September 1, 2015

Dear Students, Alumni, Community Partners, Advisory Board, and Interested Parties:

The Mental Health Counseling Program at St. John Fisher College is committed to the systematic evaluation of its student and program outcomes. Although we are continually evaluating and refining our program to ensure that we provide outstanding training for Mental Health Counselors, we are proud to present this overview of our most recent evaluation of our program outcomes. We see this as an opportunity to communicate our progress to our constituents and are hopeful that you will feel free to share any comments and feedback you may have about our program.

Please feel free to direct any questions to Dr. Rachel Jordan, 585-899-3858, rjordan@sjfc.edu

Thank-you for your partnership in our continued success,

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Overview

Mental Health Counseling (MHC) Program faculty members engage in continuous systematic program evaluation indicating how the mission, objectives, and student learning outcomes are measured and met. The Mental Health Counseling Assessment Plan outlines the direct and indirect methods that the Mental Health Counseling program utilizes to measure, evaluate, and report student learning and performance. Multiple measures are used to ensure that students develop appropriate professional identity, engage in ethical professional practice and develop competence in program area standards. Findings from direct and indirect assessment has informed program modification. Examples include adding anchors to the PQA instrument and a matrix change in 2012. These changes demonstrate that the systematic evaluation of our program has prompted program modification.

The mission, goals, and program outcomes of the Mental Health Counseling (MHC) Program are found in the graduate catalog, student handbook and program web site. They are aligned with the mission and college-wide learning goals of St. John Fisher College (SJFC). Building on the College’s mission, the Mental Health Counseling program delivers personalized instruction to a diverse student body regarding essential counseling knowledge and skills, as well as facilitating the development and enhancement of personal qualities and characteristics necessary to become an outstanding professional mental health counselor.

The MHC Program identifies two communities of interest- the internal and external communities. The MHC program identifies its internal community of interest as students, faculty, staff, and administrators. The external community of interest consists of potential students, alumni, employers, representatives from affiliating agencies, the State Education Department, and the Advisory Board. The MHC Advisory Board consists of representatives from both the internal and external communities of interest, and meets once a year to discuss curricular issues, program planning, community needs, future plans, and any other areas appropriate to the scope and interest of the committee. The purpose of the meetings are twofold: 1) to share information about the current status and plans of program, and, 2) to seek input from board members about trends in service and suggestions for improving the program to better meet the needs of clients that our students are being trained to serve. The ideas are then incorporated in committee and faculty meeting discussions for action as appropriate.

Program Outcomes Assessment- Methodology and Results

Program effectiveness is assessed using measures that include graduation rates and attrition, alumni employment rates, alumni surveys, employer surveys, site supervisor surveys, feedback from Advisory Board meetings, formal curriculum review, Standardized Tests (NCMHCE), and student evaluations of the courses and instructors.
Graduation Rates and Attrition
Data are gathered and analyzed related to the number of students who enter our program each year as well as those who successfully graduate. Once collected, the retention and graduation data are made available to both current and prospective students through our program website to inform prospective students. This information is used to help us assess our ability to engage students in learning and the mental health counseling profession and to inform our admissions policies. This is assessed annually.

- In 2015 there were 32 graduates of the St. John Fisher College Mental Health Counseling Program. Of the admitted students, 94% of our students graduated in the expected time period.

Alumnae/i Employment Rates
The Mental Health Counseling Program Director tracks each alumna/us through online permit and license verifications, email outreach, and communication from alumni. Alumnae/i employment rates are posted on our website in order to inform prospective students. This information is used by the Mental Health Counseling Faculty to evaluate the health of the field in our local area, to determine how many of our graduates secure employment in the field of mental health counseling. This is assessed annually.

- Of the 187 alumni who graduated from 2006–2014, 183 or 97% are known to have secured employment in the field of Mental Health Counseling.

Surveys
Site supervisors and employers of program graduates are surveyed in order to assess their perceptions of major aspects of our program and graduates’ preparation for the practice of mental health counseling. Information from both of these measures has been used to inform potential program changes. In accordance with the accreditation requirement of the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP), we periodically share the results of various evaluations conducted for our program with students, alumni, administration, alumni employers, intern supervisors, and community partners. Alumni/ae, site supervisors, and the employers of our alumni/ae, are invited to complete electronic surveys that assess how our program has prepared graduates for work in the field of Mental Health Counseling. Surveys are conducted every three to five years by the faculty to gather opinions and suggestions for program improvement. Information gathered from these surveys is used to inform program review, changes, and improvements. In addition to surveys, the program maintains a LinkedIn webpage, through which a designated faculty member makes regular communication with our alumni/ae regarding employment opportunities.

Alumni Survey (2014)
The SJFC Mental Health Counseling Program Alumni Survey was deployed in 2014. Twenty-one responses were received from graduates in classes 2006 through 2012. In rating effectiveness of preparation in the St. John Fisher College Wegmans School of Nursing Mental Health Counseling Program, a five point scale was used with ratings of ineffective, somewhat ineffective, adequate, effective, and very effective.
- The areas of knowledge of theory and relevant research in the field; knowledge and skills in counseling; capable of development and can productively work toward agreed upon goals for their betterment; and personal and professional behaviors that promote self-growth, including seeking new learning opportunities were all rated as 100% effective or very effective.
- Knowledge of professional standards and implications for practice was rated as 95% effective or very effective.
- Teaching competence of faculty and relevance of curriculum to professional duties were ranked 100% and 95% satisfied or highly satisfied respectively.
- 100% are very likely or moderately likely to recommend the SJFC Mental Health Counseling Program.
- Overall program satisfaction was reported as an average value of 92 on a 1-100 scale.
- Qualitative data in the form of responses to open-ended questions highlighted the program’s rigor, excellent and knowledgeable faculty, student support, and overall level of preparation as positives of the program.

Employer Survey (2014)
Employers of SJFC Mental Health Counseling Program graduates are asked to rate their effectiveness on a five point scale of ineffective, somewhat ineffective, adequate, effective, or very effective. One of the challenges of the Employer survey is delivering the survey to a specific employment supervisor inside of large agencies and organizations who is familiar with the performance of our graduates. There were 19 questions about knowledge and skill sets that translate to counselor effectiveness in the field. Unfortunately, the response rate was very low with only two respondents.

- There were no areas rated as ineffective or somewhat ineffective for all 19 categories.
- Strengths of the SJFC Mental Health Counseling Program as experienced through the MHC program graduate were the background in theories, understanding of ethics, strength-based approach, and knowledge and skill when working with counseling peers.

Site Supervisor (2015)
Site supervisors of SJFC Mental Health Counseling Program interns are asked to rate the interns’ on 19 questions about knowledge and skill sets that translate to counselor effectiveness in the field. They also note strengths of the program, knowledge/skill areas of strength or weakness. The Site Supervisor Survey results from summer 2015 indicated that:

- 100% of respondents are likely or somewhat likely to recommend that their organization employ graduates from the SJFC Mental Health Counseling Program.
- 100% of respondents rated the Mental Health Counseling program’s students as effective or very effective in areas of strength in knowledge of professional standards and implications for practice; and personal and professional behaviors that promote self-growth, including seeking new learning opportunities.
- Qualitative data in the form of responses to open-ended questions showed interns were noted for strong knowledge/skills in collaboration, preparation, patient-centered approach, clinical knowledge, diagnostic skills, and clinical skills. It was noted that interns were well-prepared for the field.
Advisory Board Meetings
The St. John Fisher College Mental Health Counseling Program’s Advisory Board is comprised of five Clinical Directors, three Administrators, four Clinicians, two Alumni/ae, and three Mental Health Counseling student representatives. The Mental Health Counseling program faculty meets yearly with the Advisory Board to report data on the state of the program, discuss potential improvements to the program, and better understand current trends in the practice of mental health counseling to best prepare students for the field. New members are sought for the Advisory Board when vacancies occur. Information from the Advisory Board meetings that requires follow up is incorporated into discussions in bi-weekly faculty meetings and relevant committee discussions.

The following are programmatic changes that were discussed at Advisory Board meetings where feedback was actively sought from that body to help guide our decisions.

- 2012 Certificate of Advance Study/Curriculum Changes
- 2013 New Matrix Approval and Electives
- 2014 Fieldwork Trends, CASAC
- 2015 Comprehensive Assessment Plan, Course Objectives

National Standardized Tests
In order to achieve licensure as a Mental Health Counselor in New York State, graduates must pass the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Exam (NCMHCE). The National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) developed examination consists of ten simulated clinical mental health-counseling cases that are designed to sample a broad area of competencies. These cases assess clinical problem-solving ability, including identifying, analyzing, diagnosing and treating clinical issues. Each case is divided into approximately five to eight sections that are classified as either information gathering or decision-making. The three areas covered by the exam are assessment and diagnosis; counseling and psychotherapy; and administration, consultation, and supervision. Students are regularly encouraged to review the licensure information, and a formal presentation on the licensure examination is provided to students during their last semester of study. Scores on these exams are gathered by New York State and disseminated through the New York State Office of Professions to graduate programs that request the data. The Director of the MHC program periodically contacts the New York Office of Professions to request for such information. Once a year faculty formally reviews the results of the NCMHCE for program graduates, and makes any necessary plan of action to improve student preparedness. Our graduates consistently achieve passing rates on the licensing exam.

- The average pass rate for our alumni who have taken the NCMHCE Exam between 2006 and 2013 is 72%. Across New York State, NCMHCE Exam passing rates are 61%.

Student Evaluations
Prior to the end of a semester, each student completes a St. John Fisher standard course evaluation form. Through the evaluation forms, students are invited to provide feedback to the instructor about the course, the instructor’s teaching style, and course assignments. Students rate course components and instructor qualities on a 7-point Likert-type scale. Results are
disseminated to both the Program Director and course instructor. Evaluation data is used to refine course materials at the individual instructor level and utilized to inform curricular change at the program level. This is assessed at the end of each semester.

• When compared to all St. John Fisher College Graduate School instructors, the Mental Health Counseling faculty consistently earn above average ratings. From 2010-2014, the student ratings for the Mental Health Counseling faculty averaged 6.61 and all Graduate instructors averaged 6.41 for the same time periods.

• For the 2014-15 academic year, Mental Health Counseling faculty as a department were ranked an average of .46 higher than all instructors at St. John Fisher College on the 15 questions using the 7 point Likert-type scale.