

*Department of Counselor Education*

*The College of New Jersey*

**2020 ANNUAL REPORT**

*For Academic Year 2019-2020*

**A. OUR MISSION CONTINUES**

In our departmental review process in 2019-2020, we revised our Mission Statement as follows:

The distinguished faculty of the Department of Counselor Education of The College of New Jersey takes pride in offering rigorous, high quality graduate degree programs in clinical mental health counseling, school counseling, and marriage, couple, and family counseling and therapy, as well as a certificate program in student assistance coordination in the schools. The mission of every program in the department is to create exemplary counseling professionals prepared to enrich the lives of the people of New Jersey, the nation, and the world through counseling and service and to provide a national model of the preparation of counselors. The department is committed to creating and supporting an inclusive learning community and to serving students from diverse backgrounds who seek a degree in counseling.

Guided by *The Mission of the School of Education*, which emphasizes The College of New Jersey's public service mandate, we are committed to preparing exceptional, self-reflective counselors who meet the needs of the communities in which they work, and the *Standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs*, which emphasize the traditions, values and objectives of professional counseling programs, the faculty of the Department of Counselor Education engage students from the greater New Jersey area and the world in the developmental process of becoming professional counselors who will address the needs of the people they serve in an ethical and competent manner.

During 2018-2019 the department began our review process for renewing our CACREP accreditation which continued throughout 2019-2020. The initial review was completed and we expect to have a site visit scheduled (either in-person or virtually) in the spring of 2021. CACREP-accreditation decisions are made at their summer Board meeting.

**B. PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS made after our departmental review in 2019-2020:**

As part of the annual evaluation of how, where and the extent to which program objectives are addressed in course syllabi, the department faculty discussed ways in which to incorporate findings from this evaluation process as well as input from curriculum reviews and graduate follow-up questionnaires, alumni employer evaluations, and clinical site supervisors into

program offerings and course syllabi. For example, we provided a survey of potential elective offerings to students for consideration in the Fall of 2019 and surveyed a constituent advisory group in the Spring of 2020. On the basis of these annual reviews the department faculty authorized a number of changes in course content throughout the program.

The following are recent changes resulting from this review process:

1. Based on feedback from surveys of key constituents and other means of program evaluation, the faculty decided to diversify the elective offerings to meet current trends in the counseling field. For example, in addition to the unique offerings in our department related to addiction counseling (COUN 553 “Treating Addiction and Co-Occurring Disorders”) and gender-specific courses (COUN 560 “Counseling Girls and Women” & COUN 561 “Counseling Boys and Men”) which are offered each year, we will be alternating course electives each year in “Mindfulness and Wellness Counseling,” “Forensic Counseling,” and “Treating Trauma.”
2. In an attempt to meet the needs of graduate students in counselor education in the 21st century, several of our courses have moved to blended learning and online formats: COUN 551 “Substance Abuse and Addiction: Individual, Family and Society” and COUN 552 “Prevention Strategies for Schools and Communities” (blended learning), and EPSY 643 “Measurement and Evaluation” (online); while some courses alternate between blended and online formats to give counseling students choices related to their preferred learning styles (i.e., online or face-to-face), e.g., EPSY 520 “Human Growth and Development” and COUN 545 “Community Agency Counseling.” Training for these shifts into blended learning and online formats have been facilitated by the Office of Instructional Design at The College of New Jersey, led by Dr. Judi Cook, who provides resources to faculty who want to integrate technology in teaching and learning for face-to-face, blended and online courses. All of our core faculty and most of our adjunct faculty have completed training under Dr. Cook’s instruction in these areas, which was supported by the administration at TCNJ. This has been accomplished through guided instruction via one-on-one meetings, group workshops, and online training on pedagogical as well as technical issues. The support of Dr. Cook and the Office of Instructional Design at TCNJ have been invaluable during the Spring 2020 COVID-19 pandemic response, as all of our courses had to be moved to synchronous and asynchronous formats for the majority of the spring 2020 semester.
3. The Department of Counselor Education continues to offer off-site courses in Portugal. There are two key reasons for this, the first of which is to offer global learning experiences to TCNJ-based counselor education students, expanding student opportunities to experience other cultures and enhance cultural competencies. Additionally, the TCNJ strategic plan is grounded in five key signature experiences for students, one of which is global engagement. Although there are several CACREP accredited online counseling programs that are available to international students, there are no known CACREP accreditation site offerings internationally for students who wish to learn in a face-to-face format. TCNJ’s Off-Site Graduate Program regularly receives inquiries from individuals who wish to complete a school counseling program through the existing international sites. The development of this additional site for our school counseling program meets the need of having a primarily face-to-face CACREP accredited program for international

students. Our traditional on campus school counseling program has remained unchanged; however, our students are now given the opportunity to take courses internationally during the summer months. With approval from CACREP, course preparation, recruitment of students, and other program logistics began during the 2016-17 academic year with formal program kick-off in the summer of 2017. TCNJ's International School Counseling cohort continues to grow with the first cohort graduating in May of 2019. Students from Thailand, China, France, Mexico, Bahrain, The Philippines, Canada, Indonesia, Egypt, and Brazil are currently enrolled.

4. In order to help adjunct faculty stay connected to the Departmental processes (because they are not required to attend monthly core faculty meetings), each core faculty member is assigned to an adjunct faculty member(s) to connect with each semester and offer mentoring and guidance as needed.
5. Because both the School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling programs require COUN 545 "Community Agency Counseling," as it covers specifics about the administration and utility of community agency counseling settings, and the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-V), this course was moved from the specialty area designations to the core curriculum for both programs
6. With low enrollments in the Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling and Therapy (MCFCT) program, the administration at TCNJ could no longer support admitting new students into the program. Subsequently, we are not seeking re-accreditation of this program. Effective in the fall of 2018, we could not accept new applications for both the M.A. in Marriage Couple and Family Counseling and Therapy and the Post-Masters Educational Specialist in Marriage and Family Therapy programs. The remaining marriage and family program students are on schedule to graduate in 2021. However, we are continuing to offer some of the MCFCT coursework as electives: COUN 601 "Theory and Development of Family Systems" and COUN 604 Couples in Relationship."
7. In the Spring 2020, based on program evaluation processes, we have updated the Livetext rubrics in order to streamline the CACREP-assessment data collection processes. Specifically, we consolidated the rubrics in a way that targets specific program standards, which will simplify data entry for faculty and make the Livetext reports more tied to specific program standards.

The mission of every program in the department is to create exemplary counseling professionals prepared to enrich the lives of the people of New Jersey and the nation through counseling and service and to provide a national model of the preparation of counselors. It is our hope that these program improvements will both serve this mission and the standards established by CACREP.

### **C. Student Awards in AY 2019-2020:**

**STUDENT AWARD** Each year our department selects student recipients for a number of different awards.

The **Douglas Burroughs Professional Commitment** Award is intended to honor a counselor education student who has demonstrated outstanding service to the community or exhibited courage or perseverance in pursuit of graduate studies. This award was created in the memory of

the late Douglas Burroughs, a former TCNJ counseling student and campus leader, who overcame numerous hardships for his long quest to complete his graduate degree in counseling. The 2020 Douglas Burroughs Professional Commitment Award was given to: **Ms. Debra McLaughlin and Ms. Riham West.**

The **Erika Pluta-Diamond Award** honors a counseling student who has demonstrated leadership in the classroom and has expressed an interest and dedication to helping women. This award was created in memory of the late Erika Pluta-Diamond, a former TCNJ counseling student who was an avid advocate for oppressed women. This year the Erika Pluta-Diamond Award was given to **Ms. Julie Meehan.**

The **Social Justice and Advocacy Award** honors a graduating counseling student who has demonstrated a serious commitment to social justice and equity through the development and/or implementation of a service, program or social policy that meets the needs of, and has had a major impact upon, the health and well-being of a culturally diverse group. This year's recipient of the Social Justice and Advocacy Award is **Ms. Mariel Garcia-Gonzalez and Mr. Dan-Ahn Tran.**

The **Student Scholar of the Year Award** is intended to honor a counseling student who has demonstrated outstanding academic performance and scholarship in counseling. The 2019 Student Scholar of the Year award was given to: **Alexis Irene.**

The **Outstanding Counseling Student of the Year** award is intended to honor a graduating counseling student who has demonstrated outstanding academic performance and counseling skills as demonstrated by making significant and/or creative contributions as an intern, performing at an independent level significantly beyond what is expected of an intern, creating and implementing new programs at the internship site; or responding to difficult, complex and challenging client situations with exemplary expertise. This year's recipients of the Outstanding Counseling Student of the Year Award are: **Ms. Emma Giantisco.**

## **8. PROGRAM OUTCOMES: Vital Statistics**

- a.** *Number of graduates from 2019-2020 Academic Year:*
- *13 in the CACREP-Accredited Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program (Master of Arts in Counseling)*
  - *4 in the CACREP-Accredited Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling and Therapy Program (Master of Arts in Counseling)*
  - *18 in the CACREP-Accredited School Counseling Program (Master of Arts in Counseling)*
  - *8 completed all of the educational requirements for the Student Assistance Coordinator in the Schools Certificate with Advanced Standing (SAC CEAS)*

**TOTALS:**      *35 MA in Counseling graduates and 10 SAC CEAS completions*

**a.** Job placement rate for May 2019 graduates:

Employment rates by programs are (survey data and personal correspondence):

100% for School Counseling

100% for Clinical Mental Health Counseling

100% for Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling and Therapy

**b.** National Counselor Exam (NCE) pass rate for May 2019 graduates 93.1%

**c.** Program completion rates:

100% for School Counseling

100% for Clinical Mental Health Counseling

100% for Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling and Therapy

**CONCLUSION:**

Our department continues to evolve to best meet the needs of our students. This is done via curricular changes to stay abreast of changes in the counseling field, providing opportunities for enhanced field and research experience, and seeking out grant funding to offer our students unique and competitive financial assistance packages. The faculty continue to engage in a number of scholarly endeavors that enhance the work they do in the classroom.