

## ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

### Waynesburg University Graduate Counseling Programs

The Graduate Counseling Programs of Waynesburg University include a Master of Arts in Counseling with two specialization tracks: (a) Clinical Mental Health and (b) Addictions, and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Counselor Education and Supervision. The Graduate Counseling Programs also offer multiple certificates and advanced training opportunities for mental health professionals. This annual report outlines successes, areas for growth, and changes within the Graduate Counseling Programs during the 2022-2023 Academic Year.

#### ***M.A. Program Purpose Statement:***

*To develop self-reflective counselors who have the ability and the willingness to enhance the emotional, cognitive, social, and spiritual development of others. This program provides opportunities for students to grow in their personal and professional lives and inspires a commitment to service and social justice as part of the Waynesburg University tradition.*

Fifteen students graduated from the Master of Arts in Counseling program in May 2023. Of these graduates, nine were enrolled in the Clinical Mental Health track, and six were enrolled in the Addictions track. The Master of Arts in Counseling program currently has 44 enrolled students, with an average cohort size of 8 to 9 students per cohort.

#### ***Ph.D. Program Purpose Statement:***

*The mission of the Ph.D. program in Counseling at Waynesburg University is to prepare professional counselors to provide leadership in the profession of counseling. Counseling leaders must be best practice counselors, supervisors and teachers. They should be grounded in the ethical codes of the American Counseling Association and its subdivisions. Counseling leaders are diversity informed and culturally competent. Finally, they use best practice standards in research and scholarly activities. The program is designed to enhance the counseling skills of doctoral students, prepare counselors for the roles of clinical and administrative supervisor, develop the teaching skills of students, teach students to conduct research, and prepare students to become counseling scholars. The program prepares doctoral students to become university faculty members in counselor education programs and leaders in the specializations of clinical mental health counseling, addictions counseling, and school counseling.*

The PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision program plans to enroll four incoming students in Fall 2023 and a current average of 4 to 5 students per cohort. This academic year, one dissertation was successfully completed, with 15 additional doctoral candidates in the dissertation phase. At the beginning of the 2023-2024 academic year, there are 19 students enrolled in coursework at the PhD level. During the academic year of 2022-2023, one PhD degree in Counselor Education and Supervision was conferred, as listed below:

- Dr. Leann E. Romitti (August, 2022). “LGBTQ+ identified counselors: Experiences in the clinical workplace.”

## PROGRAM UPDATES AND MODIFICATIONS

### Leadership

As of May 2023, Dr. Devon Bowser, Director of Graduate Counseling Programs assumed the role of Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies. In her new capacity, Dr. Bowser continues to serve as the Director of the Graduate Counseling Programs and maintains her Associate Professor of Counseling position. Dr. Bowser has been core faculty in Waynesburg University's Graduate Counseling Programs for nine years and had held the role of Director since 2022. In June of 2023, Dr. Kelley McNichols became the Assistant Director of Graduate Counseling Programs. Dr. McNichols has served as an Assistant Professor in the Graduate Counseling Programs since 2019.

### New Faculty

Our Graduate Counseling Programs increased from five to six full-time faculty members this reporting period by welcoming Dr. Dennis Winkler as a full-time Assistant Professor. Dr. Winkler is a proud graduate of Waynesburg University's Counselor Education and Supervision program. He has an extensive work history in community behavioral health. His interests include the intersectionality of race-based trauma and spirituality, and using a trauma-informed approach to his work and subsequent advocacy makes him a good "fit" for our Graduate Counseling Programs.

### Curriculum Modification

There have been modifications made to both the master's and doctoral level curricula during this reporting period. The modifications were intentional, quality improvement measures based on feedback received from our student body and faculty. Within our Master of Arts in Counseling program, the Introduction to Mental Disorders course has been replaced with a Child and Adolescent Counseling course. This shift allows our Master of Arts in Counseling students to receive additional training with this at-risk population. In the PhD curriculum, the Advanced Group Counseling Course has been replaced with a Service and Leadership in Counselor Education and Supervision course. This course will allow our doctoral students to grow their opportunities for service in our communities as part of their doctoral studies.

### Faculty Professional Activities

Our faculty remain active in the counseling profession through leadership, research, advocacy, and service activities. The following highlights professional activities during the past academic year.

- Bowser, D.,** Scarmazzi, C, & Resendiz, A. (2022). *Dynamic Instruction of Counseling Techniques in an Online Environment*. North Atlantic Region Association for Counselor Education and Supervision semi-annual conference, Pittsburgh, PA.
- McNichols, K.** & Krafick, M. (2023, April 10-14). *Intercept initiatives in Pennsylvania rural county jails and hospitals: Treatment, recovery, and warm handoffs* [Conference session]. Rx and Illicit Drug Summit. Atlanta, GA.
- McNichols, K.** (2022, November 10-13). *Boots on the ground: Counselors in training, marginalized groups, and medically underserved populations* [Poster session]. North Atlantic Region Association for Counselor Education and Supervision, Pittsburgh, PA.

- Nocita, A.** (2022, September 16). "Ethics for Behavioral Health Professionals." Presented to Cambria County Behavioral Health providers. Online, three hour presentation, 3 CE credits.
- Nocita, A.** (2022, October 3). "Ethics for Behavioral Health Professionals." Presented to Somerset and Bedford County Behavioral Health providers. Online, three hour presentation, 3 CE credits.
- Nocita, A.** (2023, April 17). "Ethical Principles for Behavioral Health." Presented to Somerset and Bedford County Behavioral Health providers. Online, three hour presentation, 3 CE credits
- Romitti, L., & **Bowser, D.** (2023). *Helping The Helper- Supporting LGBTQ+ Identified Counselors in the Clinical Workplace*. American Counseling Association Conference, Toronto, Canada.
- Winkler, D. L.**, (2022) *Biopsychosocial bondage: Restructuring and balancing for Black liberation*. Lecture presented at African-Centered Social Work Symposium, Baltimore, Maryland.
- Winkler, D. L.**, (2022) *Measuring the relationship of race-based trauma, Black identity, and spirituality*. Lecture presented at the 53rd Annual Association of Black Psychologists, Online Conference.
- Winkler, D. L.**, (2023) *Healing through enrichment circles*. Black Mental Health Alliance's Black Men and Boys Mental Health Summit, Online Summit.

Our faculty continue to be active in the counseling profession through leadership and advocacy efforts. Dr. Devon Bowser has served as the Associate Editor for the Journal of the Pennsylvania Counseling Association (JPCA) since 2019. Dr. Bowser has also successfully coordinated and co-led the first Neurodivergent Student Skills camp at Waynesburg University in July of 2023. This service was in collaboration with Washington County Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR). She continues to act as a liaison between Waynesburg University and Washington County OVR to develop further programming for high school and college students with disabilities, as well as offering trainings institutionally for supporting students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

Dr. Kelley McNichols continues to serve as the Project Evaluator for the Medication Assisted Treatment Expansion Grant of the Armstrong, Indiana, Clarion Drug and Alcohol Commission. As part of this initiative, she supports medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) in a rural county jail in Kittanning, PA. Dr. McNichols is active with the Washington County Drug and Alcohol Commission's Overdose Coalition and the University of Pittsburgh's Faith Community Collaborative (FCC). She served as a co-chair for the Pennsylvania Counseling Associations membership committee. Dr. McNichols is also a member of Waynesburg University's University Relations team where she supports grant initiatives within WU.

Dr. Andrew Nocita provides ethics continuing education training to behavioral health professionals in Bedford, Cambria, and Somerset counties. Dr. Nocita serves as the chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and as a member of the Faculty Review Committee during this reporting period.

Dr. Michelle Steimer continues to be active with Veteran Affairs. In fact, Dr. Steimer played a pivotal role in the creation of WU's Veteran and Military Affiliate Center which opened its doors in the Fall of 2023.

Dr. Dennis Winkler's is active in several community initiatives. He provides regular community groups that are free and open to the public, such as "For the People Community Healing and Enrichment Circle groups, a group for Black men with complex trauma through an initiative called Brothers Helping Brothers, and healing circles for an interfaith organization that specializes in violence interruption in Baltimore, Maryland. He also serves on a community advisory board for the Family League of Baltimore. He has offered debriefing and postvention services following community tragedies.

## **2022-2023 GRANT SUMMARIES**

### **HRSA/BHWET Grant**

Waynesburg University received a \$1,069,239 grant from the Department of Health and Human Resources (HRSA) for the Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training Program (BHWET). This program focuses on increasing the behavioral health workforce in underserved areas or working with high need populations. This grant provides a \$10,000 annual stipend to qualifying students completing their internships in field placements that meet the requirements for serving clients in high need and high demand areas. The grant also allows the Graduate Counseling Programs to provide increased training opportunities for faculty and students, as well as support an annual regional conference for mental health professionals, administrators, and allied health professionals.

Our second BHWET Scholar cohort, active during the 2022-2023 academic year, was comprised of 14 Master of Arts in Counseling students. These students and their site supervisors were provided with a series of professional development workshops throughout the program. The program intended to offer the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual BHWET Conference in the Spring 2023; however, due to insufficient interest in the call for proposals, the conference was postponed until the Spring of 2024. The Waynesburg University Counseling Training Clinic launched in the 2022-2023 academic year. The clinic continues provide training opportunities to Master of Arts in Counseling students while offering telemental health services to the members of our community.

### **HRSA/HWRT Grant**

Waynesburg University was awarded a three-year grant totaling more than \$1.5 million from the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) for the launch of its Healthcare Workforce Resiliency Training (HWRT) Program. We are pleased to announce that this program launched in the Fall of 2022. The purpose this program is to enhance the resilience, health and safety of healthcare workers in order to impact community resilience and mental health in the face of long-term stressors and health impacts amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Facilitated through the Graduate Counseling Programs, the program provides a comprehensive training curriculum to healthcare workers, first responders, and similar professionals tasked with the care of others. Initially, the program was offered asynchronously online. However, a shift to in-person training took place this past year serving as a pathway to reach more participants, especially in rural areas. Thus far, the program has served approximately 200 individuals with preliminary data

analysis showing statistically significant decrease in burnout and compassion fatigue among frontline workers.

### **Staunton Farm Foundation: Certificate in Clinical Supervision**

The Certificate in Clinical Supervision program successfully launched in the Spring of 2023. The development and implementation of this program has been supported through a capacity building grant awarded by the Staunton Farm Foundation. The Clinical Supervision Certificate program is intended to enhance the professional identity and competence of clinical supervisors in the behavioral health workforce by offering an advanced educational training program. The certificate is a 12-credit, non-degree, post-baccalaureate program that is available 100% asynchronous online and can be successfully completed in as little as two semesters. As of January 2023, 12 students were enrolled in the program. Five of the 12 students received full scholarships while the seven other students received a 50% discounted tuition. All 10 students successfully completed the certificate program in August of 2023.

We are pleased to share that in the 2022-2023 academic year the Certificate in Clinical Supervision (CCS) program either met or surpassed all program goals and objectives. A goal of the (CCS) program was to enhance supervisor self-efficacy across several areas of competence. WU studied the effects of the CCS program on the perceived supervisor self-efficacy of students participating in the program by administering the Supervisor Self-Efficacy Scale pre and post-tests. The Supervisor Self-Efficacy Scale prompts students to rate their level of confidence (one being not at all confident and 10 being completely confident) in performing supervisory tasks in counselor supervision, regardless of whether they actually performed the corresponding activity. WU investigated the change in overall self-efficacy and change in six areas of competence: group supervision, knowledge of legal issues, multicultural competence, self in supervision, supervisory ethics, and theories and techniques. The results indicated a significant difference in overall perceived supervisor self-efficacy and a significant difference in each of the six areas of competence. Waynesburg University was awarded another capacity building grant to support the continuous quality improvement of the Certificate in Clinical Supervision program in the 2023-2024 academic year.

## **DIVERSITY & BELONGING ACTION PLAN**

In the 2020-2021 academic year, the Graduate Counseling Programs of Waynesburg University conducted a comprehensive diversity and inclusion assessment of its programs, policies, and practices. In this context, diversity was defined as characteristics or identities that separate people into different groups. Most often, diversity is equated with dimensions of cultural identity, such as race, gender, religion, or socioeconomic status. It can also include identified cultural groups such as veterans, service members, and students classified as non-traditional. There are clear benefits to having a diverse community; in higher education, the most evident benefit is the richness of ideas that comes from having a variety of perspectives and voices come together in search of truth and knowledge. The term “inclusion” focused on the degree to which members of a community are able to be heard, valued, and respected within that community. Criteria specific to diversity and inclusion were informed by accreditation standards and the Waynesburg University mission.

Analysis of the findings of the Diversity and Inclusion Audit were used to develop a purposeful and measurable action plan for diversity and inclusion efforts in the Graduate Counseling Programs. These actions are monitored as part of the Graduate Counseling Programs' ongoing program evaluation process, with assessment of current progress in meeting diversity/inclusion goals disseminated to stakeholders as part of our annual program reports.

### **Progress Report August 2023**

Policies and Procedures: all outcomes have been met.

Representation in Leadership: all outcomes have been met.

Recruitment and Retention:

- ***Increase enrollment and diversity in student populations through targeted marketing plan that includes recruitment and retention of underrepresented populations in both the counseling profession and in higher education.*** Progress on this outcome is continuously monitored, with adjustment to the targeted marketing plan in response to enrollment trends. Grant funding provided financial resources to assist Graduate Counseling students with defraying the cost of professional development, particularly during clinical field placements. The Graduate Counseling Program faculty intends to continue apply for a minimum of one grant per year to support Graduate Counseling students.

Diversity and Inclusion in Curriculum:

- ***Increase opportunities for application of multicultural competencies across the MA and PhD programs.*** Opportunities for program and university activities that build on the diversity exposure and awareness experiences are identified each academic year, with an emphasis on service learning. These activities enrich the diversity of experiences of students while benefiting the needs of disadvantaged groups in the community.
- ***Offer intentional activities to increase both awareness of and exposure to diversity, both inside the University and in engagement with larger communities.*** The Graduate Counseling Program faculty have increased leadership and collaborative roles in the larger Waynesburg University community to support diversity and belonging initiatives. This involvement includes collaboration in institutional assessment and advancement, grant funding opportunities that can increase opportunities for a diverse university community, and initiatives to provide support to veteran and active military students. This outcome will continue to be assessed each year.

## **PROGRAM EVALUATION DATA AND ANALYSIS**

### **Applicant and Student Demographics**

Applications to the Master of Arts in Counseling program were higher while the PhD applications were slightly in the 2022-2023 academic year compared to the 2021-2022 academic year. Incoming enrollments were consistent with enrollment rates from the previous academic year:

the Master of Arts in Counseling program enrolled 24 incoming students for the Fall 2023 cohort, while the PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision program enrolled four incoming students. Demographic information related to applicants are provided in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1 Applicant Demographics for Fall 2023 Entry**

	<b>MA Counseling</b>	<b>PhD</b>
<b>Total Number of Applicants</b>	24	4
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	25%	0%
Female	71%	100%
<b>Race and Hispanic/Latino Origin*</b>		
American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific	0%	0%
Asian	0%	0%
Black or African American	13%	25%
Hispanic or Latino	8%	0%
White	83%	75%
<b>Median Age</b>	24	34.5

*\*These numbers reflect students who self-identified for each racial/ethnic category. Applicants were able to indicate more than one racial/ethnic identity.*

The PhD enrollment for 2022-2023 was 30 students, with 18 students enrolled in pre-dissertation courses. One student completed the PhD program between September 2022 and August 2023. The PhD program saw a lower retention rate this year of 85%, which reflects an unexpected number of withdrawals from the first-year cohort during the Fall 2022 semester (3 withdrawals/dismissals out of 30 students). The combined MA enrollments for 2022-2023 were 54 students, including full and part-time students enrolled as first and second year students. Fifteen students graduated from the MA program in Spring 2023. Retention rates remain positive for the MA Counseling program with a rate of 88% (5 withdrawals/ dismissals out of 42 students).

### **Key Performance Indicators**

Program faculty systematically assess each student's progress throughout the program by identifying key performance indicators of student learning in each of the eight core areas for the Master of Arts in Counseling program as well as in each student's respective specialty area. Additionally, key performance indicators (KPIs) are identified in each of the five doctoral core areas for the Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision program. A KPI related to counselor disposition is also assessed throughout the M.A. and Ph.D. programs.

The primary use of KPIs is to assess and monitor student development across a program of study. Ratings for each KPI are evaluated in context of the course of study; there are three to five measurement points for each KPI. It is expected that most students would receive a "2" rating during earlier courses, moving to a "3" rating by the end of their studies. Ratings of "1" would not be expected beyond the first measurement point for each standard area; receiving a "1" at any

point beyond this first measurement point would be an indicator of potential concerns. Ratings of “4” are not expected to be a common occurrence and would indicate an area of particular strength for a student beyond expectations for that stage in counselor/counselor educator development. Average KPI ratings for the 2022-2023 academic year can be found in Tables 2.2 and 2.3 below.

**Table 2.2 Average M.A. KPI Ratings 2022-2023 Academic Year**

CACREP Area	Measurement Point				
	Point 1	Point 2	Point 3	Point 4	Point 5
Professional Counseling Orientation & Ethical Practice	1.98	1.62	2.67	3.00	3.27
Social & Cultural Diversity	1.88	1.63	3.10	3.00	3.00
Human Growth & Development	2.11	2.90	3.07		
Career Development	2.38	3.00	3.07		
Counseling & Helping Relationships (Knowledge)	2.13	2.05	3.07		
Counseling & Helping Relationships (Skills)	2.25	2.11	3.00		
Group Counseling & Group Work	2.00	2.62	3.19	3.07	
Assessment & Testing	1.92	2.60	3.07		
Research & Program Evaluation	2.24	2.50	3.27		
Addiction Counseling	2.68	3.00	3.00		
Clinical Mental Health Counseling	1.90	2.80	3.22		
Disposition	2.63	2.71	3.00	3.33	

**Table 2.3 Average Ph.D. KPI Ratings 2022-2023 Academic Year**

CACREP Area	Measurement Point			
	Point 1	Point 2	Point 3	Point 4
Counseling	3.00	2.60	2.40	3.50
Supervision	2.75	2.00	2.60	3.17
Teaching	2.75	2.33	2.20	3.50
Research & Scholarship	2.00	2.60	3.33	3.00
Leadership & Advocacy	2.00	2.60	3.00	3.00
Disposition	3.50	2.60	2.80	3.00

Average ratings across M.A. and Ph.D. programs are consistent with expectations and demonstrated student mastery of targeted knowledge/skills by the completion of the program. A pattern of lower ratings across all KPIs was noted for some groups of students; action planned is to continue monitoring progress for each cohort and address student engagement with online learning tools and online courses.



**Course Evaluations**

Course evaluations serve as an opportunity for students to provide feedback on courses and instructors. These evaluations are reviewed on a regular basis and used to inform continuous improvement of courses as well as ongoing instructor training and support.

**Site Supervisor Evaluations**

The Master of Arts Program asks site supervisors to complete two different evaluations each semester to assess practicum and internship student field experiences. Midterm evaluations indicate that both practicum students and interns are consistently rated “Above Expectations” across clinical areas. Using the Counselor Competencies Scale - Revised (CCS-R), site supervisors provided an average rating of 4.42 for students enrolled in field placement courses in 2022-2023. A combined assessment of these averages indicated that students were demonstrating competence in counseling knowledge, skills, and disposition.

At the doctoral level, site supervisor and student self-evaluations for field experiences in counseling, supervision, and teaching are given twice per semester during each field experience course. Counseling ratings use a 5-point rating scale consistent with the MA Site Supervisor evaluation. PhD students consistently scored “Above Expectations” for counseling skills. Supervision and teaching evaluations use a ranged rating scale: Exemplary (9 points), Proficient (6-8 points); Emerging (3-5 points), and Unsatisfactory (0-2 points). Waynesburg PhD students were consistently rated as “proficient” in both teaching and supervision field experiences in the 2022-2023 academic year. This indicates that doctoral students usually and extensively demonstrate indicators of progress in teaching and supervision skills within their field experience placements.

**Service and Professional Development Activities**

Waynesburg University educates students to make connections between faith, learning and serving so they might faithfully transform their communities and the world. The following provides a brief summary of activities for this academic year.

**Table 2.4 Service Activities Report**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Faculty</b>
11/2022	Narcan Drive Thru: Overdose Prevention Kit distribution	5	1
3/2023	Graduate Counseling Programs sponsored a team and volunteered for the Out of Darkness walk at Waynesburg University.	9	2
4/2023	Individual advocacy projects – CNS 608 course assignment	6	

Waynesburg University students and faculty were well represented in local, state, and national conferences. Professional development workshops were provided throughout the academic year to both our student body and counseling professionals in the community.

**Graduate Counseling Exit Survey Results Spring 2023**

Master of Arts in Counseling exit survey data is collected from students upon completion of their degree each year. The MA Counseling Exit Survey uses a five-point rating scale, with 1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Satisfactory, 4 = Very Good, and 5 = Excellent. PhD exit survey data is collected from students upon completion of their doctoral degree in a given semester. The Ph.D. Counselor Education and Supervision Exit Survey uses a five-point rating scale, with 1 = Very Dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Somewhat Satisfied, 4 = Satisfied, and 5 = Very Satisfied. One student completed their doctoral studies in the Counselor Education & Supervision program during this evaluation period (September 2022-August 2023).

Average ratings by students who graduated in the 2022-2023 Academic Year were in the “Very Good”/”Satisfied” (4) to “Excellent”/”Very Satisfied” (5) range for program policies and governance as well as faculty items. Ratings of university resources were somewhat lower, with responses between “Satisfactory”/”Somewhat Satisfied” (3) and “Very Good”/”Satisfied” (4) for most items. Programmatic changes were implemented to address utilization and integration of university resources into Graduate Counseling courses to help increase student success.

The results of this survey indicated that recent graduates held an overall favorable view of their Graduate Counseling Program experience. The responses by 2023 graduates were generally consistent with responses from previous graduate cohorts, indicating that the Graduate Counseling Programs continues to provide a quality education in a supportive environment. PhD graduate ratings of doctoral content areas were consistent with averages of past years. MA graduate ratings of content areas were consistently higher than average, with the exception of research and program evaluation. This continues to be a focus area for the MA Counseling program.

### **Alumni Survey**

Alumni from the Master of Arts in Counseling program are surveyed every three years. The most recent survey was distributed in 2021, and these results were reported in the 2020-2021 Annual Report. The Ph.D. Counselor Education & Supervision program had its first graduates in 2018. In August 2022, the first alumni survey for this program was distributed to the 18 Ph.D. alumni. These results were reported in the 2021-2022 Annual Report. We look forward to providing the next round of results in the 2023-2024 Annual Report.

### **Graduate Counseling Program Site Supervisor and Employer Survey**

Data is collected at least once every three years. Surveys were last sent out in Summer 2022; our next scheduled survey distribution is Summer 2025.

## MA PROGRAM DATA AS IT RELATES TO PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

*1) To instill in students a respect for the dignity, integrity and humanity of all those they serve in their counseling activities, reflected in competent counseling that is guided by the ethical principles of the American Counseling Association and the values inherent in Waynesburg University's Christian heritage.*

Dispositional and cultural key performance indicator ratings indicate that students are aware of and demonstrating respect for the dignity, integrity and humanity of others as it relates to counseling and multicultural competencies. Graduates rate multiculturalism content as “Very Good” to “Excellent,” suggesting that respect for cultural diversity is well integrated into counseling coursework. Similarly, MA Counseling alumni rated “Very Good” to “Excellent” for their ability to apply multicultural competencies and counseling diverse populations content as well as for ethics in counseling. Site supervisors and employers indicate that Waynesburg University students are well-versed in counseling practice, professionalism, and multicultural competencies.

*2) To encourage students to maintain adequate self-awareness, emotional health and moral integrity in order to enhance their responsiveness to the needs of others.*

Counselor potential ratings scales are used for the initial two semesters of a student's program to help highlight areas of growth and strength. These have been used to bring student self-awareness regarding concerns, with targeted advising and development to encourage continued growth. Key performance indicators in disposition and professional orientation indicate that students are continuing to develop skills as reflective counselors with integrity. Graduate student exit surveys indicated sustained satisfaction with faculty mentorship for professional and personal development, reflecting continued efforts in this area. Site supervisor evaluations indicate that students are responsive to supervision and demonstrate high ethical conduct in their field placements, while employers and site supervisors consistently rate interns/graduates as above average for professionalism and interpersonal skills. A program-wide event was held online in the Fall 2022 semester to increase student skills and activities specific to self-care. This event was well-attended and met with positive feedback.

*3) To develop students with the knowledge and skills to be effective counselors, as outlined by CACREP's eight core areas of counselor training.*

Counselor development related to each core area of counselor training was measured through student performance in courses, site supervisor assessments, candidacy, and key performance indicators. Results in all these areas were favorable and indicated expected growth as students moved through the program. Site supervisors continue to rate Waynesburg University practicum students as “acceptable” to “above expectations” and Waynesburg University interns as “above expectations” to “far above expectations.” Key performance indicators and course evaluations provided data that indicated the program was effectively addressing CACREP Standards as outlined in each course. Likewise, site supervisors and employers rated Master of Arts in Counseling interns/graduates as slightly higher than average in terms of clinical preparedness and academic knowledge base.

Course evaluations and exit interview survey results indicated that students continue to find the Research Design & Program Evaluation content area to be the most challenging area of their program. This content area was refocused across the curriculum during the 2020-2021 academic year to support ongoing development of knowledge and skills via scaffolded course activities throughout the curriculum. The full impact of those changes is captured in the 2022-2023 academic year, as those students were able to experience content changes more so than previous students.

*4) To engage students as active servant leaders in their communities by applying and obtaining knowledge and skills in service opportunities that address the specific social and systemic needs of the communities they serve.*

Waynesburg MA Counseling students have consistently applied for NBCC fellowships, scholarships, and conference presentation opportunities through mentorship and encouragement by faculty.

The Graduate Counseling Programs participated in continued service work through multiple activities throughout the academic year, and have seen an increase in student participation through programs such as the Behavioral Healthcare Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) program. The Graduate Counseling Programs continues to make use of grant funding to support the engagement of students within rural and underserved communities.

## **PHD PROGRAM DATA AS IT RELATES TO PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

*1) To build upon the knowledge and skills received in master's level CACREP accredited degree programs (or the equivalent) through advanced studies in: Ethical and legal considerations in counselor education and supervision; Theories pertaining to the principles and practice of counseling, career development, group work, systems, consultation, and crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events; theories and practices of counselor supervision; instructional theory and methods relevant to counselor education; pedagogy relevant to multicultural issues and competencies, including social change theory and advocacy action planning; design, implementation, and analysis of quantitative and qualitative research; models and methods of assessment and use of data.*

Key performance indicators, field experience evaluations, and site supervisor/employer surveys demonstrated that PhD students continue to meet or go beyond expectations for advanced studies in the areas outlined in this program objective. Exit survey results remained consistent with past academic years, indicating that graduates of the PhD program believed the content of their doctoral studies was “Very Good to Excellent” across all five of the core areas: counseling, supervision, teaching, research, and leadership & advocacy. This was echoed by PhD alumni in their ratings of the program.

*2) To provide rigorous studies and experiences that prepare graduates for leadership roles in counseling, counseling research, counselor education, supervision, and advocacy.*

Conference attendance and presentations have begun to increase again in reflection of changes to the COVID-19 pandemic. Program faculty have created a modest professional development fund

to help offset the cost of conference attendance and remove the financial barrier for continued doctoral student professional development and leadership. Mentorship continues to be emphasized as an interest for the doctoral program. This is reflected in alumni suggestions for mentorship by other doctoral students as well as individual cohort feedback.

Doctoral students were invited to participate in research and course development opportunities within the Graduate Counseling Programs to enhance their skills and experiential learning. In response to KPI ratings, student feedback, and faculty input, the aforementioned shifts in PhD curricula were made.

*3) To provide studies and experiences that emphasize a culturally competent and social justice perspective of leadership in counseling, counselor education, supervision, and research.*

Cultural competence and social justice perspectives of leadership are embedded throughout the PhD program courses and activities, and this is reflected in the program data collected this academic year. PhD graduates, alumni, and site supervisors/employers consistently gave high ratings for cultural competence across the areas of doctoral education. Doctoral candidates demonstrated the ability to address culturally competent responses across written and oral comprehensive examinations, and key performance indicators identified student progress in dispositional and leadership standards related to cultural competence. Consistent with previous years, dissertation topics proposed in this academic year incorporated needs or gaps within specific targeted counseling populations. The Graduate Counseling faculty continue to consider the opportunities available for doctoral students to emphasize culturally competent and social justice perspectives of leadership. As such, the department has agreed to make substantive changes to the comprehensive examination process in the 2023-2024 academic year.

*4) To provide learning experiences for students to ethically and competently integrate Christian principles into their personal and professional career development.*

The Advanced Specialty in Christian and Spiritual Counseling is offered to doctoral students as an additional opportunity for integrating Christian principles ethically and competently. Site supervisor/employer surveys as well as alumni surveys indicate that doctoral students are prepared to ethically and professionally integrate principles of Christianity into their personal and professional career development, in line with the mission of Waynesburg University. Students, graduates, and alumni continued to emphasize the value of the program faculty, who actively model the integration of these principles in personal and professional development.

*5) To engage students as active servant leaders in their communities by applying knowledge and skills from courses to service opportunities that address the specific social and systemic needs of the communities they serve.*

Dissertation topics proposed in the past academic year clearly targeted specific community and professional needs, with clear implications for impact on the counseling profession. In response to student feedback, a process was developed to include research, leadership, and advocacy activities as part of the CNS 665 Internship field experience; students were incentivized to engage in these activities during internship semesters. The new Clinical Supervision Certificate

program has fostered interest among doctoral students' research agenda. In fact, one student is in the process of conducting a qualitative research study to explore the lived experience of those who participated in the certificate program. Another student's dissertation focuses on the self-efficacy of clinical supervisors. As we approach the 2024 BHWET Regional Counseling Symposium, students are encouraged to take an active role symposium as an opportunity to provide professional development for behavioral healthcare professionals in the community. Alumni indicated feeling prepared for leadership in the professional community, and this leadership quality was identified as much higher than average by site supervisors and employers.

### **PROGRAM MODIFICATIONS IN RESPONSE TO PROGRAM DATA:**

1. In response to student feedback, KPI ratings, exit interviews, and faculty observations, the Graduate Counseling Programs continue to assess course effectiveness and student engagement as it relates to changes in instructional formats, with an emphasis on maintaining high standards in online learning. Core faculty have not only previously participated in training offered by Waynesburg University's online learning team to enhance strategies for student engagement with online courses but has also welcomed this team into the College Teaching and Methods of Counselor Education classroom to enhance significant learning experiences among the PhD students. Training for adjunct faculty and doctoral students is offered on a regular basis to support the transition to increasingly online educational formats, with structured opportunities and collaboration with the Waynesburg University Online Learning Team.
2. As a continuation of the action in 2022-2023, in response to Master of Arts in Counseling and PhD Counselor Education & Supervision exit surveys, KPI ratings, as well as faculty and advisory boards input, specific courses throughout the MA and PhD curricula continue to be utilized as opportunities to embed utilization of university resources such as the Writing Center and Eberly Library. Connections between faith and learning as well as culturally competency has been infused into course work at all levels. The intention is to increase and normalize utilization of university resources to help students in their academic journey, while fostering empathy.
3. In response to student feedback, KPI ratings, exit interviews, and advisory board input, the following curriculum changes are being introduced in the 2023-2024 Academic Year:
  - a. In the PhD program, CNS 606 College Teaching and Methods of Counselor Education was moved to the first semester of doctoral studies. This allows students to gain foundational knowledge to not only support their evolving andragogy but to prepare them for teaching assistant experience in the upcoming semesters. The PhD program has also voted to replace CNS 626 Advanced Group Counseling with CNS 617 Service and Leadership in Counselor Education and Supervision. Opportunities for research, service, and advocacy within the Graduate Counseling Programs, Waynesburg University, and community partners are now woven into multiple courses throughout the doctoral program. The PhD

Research KPI has been revised to more effectively track student development with research and publication throughout the program.

- b. In the Master of Arts in Counseling program, program faculty voted to remove CNS 507 Introduction to Mental Disorders from the required curriculum. CNS 506 Lifespan Development will now be offered as a first semester course, with a new course focusing on Child & Adolescent Counseling offered in the summer semester. This shift is in response to feedback and profession trends calling for focused training in working with children and adolescents. This course will also help to prepare students for participation in the Behavioral Healthcare Workforce Training and Education (BHWET) program, which includes financial and professional development benefits for students and site supervisors.
4. To increase opportunities for engagement with medically underserved and rural communities, the Graduate Counseling Programs revamped the interprofessional (IPE) workshop series. Today, the IPE workshops are increasing interactive allowing for immersive learning experiences. We welcome experts in the field to collaborate with WU graduate counseling programs prompting ongoing professional growth and development of aspiring counselors to work with marginalized groups.