



School of Education & Social Sciences

MA IN COUNSELING

ANNUAL REPORT
2021-2022

(Published June 2022)

Bluefield University is committed to delivering high-quality instruction to students enrolled in the Counseling Program. Engaging in ongoing program evaluation is essential to provide rigorous and impactful learning opportunities. The student outcome data summarized in the report comes from course key performance indicators (KPIs), student scores on the Counseling Comprehensive Counseling Exam (CPCE), student, alumni, and employer surveys, and student evaluations from site supervisors, university supervisors, and faculty.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES AND MAJOR PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Program Objective #1: Students will demonstrate foundational knowledge in each of the eight CACREP core curricular areas.

All Bluefield University counseling students are required to take the Counseling Comprehensive Counseling Exam (CPCE) prior to graduation. Our first class of graduating students took the exam in Spring 2022 with a 100% pass rate.

Program Objective #2: Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively apply theory and techniques in developing a strong working alliance with students/clients.

All internship students receive an end-of-semester evaluation from a university supervisor and a site supervisor. Below are the results from Internship II in Spring 2022.

Evaluation Question	Average Rating/Highest Possible Rating	
	University Supervisor	Site Supervisor
Establishing rapport with student/client	4.50/5.00	4.50/5.00
Use of effective and developmentally appropriate counseling strategies and techniques	4.00/5.00	5.00/5.00
Knowledge of counseling theory and research	4.75/5.00	4.33/5.00

Students also performed well on the CPCE in the Counseling and Helping Relationships section. The average score of 14 out of 17 demonstrated that students know counseling theory and its application.

Program Objective #3: Students will effectively understand and address professional, ethical, and legal issues using appropriate decision-making processes.

All internship students receive an end-of-semester evaluation from a university supervisor and a site supervisor. Below are the results from Internship II in Spring 2022.

Evaluation Question	Average Rating/Highest Possible Rating
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	University Supervisor		Site Supervisor
Adherence to professional and ethical practices	4.75/5.00		4.75/5.00

Students performed adequately on the CPCE in the Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice section. The average score of 13.25 out of 17 demonstrated that students have knowledge of professional, ethical, and legal issues.

Program Objective #4: Students will be knowledgeable and thoughtful about multicultural aspects of the helping process and be skillful in the art and science of counseling culturally diverse populations.

Our first class of graduating students in May 2022 completed an exit survey. Students reflect on their preparedness for each of the 8 CACREP core curricular areas. Additionally, students indicate how prepared they feel regarding social and cultural diversity in this exit survey. The average score was a 3 (prepared) out of 4. Our site supervisors completed a survey to reflect on the knowledge and skills of our students. Site Supervisors were asked if the practicum and internship student(s) possess the skills necessary to work with individuals and families from diverse backgrounds. The average score was 4.33 out of 5. KPI data collected from the Counseling Diverse Populations course indicated that 94% of students engaged successfully in a series of personal and professional reflections regarding a cultural immersion experience, as noted below.

Core Area	Average Rating			
	Fully Met	Adequately Met	Partially Met	Did Not Meet
Social and Cultural Diversity – Multicultural Experience Reflection Series (15 students)	87%	7%	0%	7%

Program Objective #5: Students will demonstrate knowledge, identity, and appreciation of professional associations and active professional memberships for personal and professional growth.

Our students demonstrate knowledge, identity, and appreciation of professional associations, memberships, and professional growth. For example, 67% of all students and 100% of students enrolled in field experience courses are members of the American Counseling Association. Additionally, the majority of our students are also members of the Virginia Counselors Association (VCA). Two of our students were selected as recipients of the Michele Dowdy Emerging Leader award. In addition, one of our students received a VCA Foundation Grant to build a meditation space and a labyrinth at their internship site.

Students have also attended a variety of workshops/conferences, including:

- NIH Psychological First Aid Training
- Creating Trauma-Sensitive Schools Conference – Attachment & Trauma Network
- Virginia Counselors Association Annual Conference
- Virginia Alliance for School Counseling Social Justice Conference

- Virginia School Counselor Association Annual Conference
- Roanoke Area Counselors Association Spring Forum: Mind, Body, & Soul: A Holistic Approach to Counselor Self-Care
- Exploring Racial Trauma in Rural Educational Spaces
- Building Trauma Responsive Communities Conference w/ Bruce Perry – Southside Behavioral Health
- VA Department of Education: Calling All Future VA School Counselors Training
- Anti-Racist Counseling Schools and Communities – ACA Voice of Counseling
- VA Career Development Association: VA Career View – What's New?
- VA Education Association - Intersectionality & Trauma
- How Schools & Police Can Partner to Support Students Exposed to Trauma – WV Handle with Care
- Shelf Life – Undoing Drugs: The Untold Story of Harm Reduction and the Future of Addiction with Maia Szalavitz (VA Festival of the Book, VA Humanities)
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training
- Collaborative Assessment and Management of Suicidality Training
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network – Secondary Traumatic Stress for Supervisors
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network - LGBTQ+ Counseling Humility 101
- VA Association of Play Therapy Conference: Healing Attachment and Trauma Wounds Using Expressive Therapies; Containment and Grounding in Sand-Based Play Therapy
- VA Department of Education Considerations for Registering ELL Students Training

Program Objective #6: Students will demonstrate important dispositions relevant to their work in counseling – including their ability to work collaboratively with others, acceptance of divergent points of view, the ability to receive, give, and integrate feedback, and a developed sense of self-awareness regarding their skills and talents.

Assessment of student dispositions began during the application and interview process. In addition, faculty members collected student disposition data at the end of each semester, and disposition criteria are included in field experience evaluations to assess the behavioral expectations of graduate counseling students.

Faculty collected student disposition data for both Fall 2021 and Spring 2022:

Dispositions	Average Score
Collaborates successfully with others	1.94/2.00
Respects divergent points of view	2.00/2.00
Receives, gives, and integrates feedback	1.78/2.00
Demonstrates a sense of self-awareness regarding professional counseling skills	1.94/2.00

Program Objective #7: Students in the Clinical Mental Health Track will acquire knowledge and skills related to the operation of mental health services, including public mental health policy, finances, regulatory processes, mental health service delivery systems, clinical mental health counseling services networks, and advocacy.

Student Learning Objective #9 and #10 are related to the clinical mental health counseling track and state:

- Counseling students understand legal and ethical considerations specific to clinical mental health counseling. (5.C.2.1)
- Counseling students understand the history and development of clinical mental health counseling (5.C.1.a)

100% of students fully met both objectives.

Student Exit Survey

The student exit survey is conducted during the last semester of a student's program. Our first Clinical Mental Health graduate will be in August 2022.

Site Supervisor Survey

Our site supervisors were sent a survey to reflect on the knowledge and skills of our students. Site Supervisors were specifically asked if the practicum and internship student(s) possess the skills and knowledge necessary to work in the clinical mental health field. This information will be collected starting in Summer 2022 with our first clinical mental health graduate.

Program Objective #8: Students in the School Counseling Track will acquire the knowledge and skills required for the functions of a school counselor who advocates for students. This includes counseling, coordinating, consulting, case management, and a program that includes the curriculum, individual planning, responsive services, and system support.

KPI Data

Student Learning Objective #11 and #12 are related to the school counseling track and state:

- School Counseling students will demonstrate understanding of the legal and ethical considerations specific to school counseling (Standard G.2.n.)
- School Counseling students will exhibit an understanding of the design and evaluation of school counseling programs (Standard G.3.b.)

100% of students fully met both objectives.

Student Exit Survey

The student exit survey is conducted during the last semester of a student's program. We had four students complete their degrees this semester – all in the school counseling track. The average score was a 3 out of 5 on all questions related to their preparedness in school counseling.

Site Supervisor Survey

Our site supervisors were sent a survey to reflect on the knowledge and skills of our students. Students were rated on their preparedness for a job in school counseling. The average rating by site supervisors was a 4.3 out of 5.0.

Program Objectives Summary and Recommendations:

Data collected supporting the Program Objectives identified areas of strength and areas for continuing growth. Some of which are highlighted below:

Strengths:

- KPI Data and CPCE results indicate that students consistently demonstrate strong knowledge and skills in Professional Orientation and Ethics.
- Students effectively demonstrated knowledge and skills related to theory and associated techniques.
- Students demonstrated a strong understanding of legal and ethical counseling practice.
- Students in both the school counseling and clinical mental health counseling tracks demonstrated comprehensive knowledge of their respective fields.

Areas of Growth:

- KPI Data and CPCE results indicate three content areas for improvement – Human Growth and Development, Research, and Assessment.
 - Faculty will review coursework and assigned readings to target Human Growth and Development concepts further. While we currently include HGD integration in field experience courses, we will add additional focus for students to further integrate HGD considerations in case conceptualizations and structure for supervision documentation.
 - The research course has been housed within the School of Education. Our students take Educational Research with graduate students in the School of Education, and the course was taught by faculty in the Education Department. We have moved that course in-house, and the Counseling Program faculty will teach it. We believe this will improve the focus on counseling research using a counselor identity lens. We are also offering research at two points in the program to be more flexible for students balancing workloads.
 - Improving assessment is also important for us over the next year. We will add additional content to DSM Applications in Counseling regarding common assessments related to forming a diagnosis. In addition, the faculty will review the Appraisal in Counseling course to strengthen the content. We will also add an assessment component to all field experience contracts and include it as part of individual/triadic supervision. We will also add a module topic in Internship I for Assessment as a refresher for students.
- Students indicated feeling somewhat prepared to develop comprehensive school counseling programs on the exit survey. Many of our students will be working in rural settings that have not adopted the ASCA National Model. Most school districts where our students are placed do not have a senior leader at central office trained in best practices in school counseling. Our faculty believes that knowing how to develop and implement a comprehensive school counseling program is critical in best serving the needs of students

in rural southwest Virginia. We will partner with school counseling organizations and the Virginia Department of Education School Counseling Specialist to provide additional training and resources for our students and school counselors in our area. Additionally, we will invite guest speakers to speak in Orientation and/or at Intensives to discuss implementing comprehensive school counseling programs, including RAMP certification. Faculty will review coursework in School Counseling to further support student understanding. Students in School Internship I will audit and review their field experience site using the RAMP Program Assessment tool.

ADMISSIONS AND ENROLLMENT DATA

TOTAL APPLICANTS:	
# Offered Admission	27
% Offered Admission	81%
New Students Starting	24
% Admitted who Started	89%

NEW STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS:	
Gender	Female – 22 Male - 2
Ethnicity	Caucasian - 21 Black - 1 American Indian/Alaska Native - 2
Age	Average = 45 years old (Range 23-53)

NEW STUDENT ACADEMIC PROFILE:	
Undergraduate GPA (Average)	3.11

Admissions and Enrollment Data Summary and Recommendations:

Bluefield University's counseling program is completing its second year since the start of the degree program. During this time, Bluefield has continued to grow its enrollment in clinical mental health counseling and the school counseling tracks. We will work to continue to grow the program while focusing on the admittance of a diverse student body. We are working with our Director of Online recruitment to develop partnerships with HBCUs and community service agencies serving diverse populations.

PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROGRAM

We survey our constituents every year, starting with 2021-2022. The data below highlights feedback from the most recent surveys conducted during Spring 2022.

Student Exit Surveys:

All graduates felt prepared in the following areas: Professional Orientation and Ethics, Diversity, Lifespan Development, Helping Relationships, and Group Counseling. All graduates felt somewhat prepared for Career Counseling, Appraisal, and Research. Clinical mental health

counseling students felt prepared in all areas except basic and commonly prescribed psychotropics. In this area, students felt somewhat prepared. School counseling students felt prepared in most areas. Three areas that indicated being somewhat prepared included:

- Changing programs to be culturally relative
- Strategies to close the achievement gap
- Design a comprehensive school counseling program

Overall, students felt field experience was helpful in their growth. Students also reported their university advisor and their field experience site supervisor were helpful. Each of these areas had an average of 3.5/4.

All respondents reported they were "very happy" with the overall program at Bluefield University and would recommend the program to others.

Site Supervisor Survey:

Site supervisors were surveyed during internship classes. Site supervisors reported an average score of 4.5 out of 5 on most survey components. Three areas had an average score of 4.25 out of 5. These included:

- Possess the skills necessary to work with individuals and families from diverse backgrounds.
- Possess the skills necessary to advocate and become agents of change.
- Is as well prepared or better prepared than graduates of other mental health counseling programs at other institutions.

Student strengths they identified were:

- Possessing content knowledge
- Possessing counseling skills
- Communicate effectively
- Demonstrates flexibility
- Demonstrates ethical decision making
- Well prepared or better prepared than graduates from other programs

Site supervisor comments included: The trained counselor had a variety of resources and counseling practices that promoted different therapeutic techniques with students from various backgrounds. Knowledgeable. Strong content knowledge, good experience with counseling skills, and ethical conduct.

Perceptions of the Program Summary and Proposed Changes

We have identified that the Bluefield University Counseling Program has several strengths through the Student Exit Survey and the Site Supervisor Surveys. These strengths include students demonstrating strong counseling knowledge, skill, and ethical practice with students.

Specifically, students reported being "very well prepared" in crisis management, ASCA National Model, and evidenced treatment for outcomes.

The areas for growth include:

- Students indicated perceptions of being "somewhat prepared" in the core content areas of Research, Career Counseling, and Appraisal; this was further supported in CPCE and KPI data warranting review. Each of these courses was offered over an 8-week semester during Summer I or Summer II taught by clinical faculty and/or adjuncts compared to other classes within the program provided by core faculty over a 16-week semester. Core faculty will be paired with any clinical or adjunct faculty for future courses to provide additional 1:1 support throughout the semester. Further, when course load and student enrollment permit, core faculty will teach these courses, with a preference for a 16 -week semester.
- School Counseling and Internship II courses will also be modified to include a more targeted review, assessment of knowledge comprehension, and demonstration of application concerning Research, Career Counseling, and Appraisal content areas. For example, in the School Counseling course, the syllabi and lecture material will intentionally include considerations of scholarly research, application of career counseling with professional identity development as a school counselor, and considerations for ongoing assessment and appraisal in school counseling. This will be evaluated through practice CPCE review and completion of the Portfolio assignment during Internship II highlighting evidence of integration from each content area.
- The Site Supervisor Survey yielded overall positive feedback about student preparedness for the profession as a school counselor. However, it is important to note that the content questions in the Student Exit Survey and the Site Supervisor Survey differ. Therefore, in future student and site exit surveys, the program will modify the survey questions to ensure that the data captured is the same to compare the two constituents more objectively.

PROGRAM GRADUATES AND EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES

of Graduates: 4 (1 additional student will graduate Summer Term II 2022)

Employment %: Clinical Mental Health Counseling – 100%

School Counseling – 75% (one student is not pursuing full-time employment at this time)

Program Graduates and Employment Outcomes Summary:

All of the successful graduates from the Master of Arts in Counseling program at Bluefield University secured full-time employment prior to graduation. The program largely attributes this success not only to the rigor of the courses, but also to the additional support invested in students through interview coaching, letters of recommendation, and encouraging active participation in professional associations during the field placement semesters. The program will continue in its commitment to supporting students in developing strong practitioner skills in both clinical

mental health and school counseling tracks. It will be imperative for future graduating cohorts that the program continue building relationships with field placements that may offer internship to employment opportunities. The program will also implement an Employer Survey in 2023 to be administered every 2 years in conjunction with the Alumni Survey. Alumni will be asked to share a link with their current employer through a Microsoft Forms Survey. The survey will allow employers to provide feedback on how prepared the alumni/student is for the field. This data will allow program faculty to continue adjusting focus and content areas to make graduates not only adequately and competently prepared for work, but also marketable in their respective area of focus.

COUNSELING STANDARDIZED EXAMINATIONS – CPCE

of CPCE Testers: 4

% Passed CPCE: 100%

Counseling Standardized Examinations – CPCE Summary & Recommendations:

The inaugural graduating class successfully passed the CPCE comprehensive exam in 2022. However, subsections of core area scores indicate that the content areas of Research, Career Counseling, and Assessment & Appraisal were more difficult for students resulting in a lower score. In future course offerings, both the school and clinical track courses and the Internship courses will also be modified to include a more targeted review, assessment of knowledge comprehension, and demonstration of application with relation to the Research, Career Counseling, and Appraisal content areas. In both the school and clinical track courses, the syllabi and lecture material will intentionally include considerations of scholarly research, application of career counseling with professional identity, and considerations for ongoing assessment and appraisal in counseling. This will be evaluated through practice CPCE review and completion of a Portfolio assignment during Internship II highlighting evidence of integration from each CACREP core content area.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (Key Performance Indicators)

Each year the counseling program evaluates students on their professional and academic development. Students must maintain a high standard in all areas. Therefore, the faculty in the counseling program has identified 12 Key Performance Indicators that are used to examine overall student performance.

Core Area	Average Rating			
	Fully Met	Adequately Met	Partially Met	Did Not Meet
Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice	92%	4%	4%	0%
Social and Cultural Diversity	72%	17%	3%	8%
Human Growth and Development	47%	43%	10%	0%
Career Development	77%	15%	8%	0%

Counseling and Helping Relationships	83%	13%	4%	0%
Group Counseling	55%	35%	5%	5%
Assessment and Testing	28%	39%	22%	11%
Research	85%	9%	3%	3%

Student Learning Outcomes (Key Performance Indicators) Summary & Recommendations:

Areas of strength:

- SLO 1: Counseling students will demonstrate personal and professional self-evaluation strategies and implications for practice (Standard F.1.k).** The content of this SLO is embedded throughout the coursework in the program. We specifically collected data at three points throughout the past year 1) with beginning students in Orientation, 2) during Internship I 3) during Internship II. Our goal was to ensure that students develop a solid professional counseling identity and continue to evaluate their growth, including wellness, throughout the program. Again, because many of our students will work in rural settings, sometimes as the only counselor in their agency setting or school, we believe this is of utmost importance for future client care and ethical practice.
- SLO 2: Counseling students will demonstrate understanding and application of counseling theories and models (Standard F.5.a).** Helping students understand the importance of grounding our work in theory, using theory as a road map, and applying theory to our work with clients and students is a strength of our program. We introduce theory in Orientation and begin evaluating theory in the Counseling Theories course. We also assess the use of theory in Practicum for KPIs. While we cover theory in supervision for field experience and case conceptualization, we believe that we should capture theory in the portfolio and portfolio presentation. Our goal is to ensure that students leave our program with a solid theoretical foundation as part of their overall professional counseling identity as they enter the field.

Areas of growth:

- SLO 12: School Counseling students will exhibit an understanding of the design and evaluation of school counseling programs (Standard G.3.b).** Many of our students will be working in rural settings that have not adopted the ASCA National Model. In addition, most school districts where our students are placed do not have a senior leader at their central offices trained in best practices in school counseling. Our faculty believes that knowing how to develop and implement a comprehensive school counseling program is critical in best serving the needs of students in rural southwest Virginia. We will partner with professional organizations and the Virginia Department of Education School Counseling Specialist to provide additional training and resources for our students and school counselors in our area.
- Additionally, we will invite guest speakers to speak in Orientation, School Counseling, and/or at Intensives to discuss implementing comprehensive school counseling programs, including RAMP certification. Faculty will review coursework in School Counseling to

further support student understanding. Finally, students enrolled in School Internship I will audit and review their field experience site using the RAMP Program Assessment tool.

- **SLO 6: Counseling students will demonstrate an understanding of principles, models, and documentation formats of biopsychosocial case conceptualization and treatment planning (5.C.1.c).** We will add additional content to DSM Applications in Counseling regarding common assessments related to forming a diagnosis. The faculty will review the Appraisal in Counseling course to strengthen the content. We will also add an assessment component to all field experience contracts and include it as part of individual/triadic supervision. We will also add a module topic in Internship I for Assessment as a refresher for students.