

Date: July 15, 2021

To: Katherine Shepherd, Ph.D., *Interim Dean, College of Education and Social Services (CESS)*
 Jane Okech, Ph.D., *Chair, Department of Leadership and Developmental Sciences (DLDS), College of Education and Social Services (CESS)*
 CC: Counseling Program Core Faculty, Counseling Program Students, Counseling Program Alumni

From: Lance C. Smith Ph.D; *Coordinator UVM Graduate Counseling Program*

Dear Interim Dean Shepherd, Dr. Okech and Counseling Program stakeholders,

Please see the following annual report that summarizes program accomplishments, modifications, substantial changes, as well as program evaluation and admissions results from AY 2020-2021.

Program Modifications and Substantial Program Changes

COVID Responsiveness

The most pressing need within the Counseling Program during the past academic year of 2020/2021 was to respond to the COVID 19 Pandemic and the impact that it had on both students and faculty. Counseling program faculty began the year by engaging in a great deal of problem solving to address the loss of direct clinical hours and the impact this would have on both graduation timelines and licensure requirements. Also, to assess the degree of need amongst our students, during the fall semester of 2020 the counseling program coordinator conducted two needs assessments and held two town-hall meetings. The data strongly suggested that students were feeling isolated and overwhelmed, had difficulty focusing, and were concerned about completing their clinical hours. Furthermore, it was clear that the disruption of the practicum course during spring of 2020 disrupted the clinical skills development for students. Faculty were struggling with balancing work and childcare needs. Faculty responded to the student need by reducing course workloads and requirements, emphasizing relational and small group work pedagogical practices. For students struggling with their clinical skills development faculty required and/or invited opportunities for additional clinical supervision during the semester and over the winter recess.

[Counseling Program Pandemic Fall Check-In Survey](#)

CACREP Accreditation Process

In May of 2021, the Counseling Program participated in a CACREP site visit review process. The site visit was the culminating component of our reaccreditation process that entailed submitting an 86-page self-study in August of 2019 and then a follow up 52-page addendum in July of 2020. Over a period of 3 days, a significant number the Counseling Program community—faculty, students, alumni, part-time faculty, field site supervisors, and other stakeholders—met with the CACREP Site Visit Team and shared how their experiences of the

Counseling Program align with CACREP Accreditation Standards and expectations. At the conclusion of the site visit review, the review team determined that the Counseling Program has many strengths, and is particularly exemplary in areas related to equity and social justice. At the same time, the team determined that our program did not meet 45 of the more than 250 CACREP required standards. One unmet standard particularly germane to this report regards our need to significantly revise our approach to systemic assessment of student progress. In response to the site visit team feedback, the Counseling faculty held a retreat focused on crafting a response to the CACREP report. Subsequently, the Counseling Program coordinator submitted a detailed, 14-page institutional response that outlines how we intend to redress each unmet standard over the next two years. In July of 2021, the CACREP Board will be meeting to consider our response. We anticipate being granted provisional accreditation status while we work to redress these standards.

Reinforcement of Social Justice Commitment

In the spring of 2021, a counseling program core faculty member took to social media to call on UVM as an institution, and the College of Education and Social Services in particular, to cease engaging in social justice, anti-racism work. Counseling program students, alumni, part-time faculty and site supervisors responded by doubling down on their commitment to ACA Code of Ethics core principle of social justice. Numerous advocacy actions were taken by the counseling program community, both collective and individual, to promote equity both within the program and within our community. As a result of this challenging experience, Counseling Program will enter the AY 2021/2022 having strengthened structures and policies that will allow us to improve our ability to develop and prepare critically conscious counselors.

Program Evaluation Results

Program Data Systems

In May, 2021 the CACREP Site Visit Team determined that our program-wide assessment structure as currently constructed, provides data on student achievement while enrolled in the Program, but fails to provide valid and reliable data on student progression. Given this feedback, Counseling Program Faculty will need to significantly revise our systemic evaluation plan including a) more fully integrating our program objectives into our Student Dispositions Instrument and Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and b) ensuring that both the 5-year Program-Wide Assessment Cycle and Student Learning KPI Assessment Plan measure *student development*, not just student outcomes.

Owing to this feedback, we look forward to revising our assessment tools and systems in order to provide valid and reliable student evaluation data for the 21/22 Annual Report.

We are however reporting out on the following components of our *5-year Program-Wide Assessment Cycle*:

- [Cohort Demographic Data](#)
- [Site Supervisor feedback](#)
- [Student Exit Survey](#)

- [Alumni Survey](#)

Admissions

Our Spring 2021 admissions cycle was notable for both the highest number of applicants in 15 years (131), and the lowest % of enrollment for out-of-state applicants who were accepted (23%). During the previous 5 years, the mean enrollment for out-of-state applicants who were accepted was 38%. Owing to the reduction in enrollment by out-of-state applicants who were accepted, our incoming cohort for fall, 2022 will be 26 students. We are very pleased that 6 incoming students identify as BIPOC while 4 identify as LGBTQ.

Admissions 2021

	Total	Out of St	Vt	CMHC	SC	Dual Op	BIPOC	LGBTQ
Applied	131	87	44	89	22	20	22	22
Admitted	61	38	23	34	14	13	11	9
Accepted	26	9	17	17	3	6	6	4
Enrolled	26	9	17	17	3	6	6	4
Deferred	5	2	3	3	1	1	0	1

[Admissions Data Summary Table 2017-2021](#)

Finally, in order to measure the impact of the Variable Tuition Rate on the decisions of the accepted out-of-state applicants to enroll in our program, we surveyed the incoming students. Our response rate was 77%. The data is clear, without the VTR, very few of our out-of-state would be attending our program.

[Variable Tuition Rate Survey Findings](#)

Conclusions:

This was a year of consequence for the Counseling Program. Perhaps nothing was more consequential than the retirement of Dr. Anne Geroski. After 25 years of dedicated work as core faculty member within the Counseling Program, Anne retired in May of 2021. No faculty member in the history of the Counseling Program has provided more years of leadership for both programs or participated so meaningfully in the Counseling Programs' curriculum development and implementation processes to maintain its accreditation status. Having served as Program Coordinator for the Counseling Program for a total of 9.5 years; Coordinator of the School Counseling Program for over ten years and that of the Clinical Counseling Program for two years, Anne's leadership and service have left a lasting mark on the Counseling Program and the College of Education and Social Services. While the gap that Anne is leaving will be extremely difficult to fill, the counseling program community wishes Dr. Geroski all the very best in the next stages of her professional and personal life.

The program was also elated to receive the news that Dr. Julie Welkowitz was promoted to Senior Lecturer. In teaching and supervising more courses than any other faculty member, Dr. Welkowitz's impact on the program cannot be understated.

We would also like to give a particular shout out of gratitude to three counseling program alumni who joined us as new part-time faculty for our clinical courses: Fiona Griffin, Olivia Sanders and Mark Nash. In a normal year, stepping into the role of a Practicum or Internship instructor is challenging, let alone the additional stressors and challenging dynamics that came with this year of teaching during a pandemic. The Counseling Program could not function without gifted and passionate part-time faculty. Thank you Fiona, Olivia and Mark.