

**Rider University Counseling Program**  
**Annual Report**  
**AY 2020-2021**

This annual report describes: an introduction and summary of the program; program evaluation and modifications; program outcomes; inclusive excellence events and endeavors; workshops and events; grants, awards and honors; recognition in the media; service as editors, on editorial boards, and as reviewers; national, state, and local service; student awards and accomplishments, publications and creative works; and presentations. This report applies to both of our program tracks: clinical mental health counseling and school counseling; modifications or issues specific to a particular program are indicated in the narrative below.

**I. Introduction and Summary**

The Counseling Services Program at Rider University trains students in clinical mental health counseling (with an option for a dance movement therapy concentration) and school counseling. Below is our recently revised program mission statement, which is also available in our Program Handbook.

**MISSION OF RIDER UNIVERSITY COUNSELING SERVICES PROGRAM**

The Rider University Counseling Program provides students with graduate level training in clinical mental health counseling and school counseling. The program also provides concentration training in dance/movement therapy and offers a certificate in coaching. Our program trains students in competencies aligned with the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), the American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA), and the Center for Credentialing in Education (CCE; Board Certified Coach).

The program subscribes to the developmental-reflective model for professional preparation of counselors. The developmental philosophy recognizes that students enter the program at different levels of experience and expertise. An initial and continuing emphasis in the preparation of counselors is on their intra-personal awareness and their willingness and ability to be reflectively introspective with the goal of continued professional growth.

Located in the northeast region of the United States, the program is committed to working effectively with students of diverse backgrounds in areas such as culture, religion, spirituality, race, ethnicity, language, age, gender identity, sexual identity, ability, and geographical location.

The program provides counselors-in-training with the theoretical understanding of healthy human growth and development. The focus is on the application of mental health, psychological and human development principles through cognitive, affective, behavioral and systemic strategies that address wellness, personal growth and career development as well as pathology.

The program also provides counselors-in-training with strategies to integrate and apply the theoretical knowledge base, current research evidence, and ongoing self-reflective development. Continued active professional development is an ultimate goal.

The counselors-in-training develop a theory-based approach that is congruent with their unique personal qualities. The theory developed includes personal, cultural, social, vocational, psychological, and educational domains.

(Revised September 2021)

## **II. Program Evaluation and Modifications:**

Feedback from program stakeholders, including current students, graduates, site supervisors, core and non-core/adjunct faculty is a vital part of our evaluation process and continuous program improvement. Below is a summary of recent pertinent faculty and advisory council meetings and subsequent program modifications.

### ***A. Spring 2020 advisory council meeting***

The counseling faculty met in February 2020 to revise our program objectives. During this meeting, we discussed our current objectives and decided on revisions to align our objectives with the revised CACREP 2016 core content areas, student learning needs, and, as per the CACREP standards, “current knowledge and projected needs concerning counseling practice in a multicultural and pluralistic society.”

Following this revision, in May 2020, we met with an advisory board of current and former students and personnel in cooperating agencies to gather their feedback on these objectives. As a result of this feedback, we incorporated several modifications/additions into our objectives (to address issues of trauma, disability, and the import of professional communication). Following these additions, the final objectives were established and are listed below. These objectives are also included in our Program Handbook.

### **OBJECTIVES OF RIDER UNIVERSITY COUNSELING PROGRAM**

*Last Revised: 9/2021*

The basic objectives of the program are to provide graduates with the philosophy, knowledge, competency, and self-awareness that will enable them to function effectively as school counselors and clinical mental health counselors. In addition, the program provides effective training in the concentration of dance/movement therapy. Specifically, upon completing the program, graduates will possess the competencies, as aligned with the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), the American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA), and the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), in the following areas:

## 1. PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING ORIENTATION AND ETHICAL PRACTICE

Students will understand the professional functioning of clinical mental health counselors (including clinical mental health counselors with a dance/movement therapy concentration) and school counselors in a multicultural and pluralistic society, including: ethical and legal responsibilities, factors relevant to professional counseling identity (e.g., the importance of advocacy related to the counseling profession and client care, involvement in professional counseling organizations, consultation with peers and colleagues, and understanding of professional credentials and/or licenses relevant to the counselor role), the application of modern technology for appropriate client care, the appropriate modeling of counselor self-care, and the suitable use of supervision.

## 2. SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Students will demonstrate knowledge and competencies relevant to the professional functioning of clinical mental health counselors (including clinical mental health counselors with a dance/movement therapy concentration) and school counselors in multicultural and pluralistic societies. This includes the understanding of the impact of heritage, acculturative and spiritual experiences, effects of power and privilege, impact of migration, and discrimination on mental health development.

## 3. HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the theories of individual and family development, as well as the biological, cognitive, physiological, and neurological factors that affect typical and atypical human development, functioning, and behavior across the life span within multicultural contexts.

## 4. CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Students will understand ethical and culturally relevant approaches to career development in a diverse and global economy. Specifically, students will understand and apply theories and models of career development and decision making. Students will identify and use appropriate career assessments, labor information resources and technology in career counseling. Students will understand the interrelationships among and between work, mental well-being, and other life roles and factors.

## 5. COUNSELING AND HELPING RELATIONSHIPS

Students will demonstrate the knowledge and application of major theories, models, and strategies for working with clients in a variety of settings in order to develop a personal approach to counseling and consultation. Students will demonstrate essential interviewing, counseling and case conceptualization skills.

Additionally, students will demonstrate an understanding of client and/or consultee characteristics that influence helping processes, including social-cultural differences and/or systemic environmental influences and trauma in order to promote resilience and optimal development and wellness across the lifespan.

## 6. GROUP COUNSELING AND GROUP WORK

Students will demonstrate both theoretical and experiential understandings of group purpose, objectives, process, development, dynamics, and methods using verbal and non-verbal techniques to lead and facilitate inclusive groups. Students will demonstrate an understanding of different types of groups and the role of the counselor in each type.

## 7. ASSESSMENT AND TESTING

Students will demonstrate the knowledge of the development of assessments, including the historical perspectives concerning the meaning of testing and assessment, basic statistical concepts, assessment scores, and methods and sources of assessment.

Students will develop the knowledge, competency, and skills of selecting, administering, and interpreting appropriate formal and informal assessments with diverse clients for screening, diagnostic, and intervention planning purposes in a variety of settings.

## 8. RESEARCH AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

Students will demonstrate knowledge of basic statistics and types of research, and effectively critique and use existing research for counseling practice.

Students will apply basic data analysis techniques and research designs in conducting surveys, evaluating programs and practices, and conducting needs assessments.

## 9. PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITIONS

Students will demonstrate dispositions congruent with future careers in clinical mental health counseling (including clinical mental health counselors with a dance/movement therapy concentration) and school counselors. Specifically, students will demonstrate communication styles, behaviors, and attitudes consistent with openness to new ideas/self-management, cooperativeness with others/orientation to others, initiative/dependability, self-reflection, and professionalism.

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The Program Objectives are evaluated regularly. For example, in the May 2020 advisory council meeting, after discussion of potential modification to the new program objectives, we gathered feedback on our program objectives. Specifically, we broke into CMHC and SC small groups and asked questions about program, student, and graduate strengths and areas to improve, in addition to current field issues needing attention in our training program. Following this meeting, the faculty reviewed detailed notes on this meeting. This advisory council feedback informed several program modifications:

- Due to discussion of the importance of student training in trauma, we decided to offer the trauma course elective more often. At the time of the council, it was only offered once every other year. In the future it will be offered once a year.
- The employer, alumni, and supervisor surveys were revised based on feedback from the advisory council. For example, we added questions to gather more detail on issues raised in the council. Following our future planned dissemination of these surveys and review of these survey data, we will consider additional program modifications.
- CMHC and school counseling issues:
  - managing work-related stress; training in telehealth, trauma, working with diverse populations,
- CMHC specific issues:
  - DBT, working with immigrant populations and refugees
- School counseling specific issues
  - special education issues, collaborative work with parents and families, and addressing K-12 student socioemotional needs.

### ***B. Fall 2020 advisory council meeting***

In Fall 2020, we reviewed demographic data of applicants, students, and graduates starting in Fall 2016. In October 2020, we met with stakeholders of our programs, which included practicing school counselors, SACs, and CMHC counselors, graduates, and site supervisors. Following this meeting, we identified various action items related to this demographic data review pertinent to our programs. For example:

- To increase international student admissions and enrollment, we met with the Director of International Admissions at Rider University to plan to increase advertising/marketing of our program to international students. We also added a notation on our website that we are accredited by IRCEP.
- To increase the diversity of applicants who apply and students who enroll in our MA programs, we formed sub-committees and addressed various issues:
  - We identified a diverse group of students to serve as program ambassadors; they will be listed on our website and can answer prospective student inquiries.
  - The Director of the Center for Diversity and Inclusion at Rider indicated that they would include our faculty in CDI post-college information sessions on what we offer so that students in the CDI will have enough time to consider their options for these opportunities.
  - As requested by Graduate Admissions, we identified students and faculty with interest in various topic areas who could present on certain issues to undergraduate students at Rider.

- We revised our admissions presentation to address issues of diversity and equity. For example, research that our faculty have conducted involving underrepresented groups (e.g., LGBTQ+ populations, immigrant youth) and antiracist issues are highlighted. Moreover, we discuss the diversity of Rider University, the commitment to these issues on campus, and the ways in which our own program is emphasizing these issues. For example, the Center for Diversity and Inclusion also reported 75 events in their 2019-2020 report, with attendance of 4,070. Moreover, there are 24 multicultural clubs at Rider. In our counseling program, our Chi Sigma Iota student honor society, in collaboration with counseling faculty members, has hosted a monthly social justice advocacy support group.

### ***C. Faculty program review***

#### *Fall 2020 data review*

Every year, we discuss student performance on key CACREP key performance indicators, the comprehensive exam, and the national counselor exam.

As part of this Fall 2020 review, we discussed a desire to identify particular students who may struggle on the NCE or CPCE as early as possible and offer additional support. We reached out to the Student Success Center at Rider University to set up a targeted tutoring service for students who are likely to struggle with these exams. We are in discussion with this Center at Rider to hire a dedicated tutor (ideally a graduate of the Counseling Program) who can tutor students who may struggle on these exams.

*School counseling specific program review:* school counseling speciality standards were reviewed in this Fall 2020 review (3.b and 2.e). Student performance on these standards was acceptable and faculty discussed how the use of the RAMP evaluation tool in the school counseling courses aligns with goals of the Research course. Faculty are exploring ways to collaborate and support student learning in this area across courses.

#### *Spring 2021 disposition data review*

We evaluate and monitor student dispositions in the areas of: openness to new ideas/self management, cooperativeness with others/orientation to others, initiative/dependability, reflection, professionalism, integrity: honesty in accepting personal responsibility, and integrity: professional ethics.. In Spring 2021, we intentionally highlighted these disposition rubrics in the fieldwork and program orientations with an aim to make students aware of the key attributes that we have identified as essential for effective counseling, and to alert them to the fact that they should aim to develop these dispositions. In Spring 2021, we completed a review of aggregate student disposition and reviewed admissions dispositions data from Fall 2020 and Spring 2019 and annual review disposition data from Spring 2019, Spring 2020, and Spring 2021. Following

this review, we decided to highlight issues of professional communication and dependability in specific courses in our curriculum. In COUN 500 *Introduction to Counseling and Helping Professions*, COUN 550 *Counseling and Helping Techniques Laboratory*, COUN 515 *Substance Abuse Counseling*, and EDUC 500 *Introduction to Research*, instructors plan to add course material which will address professional communication and dependability.

### **III. Program outcomes:**

The data below covers the Summer 2020, Fall 2020, and Spring 2021 semesters in almost all cases. Employment data covers the Spring 2020, Summer 2020, and Fall 2020 semesters. Students currently enrolled data is updated to the current Fall 2021 semester.

MA CMHC Program - 60 credits

- Students currently enrolled: 93
- Students graduated in past year: 20
- Completion rate: 91%
- NCE pass rate: 86%
- Job placement rate: 100%

MA COUN Program - 48 credits

- Students currently enrolled: 40
- Students graduated in past year: 9
- Completion rate: 100%
- Job placement rate: 100%

### **IV. Inclusive Excellence Events and Endeavors**

- Yi-Ju Cheng created a support group and informational video for international students in CEHS.
- Aubrey Daniels, Eri Millrod, Demi Banchs, & Sravya Gummaluri created a support group focused on supporting students of color and allies, which has shifted into a social justice support group.
- The Rider Chapter of the Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Honor Society hosted a fundraiser and donated all proceeds to the Black Lives Matter local chapter in NJ. Baskets were raffled and the honor society noted that the baskets included “items that either are bought from black-owned businesses and creators or items that contribute to celebrating inclusivity and cultural humility.”
- The Rider Chapter of the Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Honor Society hosted a fundraiser (Spring 2021) for the purchase of Rider University Counseling Program apparel. Profits collected from this fundraiser were donated to the National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association (NAAPIMHA) as reflected in a statement made by them: “With the current hate crimes against AAPI individuals and communities being so prevalent in our world, we believe it is important to connect with organizations dedicated

to supporting AAPI groups. As a counseling program, it seems like a perfect fit to support the promotion of mental health resources. More information about the organization can be found in the description of the fundraiser and the NAAPIMHA website, <https://www.naapimha.org/>.”

## V. Workshops and Events

- Under Yi-Ju Cheng’s leadership, Rider’s Counseling Program co-sponsored the New Jersey Association for Play Therapy’s (NJPT) first virtual conference in Fall 2020
- Terry Pertuit and Aubrey Daniels presented a free webinar to the community on *Developing Resilience in Children and Students Experiencing Pandemic Related Trauma*. The webinar was attended by over 70 community members.
- Juleen Buser worked with counseling alum Rachel Curran to bring "The Body Project" to Rider. This program is designed to teach students how to facilitate programs to prevent body image and disordered eating concerns among high school age students. This training was held in May 2021 for advanced counseling students.
- Juleen Buser and Terry Pertuit presented a program on *Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse: The Role of Teachers* to student teachers at Rider University in Fall 2020.
- Yi-Ju Cheng presented two free webinars to the parents and mental health professionals in China on *Supporting yourself and your child through play during the COVID-19*. The webinar was attended by over 100 people (April 2020).
- Yi-Ju Cheng presented a free webinar to the parents and teachers at the Robbinsville School District on *Reconnecting with children through play*. The webinar was attended by over 80 people (January 2021).
- Yi-Ju Cheng conducted a 12-hour virtual workshop on *Child-centered play therapy* in Beijing. The webinar was limited to and attended by 33 attendees (December, 2020).
- Yi-Ju Cheng conducted a 12-hour virtual workshop on *Parent-child relationship therapy* in Beijing. The webinar was limited to and attended by 33 attendees (December, 2020).
- Aubrey Daniels was invited to present at a Robert Wood Johnson Hospital Webinar entitled *Resilience During Adversity* (December, 2020)
- Aubrey Daniels was invited to speak at Penn State College of Education GOLD Women’s Leadership Webinar Series. Her talk was entitled *Leading in the Face of Trauma* (July, 2020).
- In April 2021, the Rider chapter of the Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Honor Society held their annual induction ceremony.

## VI. Grants, Awards, and Honors

- In August 2020, Bonnie Lehet and Sarah Trocchio led a faculty and administration committee of Jason Barr, Diane Giannola, Kathleen Pierce, Yi-Ju Cheng, and Aubrey Daniels to submit a proposal for American Educational Research Association’s Education



Research Service Projects Program. The proposal focused on incoming freshman students' perceptions of systematic racism moving from the K-12 system to college.

- Terry Pertuit was the recipient of Rider University's 2020-2021 Distinguished Teaching Award.
- Yi-Ju Cheng received a summer fellowship to support her research project exploring the counseling experiences of transgender adolescents.

## **VII. Recognition in the Media**

- Aubrey Daniels and Juleen Buser were featured in a Zippia article on careers for counseling graduates. Read about it here! <https://www.zippia.com/counselor-jobs/trends/>

## **VIII. Service as Editors, on Editorial Boards, and as Reviewers**

- Juleen Buser, editorial board member for *Journal of Counseling and Development*
- Yi-Ju Cheng, editorial board member for *Journal of Child and Adolescent Counseling*
- Yi-Ju Cheng, reviewer for *Play Therapy Magazine*
- Aubrey Daniels, editorial board member for *Journal for Social Action in Counseling and Psychology*
- Christina Hamme Peterson, reviewer for *Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation*

## **IX. National, State, and Local Service**

- Association for Play Therapy Research Committee, Yi-Ju Cheng, Committee Member
- Association for Play Therapy, University Education Committee, Yi-Ju Cheng, Committee Member
- North Atlantic Region Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (NARACES), International Student and Faculty Interest Network (ISFIN), Yi-Ju Cheng, Regional Facilitator
- NARACES Conference Proposals Committee, Aubrey Daniels, Committee Member
- New Jersey Association for Play Therapy, Yi-Ju Cheng, Treasurer
- New Jersey Counseling Association (NJCA), Conference Proposals Reviewer, Aubrey Daniels, Yi-Ju Cheng

## **X. Student Awards and Accomplishments**

- Counseling student D'Amani Bowman was awarded the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC) Foundation Rural Scholarship in 2020. After graduation, D'Amani will commit to serve rural populations for at least 2 years.
- Kim Tribbett presented with Dr. Aubrey Daniels at the CMHC and Beyond 4th Annual Virtual Conference. The title of the presentation is *Wellness, COVID-19, Telemental Health, and Older Adults*.
- Lauren Hernandez was the recipient of the James P. Murphy Award for Humanistic Counseling. In memory of Dr. James P. Murphy, beloved teacher, mentor, colleague, and

friend, this award is awarded once a year to a graduating Rider University counseling student who exemplifies the characteristics of a person-centered professional counselor: Warmth, empathy, unconditional positive regard, and genuineness, as determined by the counseling faculty.

- Elena Gutierrez and Stephanie Cerda were co-recipients of the Lincoln Scott Walter Award. This award goes to the graduating counseling student(s) who shows outstanding contributions to and academic record in the counseling program

### **XI. Publications and Creative Works (underlined names are Rider students)**

Daniels, A.D., Bryan, J. (2021). Building resilience despite complex trauma: family environment and family cohesion as protective factors. *The Family Journal*  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/10664807211000719>

Muller, D. L., Buser, T. J., Frag, M. S., & Buser, J. K. (2020). Experiences of unintentionally severe harm during nonsuicidal self-injury among college students. *Journal of College Counseling*, 23(3), 234-246.

### **XII. Presentations (underlined names are Rider students)**

Buser, J. K., Buser, T., J., Pertuit, T. L., & Gummaluri, S. (2021, April). *Spiritual abandonment and nonsuicidal self-injury: Research and client care*. Program presented at the annual conference of the American Counseling Association.

Daniels, A.D., Liles, S. (2021, April). *Utilizing family systems and trauma-informed approaches amidst ongoing pandemic and racial trauma*. Presentation at the New Jersey Counseling Association Conference

Cheng, Y., & Ray, D. C. (2021, June). *Child-centered group play therapy*. Six-hour webinar at the annual Summer Institute of Center for Play Therapy.

Tribbett, K., Daniels, A.D. (2021, April). *Wellness, COVID-19, telemental health, and the older adult population*. Presentation at the The Chicago School of Professional Psychology Annual Conference

### **XIII. Conclusion**

Our program deeply values the contributions of our students, faculty, staff, graduates, and other program stakeholders to the continued quality of our counselor training. We strive to train students in academic and dispositional competencies, maintain our professional accreditation, and seek program improvement opportunities on a continual basis. Currently, we are preparing for CACREP re-accreditation.