The Counselor Education and School Psychology Department regularly and systematically evaluates its programs for the purposes of ensuring student success, alignment with licensure and certification standards, and improvement of the program. The Counselor Education program was initially accredited by CACREP in March 2008 and has been reaccredited through March 2017. The current program is comprised of a 48-credit School Counseling program and a 63-credit Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program.

In order to align with the standards put forth by Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the Plymouth State University Counselor Education program evaluates its programs in the following ways:

- Curriculum review
- Learning objectives review
- Ongoing familiarity with state licensure and certification standards
- Feedback from students, faculty, and other stakeholders at annual advisory committee meetings and surveys distributed annually to alumni, site supervisors, and employers
- Student performance via grades, the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Exam (CPCE) and culminating reflective portfolio, the student monitoring form and the personal and professional performance rubric.
- Formalized surveys to current students, alumni, site supervisors, and employers of recent graduates

Vision, Mission, and Process

Vision
The Counselor Education Program envisions a world where there is less social injustice and more compassion, human rights, and human dignity. This can be accomplished by greater democratic participation, appreciation of diversity, and a commitment to the common good.

Mission
The Counselor Education Program seeks to prepare professionals who are engaged in the ongoing processes of increased self-awareness, and enhanced interpersonal effectiveness. A commitment to social justice is promoted through an emphasis on honoring and recognizing the diversity that exists within society and through the development of skills necessary to implement interventions aimed at the positive transformation of people and systems.

Process
In order to accomplish our mission and vision, the Program actively encourages students to have a voice in the development of policies and procedures at the department, program, and classroom levels. Moreover, a focus of instruction is to promote systemic
change, advocacy, client empowerment/self-advocacy, theory-practice connections, critical thinking, and evolving consciousness.

**Standards-Based Assessment**

Each course is informed by the programmatic learning objectives that are based on core and program area standards. The School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling programs have developed a process by which the core and program area student learning objectives are embedded and assessed within each course and each course assignment. *The results provide direct evidence of student learning.* The process is as follows:

1. Each CACREP standard (from the core standards and the specific program standards) is designated to a specific course.
2. Syllabi are created based on the standards designated for each course.
3. Within course syllabi, the standards to be assessed are linked to specific assignments.
4. Rubrics are designed in order to measure students’ progress on the standards as they appear in course assignments.
5. At the end of Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling courses, instructors send statistical information about their class’s progress on each standard designated for the course.
6. This statistical information is collected into a departmental database (CDR).
7. Students’ grades are directly related to their progress on each of these standards-based assignment rubrics.

**Counselor Education and School Psychology Department Core Objectives**

- **Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice:** Students will be able to articulate and assume the professional and ethical role of a counselor.

- **Social and Cultural Diversity:** Students will be able to discuss and demonstrate techniques of cross-cultural counseling and advocate on behalf of multicultural populations.

- **Human Growth and Development:** Students will be able to describe the role that human growth and development plays in counseling interventions and modify these interventions as appropriate.

- **Career Development:** Students will be able to explain theories of career development and implement career interventions.

- **Helping Relationships:** Students will be able to define and utilize counseling skills and advanced counseling interventions.
Group Work: Students will be able to articulate theories of group counseling and utilize leadership skills in facilitating various types of groups.

Assessment: Students will be able to identify and utilize various types of counseling assessments.

Research and Program Evaluation: Students will be able to describe and conduct methods of research and program evaluation.

Curriculum Overview: Core Courses

All students in the counselor education program are required to take the following core courses as part of their respective programs:

- Professional Orientation, Ethics, and Advocacy
- Advanced Human Development
- Research Design for the Helping Professions
- Career Counseling and Development
- Theories of Counseling and Personality
- Counseling Skills
- Assessment and Consultation
- Group Counseling
- Practicum

School Counseling Program Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Foundations: Students will be able to articulate and apply foundational knowledge of school counseling.

- Counseling, Prevention, and Intervention: Students will be able to articulate and demonstrate various types of counseling, prevention, and intervention – including methods of program development and crisis response.

- Diversity and Advocacy: Students will be able to discuss issues of multiculturalism, demonstrate multicultural competency skills, and advocate on behalf of multicultural populations in school counseling settings.

- Assessment: Students will be able to analyze and utilize various types of school counseling assessments.

- Research and Evaluation: Students will be able to critically evaluate and utilize research methods in the practice of school counseling.
• **Academic Development**: Students will be able to describe methods of promoting academic development.

• **Collaboration and Consultation**: Students will be able to demonstrate methods of effective collaboration and consultation with school staff, students, parents, and community members.

• **Leadership**: Students will be able to explain the importance of and assume leadership roles in their respective schools.

**Curriculum Overview of School Counseling Program**

All school counseling students are required to take the following specialization courses as a part of their curriculum:

- Foundations of School Counseling
- Working with Youth and Their Systems
- Critical Issues in Schools
- The Counselor in the Classroom
- Seminar and Internship in School Counseling, K-12

**Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program Learning Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- **Foundations**: Students will be able to articulate and apply foundational knowledge of clinical mental health counseling.

- **Counseling, Prevention, and Intervention**: Students will be able to articulate and demonstrate various types of counseling, consultation, prevention, and intervention – including response to crisis and trauma and addiction.

- **Diversity and Advocacy**: Students will be able to discuss issues of multiculturalism, demonstrate multicultural competency skills, and advocate on behalf of multicultural populations in clinical mental health counseling settings.

- **Assessment**: Students will be able to analyze and utilize various types of clinical mental health counseling assessments.

- **Research and Evaluation**: Students will be able to critically evaluate and utilize research methods in the practice of clinical mental health counseling.

- **Diagnosis**: Students will be able to describe and employ principles of case conceptualization, diagnosis, and treatment planning with a variety of populations.
Curriculum Overview of Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program

All clinical mental health counseling students are required to take the following specialization courses as a part of their curriculum:

- Assessment, Diagnosis, and Treatment Planning
- Foundations of Mental Health Counseling
- Working with Children and Families
- Crisis and Trauma Counseling
- Addictions and Related Disorders
- Psychopathology: Disorders of Childhood, Adolescence, and Adulthood
- Psychopharmacology and the Biological Basis of Mental Health

Evaluating Core and Program Objectives

The Counselor Education faculty monitor the program’s effectiveness to ensure that students have met core (counselor education) and program area (school counseling and clinical mental health counseling) objectives. This assessment includes:

- Standardized Examination: All students in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling programs are required to take and pass the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE). Scores on this assessment measure the program’s core objectives in comparison to other programs in the country. Developed by the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), this exam is designed to measure students’ content knowledge in the following eight areas: Professional Orientation and Ethics, Human Growth and Development, Social and Cultural Foundations, Career and Lifestyle Assessment, Helping Relationships, Group Work, Appraisal, and Research and Program Evaluation. These eight areas directly align with the core Counselor Education objectives. To successfully complete this requirement, students must receive an overall passing score. This provides direct evidence of student learning. Passing scores are determined each year based on national norms. Students who do not pass the test will be required to re-take the exam. If they still do not pass, they will be required to meet with their advisors to discuss remediation plans. These remediation plans consist of either completing written essays or completing an oral examination based upon sections missed on the exam. Students have two chances (with each option being one chance) to successfully complete this remediation plan. Satisfactory completion of the exam or remediation plan is a requirement for graduation.

- Culminating Portfolio: During internship experiences, students in the counseling program complete a discipline-specific reflective portfolio. These portfolios assess students’ ability to apply and reflect upon program-specific objectives and serve to measure individual progress (direct evidence of student learning) as well as programmatic effectiveness.

- Stakeholder Surveys: As students transition to the field, the program assesses how students perform relative to program and specialization-specific (program area) objectives. Surveys are disseminated to current students’ site supervisors,
graduated students, and graduated students’ employers. The results provide direct evidence of student learning.
  o Graduates are surveyed upon graduation.
  o Site supervisors are surveyed at the end of every supervisory experience.
  o Graduates’ employers are surveyed in June following the completion of one year of employment.

Key Findings from 2013-2014 Data Review

- Student performance on the CPCE was consistently higher than the national mean scores for each section.
  o Recommendation for improvement: None.

- Students are generally successful at meeting CACREP core and specialty standards. Part of this success could be due to the faculty offering students the opportunity to develop mastery.
  o Recommendation for improvement: Continue to offer opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate mastery of core and specialty standards.

- Scores for CACREP Clinical Mental Health Counseling Standard E2 (Understands the effects of racism, discrimination, sexism, power, privilege, and oppression on one’s own life and career and those of the client) are of concern due to its low score.
  o Recommendation for improvement: Recommend omission of CMHC E.2 as a requirement for Career Counseling and Development and recommend placing it in the requirements for Social Behavior and Diversity.

- School Counseling CACREP standard A7 (Emergency Planning) is of concern. This standard is covered in Critical Issues in Schools.
  o Recommendation for improvement: Dr. Goodnough will follow up with the professor of the course and provide support as needed for course revision to better help the students meet the standards.

- A few of the core standards in Advanced Human Development were lower than the norm.
  o Recommendation for improvement: Dr. Goodnough will follow up with the professor of the course and provide support as needed for course revision to better help the students meet the standards.

- Survey data from recent alumni, site supervisors, and employers support the general strength of the Counselor Education and School Psychology program. However, there was a lower response rate for clinical mental health site supervisors and employers when compared to response rate of these same roles within the school counseling concentration.
Recommendation for improvement: Make a concerted effort to develop stronger and more enduring relationships with site supervisors and employers in the clinical mental health counseling field.

Alumni, Site Supervisor, and Employer Surveys

Surveys are distributed annually to alumni, site supervisors, and employers of recent graduates in order to measure preparation for work in the counseling field and revise programs if needed. The questions on the survey ask questions surrounding the following areas:

All Counseling Fields:
- Self-reflection
- Helping relationships
- Ability to articulate and assume the professional and ethical role of a counselor
- Discussion and demonstration of techniques of cross-cultural counseling and demonstrate advocacy on behalf of multicultural populations
- Description of the role that human growth and development plays in counseling interventions and modify these interventions as appropriate
- Explain theories of career development and implement career interventions
- Define and utilize counseling skills and advanced counseling interventions
- Articulate theories of group counseling and utilize leadership skills in facilitating various types of groups
- Identify and utilize various types of counseling assessments
- Describe and conduct methods of research and program evaluation

School Counseling:
- Articulate and assume the professional and ethical role of a counselor (ASCA National Model)
- Articulate and demonstrate various types of counseling, prevention, and intervention, including methods of program development and crisis response
- Discuss issues of multiculturalism, demonstrate multicultural competency skills, and advocate on behalf of multicultural populations in school counseling settings
- Analyze and utilize various types of school counseling assessments
- Critically evaluate and utilize research methods in the practice of school counseling
- Describe methods of promoting academic development
- Demonstrate methods of effective collaboration and consultation with school staff, students, parents, and community members
- Explain the importance of and assume leadership roles in a school setting

Clinical Mental Health Counseling:
- Articulate and apply foundational knowledge of clinical mental health counseling
• Articulate and demonstrate various types of counseling, consultation, prevention, and intervention, including response to crisis, trauma, and addiction
• Discuss issues of multiculturalism, demonstrate multicultural competency skills, and advocate on behalf of multicultural populations in clinical mental health counseling settings
• Analyze and utilize various types of clinical mental health counseling assessments
• Critically evaluate and utilize research methods in the practice of clinical mental health counseling
• Describe and employ principles of case conceptualizations, diagnosis, and treatment planning with a variety of populations