

## **SchoolCounseling@Denver 2021-2022 Annual Report**

The following report summarizes assessment activities of the SchoolCounseling@Denver program during the past academic year. Furthermore, program improvements and assessment focus for the coming academic year are also discussed. Assessment data is formally reviewed by program faculty and staff during an annual Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) Retreat and annually with external partners that are members of the [SchoolCounseling@Denver Advisory Council](#). Feedback from both groups was used to draft this report.

### **Past Year Program Improvements**

The SchoolCounseling@Denver program made the following program improvements during the 2021-22 academic year.

**Research Methods & Program Evaluation Course Updates** – The final evaluation plan assignment within this course has been re-designed as a group project and broken down into smaller steps with check points built into async content to ensure progress is made by students throughout the course. Instructors will also provide detailed feedback at each stage of the project.

**Professional Dispositions Rubric** – The rubric for assessing Professional Dispositions was revised to incorporate additional specificity regarding the assessment scale used that is in better alignment with other documented CACREP rubrics and observable behaviors. The assessment scale was also reduced from a four-point to three-point scale.

**Practicum & Internship Communication Protocol** – Created and finalized a document to be used by instructors of Practicum and Internship courses when meeting with site supervisors.

**Portfolio Revision** – The original Portfolio requirements have been removed; students now collect “artifacts” of their choosing throughout the program. Within Internship II, a new assignment was created for advanced students to support school counselor professional identity and interview/ communication skills more intentionally. The assignment requires students to conduct mock interviews with others and submit a recording.

**Basic Counseling & Group Counseling Course Updates** – Created and finalized a student progress note template that can be used in these two courses; emphasizing that this template should not be used during counseling sessions with students, but for recording keeping purposes.

**Student Assessment of Site Supervisors** – Created and finalized a separate assessment of site supervisors completed by students at the end of Internship II; original assessment items had been embedded within a “end of term” survey.

### **Preliminary / Ad Hoc Assessment Data**

#### **Data Collection**

Faculty and staff developed multiple points of data collection each quarter in various courses to assess student development and performance as well as the program in general.

During the 2021-22 academic year, the following data were collected and reviewed:

- Program Characteristics (e.g., applicant, student, and graduate demographics, faculty demographics, retention / attrition / graduation rates)
- Key Performance Indicators (e.g., specific course assignment grades / rubrics)
- Professional Dispositions Assessment
- Practicum & Internship Evaluations
- Practicum & Internship Hourly Log
- Annual Student Review (e.g., progress ratings, student survey results)
- Comprehensive Exam
- University Course Evaluations
- Course Grades
- Site Supervisor Satisfaction Survey
- Student Placement Survey
- Program Satisfaction Survey
- Graduate Survey

In the future, additional assessments will be disseminated to further reflect on student growth and school counselor competence (e.g., Alumni Survey and Employer Survey). The faculty meet once a year for a Program Learning Outcome Retreat to discuss the data collected over the academic year, determine program strengths, and strategize to address programmatic improvements.

## **Results**

The following provides a summary of findings from the assessment data noted above.

### ***Program Characteristics***

Data reviewed for this domain included demographics such as race/ethnicity, legal sex, and age for admitted students, enrolled students, and graduates. Faculty demographic data was also reviewed and included race/ethnicity and legal sex. Lastly, retention, attrition, and graduation rates for both students and faculty were provided.

#### **Main Findings**

- Incoming GPA appears to be the main reason applicants are denied admission to the program.
- SchoolCounseling@Denver students tend to identify as white, female, and between the ages of 24 and 30.
- First year retention rates averaged around 80% (74% - 2019-20 cohort; 88% - 2020-21 cohort) with minimal difference between students by race/ethnicity (students of color vs white).
- As of 2021-22, 30% of SchoolCounseling@Denver faculty are persons of color and 71% are female.

### ***Program Learning Outcomes***

**2021-2022 PLOs of Focus.** During the Program Learning Outcomes Retreat in August 2021, faculty and staff identified two learning outcomes on which to focus during the 2021-22 academic year. The two learning

outcomes are identified below. Key Performance Indicators (KPI) measuring student learning in these two areas included course assignments, comprehensive exam sub-scores, and practicum & internship evaluation competency domain ratings. The timeframe of data presented generally reflects the most recent two years; not all KPIs had data for the entire timeframe.

#### Learning Outcomes

- **Human Growth and Development** — Students will demonstrate an understanding of development throughout the lifespan, as well as its impact on normal and abnormal functioning.
- **Career Development** — Students will utilize career development theory in the development of individualized and developmentally appropriate career development activities and interventions.

#### Main Findings

- Human Growth and Development
  - 77% of students met expectations on Lifespan Development Final Exam (course assignment) KPI.
  - 100% of students met expectations on the Practicum Case Conceptualization (course assignment) KPI.
  - 89% of students met expectations on the School Counselor Intervention and Strategies Intervention Journal (course assignment) KPI.
  - 98% of students met expectations on the comprehensive exam Human Growth and Development sub-section KPI.
- Career Development
  - 99% of students met expectations on the Career Counseling Career Profile Report (course assignment) KPI.
  - 100% of students met expectations on the Internship II Career Intervention (course assignment) KPI.
  - 98% of students met expectations on the comprehensive exam Career Development sub-section KPI.
  - 100% of students met expectations on the ASCA Domain within the Practicum and Internship Evaluation.

**General PLO Review.** Data reviewed for this domain included 1) comprehensive exam results; 2) student self-assessment of learning outcome proficiency during the annual review process (optional response); and 3) site supervisor assessment of learning outcome relevance (optional response; 60% response rate).

#### Main Findings

- 46% of students passed the comprehensive exam on their first attempt; 96% passed by the third attempt (data from winter 2020 to spring 2022).
- Students were less likely to pass the following exam sections on their first attempt: Human Growth and Development (70%), Career Development (75%), and Research Methods (71%).
- Students generally self-assessed as “proficient” across most learning outcomes as part of their first annual review; slightly less students rated themselves as “proficient” for the following learning outcomes: social and cultural diversity (46%), career development (33%), assessment and treatment planning (27%), school counseling focus (42%).

- Rating percentages shifted from “proficient” to “advanced” between their first and second annual review.
- Half of site supervisors (50%) reported that “assessment and treatment planning” and “research and program evaluation” were “important” or “very important” learning outcomes.

### ***Professional Dispositions***

Data reviewed for this domain included 1) faculty assessment of students enrolled in Basic Counseling Techniques, Diversity, Practicum, Internship I, and Internship II; 2) assessment of students during the Annual Review process; 3) student self-assessment during annual review process (response optional); and 4) site supervisor assessment of professional disposition relevance (response optional; 60% response rate).

#### Main Findings

- At least 90% of students across all courses and dispositions met expectations.
- Two ratings of “needs improvement” were given during the timeframe analyzed for the following dispositions: Ethical Behavior and Cultural Humility.
- At least 95% of students were rated as “satisfactory” regarding Professional Dispositions during their first annual review process.
- Students generally self-assessed as “proficient” across all Professional Dispositions as part of their first annual review.
  - Rating percentages shifted from “proficient” to “advanced” between their first and second annual review.
- At least 80% of site supervisors found all Professional Dispositions as “important” or “very important.”

### ***Clinical Experience***

Data reviewed for this domain included 1) practicum and internship evaluations; 2) assessment of students during the Annual Review process; 3) hourly log data; 4) site supervisor assessment of clinical experience (optional response; 60% response rate); and 5) student assessment of clinical experience (optional response; 88% response rate).

#### Main Findings

- The percentage of “meets expectations” varied across experiential courses:
  - 100% of students met expectations across all competency domains during Practicum.
  - At least 88% of students met expectations across all competency domains during Internship I.
  - At least 98% of students met expectations across all competency domains during Internship II.
- At least 97% of students were rated as “satisfactory” regarding Clinical Development during the annual review process.
- 86% of site supervisors were generally “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their experience partnering with the Program.
  - 92% of site supervisors “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that SchoolCounseling@Denver faculty “were proactive in sharing materials.”
- **NEW!** 85% of students were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their site supervisors; 93% were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their placement site.

- At least 75% of students reported that site supervisors gave them experience in all areas noted (e.g., apply coursework, counseling skills, indirect student services, instruction).
- At least 80% of students responded that their site “created a supportive environment” and “school staff valued the school counseling program at the school.”

### **Curriculum**

Data reviewed for this domain included 1) assessment of students during the Annual Review process; 2) course grade pass rates; and 3) course evaluations.

#### Main Findings

- At least 74% of students were rated as “satisfactory” regarding Academic Status during their first annual review process (note: data reflect students whose first annual review occurred after requirements regarding the portfolio were removed from assessing academic status).
- Course grade pass rates range between 89% and 100% between fall 2019 and spring 2022.
- For most courses, students agreed that they learned a great deal in a course, felt that the course was excellent, and found the course challenging.
  - In spring 2022, students enrolled in Mental Health and Substance Abuse agreed less that the “course was challenging.”

### **General Program Health**

Data reviewed for this domain included 1) program satisfaction survey (response optional) and 2) graduate survey (response optional; 75% response rate).

#### Main Findings

- Overall Satisfaction:
  - 88% of **current students** were satisfied overall with the program and 87% were likely to recommend the program to others.
  - 92% of **recent graduates** were satisfied overall with the program and 87% were likely to recommend the program to others.
- Regarding **program resource materials**, students were most satisfied with coursework plans (92% responding “satisfied” or “very satisfied”) and least satisfied with the Advising Reference Sheet (63% responding “satisfied” or “very satisfied”).
- Regarding **program and university learning resources**, students were most satisfied with the DU library (94% responding “satisfied” or “very satisfied”) and least satisfied with the DU Disability Services Program (63% responding “satisfied” or “very satisfied”).
- Students were mostly satisfied with their **faculty advisor** as it relates to quality of advisement, availability, responsiveness, and quality feedback (range of “satisfied” or “very satisfied” responses from 74% to 78%).
- Students were also satisfied with **school counseling faculty** as a whole as it relates to teaching, availability, responsiveness, and quality feedback (range of “satisfied” or “very satisfied” responses from 88% to 94%).
- Students felt most connected to other students in the program (80% responding “connected” or “very

connected”) and least connected to program alumni (10% responding “connected” or “very connected”). It should be noted that the program’s first graduate cohort occurred in June 2021.

- At the time of graduation, 42% of students had yet to find employment as a school counselor and were still looking; of that remaining 58%, 50% had found employment as a school counselor and 8% were not looking for employment as a school counselor.

### **Interpretation**

The SchoolCounseling@Denver program used the aforementioned assessment data to make the following insights about student learning and the program.

### ***Program Characteristics***

Program characteristics were not interpreted, but they were analyzed throughout this process. See *Program Characteristics* subsection in the preceding *Results* section for data and refer to associated action item(s) in the *Program Improvements* subsection of the *Future Considerations* section at the end of this document.

### ***Program Learning Outcomes***

**Human Growth & Development.** The Program is encouraged by student performance on the majority of KPIs related to this area. However, there is concern related to the inconsistency of students’ ability to meet expectations on the Lifespan Development Final Exam when compared to the other KPIs. While more consistent with student performance on the associated section of the comprehensive exam KPI on their *first* try (i.e., passing on the first try at a rate of 70%), the rate of 77% of students meeting expectations on the course exam KPI is a point of focus for Program faculty. To address this concern, and potentially impact student performance on the comprehensive exam, the Program will engage in item analysis of the Exam, including both format (e.g., multiple choice, select some/all) and content of the questions. The Program will also implement an initiative related directly to supporting students as they prepare for the Comprehensive Exam and update Program policy to require students to take the exam as close to the onset of their eligibility as possible. It was also noted that the associated Lifespan Development course is, overall, content heavy. The Program’s current plan to split the course into two consecutive courses upon the transition from a 72-credit to 90-credit program will help to address the content density in this individual course. Additionally, the Program will continue to focus on integrating Lifespan Development content across the curriculum, particularly as it relates to developing and implementing developmentally appropriate school counseling interventions and activities.

**Career Development.** The percentage of students “meeting expectations” for each KPI related to Career Development is at or above 98%. While this data is promising, the Program has expressed concern regarding the relationship between student performance on Career Development KPIs and their ability to pass the Career Development section of the comprehensive exam on their first try (i.e., a rate of 75% of students). Possible explanations for this inconsistency include how data was influenced by the timing of changes to cutoff scores for the comprehensive exam and the timing of course updates that include an added final exam in the Career Development course. The Program will continue to monitor this data, informed by the changes that have already been made. Finally, as previously mentioned, the Program will be implementing an initiative related directly to supporting students as they prepare for the Comprehensive Exam and update Program policy to require students to take the exam as close to the onset of their eligibility as possible. The Program is hopeful that this initiative will help students to be better prepared for the Exam.

### ***Professional Dispositions***

Upon reviewing faculty professional disposition ratings of students, it was observed that students would benefit from additional support related to self-awareness and professional behavior during the Experiential Sequence of the Program curriculum. Section instructors and course leads of experiential courses will more actively collaborate to discuss these dispositions in their courses and adjust their practices for assessing dispositions to build consistency in individual approaches and perceptions of dispositions. Additionally, while 80% of site supervisors found Professional Dispositions to be important, the Program would like to see this number increase toward development of more mutual value of these items. The Program will update the site supervisor survey to allow for more qualitative feedback related to the value of Professional Dispositions, which will guide next steps toward addressing this issue. Finally, the Program has implemented an updated rubric related to the assessment of Professional Dispositions for the 2022-2023 academic year. Professional Dispositions assessed using the updated rubric will be evaluated alongside previous assessment to identify changes in trends, based on the updated rubric content. Particular attention will be given to students' tendency to rate themselves as "Advanced" more frequently than do their instructors.

### ***Clinical Experience***

The faculty is pleased with the scores of students meeting expectations across all competency domains, in Practicum (100%), Internship I (88%), and Internship II (98%). However, data provided evidence of the need for additional support related to crisis assessment and intervention in schools. During the 2022-2023 academic year, the program will refine its approach to instruction related to crises in schools, including the meaning of the term "crisis," approaches for crisis planning and intervention from a developmental perspective, the role of site supervisors in training related to this content, and augmenting the program's intentionality related to scaffolding instruction of content in this area.

Upon review of the midterm and final evaluation forms, the program identified opportunities for improvement in methods of data collection from site supervisors. Revisions to the evaluation survey will include steps to shorten the survey form, provide more clarity between options on likert scales, and request qualitative context from supervisors related to certain responses/domains that are critical to informing program curriculum, such as those related to Student Learning Outcomes and Professional Dispositions.

Finally, data has suggested that students would benefit from additional clarification on how to categorize different types of service hours related to the clinical experiences. Specifically, the program will work to improve student awareness related to differentiating between categories of Direct Hours in their hourly logs.

### ***Curriculum***

Assessment of course grade pass rates (between 89%-100%) and course evaluations suggests that students agree that courses are challenging and that they learn a great deal throughout the curriculum. However, there are some courses in which students struggle more than others. Counseling Theory, as well as Research Methods and Program Evaluation, are two courses that students consistently find difficult, with 2021-2022 pass rates of 93% and 89%, respectively. Both courses are taken early in the curriculum, and it is important to consider that a contributing factor may be that students are adjusting to being in graduate school and meeting the expectations of graduate level work. Additionally, changes have already been implemented to the assignments and asynchronous work in the Research Methods course to provide students with more checkpoints and feedback to help foster

success. The faculty will continue to explore additional ways to engage students with the material in this course through benchmarking, student feedback, and other methods appropriate to the needs of the course. This information will be used to inform potential changes to the structure of the curriculum as the program transitions from 72- to 90-credits in the coming years.

Faculty note that student academic performance improves as they move through the curriculum. This can be seen in the data collected during students' first annual reviews (74% are rated as having "satisfactory" academic status) and in the high pass rates (100%) for courses in the last half off the curriculum, particularly in the Practicum course, which serves as a key gatekeeping point in the program. Note that faculty also identified the aforementioned "74%" figure as an area for improvement. The program has already implemented a change to the annual review rating process, which has revised the nature of the program's Portfolio requirement, removing it entirely from the Annual Student Review process. This will, accordingly, positively impact the rate of students with a "Satisfactory" academic status at the time of the Annual Student Review, to represent each student's academic performance more accurately.

Finally, students indicated that they found the *Roles & Responsibilities of the School Counselor* and *Mental Health & Substance Use* courses less challenging than other courses in the curriculum, while feedback from the *Advisory Council* indicated that the curriculum would benefit from additional focus on mental health in schools. The program will address this feedback, as well as program data related to alignment between course grades, key performance indicators, and placement evaluations, to engage in analysis of learning outcomes to inform general curricular changes as well as the upcoming transition to 90-credits.

### ***General Program Health***

Program faculty and staff are pleased with the program's general health. Students have indicated that they are generally satisfied with the program, with 88% of Program Satisfaction Survey respondents indicating that they were either "satisfied" or very satisfied." Additionally, 94% of respondents indicated that they "agree" or "strongly agree" that the program learning outcomes are well-defined, 92% of respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" that the program is teaching to its mission, and 92% of respondents "agree" or "strongly agree" that they would consider the program to be an inclusive learning community.

The program was able to identify opportunities for improvement of general program health. First, future iterations of the Program Satisfaction Survey will include more nuanced breakdown of data to allow the program to act based on more specific feedback, such as the relationship between a student's stage in the program and their perspective on applying their coursework to professional practice. Additionally, survey responses related to raising concerns via student representatives and visibility of student leaders have highlighted an additional need. Based on this data, the program will work to improve student connectedness to one another and the program via mechanisms such as improving awareness of and adding additional mechanisms, as needed, to encourage student connection and opportunity to provide feedback to the program.



## Program Highlights

The SchoolCounseling@Denver program has many things to be proud of during the 2021-22 academic year. A few of these accomplishments are described below.

**CACREP Accreditation** – The SchoolCounseling@Denver program hosted a site visit team from CACREP during February 2022 and received formal notification of accreditation in August 2022. This accreditation status provides retroactive recognition of graduates beginning on July 9, 2020 and is active through October 31, 2030.

**Faculty Scholarship** – Core faculty scholarship over the past academic year has included involvement in over two dozen scholarly presentations and publications.

**New Faculty** – The Program welcomed four new core faculty in September 2021. This group included the permanent appointment of Dr. Sage Rian, the transition from adjunct instructor to core faculty for Dr. Clark Ausloos and Dr. Kelly Gentry, and the hire of Dr. Lindsay Harman.

**Increase in Program Graduates** – The Program conferred 52 School Counseling MA degrees between November 2021, March 2022, and June 2022, compared to last year's inaugural graduating class of three students. Many of these graduates traveled to Denver from across the country to attend the on-campus Commencement ceremony to celebrate their accomplishments.

**Inaugural Immersion Experience** – The first annual Immersion Experience was hosted on the Denver campus at the Morgridge College of Education in Ruffatto Hall in June 2022. Over 30 students traveled from across the country to join Program faculty and staff for a three-day immersive experience to fortify their training in content related to trauma and self-care and to celebrate accomplishments of themselves and their peers through the presentation of student awards and recognition.

## Future Considerations

### Program Improvements

Considering the data reviewed, the SchoolCounseling@Denver program will be focused on the following program improvements during the 2022-2023 academic year.

**Program Characteristics Data Updates** – Program will improve data reported in this area with the annual Assessment Data Report by adding gender identity as another demographic, comparing SchoolCounseling@Denver data to other MCE / DU programs, examining retention rates by plan of study, and exploring withdrawn student statistics.

**Learning Outcomes Correlation Analysis** – Conduct analysis to better understand any relationships between course grades, KPIs, Practicum & Internship Evaluation, comp exams score, and Professional Dispositions.

**KPI Review** – Review KPIs with course leads to ensure learning outcome content is addressed and if not, understanding if and where to move a KPI. Also, review KPIs as it relates to the new 90 credit plan of study and state standards revision.

**Site Supervisor Survey** – Update the survey to add open-ended questions to ask respondents to indicate “why” they rated various professional dispositions and learning outcomes as “less important.”

**Hourly Log Review** - Review and revise the log and other supporting materials to ensure students are more prepared to log hours accurately (e.g., revise / add definitions).

**Pre-Practicum Experience** – Creating an experience prior to Practicum that attempts to give students an idea of what it means to be a School Counselor.

**Lifespan Course Updates** – Conduct an item level analysis of the final exam assignment to determine if and how course could be adjusted.

**Comprehensive Exam Preparation** – Identify ways to better prepare students for the comprehensive exam.

**Crisis Content Augmentation** – Review current program content related to crisis assessment and intervention toward augmenting relevant instruction across the curriculum.

**Student Connectedness** – Identify and implement ways for students to raise concerns as well as create opportunities for students and alumni to come together in community.

**Advisory Council Revamp** – Review and potentially revise the structure of the SchoolCounseling@Denver Advisory Council to improve feedback gathering.

### **Next Year’s Program Learning Outcome Focus**

The SchoolCounseling@Denver program will focus on the following learning outcome(s) in the 2022-2023 academic year.

**Assessment and Treatment Planning** — Students will demonstrate the ability to identify effective assessment strategies in order to facilitate treatment planning.

### **Contributors to this Report**

Dr. Stacy Pinto  
Dr. Jillian Blueford  
Dr. Joseph Johnson  
Dr. Sage Rian

Dr. Lindsay Harman  
Dr. Kelly Gentry  
Dr. Clark Ausloos  
Dana Wright

Becca Breen  
Nicole Holland  
Aaron Ragon