



2020 RC/RCMH Student Satisfaction Survey Summary¹

The Rehabilitation Counseling Program distributes a satisfaction survey every semester to graduating students. The survey collects information about several aspects of the program ranging from academic coursework to fieldwork experiences. The data presented in this summary accounts for surveys collected from all 28 graduates between the Fall of 2013 and Spring of 2016 as well as the Fall of 2018 and Spring of 2019. We were unable to collect data between 2017 and 2018 due to a shortage in personnel. Below is a summary of the results.

Overall Experience

To inquire about overall experience, students answered questions about their academic experience, the quality of faculty and peers, and the program content and structure. Likert-scaling was used to respond to these questions. Based on the data collected, Rehabilitation Counseling (RC) students were satisfied with their overall experience in the program. As reflected in Table 1, students believed their academic experience was either excellent or good. One hundred percent (100%) of students surveyed thought their academic experience specific to program quality, academic standards, and integration of current developments in the field was either excellent or good. When turning to faculty and peer quality, similar ratings (100%) were observed in their opinion about the intellectual quality of faculty and their relationships with faculty and peers. There was, however, slightly less agreement about the level of intellectual quality of their peers. In terms of program content and structure, 100% of students either strongly or moderately agreed that the program's content aligned well with their professional goals and that the program structure was collaborative. There is some variability in agreement though when asked if they felt the coursework load was appropriate. A small percentage (6%) of students expressed uncertainty or disagreement with this question.

¹Data collected 2013-2016, 2018-2019, n = 28

Table 1: Overall Experience

Academic Experience* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic standards of the program Integration of current developments in the field Overall quality of program 	100% = E or G 100% = E or G 100% = E or G
Faculty & Peer Quality* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intellectual quality of faculty Intellectual quality of peers Relationships between faculty & students 	100% = E or G 91% = E or G; 9% = F 100% = E or G
Program Content & Structure** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program content supports professional goals Program structure supports collaboration & teamwork Amount of coursework seems appropriate 	100% = S or A 100% = S or A 94% = S or A; 3% = U; 3% = D

**Ratings (1-4) using a Likert Scale: P = Poor; F = Fair; G = Good; E = Excellent*

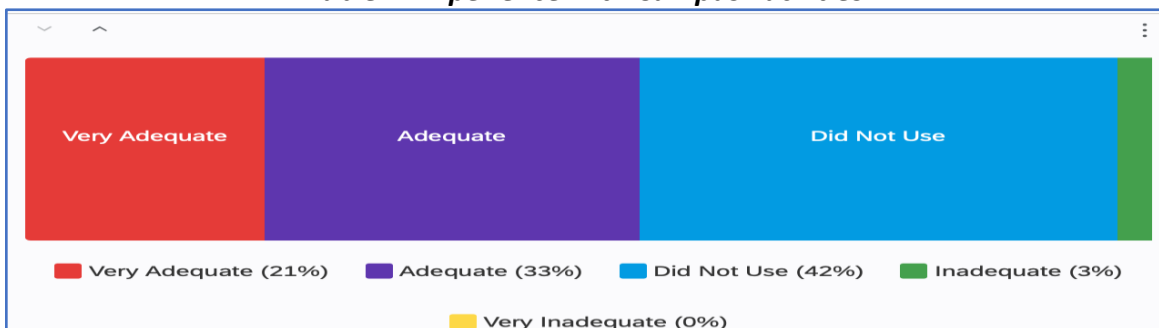
***Ratings (1-5) using a Likert Scale: SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; U = Uncertain; A = Agree; S = Strongly Agree*

Campus Facilities

Students were then asked to rate how adequate they thought the campus facilities were while in the program using a 5-point Likert scale from “very inadequate” to “very adequate”. Table 2 shows that 54% of the RC students felt they were either very adequate or moderately adequate in supporting their academic experience. While only a small portion of students (3%) felt the facilities were inadequate, a large number of students (42%) said they did not use them at all. It should be noted campus facilities, as defined in this survey, included both those that are on-campus (e.g., computer lab) and those online (e.g., library holdings). We suspect that some of the students may have only considered on-campus facilities when answering this question, leading to the high percentage identifying as non-users. As they are graduate students commuting to campus for classes in the evening, many are less likely to use on-campus facilities, especially those that may operate during regular business hours.

Student were also asked for their opinion about specific campus facilities. Those seen as most adequate in meeting their needs were services of the graduate school, academic records, and interlibrary loan/library databases. Facilities identified as least adequate in meeting their needs were web-based computer systems, such as those used for online registration and student accounts. Student commentary in response to campus facilities was limited with only one person expressing the need for more student computers and study space in Hagedorn Hall.

Table 2: Experience with Campus Facilities

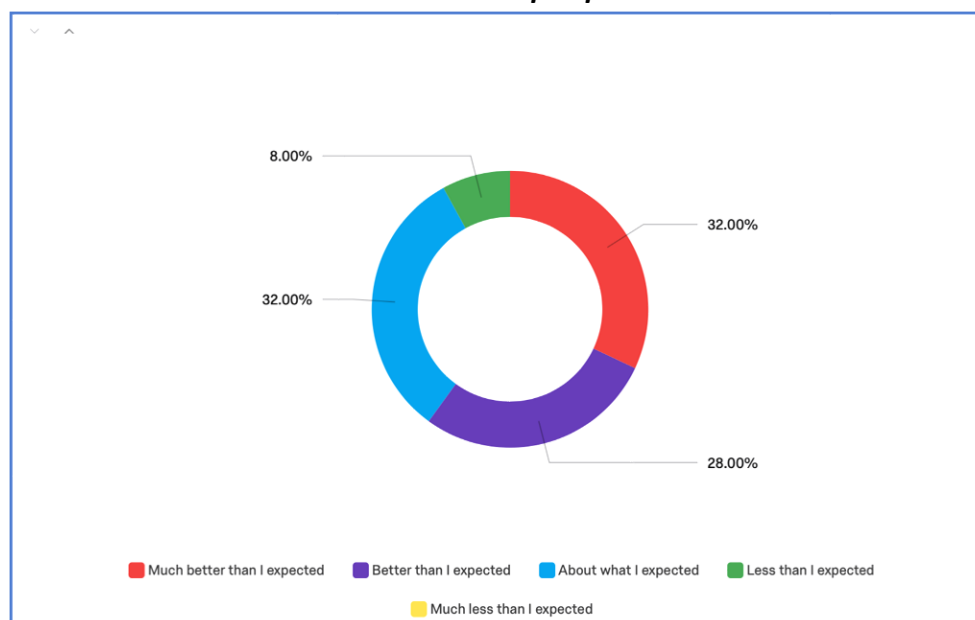


Internship Experience

Fieldwork is an essential component of the RC/RCMH program that is satisfied by the completion of a 600-hour internship experience. Through internship students solidify their knowledge and skills of the profession. The Student Satisfaction Survey collects information about whether overall student expectations were met during internship. As seen in Table 3 on the following page, the vast majority of students (92%) saw their experience as exceeding or meeting their expectations. A small percentage (8%), however, thought their internship experience fell short in meeting their expectations. Students were also asked about their preparation for internship. A large proportion of students (96%) felt they were ready when they started their internship; that their prior coursework and practicum experience gave them the requisite knowledge and skills to move forward.

Commentary about internship indicated that students felt they received high quality supervision and practical experiences allowing them to grow professionally as a counselor. Separate from individual counseling, they enjoyed running group counseling sessions and saw the experience as a confidence booster in their ability to work competently in the field. Few students offered constructive feedback about ways to improve the internship experience. For those who did, the number of assignments in internship was raised as one concern. Some students felt the assignments distracted from the focus of the seminar.

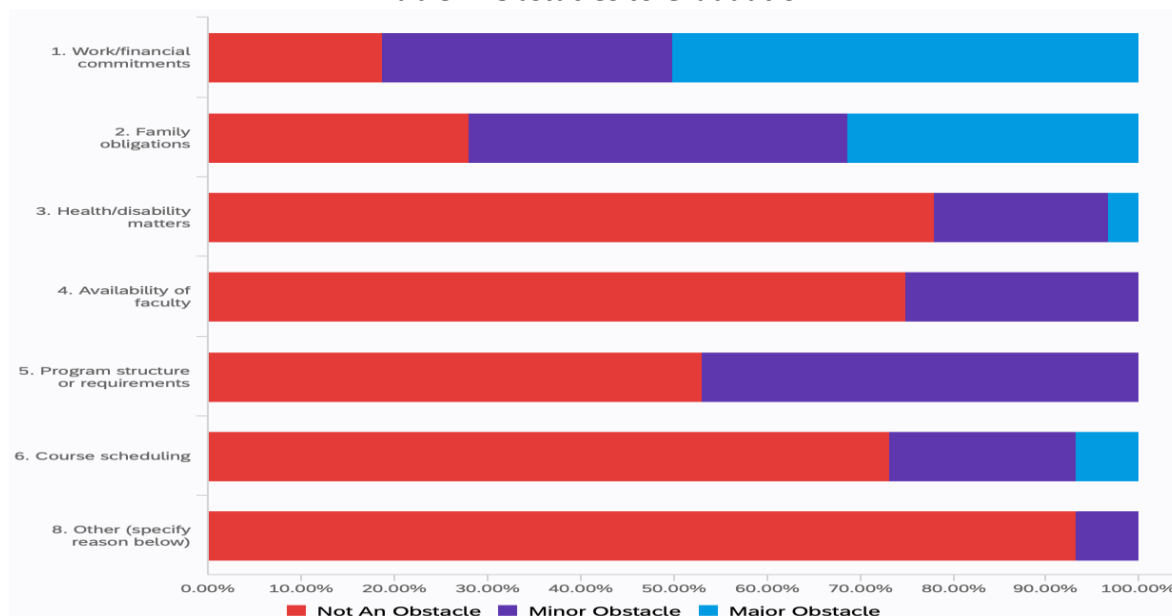
Table 3: Internship Experience



Obstacles to Graduation

With a program goal to achieve a 90% retention rate, we sought student perspectives about various obstacles they encountered on the path to graduation. Table 4 shows that most obstacles were not significant issues with the exception of two: work and financial commitments, as well as family obligations. These two obstacles were defined by the majority of students as being either major or minor for them.

Table 4: Obstacles to Graduation



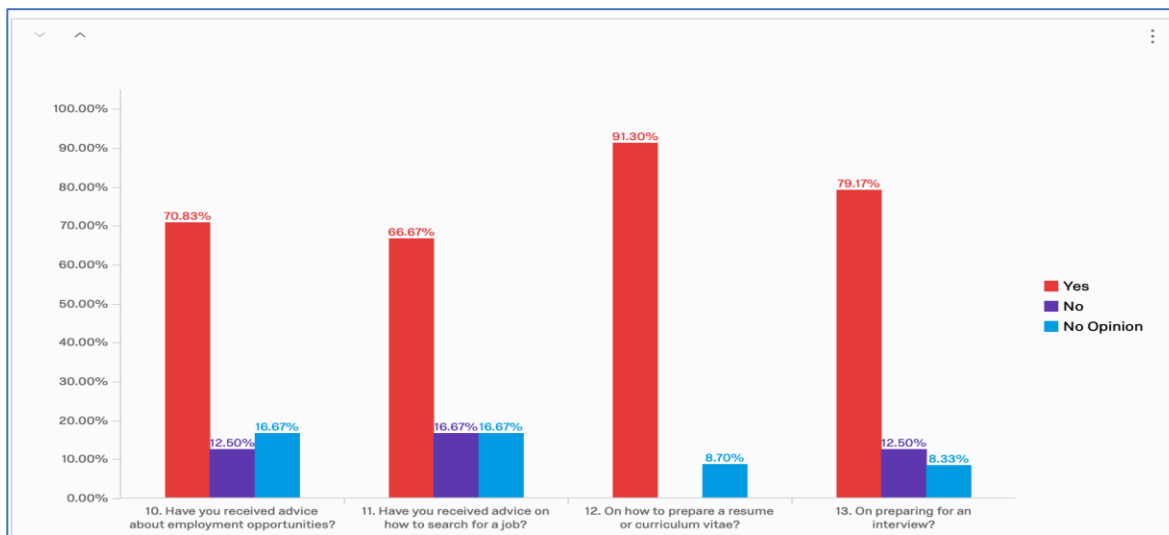
Only a small portion of students saw health/disability matters and course scheduling as major obstacles. In addition, nearly half of the students saw the program structure or requirements as an obstacle, but only minor in nature. Many of the students in the RC/RCMH program are juggling full-time employment with their academic responsibilities and personal lives. At times, scheduling conflicts occur between the student's work hours and the timing of a class. Furthermore, there are some students who are concurrently working while completing their fieldwork requirements, creating additional stress for them. It should be noted that despite these concerns, the program tracks its retention rate, which in the last year (2019-2020) was 100%.

Job Search Assistance

The RC/RCMH program assists students in finding and securing employment in the field; often relying on informal networking with non-profit and public sector agencies. To ensure students are receiving adequate support, questions about job search assistance were included in the survey. The figures in Table 5 show that students were overall extremely satisfied with the support received. Ninety-one percent (91%) reported receiving assistance with resume development followed by 79% with interviewing skills. One explanation for this finding may be attributed to the practicum class. Since 2014, an assignment was added to the class that requires students to develop their resume in preparation for internship. The instructor provides constructive feedback that is used to polish their resume. In addition, review of interviewing skills was added to the role of the field coordinator around 2016 to better prepare students for internship and later on for job hunting.

Assistance with identifying employment opportunities and job search methods were also endorsed by most students but to a lesser degree than resume writing and interviewing skills. This type of advisement is often done informally one-to-one with students as needed. Students are encouraged to work with their advisors, with some acting on that suggestion more than others. Therefore, certain students may feel more supported in this area over others. Also, some students are working in related positions when they begin the program and remain with their employer post-graduation. As such, not everyone requires assistance in finding a job.

Table 5: Job Search Assistance



Conclusion

Overall results from the RC/RCMH Student Satisfaction Survey suggest that the Program is viewed favorably across multiple areas including academic quality, academic resources, fieldwork experience, and assistance with employment opportunities. Even with such positive ratings, there are a few areas of improvement to consider in relation to: (1) the low utilization of campus facilities, (2) the commentary related to internship assignments, (3) the need for more assistance with the job search, and (4) graduation obstacles specific to work and financial factors as well as family obligations. Below are recommendations to address these specific areas.

Recommendations

Low Utilization of Campus Facilities

The survey items associated with campus facilities should be reviewed and modified for proper content validity to ensure the students are answering the questions as intended: accounting for both on-campus and online campus facilities.

To ensure students understand the campus facilities available to them, the program may wish to post a resource guide about the facilities on the Rehabilitation Counseling Resource Center, which is located on Blackboard.

Assignments in Internship

Conduct a review of internship seminar to determine if revisions are needed to the assignments in the class. The assignments rotate from one semester to another but there is one consistent assignment completed across two semesters, a program evaluation. This assignment may in part be redistributed to a new course being offered starting next year, REHB 241: Case Management and Quality Assurance in Rehabilitation Counseling. In so doing, students may feel the assignments are more evenly dispersed.

Obstacles to Graduation

Work and financial commitments, as well as family obligations, were identified as the most significant obstacles to graduation. While the faculty routinely talk with students about these issues formally and informally as part of advisement, it may be helpful to further explore the exact nature of these obstacles to determine more effective ways to support students who are working through them. The program also incorporates assignments related to self-care in both practicum and internship. It may be useful to connect these assignments to formal training about work-life balance. The program is also creating professionalism modules for students to review prior to entering or in their first semester in the program; one topic will focus on strategies for work-life-school balance to encourage reflection on priorities and responsibilities.

Assistance with the Job Search Process

Within the past two years, the program has hosted a few professional networking events, giving students a platform to connect with colleagues in the field. It should continue hosting similar events like this on a regular basis. The program should also consider working with the Center for Career Design and Development to hold a workshop (perhaps annually) about effective job search strategies. This could be a requirement for any student before entering into their final semester in the program.