2008-09 Planning and Review Committee
Consultant Recommendation

I. Degree: M.S. in Marriage and Family Therapy

Date of Review: Feb 6, 2009

Program Director: Bruce P. Kuehl, Ph.D.

PRC Consultant: Nancy Schofield

Purpose of the Review: To assess the quality of the M.S. in Marriage and Family Therapy program as part of the seven-year review cycle required of all degree programs at UW-Stout.

Committee Findings: The PRC recommends continuation of this program through the next scheduled review in 2015-2016 and that the recommendations made by the committee be implemented.

II. Abstract:

The M.S. in Marriage and Family Therapy program admits twelve well qualified students each year. This cohort moves together through the two academic years of the program. The MFT program is an intentional mix of coursework and extensive clinical experience. A program revision was completed in 2007. The program has enjoyed continual accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) since 1977.

Graduates of UW-Stout's MFT program are well qualified to provide couple and family therapy. They automatically meet the licensing requirements of Wisconsin and Minnesota, as well as many other states. MFT graduates have been successful in securing jobs in their profession and consistently obtain excellent ratings from their employers.

Process Followed for Current Review:

The PRC Chair met with the Dean, Program Director and Chair of the primary department to discuss the review process. The PRC consultant met with the Program Director in early October to review the procedures and offer assistance. Data regarding several aspects of the program was collected from students, key instructors within and outside the department, program committee members and program graduates through surveys. The data was analyzed and returned to the Program Director and PRC members. The Program Director submitted his self-study report, received input from the consultant and presented the report to the PRC on Dec. 5, 2008. The consultant’s recommendation report was discussed and approved by the PRC on Feb 6, 2009. This report was forwarded to the Dean for her response. The PRC reviewed and accepted the Dean’s response, and forwarded the report to the Faculty Senate for approval.

III. Previous Review 2000-2001:

The previous PRC review of the M.S. in Marriage and Family Therapy program was conducted during academic year 2000-2001. That report was written by Sue Foxwell and Ana Vande Linde.
Previous Recommendations for Program Director and Dean:

1. The Department Chair and program staff should develop a plan to hire more female staff, preferably as tenure track. The Dean should oversee this process and provide necessary resources for this process. (Recommendation for the Program Director and Dean.)

2008-09 Summation of Consultant: This issue was continued from the 1993-94 review. Gender balance of MFT clinical faculty was achieved in 2003 and has continued. Relative parity now exists with four of nine faculty being female.

2. The Program Director and key instructors should review curriculum and course content for diversity concepts; analyzing and determining where best to infuse these concepts; look at hiring a consultant (external to program) for outside point of view. (Recommendation for the Program Director.)

2008-09 Summation of Consultant: The program revision in 2007 included a focus on this issue. As a result fourteen of eighteen courses now include aspects of diversity.

The Program Director notes in his report to PRC that these changes have been effective “as evidenced by the program specific graduate survey: 100% of respondents indicated ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’ for all items that evaluated the program’s attention to diversity.”

3. The Program Director and key instructors should review curriculum of the “cultural anthropology” and “cultural competency” course to analyze if both are needed in the program to achieve the goals they are set out to accomplish. The Program Director should review the principles and concepts of each course to ensure clarity and non duplication, working with the instructors of each of these courses. (Recommendation for the Program Director.)

2008-09 Summation of Consultant: This has not been addressed and continues to be a serious concern.

4. The Program Director and clinical staff should examine how students are being initiated into the therapy (hands on) sessions and determine ways to assist students in the transition from theory into practice. (Recommendation for the Program Director.)

2008-09 Summation of Consultant: A number of instruments have been developed or enhanced to assist students in the transition from theory into practice: “Transition to Practicum” evaluation, “Practicum and Clinical Services Center Manual” and a “Clinic Orientation”. The students are screened for preparedness, required to participate in a mandatory orientation and to observe at the clinic, and encouraged to work in “teams” from behind the mirror.

5. Now that the space has been secured for the clinical staffing (344 VR), adequate furniture needs to be obtained. The department chair, Dean, and Program Director should work together to develop and implement a plan for purchase. (Recommendation for the Program Director and Dean.)

2008-09 Summation of Consultant: Adequate furniture and equipment has been obtained for the clinical staffing room.
IV. 2008-2009 Program Review:

Program Strengths

1. The program faculty is outstanding. They are highly skilled and dedicated, with impressive credentials. They have strong connections to agencies and experience in many areas of practice where new students may become employed. (Student comments, Advisory Committee, Program Director’s report)

2. The combination of coursework and clinical experience is the epitome of the Stout model of hands-on learning. It is very successful in producing graduates who are well prepared, well rounded, effective practitioners. The small cohort community supports the students through their rigorous program. (Student and faculty comments, employers, Program Director’s report)

3. The program is managed with thought, care and oversight from the documentation, through the coursework and clinical experience, and continues with extensive follow-up surveys of students and alumni. (Student comments, Advisory Committee, Program Director’s report)

4. Continual accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) since 1977 is recognition of the quality of the program and a testament to the ongoing efforts for evaluation and improvement. (Program Director’s report)

Issues of Concern

1. An essential faculty position was lost due to retirement and is now being covered by an academic staff member with excellent experience and credentials, but only for a limited term. This is only a temporary solution because these credentials are extremely rare to find. This puts the program at high risk when this academic staff member is no longer available.

2. The concern about the overlap in curriculum of the cultural anthropology and cultural competency courses was noted in the 2000-2001 review and has not diminished. The unnecessary repetition or overlap of these courses, or the suggestion to remove (or change) ANTH 620, was specifically noted by the majority of the students who responded to the survey. (This issue was also noted by faculty.) The significant changes across the program curriculum to address diversity are relevant to the continued use of this course in the program. (Program Director)

3. Students expressed a number of individual concerns about curricular issues. There were also several procedural issues specifically related to the program and clinic experience. The Program Director has already responded to many of these issues.

Recommendations for the Program Director

1. Continue to make a strong case for action that more securely addresses the serious loss of necessary faculty expertise.

2. Address the issues concerning the cultural anthropology course.

Recommendations for the Chair of the Human Development and Family Studies Department

3. Create a plan to address the serious loss of necessary faculty expertise.
Recommendations for the Dean of the College of Education, Health and Human Services

4. Find the resources to address the serious loss of necessary faculty expertise.