

Department of Counselor Education - Academic Program Review  
Response to Site Team Report and Action Plan

It was with great pride that we received the official report of the Academic Program Review Site Team following their review and visit in January 2023. We have found this process to be thorough and rigorous, and this exercise has allowed the department to identify strengths and goals for the future.

---

In addition to the goals that the site-team has outlined, we would like to highlight several of the findings of the site-

*"The faculty are distinguished scholars who contribute positively to the profession's advancement."*

*"Additionally, their training approaches, at the master's and doctoral levels, appear to be well-connected to community and professional needs as their graduates are highly competitive applicants and sought out by many employers."*

*"Despite noted limited resources, the faculty are committed to each other and the university. This collective vision helps the program stand out and serves as a model for other programs in South Florida."*

*"Students discussed multiple research opportunities with multiple professors, enabling them to better understand their coursework and pathways to professions and research."*

*Great reputation – 90 quality applicants with minimal recruitment competing for 18 spots in their CMHC program."*

*Every single group we interviewed mentioned the amazing work done by Mikeala Kursell to make sure everything runs smoothly between faculty, students, and adjuncts within the program.*

---

The Department of Counselor Education, in response to the Academic Program Review Site Team report dated January 21, 2023, have developed the following goals:

1. Support the Maintenance of CACREP Accreditation

From the site team report:

*"Despite multiple competing programs in the area, the department's accreditation by CACREP*

one of the few CACREP-accredited programs in the area for all specialties. Several competing private institutions (Lynn University, Nova Southeastern, Palm Beach Atlantic, and South University) are in the process of becoming CACREP-accredited for the Clinical Mental Health Counseling track only. For the Clinical Rehabilitation, School Counseling, and Ph.D. programs, our department remains uniquely CACREP-accredited, with the closest comparable programs being in Miami, Orlando, or Tampa. This accreditation continues to be a strategic advantage, but is also necessary to maintain a competitive edge in the region. Our re-accreditation site visit will occur in the fall, and we hope to receive an 8-year re-accreditation from CACREP.

We must focus on re-

*"Additional pre- and post-award grant support to ensure that grants and related expenses, such as paying adjunct faculty when grants result in faculty course buyouts, are paid for in a timely manner."*

*"Discretionary funding for travel to conferences, software, and related uses above and beyond current levels. The current levels - \$800 (sic) to attend a conference if the attendee is not presenting a paper and \$1,1000 if the attendee is presenting a paper - is extremely low."*

As noted in our self-study, the CE faculty are very productive regarding research and grant funding. Since 2017, we have engaged in the community, collaborating with partners and constituents to bring over \$13.3 million in grant money to fund interdisciplinary efforts, as demonstrated by Dr. 'u Patient Centered Outcome Research Institute (PCORI) community engagement grant (250K), ) † S.W.E.L.L. program (\$1.6. million), and following the ° hk site visit in January, another Department of Education Mental Health Demonstration Grant (Wellness Advocates Valuing Educators and Students, WAVES \$6 million). As academics who are mindful of the obligation to contribute to the body of research and scholarship and who seek to create a department that is the highest producing and nationally recognized, the CE faculty know that pre- and post-award support (and incentives for these grants) remain a significant obstacle, as does funding for travel, software, and other expenses commonly incurred by researchers. Yet, despite this fact, the Dep

placement assistance; communication with district partners; data collection and report generation for P.I.; hiring, training, credentialing, and payroll management of all employees (OPS, postdoctoral researchers, adjuncts, graduate assistants, suppliers/contractors); budget transfer forms; research support; editorial work for publications and websites; purchases for grant and community form participants; etc. The recent addition of the WAVES program and School District of Palm Beach County (SDPC) ESOL Cohort VI will further increase the needs for support of these tasks (and more) in 2024-2025.

Beyond standard department and grant support, Mikaela has lent editorial, data collection, report generation, narrative, and survey administration support to numerous research projects for all (6) six counselor education programs and CACREP-accreditation-related projects, as well as for faculty books and journal articles for publication. She is establishing an auxiliary unit (Counselor Education Community # training. Overall, this work supports not only the grant funds in the department but also the books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and professional service/conference positions held within the Counseling Department (for example, over 5 books, 31 articles, and 159 committees in 2020 alone). Replacing our clerical person who retired two years ago (who had been hired to assist with the doctoral program, another area in need of support) is key to ongoing high-level research productivity.

### 3. Support High Quality Training

#### From the site team report:

*"Students discussed multiple research opportunities with multiple professors, enabling them to better understand their coursework and pathways to professions and research."*

*"Funding for recruitment of doctoral students a. While doctoral student stipends and related benefits have increased significantly, the cost of living in South Florida may still not make these offers competitive."*

*"Determine the best way to tap into the various health-related initiatives, such as the possibility*

directly involved in supervising unlicensed doctoral students through licensure and doctoral students can gain hands-on supervision experience and are provided with research opportunities. Moreover, having a clinic helps better meet CACREP standards for counselor training. A tele-health clinic could be one that is self-sustaining (with minimal support from the university) that will answer the needs of all students

initiatives, are the focus for the foreseeable future. While this is a significant opportunity, missing out on it could pose an existential threat to the department and the COE. Partnerships and initiatives can only be considered if we have additional faculty. Currently, six (two-thirds) faculty members are dedicated to at least one grant and others are actively applying for grant funding. Additional faculty lines that focus on this initiative are crucial for networking with on- and off-campus partners toward being part of these conversations and funding sources.

Toward this goal, we propose restoring the faculty to a minimum of 12 full-time faculty immediately. As it stands now, there are only 9 full-time faculty lines (not including the chair, who serves in an administrative capacity). When our Ph.D. program was approved in 2004 by the Florida Board of Governors and the FAU Board of Trustees, both approved a full-time faculty of 12. This number has never been achieved. With support of the COE Dean, we are searching for a full-time, tenure track professor in school counseling and we have two COE-funded post-doctoral positions available. We will seek to convert both post-doctoral positions into Assistant/Associate tenure-track lines which would allow us to grow our CMHC and Rehabilitation programs. This would bring the department to a total of 12 full-time faculty, which is a minimum, and must receive the highest priority.

#### 5. Support Department Faculty Leadership and Program Visibility in the Counseling Field

##### From the site team report:

*"...The faculty are distinguished scholars who contribute positively to the profession's advancement."*

*"Highly involved with professional organizations and editorships, without any financial or related compensation such as course releases."*

Faculty in the Department of Counselor Education are also heavily involved at the national level in service to the American Counseling Association (ACA) as well as several of the divisions of ACA. Several faculty