

## 2002-03 Planning and Review Committee

### Consultant Report

#### I. **Program Review:** M.S. Guidance and Counseling, K-12 School Counseling

**Program Director:** Dr. Denise Zirkle

**PRC Consultants:** Rajiv Asthana, Mary Hopkins-Best and Sue Foxwell

**Date of Review:** February 7, 2003

**Purpose of Review:** The review was conducted to assess the quality of the M.S. Guidance and Counseling degree program as part of the ongoing seven-year review cycle of every UW-Stout program.

**Committee Findings:** The committee recommends continuation of this program. The committee recommends that the student survey be conducted again in fall 2004 with a subsequent status report by the program director addressing the student concerns noted in this report.

#### II. **Abstract:**

The M.S. Guidance and Counseling prepares students to be educational guidance and counseling professionals in the school setting. UW-Stout is approved to endorse individuals who meet the requirements of this degree program for Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction certification as School Counselors. Students obtaining K-12 licensure complete a minimum of 48 credits of coursework in theoretical and practical approaches to counseling, research, student assessment, consultation, career development, and developmental guidance. Students without prior teaching licensure additionally complete a minimum of 15 credits of deficiency coursework in developmental psychology, educational psychology, curriculum development, disability foundations, multiculturalism, and educational foundations. Numerous components of the program involve experiential learning, with the culminating experience being a school-based counseling practicum under the supervision of a certified school counselor.

#### III. **Process Followed for Current Review:**

The PRC Chair, PRC Vice Chair, and Associate Vice Chancellor met with the dean, program director, and chair of the primary department to discuss the review process. The PRC consultants also met with the program director to review the procedures and provide feedback on the draft report. Data regarding several aspects of the program were collected from students, key instructors within and outside the department, program advisory committee members and program graduates through surveys. The data was analyzed and returned to the program director and PRC members. The program director then completed the self-study, presented the report to the PRC, and responded to questions. The chair of the primary department also attended the presentation and responded to questions from the PRC. The PRC discussed the program report and the consultants wrote this recommendation report. This report was forwarded to the dean and the department chair.

#### IV. **Previous Review:**

The last PRC review was conducted in spring 1996. A major revision of the program was completed in spring 1999. A significant increase in the program size since the last review and a

decrease in the number of permanent faculty had resulted in a negative impact on the program quality. The program has successfully met most of the PRC recommendations from the last review as summarized below:

1. One program director has served for consecutive years.
2. To better align the program with the CACREP accreditation requirements, the minimum practicum hours have been increased from 300 to 600, the minimum credits for a K-12 Counseling degree have been increased to 48, and the 9-month internship for non-teacher students has been eliminated. The remaining unresolved issues concerning the accreditation are related to the administrative support and decreasing the faculty/student ratios.
3. The K-12 Counseling concentration moved up to the status of a program and differentiated itself from the Mental Health Counseling program.
4. One- and three-year follow-up surveys have been conducted each year since 1997, and the results used as a basis for program improvement.
5. The 1999 program revision addressed several goals pertinent to CACREP accreditation as well as the DPI standards to keep the program current with professional trends.
6. To accommodate part-time working students, courses are offered on a rotating cycle so that all the courses meet either in the evening, summer or weekends at least once per year. The Wausau weekend series will be phased out in 2004 as most Wausau students reside closer to Stout and would be able to take weekend courses on campus.
7. The majority of student concerns related to the last PRC survey have been addressed. The remaining problem of course duplication is being addressed by the faculty by closely following course objectives and collaboratively examining the course content to eliminate duplication.

## V. Program Review

### Program Strengths:

1. *Faculty:* All data suggest that for the most part, faculty are knowledgeable, bring experience to the classroom, are available and approachable, and are up-to-date. *Source:* student, faculty, advisory committee surveys and program director report.
2. *Experiential component of program:* Students are receiving appropriate opportunity to apply what they are learning via laboratory work and practicum. *Source:* student surveys and program director report.
3. *Availability and flexibility of coursework:* Due to the program size and willingness of faculty to offer off-campus, evening, and weekend courses, all required courses are offered a minimum of twice a year and at least once a year in a non-traditional format. All coursework other than laboratory courses are offered in a weekend format minimally once every two years. *Source:* student and faculty surveys and program director.
4. *Strong curriculum:* The curriculum is relevant and up-to-date. *Source:* student and faculty surveys and program director report.
5. *Reputation:* The program enjoys a reputation as one of the premier programs in the Midwest. *Source:* Number of applicants to the program and student surveys.
6. *Students:* The large number of applicants allows faculty to admit students with outstanding credentials. *Source:* program director.

### Issues of Concern:

1. *Lack of Academic Rigor and Accountability in selected classes:* Many students and key faculty expressed concern with low academic standards and content, and grade inflation, in some

critical classes. As a result, graduates were concerned about their ability to perform critical job functions. *Source:* program director and student and faculty surveys.

2. *Course Duplication:* Overlap was noted between some of the required courses, notably the Elementary Guidance and PK-12 Development Guidance courses, and the Career Development and Career Transition courses. *Source:* student surveys.
3. *Competencies Needed:* Students noted a need for more emphasis on classroom management, curriculum development, counseling at the middle school level, and diversity. *Source:* student and faculty surveys, program director, and follow-up studies.
4. *Faculty Vacancy:* There is currently a faculty vacancy that needs to be filled with an individual who has the terminal degree and school counseling experience, hopefully at the middle school level. The current faculty are stretched to their limit and the current student/staff ratio is inappropriate for a graduate program. DPI accreditation and future CACREP accreditation are at stake. *Source:* program director, chair and faculty survey.

#### **Recommendations for the Program Director:**

1. In collaboration with the program advisory committee and faculty, review the program and all coursework for possible revision to eliminate duplication noted in Concern #2 and incorporate the content noted in Concern #3.
2. It is understood that personnel changes should alleviate Concerns #1 and #2. However, student and faculty surveys should be conducted to provide data necessary to determine if these concerns have been lessened. Provide a status report in fall 2004 addressing Concerns #1 and #2.

#### **Recommendations for the Chair, Department of Education; School Counseling; School Psychology:**

1. Advocate for filling the current School Counseling faculty vacancy.
2. Appoint a lead instructor for each of the required School Counseling courses housed in the department to assure continuity when multiple or adjunct instructors teach those courses.
3. Review syllabi of required courses taught by adjunct instructors to assure that approved course content is being taught.

#### **Recommendation for the Dean:**

1. Appoint a committee to analyze the resources and program revisions needed to seek CACREP accreditation. The program director should chair this committee.
2. Advocate for the approval and resources necessary to fill the current School Counseling faculty vacancy.