Assessment in the Major

M.S. Mental Health Counseling

Prepared by

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Program Director

Academic Year 2009 - 2010
Assessment in the Major

M.S. Mental Health Counseling 2009 – 2010

Three data sources were used for this Assessment in the Major. Final evaluations of student first and second semester performance in internship (COUN-794 Mental Health Counseling Internship) were used to assess student preparation level for the internship experience, as well as their overall performance throughout the experience. Also, student self-evaluations of their skill level at the end of the internship experience were examined. As the internship is considered to be the capstone experience for students in the program, evaluation of skill level throughout the internship experience is judged to be a strong indicator of student preparation for entry into the mental health counseling field. Finally, the results of the Mental Health Counseling Program comprehensive exam, which reflects student academic performance at or near the completion of the program, were addressed.

1. Methods Used to Assess Learning Outcomes

   a. On-site internship supervisor first and second semester final evaluation forms were used to gather data (see attached).

   b. Student self-evaluations of their skill level at the end of their internship experience (generally at the end of the program) were used (see attached).

   c. Outcomes of student comprehensive exams were utilized to assess academic performance and knowledge base at or near the end of the program.

2. Description of Administration of Assessments

Twenty-five students were assessed by their internship site supervisor during the past academic year in relation to their performance at the end of their first semester internship experience. Twenty-four students were assessed at the end of their second internship experience. The evaluations are done at the end of each semester internship experience with the site supervisor sitting with the student and explaining the evaluation results. Each student also did a self-evaluation of their abilities and internship performance at the end of the internship experience. The student self-evaluations are done privately at the end of the entire internship experience.

The comprehensive examination covers the core required courses in the Mental Health Counseling Program. Faculty teaching each course prepared questions to cover their course content. The exam was offered twice during the 2009–2010 academic year, near the end of the fall and the spring semester. Students near or at the completion of the academic part of their program signed up to take the exam. Students had three hours to complete the exam. Ten students took the
exam in the fall semester, and nine took it in the spring semester. Overall, eighteen of the nineteen students who took the exam passed.

3. Results of the Assessments

Responses to the first and second semester final internship forms, and to the student final self-assessment were indicated on a six-point Likert scale, with 0 = Unsatisfactory; 1 = Needs Substantial Improvement; 2 = Needs Some Improvement; 3 = Acceptable; 4 = Very Satisfactory; and 5 = Outstanding. Nineteen items were examined and grouped into two content areas: The means for the Inter/Intra Personal Competencies and Professional Core Competence for each of the nineteen items on the mid-term, final, and student self-evaluation were calculated and compared, as were grand means for the Inter/Intra Personal Competencies areas and Professional Core Competencies. A score of 5.0 (Outstanding) was the highest possible rating and a score of 0.0 (Unsatisfactory) was the lowest. A mean score of 3.5 for any item was considered minimally acceptable.

The comprehensive exam consisted of 96 multiple choice questions. A score of 70% or above was the cut-off point for passing or failing.

a. Mean scores at the end of the first semester for the nineteen items ranged from 3.85 to 4.64, well above the minimally acceptable level of 3.5. The overall mean for the Inter/Intra Personal Competencies (see Appendix A) was 4.48 and the Professional Core Competencies (see Appendix A) was 4.22. These scores indicate, at a personal level and at a professional skills level, that our students are viewed by their internship supervisors as well prepared to enter into and engage in their first internship experience. The lowest three scores were in areas of using the DSM-IV-TR to make client diagnosis (item 13), using psychological testing (item 14), and ability to utilize career information and career appraisal instruments (item 15). Similar to past years, a number of our site supervisors stated that little activity was done at the site in this area during the internship, and gave relatively low scores in these areas as a result.

b. Mean scores at the final internship evaluation for the nineteen items ranged from 4.11 to 4.80, all being well above the minimally acceptable level of 3.5. In particular, the three areas mentioned earlier (DSM-IV-TR diagnosis, psychological testing, career assessment) all but one item showed significant elevations in scores for the second semester (see table). The score ranking the use of psychological appraisal instruments improving from 3.90 to 4.20, the score ranking for DSM-IV diagnosis improved from 3.90 to 4.20, while scores ranking the ability to utilize career information and career appraisal instruments improved from 3.85 to 4.22. The overall mean for the Inter/Intra Personal Competencies items was 4.71, and for the Professional Core Competencies were 4.53. Overall,
the first and second semester evaluations indicate that our students are seen by their site supervisors as well prepared to enter the internship experience at both a personal and professional skills level. They are also able to use the experience to continue to grow and develop as professionals throughout the internship experience, and are highly regarded by their site supervisors throughout the experience.

c. Mean scores for student self-evaluations are generally in line with site supervisor scores, though lower. Scores on the nineteen items ranged from 3.46 to 4.46. The overall mean for the Inter/Intra Personal Competencies items was 4.26 and for the Professional Core Competencies were 3.98. Overall, the results appear to show a slight disconnect between the site supervisor evaluations and student self evaluations. Students seems to be rating themselves in a less positive light that what is observed by their supervisors.

d. Ten students took the comprehensive exam during the Fall 2008 semester, with nine passing and one failing. Nine students took the exam during the Spring 2009 semester, with all nine passing. Overall, eighteen of the nineteen students who took the exam passed. In each semester, all students who were preparing to graduate at the end of the semester passed the exam. From faculty observation, the exam seems to have worked well to differentiate those who worked to prepare for it from those who did not. Overall, the results of the comprehensive exam seem to indicate that students nearing the completion of their program, while needing to study and prepare, have integrated the information and knowledge received throughout their time in the program.

4. Description of Use or Plan to Use the Results

Overall, the data from the current assessment suggest that our students are well prepared academically and are well prepared clinically. They are doing well at their internship experiences, and are rated highly by their supervisors in all areas, both at the end of their first semester and at the completion of the experience. No major weaknesses were displayed as a result of the assessment process, neither for internship students nor for graduates of the program working in the field.

As stated above there seems to be some disconnect between the student perception of their abilities as a counselor and that of their supervisor. At some level this could be the reason for the significant increase in scores between the first and second semester supervisor evaluations as students were highly driven to develop in all areas of the profession. We will continue to monitor this dynamic in the future.

In terms of counseling skill development, three areas of relative weakness for students in terms of site supervisor ratings were in the areas of diagnosis and use
and interpretation of career and psychological tests. This is similar to the feedback received last year. In the past year both the assessment class and the diagnosis class have undergone extensive revision but in general the scores in these areas remain remarkably consistent. It should be noted that most internship sites do not require the use of either career or psychological assessment instruments which greatly influences the scoring of that domain. In regards to diagnosis, this area will be specifically monitored in internship classes and more training will be provided as it appears the classroom experience needs to be supplemented.

5. Description of Planned Changes in the Assessment Process

During the past year the Mental Health Counseling Program underwent an extensive revision in preparation for CACREP accreditation. As a part of this process a number of assessment measures have been added to the program. First internship has been split between a heavily supervised practicum course and a shortened but similar internship experience. Based on these changes, students will now be evaluated during the new counseling practicum (COUN 793) course and during internship (COUN 794). Furthermore, the assessment used for the Counseling Internship will be modified for the Fall semester of 2011.

The first offering of counseling practicum will be in the Spring semester of 2011 so these results will be presented in the Assessment in the Major report for the 2010-2011 academic year. The counseling practicum evaluation is presented in Appendix B.

Recently, the program surveyed the graduates from the past five years. Results of this survey were not available at the time of this writing and will be presented in the Assessment in the Major report for the 2010-2011 academic year. The program survey is presented in Appendix C.

6. Concluding Comments

There have been a number of significant changes in the Mental Health Counseling program in the past year. The entire program has been revised to meet national accreditations standards. At present we are enrolling our first cohort of students in the newly created Mental Health Counseling Practicum course which was the most significant course-related issue blocking our move toward accreditation. Finally, we have hired a new faculty member. For the first time in three years we have a stable core faculty which has allowed us to make significant movement toward the accreditation process. We are currently slated to submit the accreditation self study for review in the Spring of 2011. This process will be discussed and outlined in the Assessment in the Major report for 2010-2011.
## Summary of Internship Evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Supervisor’s First Semester Evaluation</th>
<th>Supervisor’s Final Evaluation</th>
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- **Inter/Intra Personal Competencies**
  - 4.48
  - 4.71
  - 4.26
  - +.23
  - (change) 4.65

- **Professional Core Competencies**
  - 4.22
  - 4.53
  - 3.98
  - +.31
  - (change) 3.68
Appendix A

Internship Assessment Forms
SITE SUPERVISOR’S STUDENT EVALUATION

Final

(Note: The questions asked on this form are the same ones as on the Student Self-evaluation form)

To be completed at the end of the semester or internship experience and submitted with the rest of the evaluation material to the University Internship Supervisor.

Name of Site Supervisor(s)___________________________________________________

Name of Student___________________________________________________________

Name of Internship Site_____________________________________________________

Address of Site______________________________ Phone # at Site_____________

Semester of Internship for Student (circle one)   First     Second     Third or Beyond

5 = Outstanding     2 = Needs some improvement
4 = Very satisfactory 1 = Needs substantial improvement
3 = Acceptable      0 = Unsatisfactory--no effort expended
NA = Does not apply in this internship setting

INTER/INTRA-PERSONAL COMPETENCIES

1. Demonstrated a spirit of cooperation with colleagues/supervisor(s).     5 4 3 2 1 0 NA
   Comments:

2. Demonstrated an ability to use effective interpersonal communication skills with colleagues/supervisors/clients.     5 4 3 2 1 0 NA
   Comments:

3. Accepted suggestions from supervisor(s) and was willing to make changes.     5 4 3 2 1 0 NA
   Comments:

4. Demonstrated an ability to handle stressful situations constructively.     5 4 3 2 1 0 NA
   Comments:

5. Indicated a consistent enthusiasm for the Internship position and the profession.     5 4 3 2 1 0 NA
   Comments:
6. Demonstrated awareness and an open-minded attitude about gender, racial, ethnic, religious and age-related issues which may affect professional interaction with clients, supervisors, colleagues and agency constituents.
Comments:

PROFESSIONAL CORE COMPETENCIES

7. Demonstrated the ability to initiate and complete a variety of tasks related to the professional work of the agency.
Comments:

8. Demonstrated the ability to effectively convey information orally as well as in writing.
Comments:

9. Demonstrated the ability to provide a clear rationale for professional interventions using current and acceptable theoretical, empirical and research-based formulations.
Comments:

10. Demonstrated knowledge and acceptance of agency's/institutions policies.
Comments:

11. Worked within the guidelines of professional ethics, statutes and federal laws.
Comments:

12. Consulted with supervisor(s) when faced with an ethical dilemma.
Comments:

13. Demonstrated an ability to use the DSM-IV to make client diagnoses.
Comments:

14. Demonstrated the ability to use and interpret psychological appraisal instruments with clients.
Comments:

15. Demonstrated the ability to utilize career information and career appraisal with clients.
Comments:
16. Demonstrated effective organizational and leadership abilities. Comments:

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<th>3</th>
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</table>

17. Demonstrated skills in group counseling, family and couples' counseling and consultation (specify and describe). Comments:

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>0</th>
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</table>

18. Demonstrated skills in individual counseling (i.e., developing a professional relationship with the client: empathy, rapport, attending skills, utilizing strategies appropriate to the client and the situation, goal definition, etc.). Comments:

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<th>Rating</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
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</table>

19. Demonstrated skills in consulting, i.e., working with parents, staff, other agencies, conducting in-service activities, workshop, etc.). Comments:

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### ADDITIONAL COMPETENCIES APPROPRIATE TO SETTING

20. (Write In) Comments:

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21. (Write In) Comments:

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22. (Write In) Comments:

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23. (Write In) Comments:

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</table>

Student Signature__________________________________________________________

Supervisor Signature_______________________________________________________

Date (month, day, year)____________________________________________________

INCLUDE THIS FORM WITH THE REST OF THE EVALUATION PACKET AND SEND OR BRING TO THE UNIVERSITY INTERNSHIP SUPERVISOR.
Appendix B

Practicum Assessment Form
Student Name: __________________________________________

University Supervisor: ___________________________________

Site Supervisor: __________________________________________

Semester: _______ Midterm Review Date: _______ Final Review Date: _______

For the student, please complete the following grid:

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<tr>
<td>Number of continuing clients</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of female clients</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of male clients</td>
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</table>

Complete the areas below if applicable:

| Number of clients less than 16 yrs of age |  |
| Number of clients over 50 years of age   |  |
| Number of American minority clients      |  |
| Number of clients with a disability      |  |

The following criteria (Counseling Process, Counseling Skills, Behavioral Elements, Therapeutic Relationship, Supervision, and Professionalism) are the counselor functions that are needed to develop and maintain a therapeutic relationship and to promote personal growth and wellness within our clients.

Each of the items listed below will be rated in the following likert scale.

0 = NOT APPLICABLE
1 = UNDEVELOPED AND/OR NEGATIVITLY IMPACTED SESSION
2 = SOME EVIDENCE OF DEVELOPMENT; NEED ADDITIONAL WORK PRACTICE
3 = FAIRLY DEVELOPED; STILL ISSUES WITH USE OR PRESENTATION
4 = USED EFFECTIVELY TO ENHANCE THE COUNSELING PROCESS AND/OR RELATIONSHIP
5 = HIGHLY DEVELOPED AND/OR WELL TIMED USE OF THE SKILLS
COUNSELING SKILLS

1) Paraphrasing/Reflection/Summary: from statements and on-verbal cues, the counselor accurately describes the client’s issues, affect, and behavior: a) Content  b) Feelings  c) Process  d) Non-Verbals
   Rating: ___________
   Notes:___________________________________________
       ____________________________________________
   ______________

2) Probes/Questions: the counselor’s statements result in the client providing additional information about his/her cognitions, behaviors, and/or feelings: a) Clarification  b) Open-ended questions  c) Close-ended questions
   Rating: ___________
   Notes:___________________________________________
       ____________________________________________
   ______________

3) Identifies the central issue(s); names the important concern(s) of the client
   Rating: ___________
   Notes:___________________________________________
       ____________________________________________
   ______________

4) Closure/ Termination: the counselor provides closure in each individual session, discusses termination in the sessions preceding the last session, and is intentional in bringing a positive end to the counseling process
   Rating: ___________
   Notes:___________________________________________
       ____________________________________________
   ______________

5) Self- Disclosure: uses appropriate self disclosure to enhance the counseling relationship
   Rating: ___________
   Notes:___________________________________________
       ____________________________________________
   ______________

6) Immediacy: the counselor addresses the client’s behavior in the “here and now”
   Rating: ___________
   Notes:___________________________________________
       ____________________________________________
   ______________

7) Identifies the Core Affect(s): names the central feeling(s) experienced by the client
   Rating: ___________
   Notes:___________________________________________
       ____________________________________________
   ______________

8) Explores and Tracks: the counselor stays with the client cognitively and affectively
9) **Goal Setting/Assigning Homework:** The counselor is able to work with the client to set meaningful goals and the counselor assigns homework that is both meaningful and beneficial to the client’s set goals.
   Rating: ________
   Notes: ____________________________________________________________
   ________________

10) **Confrontation:** include noticing discrepancies and challenging clients as appropriate
    Rating: ________
    Notes: ____________________________________________________________
    ________________

11) **Use of Metaphors:** counselor demonstrate the use of metaphor during session
    Rating: ________
    Notes: ____________________________________________________________
    ________________

**BEHAVIORAL ELEMENTS**

12) **Physical Presence:** the counselor’s body posture, facial expression, and gestures are natural and congruent with those of the client.
    Rating: ________
    Notes: ____________________________________________________________
    ________________

13) **Activity Level:** the counselor maintains a level of activity appropriate to the client’s activity level.
    Non-verbals: a) the counselor’s physical movements are appropriate to the client’s activity level during the counseling session, b) Voice: the counselor’s tone of voice and rate of speech are appropriate to the client’s present state and/or counseling session.
    Rating: ________
    Notes: ____________________________________________________________
    ________________

14) **Dress Code:** Dresses professionally/appropriately based on site guidelines
    Rating: ________
    Notes: ____________________________________________________________
    ________________

**THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP**
15) **Non-Defensive:** the counselor gives and receives feedback interactively with clients, peers, and supervisors in an appropriate, professional manner.
   Rating: ___________
   Notes: ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

16) **Supportive/Unconditional Positive Regard:** the counselor makes statements that accept the client’s cognitions, accepts the client’s behavior, and/or shares with the client that his/her feelings are not unusual.
   Rating: ___________
   Notes: ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

17) **Genuineness:** the counselor’s responses are sincere.
   Rating: ___________
   Notes: ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

18) **Respect for Cultural Needs:** shows appreciations for cultural and/or spiritual concerns.
   Rating: ___________
   Notes: ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

19) **Advanced Accurate Empathy:** the counselor’s responses add to the expression of the client in such a way as to express feelings at a level deeper than the client is able to express for himself/herself.
   Rating: ___________
   Notes: ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

20) **Transference and Counter transference:** Counselor is aware of transfer issues within counseling and discusses these issues with both client and/or supervisor.
   Rating: ___________
   Notes: ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

21) **Validates positive by identifying client’s strengths and resources**
   Rating: ___________
   Notes: ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

**SUPERVISION**
22) Feedback: Is open to feedback and demonstrates willingness to implement in counseling sessions
Rating: __________
Notes:_________________________________________________

23) Timeliness: arrives on time to supervision, notifies supervisor in a timely manner about any challenges with attendance. Keeps supervisor updated with regard to circumstances that affect supervision attendance.
Rating: __________
Notes:_________________________________________________

24) Participation in Supervision: actively participates in individual or group supervision. Is prepared with recordings of sessions and analysis of session other than those required
Rating: __________
Notes:_________________________________________________

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR:

25) Ethical: Demonstrates awareness of the ACA code of ethics, statues, and federal laws and uses these standards to guide practice.
Rating: __________
Notes:_________________________________________________

26) Paperwork: Completes all paperwork in a timely manner, maintains relevant client case notes, demonstrates understanding of documenting counseling sessions relevant to site requirements
Rating: __________
Notes:_________________________________________________

27) Video Supervision: Is prepared with recordings of sessions and analysis of session other than those required
Rating: __________
Notes:_________________________________________________

28) Writes and/or verbally expresses clearly the initial statement of problem(s)/issues, and the presenting goals, expressed by the client.
29) Demonstrates an ability to handle stressful situations constructively
   Rating: __________
   Notes:____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

30) Demonstrates an ability to use the DSM-IV to make client diagnoses.
   Rating: __________
   Notes:____________________________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________________________

GOALS FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:

Create 3 goals that you will focus on for the semester. Please revise these goals at midterm if needed.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Site Supervisor Signature: ___________________________ Date ____________
University Supervisor Signature: ___________________ Date ____________
Student Signature: _________________________________ Date ____________
Appendix C

Mental Health Counseling Program Evaluation
Please read each of the following questions. Either write in the answer or check the box that most describes your experience in the Mental Health field or within the Mental Health Counseling program.

1. When did you receive your degree?
   Semester and Year: ______________________

2. Since graduation, have you accepted an offer of employment in the mental health, or a related field?
   Yes: ___________              No: ___________

3. Following graduation from the mental health counseling graduate program, what was the duration of your job search before obtaining a mental-health-related job?
   0-3 months: __________
   4-6 months: __________
   7-12 months: __________
   13-24 months: __________
   Other, please specify:
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

4. Please identify your present work site, job title, whether you work part or full-time, and briefly describe your job duties
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________

5. How long have you been at your current job?
   0-6 months: __________
   7 months to 1 year: __________
   1-2 years: __________
   3 or more years: __________

6. Please share your present salary range.
   Below $20,000: __________
   $20,001-$30,000: __________
   $30,001-$40,000: __________
   $40,001 and above: __________
7. Please list other positions/jobs or work experiences you have had since graduation, progressing from the first upon graduation from the mental health counseling program to the most current.

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

8. Please respond to the following statement, "My current job is providing me with the opportunity to accrue the experiences necessary for licensure."

Yes:  
No:  
I am already licensed:  
I am not seeking licensure at this time:  
Other, please describe:

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

9. Please select the response that best reflects your opinion on the level of preparation provided by the UW-Stout Mental Health Counseling graduate program, as described by our program objectives:

Develop and demonstrate identity as a professional counselor

Superior Preparation: ____ Adequate Preparation: ____ Deficient Preparation: ____ Not sure: ____

Demonstrate an understanding of the roles and functions of professional counselors as leaders, advocates, collaborators, and consultants

Superior Preparation: ____ Adequate Preparation: ____ Deficient Preparation: ____ Not sure: ____

Articulate and comply with the counseling profession’s current code of ethics.

Superior Preparation: ____ Adequate Preparation: ____ Deficient Preparation: ____ Not sure: ____

Plan and implement counseling techniques, methods, and treatment approaches to assist the client in attaining optimal development.
Apply dynamics of group formation and processes in a variety of counseling settings.

Synthesize psychometric theory and concepts into the utilization and interpretation of appropriate assessment instruments.

Demonstrate an understanding of the cultural context of relationships, issues, and trends in a multicultural society and how these constructs impact the counseling profession.

Utilize the current diagnostic system to assess problems or symptom patterns, formulate clinical diagnoses, and plan and implement treatment.

Demonstrate an understanding of the major approaches and interventions utilized with clients with substance abuse problems and addictions.

Demonstrate an understanding of major theories and systems approaches used in couples, marriage and family therapy.

Articulate human development and career theories as they apply to the counseling profession.

Demonstrate an understanding of research practices, principles, data collection techniques and methodologies as they relate to the counseling profession.
Demonstrate an ability to use and access appropriate technology resources to enhance the counseling process

Superior Preparation: ____ Adequate Preparation: ____ Deficient Preparation: ____ Not sure: ____

10. Please feel free to share any additional comments or suggestions you may have regarding the improvement of the Mental Health Counseling Program. Topics may include but are not limited to: course work, program culture, supervision, practicum/internship, intellectual stimulation, thesis, personal growth, clinical problems etc.