

*Department of Counselor Education  
The College of New Jersey*

**2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT**

**A. PROGRAM REVIEW**

The Department of Counselor Education at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) offers students rigorous, high-quality graduate programs of study in school counseling and clinical mental health counseling (generalist practice or addiction specialization). As a unit within the School of Education, the department embraces the mission of Creating Agents of Change, the overarching goal of the Conceptual Framework of the Professional Education Unit at TCNJ.

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 around the globe through counseling and service and to provide a national model for 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 degrees in counseling. Guided by the Standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), which emphasize the traditions, values, and objectives of professional counseling programs, the faculty of the Department of Counselor Education engages students in the developmental process of becoming professional counselors who will address the needs of the people they serve in an ethical and competent manner.

In addition to the introduction to the mission of the program described above, this program describes program evaluation and modifications; program outcomes; awards and honors; a summary of the program evaluation results, including achievement of academic quality indicators; subsequent curriculum modifications and program improvement informed by program evaluation. This report applies to both of our program tracks: clinical mental health counseling and school counseling. During AY 2022-2023 the department was awarded continued, 8 year CACREP Accreditation for our Clinical Mental Health and School Counseling Programs (Ewing and Portugal sites).

Faculty are active clinicians and scholars, routinely publishing in a variety of venues and working in clinical practice. Further, the department continues to actively pursue external funding sources to benefit TCNJ students and the greater community. We are currently in the 3rd year of \$625,000 federal grant awarded by SAMHSA to provide Youth Mental Health First Aid Training free of charge throughout NJ and surrounding areas and have recently submitted proposals to the US Departments of Education and the Health and Human Services Administration in pursuit of funding to support student scholarships.

## B. PROGRAM EVALUATION & MODIFICATIONS

Feedback from program stakeholders is critical for our evaluation processes and used to aid in the continuous program improvement process. These stakeholders include current students and alumni, site and on-campus individual supervisors, core and non-core/adjunct faculty. A systematic annual department review which includes surveys of students, alum, and employers resulted in the following changes and modifications.

Current students and alumni both reported on their program evaluation a desire for additional elective course options. As a result, we added two new electives.

1. In the winter of 2025 we are offering a reimagined forensic counseling course in response to student demand for the content as well as additional course offerings during the winter term.
2. Climate-Aware Counseling will be offered in the Spring of 2025. This course is designed to provide an overview of how the climate crisis is impacting mental health, and strategies to work with clients and students impacted by climate-related disasters and eco-anxiety.

In response to feedback from alumni, employers, and site supervisors, our school counseling program curriculum is in the process of being substantially revised. We are adding two additional required school counseling courses: (662, Leadership, Advocacy, and Systems Change and COUN 663 School-Based Counseling Interventions and Curriculum Development). These additional courses are also part of aligning our School Counseling Curriculum CACREP Standards

Further, additional curricular changes to the School Counseling coursework will allow graduates to meet the educational requirements for the NJ Director of School Counseling Certification.

Employers and internship site supervisors alike continue to be pleased with the quality of candidates they receive from TCNJ. “She is an outstanding school counselor! She came in well positioned to tackle the myriad of tasks and responsibilities and she had the confidence to do her job” is a quote that is representative of the feedback we routinely receive from employers.

Finally, the Inclusive Community Committee, which is led by four faculty members, expanded the scope of the committee to include an Advisory Board. The Advisory Board is composed of alumni and current students who will work with the ICC in effort to enhance curriculum and program practices, from a multicultural and social justice perspective.

## C. STUDENT AWARDS

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 2024 Douglas Burroughs Professional Commitment Award was given to: **Shanice Morrison**

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 **Razia Idris**

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 **Jennifer Palafox**

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 2024 Student Scholar of the Year award was given to: **Erin Scheibling**

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. Charlie Burditt**.

In addition to department awards, this year, Sobia Ahmed, was awarded a NBCC Foundation Minority Fellowship, using a research proposal she created in her Research and Statistics class as part of her application.

**D. PROGRAM OUTCOMES: Vital Statistics**

a. *Number of graduates from 2023-2024 Academic Year:*

- *35 in the CACREP-Accredited Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program (Master of Arts in Counseling)*
- *17 in the CACREP-Accredited School Counseling Program (Master of Arts in Counseling)*
- *5 completed all of the educational requirements for the Student Assistance Coordinator in the Schools Certificate with Advanced Standing (SAC CEAS)*

*TOTALS: 52 MA in Counseling graduates and 5 SAC CEAS completions*

b. Job placement rate for 2024 graduates:

School Counseling: For 2024 School Counseling graduates, 98% of those responding to surveys (87.5% response rate) who actively sought jobs are currently employed in the field.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling: For 2024 Clinical Mental Health Counseling graduates, 100% of those responding to surveys (86% response rate) who actively sought jobs are currently employed in the field.

c. National Counselor Exam (NCE) pass rate for May 2024 graduates was 94% for Clinical Mental Health and 100% for School Counseling programs.

d. Program completion rates:

School Counseling: 96% of the SC students who were fully matriculated in 2021 completed the MA degree

Clinical Mental Health Counseling: 98% of the CMHC students who were fully matriculated in 2021 completed the MA degree