



# **CACREP Graduate Counseling Programs Annual Program Evaluation Report Academic Year: 2022-2023**

## **Introduction**

The theme of growth and transformation continued into the 2022-2023 academic year, where we saw changes within the department and school. We achieved excellent gains in streamlining the collaboration process among our CACREP programs and are continuing to learn as we navigate our new systems and processes. Another modification on the horizon, Hofstra announced a university-wide change in learning management systems, from Blackboard to Tevera, which began a transition in the summer to full use in the 2023-2024 academic year. Continue reading to learn about new personnel and more highlights across our programs.

## **Change in Departmental Leadership**

After six years of tireless and stellar leadership, Dr. Jamie Mitus has stepped down as the CMHP Department Chair. For the first time since 2006, she will be “just a faculty member,” having previously served as RC Program Director from 2006 to 2016 before stepping into the chair role. She will be succeeded by Dr. Sage Rose. Dr. Mitus is already looking forward to getting back into the classroom full-time again and engaging in scholarship toward her promotion.

## **Farewell to Dr. Dan Sciarra**

Dr. Sciarra retired from Hofstra at the end of the Fall 2022 semester after 24 years on the faculty. He is a licensed psychologist, a licensed mental health counselor, a certified school counselor, and a nationally certified counselor who is fluently bilingual in Spanish with over 30 years of experience working with Latino children, adolescents, and their parents. His research interests include multicultural counseling, racial identity development, and the role of the school counselor in the promotion of academic achievement and educational attainment among students of color. In addition to over 40 published articles in the areas of multicultural and school counseling, Dr. Sciarra is the author of several books on similar topics. Dr. Sciarra served as department chair,

director of the counseling programs, and was named Hofstra Teacher of the Year in 2004 for the School of Education. Dr. Sciarra looks forward to spending many months in Florida on the golf course during his retirement. Thank you for all you have done for our programs!

### **New Coordinator of Outcomes Assessment and Affiliations**

In April 2023, the School of Health Professions and Human Services added a new vital role of support. The Coordinator for Outcomes Assessment and Affiliations (COOA) assists program directors and faculty with developing, compiling, and maintaining program outcomes assessment plans and procedures; supporting accreditation activities and reporting requirements; and coordinating the contract affiliation and academic partnership approval processes. Regarding the contract affiliation process, the COOA works with the Director of Internship, Practicum, and Assessment (DIPA) to complete affiliation agreements and accompanying documentation and then works to finalize agreements through the university's contract affiliation approval process. Regarding accreditations and assessment, the COOA (in collaboration with the Senior Associate Dean) supports faculty in all accreditation-related activities, including assessment data collection and assessment measures in Tevera. This role is new, and the COOA will continue to deepen their support and impact for accreditation and assessment.

### **Approved for a Site Visit**

The Hofstra CACREP Programs received excellent feedback for our self-study, with notification in May 2022 that reviewers agreed we were ready for a site visit. Several areas and standards were noted for additional evidence and documentation. An addendum to the report will be submitted within 30 days of the scheduled site visit anticipated this coming fall semester.

### **Welcome to Dean Reginald Alston**

The School of Health Professions and Human Services ended the academic year on a high note with the announcement of our new dean; the CMHP Department is especially excited to have a dean with a background in counseling! Appointed on August 1<sup>st</sup>, Dean Alston already hit the ground running and we are eager for the year to come.

Reginald J. Alston, PhD, is the former Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Applied Health Sciences and a Professor of rehabilitation sciences and community health in the Department of Kinesiology and Community Health at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He also served as Associate Chancellor for Faculty Affairs for nearly five years at Illinois. His research focuses primarily on disparities in rehabilitation outcomes for ethnic minorities with disabilities, particularly African Americans. Dr. Alston has published extensively in leading journals of rehabilitation, and he has successfully managed research projects as a PI, co-

investigator, or coordinator with funding from NSF, NIH, and NIDRR. As evidence of his national reputation for scholarship, he received the James F. Garrett Award for a Distinguished Career in Rehabilitation Research from the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association in 2007. Dr. Alston has taught a variety of courses such as disability policy in American society, medical aspects of disability, psychosocial aspects of disability, and research methods in health sciences. In 2005, he received the King James McCristal Distinguished Scholar Award from the College of Applied Health Sciences at Illinois, and he was the recipient of the Award for Excellence in Graduate and Professional Teaching from the College of Applied Health Sciences in 2006. Also in 2006, Dr. Alston was selected by the College of Medicine at Illinois as the Medical Scholars Program Outstanding Advisor of the Year.

Dr. Alston is a former Editor of the Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling and a former executive board member for the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA) and the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE). In 2008-09, he worked on Capitol Hill in the Office of Senator Tom Harkin (D, Iowa) as a Robert Wood Johnson Health Policy Fellow studying disability policy. Dr. Alston is a former board member of the Unit #4 school district in Champaign, Illinois and the Francis Nelson Federally Qualified Health Center in Champaign. For his engagement work with groups in the community, he received the 2009 Campus Award for Excellence in Public Engagement. Lastly, Dr. Alston was the Interim Director of the Chez Veterans Center at the University of Illinois for four years from 2018 to 2022. Good luck Dean Alston!

## **Program and Faculty Highlights**

We are proud to share some program highlights and faculty accomplishments from the 2022-2023 academic year:

- **Dr. Jamie Mitus** began to work on a manuscript based on a study she conducted exploring the effects of self-care strategies on burnout among human service professionals. She completed the data cleaning and analysis and is planning to submit it to for publication consideration in 2024. She also continued managing an RSA Long-Term Training grant that was awarded to the program in 2019.
- In Fall 2022, **Dr. Joel Brown** announced to students an opportunity to collaborate on his research, particularly two accepted NARACES presentations, as well as planned manuscript activities. As a result, Dr. Brown and two students created a research team and continue to work together to contribute to the professional research.
- **Dr. Andrea Nerlich** was promoted to the rank of full Professor in 2022-2023, but she's hoping to not let off the gas with her scholarship. Her research team put forth a special

issue in *Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Journal* in September entitled “The Future of Rehabilitation Counseling Associations.” A culmination of a year’s-long work, the issue contained seven manuscripts based on a survey of 2,608 rehabilitation counseling professionals. She is also conducting a qualitative analysis with colleagues and her graduate student on trends and discourse surrounding health equity, ableism, and the disabled experience during COVID-19 on “disability Twitter”. Dr. Nerlich was appointed as a representative of the National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE) to represent their interests on the Rehabilitation Counseling Unification Taskforce, a collaborative cross-organizational coalition to explore the unification or consolidation of RC professional organizations. She presented at two national conferences on this topic.

## Program Demographics

Enrollment Status and Degrees Granted by Program			
Program	Full-Time Fall 2022	Part-Time Fall 2022	Degrees Awarded 2022-2023
Mental Health Counseling	66	22	31
Rehabilitation Counseling	1	0	2
Rehabilitation Counseling in Mental Health	13	2	5
Totals	80	24	38

Student Demographics by Program Fall 2022					
Category	MHC	RC	RCMH	Total	%
Gender					
<i>Female</i>	78	1	13	92	88.0
<i>Male</i>	10	0	2	12	12.0
Race/Ethnicity					
<i>Asian</i>	8	0	0	8	8.0
<i>Black</i>	5	0	2	7	7.0
<i>Hispanic</i>	13	0	3	16	15.0
<i>Unknown</i>	0	0	0	0	0.0
<i>Nonresident alien</i>	4	0	0	4	4.0
<i>Two or more races</i>	1	0	0	1	1.0
<i>White</i>	57	1	10	68	65.0
International student	4	0	0	4	4.0
Veteran	0	0	1	1	1.0

## Evaluation of the Field Placement Process

In December of 2022, faculty across the CMHP Department collaborated on a survey to assess efficacy of and satisfaction with the field placement process. Students from across the five programmatic areas (CAT, MFT, MHC, RC/RCMH, SC) who had completed practicum or first internship from Spring to Fall 2022 (n = 116) were sent the *Field Placement Process Evaluation*; 32 surveys were completed for a response rate of 27.5%. For all reported scores, a benchmark mean rating of 3.90 or less was used to indicate an area of concern (in green). Except where noted, n = 32 in all cases. All scales are rated from 1 to 5.

### Initial Advisement for Fieldwork

Students were asked two questions on a 5-point scale (*Poor* to *Excellent*) about the pre-advisement for fieldwork by one’s program. Overall, both benchmarks were exceeded. Mean overall ratings are reported in Table 1.

**Table 1: Mean Overall Ratings for Initial Advisement Questions**

Question	Mean
How well did your advisor orient you to the role of the placement director?	3.94
How effective was the communication from the program regarding your first meeting with the placement director?	3.72

### Engagement with the Placement Director

Students were asked six questions about their engagement with the placement director using varied 5-point scales for the following areas: availability to meet (*Minimal* to *Excellent*), timeliness of responses (*Unresponsive* to *Excellent*), quality of guidance provided (*Poor Quality* to *High Quality*), professionalism in communication (*Unprofessional* to *Highly Professional*), consistency in follow-up (*Inconsistent* to *Very Consistent*), and completion of field placement pre-work (*Inconsistent* to *Thorough*). Mean overall ratings are reported in Table 2.

**Table 2: Mean Overall Ratings of Engagement with the Placement Director**

Question	Mean
Availability to meet	3.88
Timeliness of responses	4.03
Quality of guidance provided	3.28
Professionalism in communication	3.94
Consistency in follow-up	3.75
Completion of field placement pre-work (e.g., forms, paperwork)	4.06

## Field Site Information

Students were asked five questions about field site information provided by the placement director using varied 5-point scales for the following areas: quality of placement options provided (*Poor Quality* to *High Quality*), accuracy of contact/site information provided (*Inaccurate* to *Highly Accurate*), appropriateness of sites in meeting program requirements (*Inappropriate* to *Highly Appropriate*), relevance of the options to my interests (*Irrelevant* to *Highly Relevant*), and relevance of options to my situation (*Irrelevant* to *Highly Relevant*). Mean overall ratings are reported in Table 3.

**Table 3: Mean Overall Ratings of Field Site Information**

Question	Mean
Quality of placement options provided	3.09
Accuracy of contact/site information provided	3.31
Appropriateness of sites in meeting program requirements	3.13
Relevance of options to my interests	3.43
Relevance of options to my situation (e.g., schedule, location, transportation)	3.94

## Orientation to Field Placement

Of the 32 students, 26 (81.3%) indicated attending the orientation session with the placement director. Five questions were asked using a 5-point scale (*Poor* to *Excellent*) for the following areas: communication leading up to the session ( $n = 28$ ), organization of the orientation session, quality of information provided, ability to answer questions about placements and the process, and usefulness in preparation for field placement. Mean overall ratings are reported in Table 4.

**Table 4: Mean Overall Ratings of Orientation to Field Placement**

Question	Mean
Communication leading up to the session	3.96
Organization of the orientation session	4.15
Quality of information presented	4.19
Ability to answer questions about placements and the process	4.04
Usefulness in preparation for field placement	3.58

## Satisfaction with Field Placement Experience

Students used a 5-point scale (*Not At All* to *Totally*) to rate their satisfaction with fieldwork. Overall, students were satisfied with their practicum experience ( $x = 3.94$ ); however, eight students (25%) reported a rating of 3 or less. Most students (71.9%) indicated they did not complete or plan to complete their first internship at the same site as their practicum. Satisfaction with first

internship was similar for the 25 students providing responses ( $x = 3.92$ ); although, seven students (28%) indicated a satisfaction rating of 3 or less. Seven of the 25 students (28%; 1 SC, 1 MHC, 2 MFT, 4 CAT) indicated they were not going to continue their second internship in the same location as their first, citing desire for diversity, lack of direct supervision, lack of organization, and poor supervisor as the reasons.

## **Implementation of Tevera**

The implementation of the Tevera system experienced some setbacks in the 2022-2023 Academic Year. Delays in establishing a contract and initiating the system prevented the rollout of the system for the Fall 2022 semester. As such, paper logs and evaluations continued to be maintained for fieldwork documentation. The system was piloted for the first time with students in Spring 2023 where several challenges were presented. First, some students were not enrolled due to the course fee being attached to the practicum course. Second, some site supervisors experienced difficulties with accessing the system because of firewalls on their agency or organization computer systems. Third, students, faculty, and site supervisors experienced a “learning curve” in familiarizing themselves with the functionality of the system. Finally, assignments attached to KPI evaluation points were not established in the system, so these continued to be maintained individually by course instructors. Faculty, with the assistance of the DIPA and the Dean’s Office, reviewed protocols related to Tevera throughout the summer semesters and will be implementing changes in the Fall 2023 semester to facilitate ease of use and student enrollment, including registration and payment for the system as a course fee upon enrollment in a student’s first semester.

## **Program Improvements and Curricular Changes**

### **All Programs**

- With the alignment of CACREP programs, career counseling was moved to a departmental course. Previously, MHC students took *COUN 277: Counseling for Career and Life Planning* and RC/RCMH students took *REHB 268: Vocational and Career Development in Counseling*. To better serve all students, Dr. Nerlich undertook a revision of the course with the assistance of Instructional Design to create a hybrid course, *CMHP 247: Career Counseling and Development*. This course will be offered in both the Spring and Summer semesters and will allow students to engage with both online interactive content and in-class application of learning. Animated case vignettes were created to illustrate client concerns, and a five-part client case will be used across the course to demonstrate case conceptualization, assessment, narrative interviewing, planning, and interventions.

### **Mental Health Counseling**

Below highlights some of the program improvements and curricular changes that were enacted in response to MHC Program Evaluation efforts:

### ***“Fireside Chat”***

In Fall 2022, the MHC program held a “Fireside Chat” where all students were invited to share experiences in and feedback about the program. An open and honest discussion occurred, and valuable feedback was documented. The following actions were identified:

1. A greater focus on, and consistent communication about, the option to take the NCE during the program owing to CACREP accreditation.
  - a. *Action:* Program director committed to sending an email to advanced students every semester explaining the NCE and process for application.
2. More education provided to practicum and internship sites on the requirements for practicum and internship.
  - a. *Action:* CACREP faculty discussion on procedure to implement consistent updates to sites on requirements. Following the process survey, develop a consistent protocol.
3. The practicum and internship site list should be updated consistently to account for changes in staff.
  - a. *Action:* CACREP faculty discussion on procedure to implement consistent updates to sites on requirements. Following the process survey, develop a consistent protocol and utilize the Tevera system to maintain placements.
4. Students requested more sections of elective courses in both January and Summer.
  - a. *Action:* Program Director committed to keeping an additional section of *COUN 278: Substance Use Disorder Counseling* in Summer Session III and add an additional section of *COUN 225: Counseling for Death, Dying and Bereavement* in January 2023. For discussion is adding a third section of *COUN 225: Counseling for Death, Dying and Bereavement* in Summer 2024.

### ***Other Program Updates***

- Based on student feedback about the importance of *COUN 202: Professional Orientation and Ethics*, the program assigned both sections to Professor Jeanne Byrnes, an adjunct and RC Program graduate who has been with the department for over 20 years, who has a strong professional identity as a counselor and is highly respected by MHC students. With Prof. Byrnes expertise and strong presence as an instructor, she created more consistency between sections and increased the challenge and rigor of the course.



- Like COUN 202, we hired Adjunct Instructor Jaclyn McCarthy to teach *COUN 275: Consultation in School and Community Settings*. Prof. McCarthy came to us highly recommended as a licensed clinician with expertise in the areas of consultation and mental health practice. She helped create more challenging work in this class by implementing exams that best measure student acquisition of the material.

## **Rehabilitation Counseling Programs**

Below highlights some of the program improvements and curricular changes that were enacted in response to RC Programs Evaluation efforts:

- To align with other internship fieldwork classes, RC internships were changed from 6 to 3-credit courses. No change was made to the structure or content of the course or the requirement for 600 total hours of internship experience. The 6-credit model was an artifact of prior CORE accreditation and from the RC program being one of the oldest certification programs at Hofstra. This change allows for 6 credits to be recuperated for additional program planning, which will allow all students to take an additional elective and a skills-focused course (see below).
- In response to practicum evaluation and student feedback, to better prepare students in systematic counseling skills *REHB 228: Skills and Techniques in Rehabilitation Counseling* (3 cr.) was created. This serves as a pre-practicum skills course, following the introduction to theory in *COUN 210: Counseling and the Helping Relationship*. This will include interactive content through MindTap resources available to accompany the text from Cengage Learning. Students will be assessed on skill development using the CCS-R prior to being placed in practicum. This instructor will also serve as a point of assessment for students on professional dispositions prior to their practicum placement. With this change, practicum will be focused less on didactic learning and more on seminar-based group clinical supervision. This course is required of both RC and RCMH students and utilizes some of the credits that were recaptured from the redesign of internship.

### ***Future Actions: 2023-2024***

The following tasks represent the agenda for the 2023-2024 Graduate Counseling Programs faculty:

- Based on student feedback, develop a streamlined process and protocol for fieldwork placement, focusing on the areas of diversifying placement options, updating field

placement database in Tevera through routine quarterly updates, and communication of requirements

- Improve the use of the Tevera system for fieldwork management, including earlier student enrollment and creation of KPI assessment points within individual didactic courses