

**Arcadia University's Graduate Program in Counseling
Biennial Student Survey for the 2022-23 Academic Year**

Description of Assessment

Every other year, the Graduate Program in Counseling (GPC) surveys current students to evaluate its effectiveness in meeting its programmatic mission and objectives, along with students' satisfaction with various components of the program. This survey was developed by the GPC's core faculty and reviewed by the Master of Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council (MPCAC) during the program's most recent reaccreditation cycle.

Summary of Findings

In total, 14 students completed this survey. All respondents are completing their Master of Arts in Counseling (and no dual degrees). Respondents reported completing the following concentrations: Dual Child & Family and Trauma (6), Trauma (4), Child & Family (3), and Mental Health (1). Overall, the students reported completing an average of approximately 3.5 semesters of coursework in the GPC. Results for the 2022-23 academic year indicate that respondents are highly satisfied with their overall experience of the GPC and most specific components of the program; however, they reported room for growth in multiple areas, including peer mentoring, distinguished alum program, new student orientation, Community Canvas page, and research opportunities. Overall, respondents reported that the GPC provides strong training in the essential qualifications of counseling, as well as in the curricular areas of evidence-based practice, multicultural practice, and social justice and advocacy. They noted room for improvement in the areas of self-care and career development. Respondents also reported receiving strong training in a majority of key counseling skills and concepts, with a several exceptions, including case conceptualization, treatment planning, and progress monitoring. The few respondents who took our couples and family counseling courses also appeared generally satisfied with their preparation to work with couples and families. Just over a third of students reported being members of at least one professional organization, which may seem low; however, 38% of respondents were in their first semester. Students reported a wide range of topics that they would like to see included in our curriculum, ranging from greater coverage of gender and sexuality to counseling incarcerated individuals to art therapy. Respondents also rated a majority of our program policies and procedures positively with several exceptions, including opportunity to socialize with fellow students, communication about local events and employment opportunities, opportunity to get involved in committees and activities across the University, and understanding and preparing for challenges after graduation. Two respondents reported having received Support Plans and described the experience as helpful and offered comments about providing clearer communication of concerns prior to the enactment of a Support Plan and offering greater support while on a Support Plan. In terms of class times, most respondents prefer afternoon and evening times (rather than morning and night times). Most students would also like to see a majority of classes remain in person with just a few more options for online courses. A majority of students reported being content with Boyer Hall (the building that houses the GPC), yet many also offered strong criticisms of the non-inclusive seating, dreary wall colorings, run-down lobby furniture, and inconsistently functional AV technology. Students reported many positive aspects of the program that are largely aligned with our program's mission/objectives and emphasis student-centered instruction and mentoring. Respondents also offered numerous suggestions for changing the program, such as the high cost of tuition, the need for additional

instructors, more practical training in self-care, better alignment with adjunct instructors, stronger/longer didactic instruction in some courses, and early coverage of students' experience of transference toward instructors. Overall, all respondents reported that the GPC's mission and objectives are well suited to address the needs of the field and would be at least moderately likely to recommend the GPC to others interested in pursuing counseling.

Planning & Modifications

Based on the results of this evaluation:

1. Feedback about specific courses will be shared with the instructors.
2. The GPC has already initiated discussion on how to strengthen the peer mentoring program. In particular, we hope to develop a peer guidance system for students who are on remediation or need mentoring navigating challenges in the program. We also plan to gather information from students about how to enhance peer mentoring.
3. The GPC is in the process of revising the new student orientation for Fall 2023 to include coverage of student trauma and its impact on student progress, including the related topic of student transference toward program instructors and administrators and how to manage this experience effectively.
4. The GPC has already finished a complete overhaul of the program's Community Canvas page to improve its organization, include important program documents, and remove unnecessary filler that made the page very difficult to navigate.
5. When the core faculty reconvene in Fall 2023, we will discuss ways to bolster our curricula in both self-care and career development.
6. Due to low turnout and concerns regarding the pandemic, the GPC discontinued program-wide social events. However, the GPC would be willing to support a student-driven initiative to resume social gatherings.
7. Program administrators send multiple emails/Canvas announcements each month on local events and employment opportunities. The core faculty do not believe that we have fallen short in this area. However, we plan to remind students to check their University emails and the Community Canvas page on a weekly basis so that they do not miss this information. Related, the GPC will continue to send emails/announcements regarding opportunities to get involved in committees and activities across the University.
8. It appears that the Distinguished Alum program could be more helpful in terms of helping upcoming graduates understand and prepare for challenges after graduation. During the Fall 2023 semester, internship seminar instructors will be asked to provide feedback on how to strengthen this program, and modifications could be made.
9. Program Directors will continue to share student feedback about the challenges and limitations of Boyer Hall (seating, wall coloring, lobby furniture, technology, etc.). Feedback will be share again with our Department Chair and Dean of CAS.
10. Program Directors will continue to share feedback regarding the high cost of tuition for the GPC relative to other local Counseling programs. Of note, this concern was documented in the GPC's Annual Program Report and the Program Director's Annual Report.
11. The core faculty have already planned to provide additional information about the GPC to adjunct faculty to help them better understand and integrate into our community and support students in their education and training.

Detailed Results

How satisfied are you with the following components of the Counseling program?

- 86% of students reported being very and extremely satisfied with their *overall experience*
- 71% of students reported being very and extremely satisfied with their *counseling courses*
- 79% of students reported being very and extremely satisfied with the *self-awareness labs*
- 78% of students reported being very and extremely satisfied with the *knowledge labs*
- 93% of students reported being very and extremely satisfied with *program advising*
- 93% of students reported being very and extremely satisfied with *faculty mentoring*
- 25% of students reported being very and extremely satisfied with *peer mentoring*
- 33% of students reported being very and extremely satisfied with the *distinguished alum mentoring program*
- 50% of students reported being very and extremely satisfied with *new student orientation*
- 100% of students reported being very and extremely satisfied with the *professional development fund*
- 73% of students reported being very and extremely satisfied with the *practicum and internship workshops*
- 57% of students reported being very and extremely satisfied with the *Counseling Community Canvas page*
- 45% of students reported being very and extremely satisfied with the program's *research opportunities*

Training in Essential Qualifications

- Alums rated their preparation for our essential qualifications of counseling as follows:
- *Written communication*: 86% rated the training as excellent or good.
- *Public speaking*: 93% rated the training as excellent or good.
- *Participation*: 100% rated the training as excellent or good.
- *Analytical Skills*: 93% rated the training as excellent or good.
- *Counseling skills*: 86% rated the training as excellent or good.
- *Self-awareness*: 93% rated the training as excellent or good.
- *Receiving & Utilizing Feedback*: 86% rated the training as excellent or good.
- *Professional Behavior*: 100% rated the training as excellent or good.
- *Interpersonal Skills*: 100% rated the training as excellent or good.

Training in Integrated Curricula

- 92% of students rated their training in *evidence-based practice* as excellent or good.
- 100% of students rated their training in *multicultural practice* as excellent or good.
- 57% of students rated their training in *self-care* as excellent or good.
- 46% of students rated their training in *career development* as excellent or good.
- 86% of students rated their training in *social justice & advocacy* as excellent or good.

Training in Target Skills & Concepts

- 100% of students rated their training in *Adherence to professional, ethical, and legal standards of counseling* as excellent or good.
- 93% of students rated their training in *Understanding state requirements for licensure* as excellent or good.

- 92% of students rated their training in *Applying interviewing skills to gather client information* as excellent or good.
- 75% of students rated their training in *Understanding and integrating various theories of counseling* as excellent or good.
- 55% of students rated their training in *Developing and writing case conceptualizations for clients* as excellent or good.
- 82% of students rated their training in *Assessing client concerns and identifying goals for counseling* as excellent or good.
- 64% of students rated their training in *Identifying the research-supported treatment options for specific client concerns or goals* as excellent or good.
- 40% of students rated their training in *Designing and writing treatment plans for clients* as excellent or good.
- 60% of students rated their training in *Using assessment tools to gather clinical information* as excellent or good.
- 73% of students rated their training in *Utilizing clinical information to form diagnostic impressions* as excellent or good.
- 83% of students rated their training in *Understanding and using various relational counseling skills* as excellent or good.
- 82% of students rated their training in *Providing psychoeducational information to clients* as excellent or good.
- 90% of students rated their training in *Delivering manualized or protocol-based treatments* as excellent or good.
- 100% of students rated their training in *Identifying the cultural assumptions of different treatment modalities and potential clashes with client characteristics* as excellent or good.
- 100% of students rated their training in *Tailoring counseling approaches to meet clients' unique interests, values, needs, etc.* as excellent or good.
- 50% of students rated their training in *Creating assessment plans to track clients' progress throughout counseling* as excellent or good.
- 83% of students rated their training in *Using counseling skills with individuals* as excellent or good.
- 67% of students rated their training in *Using counseling skills with groups* as excellent or good.

Couples & Family Counseling

- Three students reported taking PY614 (Couples Counseling), and 100% reported good and excellent preparation to work with couples.
- Four students reported taking PY613 (Family Counseling), and 75% reported good and excellent preparation to work with families.

Professional Involvement

- Five students (36%) reported being a member of at least one professional organization, including: PSI, PBTA, ACA, PACA, PCA, APA, APA DIV 45 & 29.

What course or concentration topics would you be interested in (not offered in our curriculum)?

- Art Therapy
- Spirituality
- Adolescent-specific counseling

- Crisis counseling
- Treatment Plan and Conceptualization workshops
- Work videos/examples of our own professors counseling others
- Personality disorders
- Pediatric Trauma counseling
- Medical trauma
- Counseling for the incarcerated
- Systems-thinking counseling approaches
- Social Justice and Advocacy Concentration
- Play Therapy
- Narrative Therapy
- Somatic therapies/alternative therapies
- Gender and sexuality

Program Policies, Procedures, & Communications

- *Opportunity to ask questions about the program curriculum, policies, and procedures:* 93% of students rated the GPC as good to excellent.
- *Degree of respect between fellow students:* 85% of students rated the GPC as good to excellent.
- *Degree of respect between students and faculty:* 93% of students rated the GPC as good to excellent.
- *Level of guidance and support offered by course instructors:* 100% of students rated the GPC as good to excellent.
- *Quality of manuals and communication about program expectations:* 93% of students rated the GPC as good to excellent.
- *Opportunity to provide feedback to faculty:* 93% of students rated the GPC as good to excellent.
- *Encouragement and guidance to participate in professional activities:* 71% of students rated the GPC as good to excellent.
- *Helpfulness of formal and informal feedback about academic and clinical progress:* 79% of students rated the GPC as good to excellent.
- *Opportunity to socialize with fellow students:* 57% of students rated the GPC as good to excellent.
- *Communication about local events and employment opportunities:* 50% of students rated the GPC as good to excellent.
- *Opportunities to get involved in committees and activities across the University:* 50% of students rated the GPC as good to excellent.
- *Understanding and preparing for challenges after graduation:* 57% of students rated the GPC as good to excellent.

Support Plans

- Two students (14%) reported having received a Support Plan, and they rated the experience as moderately and extremely helpful. They offered open-ended feedback indicating that it would have been helpful to have more feedback about the concerns prior to the

implementation of a Support Plan, as well as more frequent check-ins with faculty while on their Support Plans.

Program Mission & Objectives

- 100% of students reported that the program's mission statement and objectives fit with the needs of the counseling field very much or extremely well.

Please share any suggestions for other major objectives for the program to consider.

- More support in creating and maintaining a caseload during clinical training
- More education in how to realistically engage in self-care while playing so many roles in graduate school

Please share any feedback you have on the various ways that we collect feedback from you (e.g., mentoring meetings, surveys, etc.).

- Clearer and more frequent advertisement of research opportunities in the counseling program

Which of the following class times do you prefer? Check all that apply.

- *Morning* (9:20 am-12:00 pm): 4 of 14 (29%) students prefer this time
- *Afternoon* (1:30-4:10 pm): 8 of 14 (57%) students prefer this time
- *Evening* (4:30-7:10 pm): 11 of 14 (79%) students prefer this time
- *Night* (7:20-10:00 pm): 6 of 14 (43%) students prefer this time

Would you like to see more online or hybrid courses in our program?

- *No, Keep courses primarily in person*: 6 of 14 (43%) students
- *Yes, A few more online courses*: 4 of 14 (29%) students
- *Yes, Many more online courses*: 4 of 14 (29%) students

How satisfied are you with the Counseling program's physical space (i.e., classrooms, training rooms, open areas, etc.)?

- 64% of students reported being moderately to very satisfied
- Students also offered the following open-ended suggestions:
 - The lighting is very harsh in the classrooms
 - Boyer Hall is old; however, the third floor is nice
 - Some of the classrooms have very uncomfortable sittings which can actually be a problem for people with disabilities or fat persons
 - Improve the setup for zoom technology so that sound quality is better when virtual
 - Better seating that is more conducive to group discussion such as round tables or furniture that can be easily rearranged
 - All classrooms should be updated with tables and detached chairs
 - All classrooms should have fresh paint and new carpets to match in an appealing color
 - The classrooms on the first floor are depressing
 - The ripped up chairs and broken tables in the lobby were extremely upsetting.
 - All of the classrooms need to have updated equipment; tech equipment is not effective

How likely would you recommend Arcadia's Counseling program to others?

- 88% of students reported very to extremely

In your experience so far, what are the three best aspects of the Counseling program?

- The emphasis on multicultural factors of counseling
- Small class sizes
- Diverse instructors
- Opportunity to provide feedback to the program
- Options for hybrid instruction
- Multicultural focus and ways to tailor evidence-based treatments
- Different methods of evaluating students
- Faculty support
- Practicum/internship experience
- Self-care emphasis
- Knowledgeable and helpful staff
- Compassionate support from professors and advisors who also challenge students to be the best counseling professionals
- Flexibility in switching courses, concentrations and/or timeline of program completion
- Program staff's openness to feedback
- Program's efforts to address issues of social justice when raised
- Sense of belonging in the community
- Meaningful opportunities to give and receive feedback to enhance counseling skills
- Thoughtful program planning and advising, in person class offerings
- Variety of professors I have and being able to learn from each of their unique experiences
- Program Directors are invested in the welfare of the students and dedicated to making sure students meet all requirements to graduate
- Guidance and supervision for practicum and internship
- Professional development fund

If you could change anything about the Counseling program, what would you change?

- Cost of tuition
- Additional instructors needed
- Offer more practical tools for self-care rather than instruction
- Offer courses in person in the summer and not just online (especially for group counseling)
- More opportunities to interact with students from other cohorts/classes
- Also offer afternoon class time when an 7:20-10:00 course is needed
- Encourage students to meet with their professors to address issues before contacting program directors for support
- More information on licensure outside of PA
- Address the reality to student transference on professors; discuss during orientation
- More manageable amounts of reading
- More opportunities for ungraded role plays and a time to share feedback
- More cohesion among the courses and professors, particularly with the adjunct professors
- Please incorporate social events for the students
- Some instructors do not make the most of class time by spending too much time on check ins
- Greater coverage on gender and sexuality
- A more diverse staff