

*Department of Counselor Education  
The College of New Jersey*

**2021 ANNUAL REPORT**

*For Academic Year 2020-2021*

**A. PROGRAM REVIEW**

During AY 2020-2021 the department continued our review process for renewing our CACREP accreditation status. Although a site visit was expected during the Spring of 2021, because of the COVID pandemic CACREP moved to trying to complete a virtual site visit in the Fall of 2021. Subsequently, CACREP extended our accreditation until October 31, 2022. We provided dates for a virtual site visit for the Fall of 2021; however, as multiple accredited programs are also attempting to be reaccredited at this time, CACREP has pushed the virtual site visit forward to the Spring of 2022. We have provided potential dates for this process to occur and are working diligently to uphold the CACREP standards to have another successful reaccreditation cycle completed in 2022. CACREP-accreditation decisions are made at their summer Board meeting.

**B. PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS**

A systematic annual department review in 2020-2021 resulted in the following modifications:

1. *Increase in Course Electives:* Elective offerings increased in 2021, as a Mindfulness and Wellness Counseling course and a College Counseling course were offered as electives in the summer of 2021. The Mindfulness and Wellness Counseling course was approved through the college curriculum committee to become a permanent course offering. During the 2019-2020 Year review process, based on survey results, a newly developed special topics course in counseling on trauma treatment was offered in the Fall 2021 semester in response to interests expressed by students for developing the necessary competencies for providing trauma-informed counseling services. We are also working with Educational Leadership faculty at TCNJ to develop the Director of School Counseling certificate program to give more value-added options to school counseling students as we move to become a 60-credit school counseling program based on expected CACREP-accreditation standards changes.
2. *Review of School Counseling Course Syllabi:* Faculty with expertise in school counseling reviewed COUN 660, Organization, Administration, and Supervision in School Counseling, and EPSY 661, Counseling Children and Adolescents, to better organize and assess the CACREP standards covered in these courses. Considerations are being made to possibly create a “school counseling techniques”-type course when moving to 60-credit program (possibly to cover a bit more in EPSY 661 to provide scaffolding from earlier courses, such as Introduction to Counseling (COUN 501) and Counseling Theories and Techniques (COUN 670). In each of these courses, we will focus on communicating the importance of the transferability and adaptability of skills across contexts, learning to deal with ambiguity, and becoming lifelong learners and reflective practitioners.

3. *Implementation of "Supervision Assist"*: The Department of Counselor Education transitioned from using LiveText to collect CACREP assessment and program objectives data from faculty regarding student performance to targeted Qualtrics surveys. Importantly, the cessation of LiveText allowed for us to transition to a new cloud-based online platform to support students in their practicum/internship experiences as well as post-graduation as they accrue hours towards clinical licensure. After forming a subcommittee of faculty to review all viable options, we selected *Supervision Assist*. This new platform will allow the development of a directory of potential practicum/internship sites that can be modified by sites themselves as staffing and opportunities change over time, rather than the fixed directory that we now maintain. Additionally, all information that we now collect on paper logs will be collected electronically, with supervisors being able to approve hours via email notifications of student submissions. All other forms we currently collect in paper format regarding the practicum/internship experience will also be embedded in the program. This will make student files almost entirely electronic. The software provides excellent graphics for practicum/internship instructors to assess if students are reaching important benchmarks over time or facing challenges with obtaining hours. For more information, please see: <https://supervisionassist.com/>
4. *Changes to EPSY 643 Measurement and Evaluation*: Based on comments from our Alumni Survey related to the Measurement and Evaluation course, the instructor created ways to assist students to access assessments after the course was complete. Specifically, students are provided with training by the TCNJ Education librarian on how to access tests and measures through the TCNJ library system, and in class on how to identify tests and measures when they lose access to the library post-graduation. As an assignment in this class students each select and review a measure from within designated categories, these reviews are later shared with the entire class to begin building a personal library, as well as shared on a google drive, where students are added at the end of the class so they can access the measures of previous students as well. As a professor, Dr. Gibson has access to Q Global with Pearson and also shares some of the gold standard measures for experiential use with the class. There is some frustration among students that the costs of such measures are prohibitive for many practices, and a desire to have copies for use. Due to copyright restrictions such sharing of these pay measures are not permitted and will not occur.
5. *Changes to Group Counseling and Techniques (COUN 675)*: The Group counseling course changed to using more demonstration groups to practice skills. In response to student desire for the experiential component of the group counseling class to extend beyond their participating as members, the syllabus was modified to reflect greater integration of in-class role plays with demonstration groups. Additionally, we transitioned from having advanced students return to facilitate the student experiential groups, to having the students alternate facilitating their group each week to provide actual facilitator experiences. Initial student response to this transition was very positive, with students reflecting on the value of watching multiple styles of facilitation throughout the semester to help them identify and develop their own. They also reported decreased anxiety about facilitating their own groups during internship as a result of having this initial experience.

6. *Changes in the Process for Site Visits:* Changes were made in terms of the number of in person site visits, i.e., once visited by instructor, virtual visits are used. Of the supervisors who responded to our query, site supervisors liked this process better. Specifically, data is collected from site supervisors at the end of the internship experience regarding their perception of the TCNJ Counselor Education program and our preparation of students for these experiences. This data is presented annually to faculty in a format that shows trends over the past five years to allow for review and analysis beyond a single year's snapshot. Historically, site supervisors perceived little value in faculty-led site visits each semester. The department modified the process by providing a list of targeted questions to employ, offering gifts to the supervisors, etc., but to no avail. The only deviation from the general malaise about the experience occurred during the spring of 2020, our first online site visit experience due to COVID, they were significantly more satisfied. Now that we have access to the spring of 2021 data as well, we see continued satisfaction with the virtual site visit experience. It appears that perhaps the added efforts involved in hosting an in-person visit may be a contributing factor to the negative perception of the experience. The faculty continue to find value in the in-person visits, primarily to assess the environment for the student. To satisfy both faculty concerns and site supervisor preferences, we determined that in-person site visits would occur during practicum, and if satisfactory, could occur online for internship. The one caveat to this is for students who change sites, in such instances the first semester that a student is at a new site, an in-person site visit must occur. We anticipate that in addition to sustaining increased site-supervisor satisfaction, this will also facilitate our hiring of high-quality faculty to teach practicum and internship, as time off of their primary employment to conduct such visits has been a barrier with recruitment.

### ***C. STUDENT AWARDS in AY 2020-2021:***

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. Abigail Emmert.**

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. Taylor Keefe.**

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. Megan Brophy**

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 2021 Student Scholar of the Year award was given to: **Addie Parker**.

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 is: **Mr. Brandon Isaacson**.

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

**a. Number of graduates from 2020-2021 Academic Year:**

- 22 in the CACREP-Accredited Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program (Master of Arts in Counseling)
- 3 in the CACREP-Accredited Marriage, Couple, and Family Counseling and Therapy Program (Master of Arts in Counseling); the final cohort of this program
- 24 in the CACREP-Accredited School Counseling Program (Master of Arts in Counseling)
- 15 completed all of the educational requirements for the Student Assistance Coordinator in the Schools Certificate with Advanced Standing (SAC CEAS)

*TOTALS: 49 MA in Counseling graduates and 15 SAC CEAS completions*

**b. Job placement rate for May 2020 graduates:**

School Counseling: For May 2020 School Counseling graduates, 100% of those responding to surveys (79% response rate) who actively sought jobs are currently employed in the field.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling: For May 2020 Clinical Mental Health Counseling graduates, 100% of those responding to surveys (77% response rate) who actively sought jobs are currently employed in the field.

**c. National Counselor Exam (NCE) pass rate for May 2021 graduates 95%**

**d. Program completion rates:**

School Counseling: 89% of the SC students who were fully matriculated in AY 2016-2017 completed the MA degree

Clinical Mental Health Counseling: 93% of the CMHC students who were fully matriculated in AY 2016-2017 completed the MA degree

**E. ADDITIONAL NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT:**

A successful faculty search in the spring semester of 2021 resulted in the hiring of a new tenure-track faculty with the school counseling specialization, Dr. Kathleen Grant. This hiring is timely and necessary as our School Counseling Program will be transformed into a 60-credit program in the coming years.

Lastly in response to COVID-19, all courses were taught fully online using Zoom as a platform for holding synchronous classes. Additionally, a few courses were offered in an asynchronous format. The department plans to make the necessary modifications to its course delivery during the academic year of 2021-2022 by following the institutional safety and health guidelines. Relatedly, a new protocol for providing online counseling as part of practicum and internship has been established.