



**Master of Arts-Clinical Mental Health Counseling
Program Evaluation Report 2019-2020
Summary**

The 2019-2020 Program Evaluation Report (PER) demonstrates our efforts to understand our progress in achieving our vision, mission, and objectives. The PER also showcases our capacity to comply with evaluation requirements of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP, 2016). We compile and present annual data about the on- ground site (hereafter OG), the online site (hereafter OL), and the program overall (hereafter Program)

A. Students Admitted and Studying with Us in 2019-2020

In 2019-2020, we attracted, enrolled, and educated a diverse and inclusive student body. Table 1 shows that across the program, 1,837 individuals applied. Of the 1,837 who applied, we offered interviews to 694 individuals (38%). Following interviews, 515 (74%) were admitted to the program. Of those granted interviews in 2019-2020, 358 (78%) matriculated and enrolled.

Table 1: Admissions (2019-2020)

Status	OG	OL	Program
Applied	148	1,689	1,837
Interviewed	87	607	694
Admitted	66	449	515
Enrolled	30	328	358

In 2019-2020, those who self-identify as female and cisgender women continue to make up the bulk of our applicants and those admitted (86%) mirror trends in the counseling field nationally. *We should note that data on race/ethnicity and sex/gender are drawn from information provided by students in application data.* Table 2 shows that White students continue to constitute the majority of those who apply and are admitted (63.7%) and enrolled (59%) However, the OL site increasingly attracts and welcomes individuals of historically underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds (36.3%). The OG site has observed steady interest from international students, who make up about 30% of applicants.

Figure 1 shows our program’s 2019-2020 reach nationwide. Students come from 43 states with the largest contingent from Illinois, the program’s institutional home. Table 3 shows that we are educating and training a relatively diverse study body, 38% of whom are BIPOC

Table 2: Admitted Students by Race/ Ethnicity (2019-2020)

Race/Ethnicity Admitted	OG	OL	Program N=515	Program Percent
White	37	291	328	63.7%
Black/African American	5	77	82	15.9%
Latinx/Latino/Chicano	4	33	37	7.2%
Asian	15	24	39	7.6%
Native American/American Indian	1	7	8	1.6%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	-	2	2	<1%
Multiracial	3	6	9	1.7%
Not Reported	1	9	10	2%

Figure 1. Admitted Students by US States (2019-2020) N=43 States

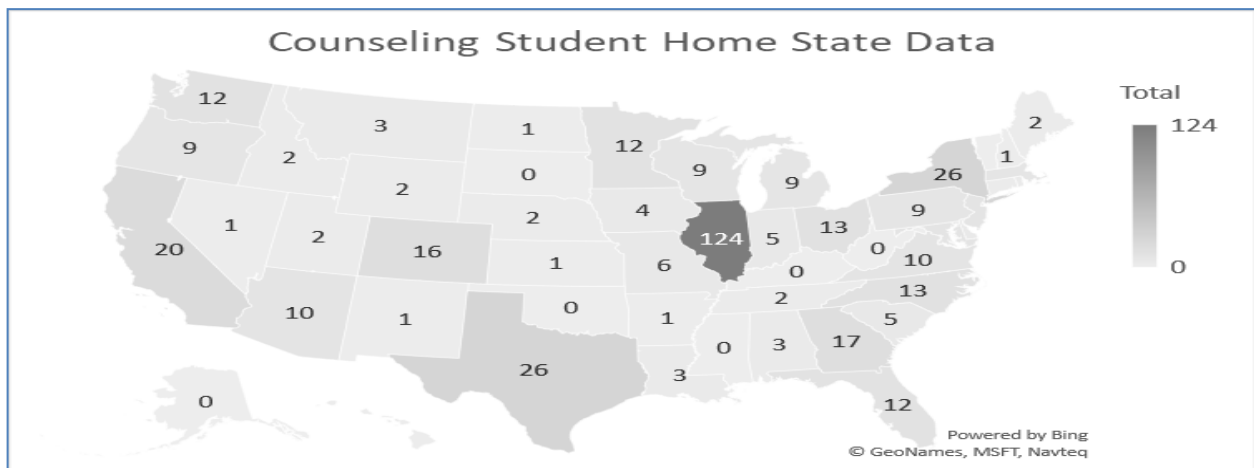


Table 3: Total Active Student Body by Race/Ethnicity and Sex/Gender (2019-2020)

Student Body	OG (69)			OL (581)			Program (650)				Program percent
	F	M	Other	F	M	other	F	M	Other	Total	
White	35	7		292	51		327	56	2	385	59%
Black	4	0		66	20		70	18	2	90	13%
Asian	13	1		33	3		46	4	-	50	8%
Latinx	2			39	8		41	8	-	49	8%
NA/AN				3			-	3	-	3	>1%
Pacific Islander	1						1	-	-	1	>1%

Multiracial	4	1		35	4		39	4	1	44	7%
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B. Student Achievement 2019-2020

Our program has a demonstrated history of graduating students on their preferred timeline, with low dismissal (0 in 2019-2020) and academic probation rates (3%). In 2019-2020 the COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine presented a challenging set of conditions in both sites, and this impacted some student dynamics (e.g., a larger number of students taking leaves of absence). A substantive majority of our students perform at or above expectations in coursework, with GPAs at or above 3.0. In 2019-2020, relative to program size, very few students had GPAs below 3.0 (Table 4). Table 5 shows the size of our graduation class by site. Students also achieve on-time graduations, and this trend continued for the most part despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4: GPA < 3.0 2019-2020

GPA < 3.0	Overall	Sex/Gender			Race/Ethnicity	
		Female	Male	Non-Bin	BIPOC	Non-BIPOC
OG	0	0	0	0	0	0
OL	20	14	5	1	13	7
Program	20	14	5	1	13	7

[^]Students with GPA .3.0 are placed on probation multiple times in the same academic year, in this case they would be counted multiple times.

Table 5: Graduations in 2019-2020

Graduations	Overall	Sex/Gender			Race/Ethnicity	
		Female	Male	Non-Binary	BIPOC	Non-BIPOC
OG	29	24	5	0	7	22
OL Accelerated and Traditional	61	48	13	0	16	45
OL Part-Time	58	50	8	0	19	39
Program	148	122	26	0	42	106

Count of students completing and graduating from each site during 2019 - 2020 academic year.

C. Student Performance as Counselors-in-Training 2019-2020

The depth and quality of clinical training continues to be a strength in our program. Students are

required to complete at least 50 direct face-to-face hours with clients for the practicum experience and 240 direct hours for the internship experience . COVID-19 impacted clinical training dynamics, including significant disruptions as placement sites manage quarantine conditions and pivoted to tele mental health. Despite these changes, we believe that our students still achieved the expected training benchmarks established for our program. Students trained at around 372 unique placements sites across the US, and with around 425 unique supervisors at these sites. Table 6 shows the clinical training targets assessed by supervisors on these scales. Table 7 summarizes the mean scores (and standard deviations) of site supervisor evaluation of students. Overall, supervisor ratings suggest that our students are achieving a solid standard of above-average ratings of at least 4.5/5.0 in the practicum year and 4.75/5.0 in the internship year. Better performance in the internship year over practicum is a noted and welcomed trend.

Table 6: Clinical Trainee Competencies Assessed by Practicum and Internship Supervisors

Knowledge and Skills	
Professional Skills	
1	Ability to establish a facilitative therapeutic environment
2	Capacity to empathize with clients’ conflicts and struggles
3	Capacity for genuineness, openness, and warmth with clients
4	Sensitivity to clients’ transference and its implications for assessment and treatment
5	Awareness of own reactions to clients and their implications for assessment and treatment
6	Ability to formulate a coherent case assessment & integrate additional material as available
7	Ability to apply theoretical knowledge to case material
8	Ability to conceptualize and implement effective treatment plans
9	Ability to use (administer, score, interpret) standardized tests
10	Ability to prepare formal reports
11	Ability to maintain reports and records up-to-date and on-time
12	Ability to make cogent case presentations
13	Ability to accept and make constructive use of supervision
Approach to Learning	
1	Openness to trying new clinical methods and approaches
2	Interest in using staff and other agency resources (in-service, etc.) for learning
3	Capacity for self-awareness, self-scrutiny, and self-evaluation with respect to clinical performance
Professional Demeanor	
1	Describes sound and ethical judgment
2	Establishes professional relationships
3	Explains scope of professional duties and responsibilities
4	Recognizes how staff and other agency resources (in service, etc.) can assist one’s learning
5	Shows Dependability
6	Values punctuality and attendance
7	Willingness to assume duties and responsibilities
Cultural competency	

1	Ability to understand and work effectively with culturally diverse populations
2	Ability to understand how cultural background and experiences influence own attitudes, values and biases in counseling others
3	Possesses an awareness of own cultural values and biases
4	Understands how oppression, discrimination and stereotyping affect them personally and in their work with clients
5	Use supervision to improve education, understanding and effectiveness in working with culturally different populations

Note: Training competencies are evaluated on the following rating scale. 5=excellent work, 4.5=clear strength, 4=satisfactory work, 3.5=student experiencing difficulty in this area and making satisfactory progress, 3=student experiencing difficulty in this area and making slow progress, 2.5=student experiencing difficulty in this area and making questionable progress, 2=represents an area of difficulty where progress has not yet been demonstrated, 1=a key problem area which threatens to interfere with clinical effectiveness, consultation should be initiated, N/A=not able to evaluate at the present time or does not apply.

Table 7: Clinical Site Supervisor Evaluation of Counselor-in Training Competencies (2019-2020) N=723

Supervisor Evaluation of Practicum Students Knowledge and Skills						
Competency Domain	OG Mean Score (N=66)	SD	OL Mean Score (N=657)	SD	Program Mean Score (N=723)	SD
1 Professional Skills	4.45	0.34	4.56	0.47	4.55	0.47
2 Approach to Learning	4.54	0.40	4.68	0.49	4.67	0.49
3 Professional Demeanor	4.41	0.39	4.62	0.51	4.6	0.51
4 Cultural Competency	4.48	0.41	4.68	0.51	4.66	0.51
Supervisor Evaluation of Intern Knowledge and Skills						
Competency Domain	OG Mean Score (N=78)	SD	OL Mean Score (N=579)	SD	Program Mean Score (N=657)	SD
1 Professional Skills	4.52	0.38	4.78	0.30	4.75	0.32
2 Approach to Learning	4.60	0.37	4.85	0.30	4.81	0.32
3 Professional Demeanor	4.50	0.42	4.81	0.30	4.77	0.33
4 Cultural Competency	4.57	0.44	4.84	0.33	4.81	0.36

D. Alumni Ratings of the Program

We conducted an alumni survey which was distributed to 602 alumni between December 15, 2020, and January 31, 2021. Of the 602 alumni who were sent the survey, 256 (43%) started it. A total of 205 completed the survey for a completion rate of 34%. Of the participants who completed the survey, 78 (38%) graduated from onground, and 127 (62%) graduated online. Alumni were asked to rate the effectiveness of the program mission which is to “*deliver innovative clinical mental health counseling training grounded in contemporary psychodynamic theory, best practices from multiple perspectives, and a multicultural worldview, preparing students to become competent counseling, mental health advocates, and leaders*”. The

breakdown in responses between alumni from on-ground and online sites were equivalent and are included in Tables 8. Table 9 shows alumni ratings of the program’s objectives.

Table 8: Alumni Ratings of Program’s Effectiveness in Meeting its Mission

Ratings	Program		OG		OL	
	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count
Extremely or Very Effective	89%	184	90%	71	89%	114
Moderately or Slightly Effective	9%	20	9%	7	9%	11
Not Effective At All	>1%	1	1%	1	2%	2
Total	100%	205	100%	79	100%	127

Table 9: Program Alumni Ratings of Program’s Effectiveness in Meeting its Objectives (N=205)

How effective is the program in helping students to:	Extremely or Very Effective		Moderately Effective		Slightly or Not At All Effective	
Possess an in-depth understanding of Clinical Mental Health Counseling	95%	194	4%	9	1%	1
Demonstrate self-reflective counseling skills honed through extensive and closely supervised clinical practice	97%	197	2%	5	1%	2
Demonstrate rich multicultural awareness that embraces and advances diversity and social justice values	71%	144	19%	40	10%	20
Embody a professional counselor identity	89%	181	9%	17	2%	5
Showcase a scientific mindset and an interest in scholarship and profession-centered activities	80%	163	15%	32	5%	8
Understand strategies to integrate psychodynamic thought and emerging best practices into clinical work	87%	178	10%	21	3%	5

E. Student Performance on the National Counselor Exam

Consistently, our students perform well on the National Counselor Exam (NCE), with pass rates on the first attempt at over 90%. Table 10 shows pass rates for 2018-2020. We reported both years to show the trend

Table 10: National Counselor Exam (NCE) Pass Rate on First Attempt (2018-2020)

Year	OG	OL	Program
2018-2019	96% (27)	93% (57)	93.96% (84)
2019-2020	96% (28)	89% (45)	91.68% (73)
	55 (96%)	102 (91%)	

F. Student Feedback in 2019-2020: Qualitative themes

Towards the end of their studies, we conduct semi structured exit interviews with applicants in each site. In 2019-2020 given the disruptions in education because of COVID we did not conduct interviews in Winter of 2020. Exit interview themes for Spring and Summer 2020 are summarized.

Table 11: Sentiments in Exit interviews (Spring & Summer-2020)

Strengths		
	OG	OL
Opportunities for Growth & Reflection	<i>"...being in this program for two straight years out of undergrad, I have learned so much about myself, gained a greater understanding of my own values - and this is what the program is about."</i>	<i>"...coming into the Counseling profession [I] thought I knew myself well. This program showed me there are so many open pathways I can take [to] grow, learn, adapt, bend,</i>
Group Dynamics Immersion	<i>"...the reason I chose this program...it fostered my understanding of group dynamics and [allowed me to] see/understand myself from this perspective."</i>	<i>"Group Immersion...I know myself better and can recognize commonality in "us" (humanity) around our struggles."</i>
Quality of Education & Training	<i>"The clinical training is the best; I feel so prepared to go to work."</i>	<i>"...most grateful for the rigorous educational experience. I absolutely got what I came for and feel well-trained and prepared for clinical work."</i>

Core Faculty	<i>"I felt taken care of, attended to, well trained, and inspired."</i>	<i>"...quality of professors is outstanding. NU brings the top minds to the program, and it is serious"</i>
Connection to Peers	<i>"My cohort...we are not only classmates, but friends."</i>	<i>"I made genuine friends through this program, which I wasn't expecting. This was facilitated by role plays, small groups, ground projects and other...interactions."</i>
Job opportunities after graduation	<i>"A job offer where I completed my internship!"</i>	<i>"I plan to take the NCE and get licensed, I accepted a job offer at my internship site!"</i>
CES Doctoral Studies Interest	<i>"Help with the doctoral application process was life-changing for me."</i>	<i>"A doctoral degree in the Chicago area, hopefully continue practicing at one of my sites [where I was] offered a job!"</i>
Growth Areas		
	OG	OL
Cultural Competency Diversity & inclusion	<i>"...wish there was more cultural diversity training for students who identify as White."</i>	<i>"I would have loved to have seen or had an opportunity for a student group for...people of color to <u>connect.</u>"</i>
Coursework Sequence/Content/quality	<i>"Have the multicultural counseling course closer to the beginning of the program...to help me serve my clients."</i>	<i>"Faculty did a good job of identifying outdated information...we would benefit from regularly refreshed material."</i>

Conclusion

We derive several conclusions from our 2019-2020 Program Evaluation which was also reviewed by faculty in a department faculty meeting. We summarize key takeaways that will drive our efforts to continually improve

Strengths

- Enrollment in our program has increased which allows us to expand brand of educational and training to more generations of students, including students from international locations.
- The program's national reach is also increasing. Students come from 43 states and six international locations and train in 372 agencies and institutions across the US with over 425 unique supervisors.
- Further, largely because of the online site is helping us we are educating and training a diverse student body, now 38% BIPOC overall.

- Our program, across both sites, continues to achieve a high standard of education and training consistent with our program vision, mission, and goals as indicated by key program metrics
- Our NCE pass rate trend is above 90% on the first attempt, which also confirms student achievement of clinical mental health education and training consistent with standards of the profession.
- Both sites maintain a high degree of concordance in educational and clinical training targets, as documented by the small to moderate differences in mean scores in supervisory evaluations across all students.
- Our alumni survey indicated that upon leaving our program, students continue to have favorable impressions of the programs and its contributions to their progress in the mental health marketplace.

Growth Edges based on Program Objectives

- A growth area is to improve some aspects of our asynchronous coursework and quality of live instruction. When *both* are evaluated negatively, students are apt to report lower satisfaction with their education.
- The virtual course delivery format (because of COVID dynamics) was a significant disappointment to students in the OG site. Despite this many reported some satisfaction with the quality of their classrooms and instruction documented in course evaluations (95% of coursework average at least a 4.0 on a 6.00-point scale in overall course quality). Should COVID conditions persist, deeper levels of training in effective online classroom management at the OG site will remain a priority.
- While 2019-2020 was an incredibly difficult year for training sites, the supervisors' capacity to be present for their trainees remains a theme. About these dynamics, Clinical Training teams in both sites have already engaged in sustained dialogue revised framework for grade assignment, search for a new platform to track clinical hours, providing continuing education for clinical supervisors.
- Our DEI value positions, responsiveness, and engagement have also been flagged in several metrics as an area of concern. Several efforts are underway to address this important dynamic to show our strong commitment to multicultural values in our vision and mission.

The 2019-2020 PER shows our education and training towards the Master of Arts Degree is solid. In several areas, we are achieving our program's vision, mission, and objectives. Our data also shows growth edges in each site and program wide. We are determined to keep advancing towards continuous improvements. In our efforts, we hope to contribute to the workforce of well trained and self-reflective professional counselors in the U.S and internationally.