

Dear colleagues and community members,

Throughout 2012, Plymouth State University's Counselor Education program disseminated surveys to employers of our graduates, field experience site supervisors, and alumni in order to assess our program's strengths as well as our program's needs for improvement. This assessment is necessary to ensure that our program is adequately preparing our students to effectively meet the needs of those who seek services. By reviewing the results, we aim to continually identify areas for improvement and make appropriate changes to address these programmatic needs. Below is an overall analysis of our findings.

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

The Counselor Education program disseminates surveys to employers of graduates, internship and practicum site supervisors, and School Counseling and Mental Health Counseling programs alumni. Surveys were created through Zoomerang software, and included questions based on four-point, Likert-type scales ranging from "not at all" to "very much."

Employer Survey Results (N=2)

Respondents rated Plymouth State University's (PSU) ability to prepare its graduates for professional positions very highly. The two respondents replied "very much" to each criteria, including the degree to PSU graduates' ability to develop effective professional relationships within their work setting as well as the broader community; ability to develop and deliver appropriate group and individual interventions; ability to advocate on behalf of students/clients; knowledge of the current best practices; and ability to develop helping, professional relationships with diverse individuals (including socioeconomic and religious diversity). Finally, respondents were asked to rate how well-prepared they believe Plymouth State University graduates are in comparison to graduates they've hired from other counselor preparation programs. Both respondents said that they were "unable to compare."

Site Supervisor Survey Results (N=16)

The Counselor Education program distributes surveys to site supervisors in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the program's ability to prepare students for practicum and internship experiences. Based on general trends in supervisors' responses, site supervisors believe that PSU practicum and internship students are professional and ethical, demonstrate knowledge of best practices, develop and deliver appropriate individual and group counseling skills and interventions with diverse clients, and are aware of the multiple systems that impact students/clients. No items were endorsed by site supervisors that indicated concern over PSU's ability to effectively prepare students for their field experiences.

Counselor Education Alumni Survey Results (N=13)

Overall, alumni rated Plymouth State University's Counselor Education program positively in terms of our ability to prepare our students as professional counselors. All respondents identified programmatic strengths in the program's ability to effectively foster personal growth and self-reflection as well as to develop their professional identity as ethical

counselors. Based on survey responses, alumni identify assessment as the area in most need for improvement.

Limitations

One significant limitation in the survey study was the low response rates from students who have graduated from the program as well as graduated students' employers. This low response rate presents challenges in making accurate assessments on the program's effectiveness in addressing the program areas measured by the survey.

Overall Synthesis

The site supervisor survey was useful in shedding light on some programmatic themes. According to the responses, site supervisors believe that Plymouth State University Counselor Education students are able to understand the multiple systems that impact students/clients, are knowledgeable of best practices, and are able to develop helping, professional relationships with diverse individuals. Respondents also believed that most students were aware of themselves and their impact on others and were able to develop and deliver appropriate group and individual interventions. Site supervisors did not indicate areas of needed improvement; however, 8% (n=1) of site supervisors rated students' ability to develop and deliver appropriate group and individual interventions and students' awareness of themselves and their impact on others as "somewhat, but not adequately".

Given some of the challenges in acquiring and tracking data to date, the PSU CESP department has created a new alumni database to support alumni tracking and is exploring alternative formats for which to collect data including at face-to-face advisory board meetings and site supervisor meetings in addition to web-based surveys.