Annual Report to our Stakeholders and Interested Others
Summer 2016-Winter 2017 Academic Year

The Master of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (MCMHC) program began in Winter 2011, and celebrated its 6th anniversary this year of providing comprehensive education and professional training to clinical mental health counselors. Since our inception, 57 students have graduated from the program. MS CMHC alumni continue to do well post-graduation, with a 87.5% NCMHCE licensure examination pass rate and 100% job placement rate of graduates actively seeking employment for the 2016-17 academic year. One graduate was also accepted to a doctoral program in Clinical Psychology, and another to a doctoral program in Clinical Forensic Psychology.

Dr. Amber Pope served as the Program Chair and Clinical Coordinator for practicum and internships, Dr. Ali Wolf as the Online Coordinator for the online format, and Dr. Tom Hofmann as a full-time Professor in the MCMHC program. Dr. Mary Nuosce, Dean of the Nichols School of Professional Studies, continues to teach clinical courses in the program. Several doctoral level practitioners in the local community have taught classes for the MCMHC program in an adjunct capacity, including Dr. Christin Pryor and Dr. Cheryl Kasprzak. We hosted a doctoral level intern, Elisa Niles, who is pursuing her PhD in Counselor Education at Walden University this summer. She assisted with teaching the research and counseling in community settings courses.

The CMHC faculty completed process improvement efforts this year. Our biggest accomplishment was designing an online format of the MS CMHC program, which was launched in Winter 2017. Faculty submitted a substantive change report to CACREP for the online format, which was approved by CACREP in February 2017. We re-designed our blended courses to offer in a fully online format, creating new assignments and synchronous WebEx sessions for students enrolled in the online format. Further, targeted measures in course learning outcomes reached target levels, suggesting that students are meeting the standards of preparation through the current curriculum. At this point, we have collected data on targeted measures in all of the core courses, so this data can now provide a baseline score to establish trends for future assessment years.

Faculty launched an IRB-exempt Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) study to explore the experiences of bilingual counselors. Interviews with participants were completed in Winter 2017 and data analysis started in Summer 2017. In addition to the CQR study, MS CMHC students are leading research focus groups, under the instruction of Dr. Hofmann, as part of the Summer 2017 research course on the same topic of exploring the experiences of bilingual counselors. The results of both studies will be used to improve the MS CMHC program in training bilingual counselors to provide services for clients who speak languages other than English.

Program faculty and students remain active in the community. Continuing the partnership with Early Childhood Learning Services (ECLS) and the Children’s Advocacy Network established in Winter
2016, faculty are working with the local community to assess and establish available resources to support counseling children and adolescents. As a follow-up to this research, Dr. Hofmann and students presented the results of the study to the Children’s Network members in October 2016, with approximately 30 community members in attendance. Dr. Hofmann continues to attend the Children’s Network meetings and advise them on service improvement.

Program faculty, students, and alumni also remain active in professional development activities. Multiple students are active members of the Gulfcoast Mental Health Counselors Association, the Florida Mental Health Counselors Association, and the American Counseling Association. Two students had a poster presentation accepted for the Florida Counseling Association conference in October 2017. Students and alumni are also active in volunteering in the community, in organizations such as the Children’s Home Society, Battle in Distress (501c nonprofit organization for Veterans), Habitat for Humanity, and the Lee Adolescent Mothers Program (LAMP).

Dr. Pope presented on training bi-lingual counselors at the 2016 Southern Association of Counselor Education and Supervision conference, presented on supporting counselors-in-training who have experienced trauma at the 2017 American Counseling Association conference, and she gave a poster presentation at the 2016 Association of LGBT Issues in Counseling conference. Dr. Hofmann presented on solution-focused therapy at the National Association of Social Work conference, and gave a 7-hour motivational interviewing training to 30 family advocates at Lee County Schools.

Program faculty are available for speaking on a variety of topics to the community and area agencies. They have presented this year locally on topics such as solution-focused therapy and attachment theory.

Dr. Pope had several academic publications this year. Dr. Pope also co-authored two articles published in peer-reviewed academic journals, *The Journal of Homosexuality* and *The Clinical Supervisor*, both which are affiliated with the American Counseling Association. Dr. Pope co-authored a chapter published in an introductory textbook for CMHC, entitled *Clinical Mental Health Counseling: Elements of Effective Practice*, published by Sage, Inc.

Thank you for your interest in our program and this report.

**Student information:**

Students who graduated this past year: 13
Students who completed the program within 10 semesters: 60%
NCMHCE licensure examination pass rate: 87.5%
Job placement rate of graduates who were actively seeking employment: 100%

Sincerely,

Amber L. Pope, PhD, LMHC, NCC
Program Chair, Clinical Mental Health Counseling