

## Rehabilitation Counseling Program SOAPS Report for 2015-2016

**1. What learning outcome(s) did you assess this year?** The program focused on the area of Ethical Conduct and Professional Identity (Goal 3) specifically examining the extent to which rehabilitation counseling students can articulate an understanding of the ways in which multicultural awareness impacts ethical practice (Objective 3.2). This portion of the assessment utilizes data from Fall 2015 given the SOAP that was initially developed and is on file with the university.

**2. What instruments did you use to assess them?** The instruments used for the assessment were as follows: Rehab 211-Professional Ethical Rubric; Rehab 237-C1, C3, and C6 using the Pre-Practicum Student Evaluation; and Rehab 239-Items C1, C3, and C6-C9 using Internship Student Evaluation.

**3. What did you discover from these data?**

### Rehab 211

Rehab 211 (Professional Issues and Ethics in Rehabilitation Counseling) had a total number of 14 students enrolled during Fall 2015. The Professional Ethical Rubric was used to assess student learning outcomes. In the area of **Informed Consent Considerations**, 14 out of 14 students (100%) scored at a level “3” or were considered “accomplished” in being able to demonstrate the nine areas of informed consent as outlined in the Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors (Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification [CRCC] 2010), which are as follows: (1) the qualifications, credentials, and relevant experience of the rehabilitation counselor; (2) purposes, goals, techniques, limitations, and the nature of potential risks, and benefits of services; (3) frequency and length of services; (4) confidentiality and limitations regarding confidentiality (including how a supervisor and/or treatment team professional is involved); (5) contingencies for continuation of services upon the incapacitation or death of the rehabilitation counselor; (6) fees and billing arrangements; (7) record preservation and release policies; (8) risks associated with electronic communication; and, (9) legal issues affecting services. Students also were able to integrate various perspectives from class discussions, course text, and field/personal experiences while making connections among professional, cultural, and legal aspects, which is highly encouraged at the graduate level as there is a strong focus on praxis in the program (what does informed consent look like among various populations relative to age, language, race/ethnicity, etc.). Differently stated, 100% of students evaluated during the Fall 2015 semester using the Professional Ethical Rubric were able to demonstrate a high level of cultural complexity, critical thinking, and reflexivity (related to self-awareness, which is an important aspect in developing highly equipped counselors that will work with diverse populations-relates to Objective 3.2 that was being assessed).

In the area of **APA style/formatting** 10 out of 14 students (71%) scored at a level “2” or “capable” (4-6 errors), and 4 out of 14 students (29%) scored at a level “3” or “accomplished” (3 or fewer errors). In the area of **Grammar and Mechanics**, 8 out of 14 (57%) students scored at a level “2” or were rated as “capable (4-6 errors);” 5 out of 14 students (36%) scored at a level of

“3” or “accomplished” (3 or fewer errors) and 1 out of 14 students (7%) was rated at a level “1” or “developing” (more than 6 errors). Though the majority of students were rated in the capable and accomplished range in APA style/formatting and Grammar and Mechanics, as a program we learned that we want to continue to emphasize the importance of a) written communication (critical skill for highly equipped counselors as there is an abundance of case documentation and reports), b) instructor feedback, and c) university resources (such as the Graduate Writing Studio).

### Rehab 237

Rehab 237 (Case Practices) had a total of 13 students enrolled in Fall 2015 and also includes field experience hours in a rehabilitation counseling setting. The Pre-Practicum Student Evaluation was used to assess student learning outcomes. On item **C1-Understanding and Accepting of Client Values** 9 out of 13 students (69%) scored at a level “5” or “outstanding” described as well above the level of a competent student or new employee by their site supervisor while 4 out of 13 students (31%) were rated at a level “3” or “average” denoted as equal to the standard required of a competent student. We learned that the majority of students are doing well, but we must continue to support students in this area (see Section 4).

On item **C3-Avoids Negative Biases about Clients** 9 out of 13 students (69%) scored at a level “5” (outstanding) or “4” (above average noted as performance being substantially above that required of a competent student or new employee) while 4 out of 13 students (31%) scored at a level of “3” or “average.” We learned that students are doing well overall, but dialogue and reflective exercises/assignments must continue in order to challenge biases of rehabilitation counselors-in-training (see Section 4).

On item **C6-Understands the Relationship of the Client’s Disability to Personal, Social, and Vocational Adjustment** 9 out of 13 students (69%) scored at a level “5” (outstanding), 3 students achieved a level “4” (above average), and 1 student achieved a level “3” (average).

Given the above scores, we learned that students are doing well (majority of students being rated at the outstanding to competent ranges) relative to demonstrating multicultural awareness as a function of ethical practice. We also learned that course assignments, class activities, discussions/dialogues, and guest speakers that partner with the program must continue supporting students in becoming *comfortable* with the *uncomfortable* and embracing dissonance that most often accompanies discussion focused on cultural/professional issues. Closing the loop on the effectiveness of this comes from formal and informal feedback regarding overall courses (student evaluations) and specific assignments (e.g., role play with current professionals from the community that used to be former clients of various service systems in and around the Central Valley; “clients” provide counselors-in-training with real-time feedback).

### Rehab 239

Rehab 239 (Internship) had a total of 9 students enrolled during Fall 2015. On item **C1-Understanding and Acceptance of Client’s Differences**, 4 out 9 students (44%) were rated at level “5” or “outstanding” by their site supervisor while 5 out of 9 students (36%) were rated

at a level “4” or “above average.” While there is some overlap between item C1 on the internship and pre-practicum evaluations, students in internship are demonstrating a high degree of ethical behavior particularly in this area of multicultural awareness.

On item **C3-Avoids Over-generalization and the Forming of Stereotypical Attitudes and Behavior Toward Clients**, 4 students (44%) were rated at a level “5” or “outstanding” while 5 students (56%) were rated at a level “4” or above average. Again, we learned that students are doing well in this area and have improved levels of awareness, knowledge, and skills in this area from the pre-practicum stage. This finding is important particularly given the outcomes for individuals with disabilities from diverse backgrounds

On item **C6-Understanding the Relationship of the Particular Disability to Personal, Social, and Vocational Adjustment**, 6 out of 9 students (67%) were rated as either above average or outstanding while 3 students (33%) were rated as average. Taken in to account scores received in Rehab 237 (see page 3), students are continuing to do well in this area of multicultural competence.

On item **C7-Ability to Relate to and Work with Clients Who Have Physical Disabilities**, 7 out of 9 students (78%) were rated as either above average or outstanding while 2 students received scores of N/A or inadequate opportunity to evaluate by their site supervisor. This was a function of the students’ field experience sites as clients had learning disabilities, substance abuse, and mental health disorders. We learned that students are doing well overall in this area, but we can improve in this area as well via class assignments and field experience opportunities incorporated as part of the courses we teach.

On item **C8- Ability to Relate to and Work with Clients who have Mental Disabilities**, 8 out of 9 students (89%) were rated as either “above average” or “outstanding,” while 1 student (11%) was rated as “average.” We found that students are doing well in this area and we are extremely pleased. This finding also supports the national trends of cross-training students to specifically work with individuals diagnosed with mental health needs.

On item **C9-Ability to Relate to and Work with Clients Who Have Emotional Disabilities**, 8 out of 9 students (89%) were rated as either “above average” or “outstanding,” while 1 student (11%) was rated as “average.” We found that students are doing well. This is encouraging particularly given that we are training students to work effectively with a wide range of disability populations.

#### **4. What changes did you make as a result of the findings?**

Full and part-time faculty continue to emphasize content (multicultural competence of which awareness is an aspect) and foundational skills such as written communication. The importance of both are discussed in program faculty meetings, classes, and rehabilitation counseling student association meetings through the faculty advisor. We continue to highlight these points at our program orientation, in student advising/mentoring and professional development meetings throughout the academic year, as well as in our clinical reviews (each student in the program presently undergoes two clinical reviews to evaluate their progress and receive encouragement

and support/resources or develop a remediation plan if progress is rated as below average according to the clinical review instrument in use). Evidence-based practices (EBPs) in areas including multicultural competence have been brought into the classroom and program faculty meetings more consistently for discussion as a way of supporting the preparation of highly trained culturally competent rehabilitation counselors and to help rehabilitation counselors-in-training become more comfortable with consulting the research as they learn to work with real-life clients during their field experiences. More program instructors have begun providing opportunities for professional development points (we try to avoid traditional “extra credit” due to the connotations at the graduate level) if students engage in writing and cultural competent webinars or workshops. Attendance is typically accompanied by a student reflection paper with specific prompts.

**5. What assessment activities will you be conducting in the 2016-17 academic year?**

According to the SOAP on file with the university, we are scheduled to 1) review/revise comprehensive examination, 2) review/revise Student Pre-Practicum Evaluation, and 3) review/revise Student Internship Evaluation. However, since last year’s report, the program has been approved to seek Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) accreditation in an effort to achieve dual accreditation status. As such, we are in the process of pursuing CACREP accreditation and modification of curriculum, comprehensive examination, and evaluation tools will be reviewed.

**6. What progress have you made on items from your last program review action plan?**

Though we are gearing up for dual accreditation (already Council on Rehabilitation Education [CORE] accredited, now seeking CACREP accreditation), we continue to use comprehensive examination results (student learning outcomes in SOAP are covered on the examination) as a way of measuring progress. During the 2013-2014 academic year (AY), 57% of students achieved a pass rate on the first attempt. In 2014-2015, 63% of students passed the comprehensive examination on the first attempt. In 2015-2016, 69% of students passed on the first attempt. We are pleased to see the number of students passing on the first attempt and thus demonstrating an increase in achieving learning outcomes. In faculty meetings, we review what content and to what extent is being covered across the curriculum. This also allows us to examine areas that are receiving little to no coverage, so that we can adjust our teaching, assignments, and discussions. Furthermore, while rehabilitation counseling students comprised 5% of the overall sample, the results from the most recent School of Education Graduate Degrees End of the Year Summary indicates that more than 50% of respondents feel extremely prepared when it comes to having an equity mindset in working with clients and more than 70% feel extremely prepared when conducting themselves in accordance with their profession’s ethics and standards.