

Rider University Counseling Program

Annual Report

AY 2021-2022

This annual report describes: an introduction and summary of the program; announcement of a 60-credit school counseling program transition; program evaluation and modifications; program outcomes; workshops and events; awards and honors; service as editors, on editorial boards, and as reviewers; national, state, and local service; student awards and accomplishments, accreditation and technical reports; publications; 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 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. Announcement of 60-Credit Transition for the School Counseling Program

Due to CACREP requirements, our school counseling program will be transitioning to a 60-credit program in 2023. All students enrolling in the program after July 1, 2023, will be enrolled in a 60-credit program.

We are excited about this transition! As part of this change, we have created a new school counseling course: EDSO 502 *Advanced School Counseling & Consultation Models in Educational Settings*. Dr. Terry Pertuit created this new course which will offer “a critical exploration of the role of professional counselor as an advocate, leader, and change agent in educational settings.”

Students enrolled in this 60-credit program will take EDSO 502 and three other courses, depending on specific areas of interest.

III. 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 data collection efforts and meetings and subsequent program modifications.

A. Faculty program review

Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 data review

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

In Fall 2021, faculty reviewed data for four assessments linked to two CACREP KPIs (Core 1.K and CMHC 3.b). Students are assessed on their “strategies for personal and professional self-evaluation and implications for practice” (CACREP 1.K) in COUN 500 Introduction to Counseling and Internship II. This CACREP standard aligns with program objective 9, which involves training students in professional dispositions. Faculty noted improvement overall in

student scores from measure 1 to measure 2. In the COUN 500 measure (1st measure, which students complete at the start of the program), some students did score low and faculty discussed these scores. In general, faculty noted that the bar for self-reflection in the assignment was quite high, asking students to link their self-insights to their future work as professional helpers; this assignment asks for a nuanced, deep personal reflection on how certain personal traits, for example, may benefit a future counselor in working with clients and how those (or other) traits may also be hindrances in their future professional counseling role. Faculty did not understand the low scores as a problem with the assignment, the rubric, or the class training and supported the high bar of self-reflection required in this measure. As scores improved overall by the second measure (in Internship II, which students take at the end of the program), it suggests that students are growing in this area throughout the program.

CMHC-specific program review: CMHC students are assessed on “techniques and interventions for prevention and treatment of a broad range of mental health issues” (CACREP CMHC 3.B) in Foundations of CMHC and practicum. This CACREP standard aligns with program objective 5, which involves training students in counseling and helping relationships. Faculty discussed that student performance is acceptable on these assessments. However, as students are not necessarily showing progress (gains in scores) from measure 1 to measure 2, faculty discussed ways to address this. Part of this may be due to the nature of the assignments and the scoring process. To address this, the faculty discussed potential modifications; in the future, measure 2 (in practicum) will be evaluated by the site supervisor and the course instructor (instead of just the site supervisor), with the final rubric score being an average of these scores.

In Spring 2022, we reviewed NCE and CPCE data. We determined that students are doing well overall. We already put plans in place from our last review and the Student Success Center at Rider University hired a professional tutor to specifically work with our students on NCE and CPCE exam preparation. Our plan to identify students at the annual review who may struggle and let them know of this resource was put into place in Spring 2022. We also decided to implement a few more measures to identify students who may struggle and alert them of this resource. At the end of each semester, we will ask core and non-core faculty to identify students who struggled in their classes that specific semester. We will also reach out to students at the start of Internship II (which is the semester most students take the NCE and CPCE) who we think may struggle on these exams. In this way, we can specifically identify students who may need additional tutoring assistance and can alert them of this resource. The Internship II instructors will also plan to alert students of this resource.

B. Graduate, Supervisor, and Employer Surveys

In Spring 2022, we sent out evaluation surveys to graduates of our programs, site supervisors of our students, and employers of our graduates as part of our continual process of program review and evaluation of our program objectives. We specifically designed these surveys to evaluate

issues raised in prior feedback from our advisory council and from previous faculty program data reviews. After data collection, we met to review the data and discuss program modifications.

We discussed the low response rate to several surveys (graduate and employer surveys specifically) and noted ways to improve this in the future, such as altering various aspects of the request for participation. We also noted that these surveys may not fully capture some of the more recent changes we have implemented (e.g., trauma content, technology content) and when we send out these surveys and review in the future, we can better ascertain the impact of these changes.

Overall, we noted positive feedback in many domains, such as feedback around the strength of our program in areas such as self-care, skill training, self-reflection, supervision, professionalism and ethics, and empathy. The main areas in which to consider improvement, based on feedback and our faculty evaluation, involve program objectives 2, 3, and 5.

Program objective 2 discusses training in 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.* As noted below in our CMHC specific program review, we discussed ways to add material about immigrant and refugee populations to certain courses.

Program objective 3 discusses training in 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.* As noted below in our school counseling specific program review, we discussed how the 60-credit school counseling program will add important content to this program; an additional school counseling course will cover material related to this objective, such as 504 plans and IEPs.

Program objective 5 discusses training in 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.* As noted below in our CMHC specific program review, we discussed adding dialectical behavior therapy material to coursework. Also, as noted below in our school counseling specific program review, we discussed how the 60-credit school

counseling program will add important content to this program, such as offering students the opportunity to take trauma electives.

- *CMHC-specific program review:*
 - Trauma was a topic that came up as a vital issue to address in the program. We believe that we have made steps to address this in our program, such as offering trauma coursework and intentionally addressing trauma content in other coursework.
 - Immigrant and refugee populations also emerged as a key issue to address in the program. We believe we are addressing this in some existing courses (e.g., trauma, disaster, grief course; multicultural courses; psychopathology course) but believe we can add and/or expand coverage in the multicultural courses and the counseling children and play therapy courses.
 - Dialectical Behavior Therapy came up as an important issue to address in the program. We plan to add this content to the theories course. We also have a video on psychotherapy.net that can be a student resource for DBT material.
 - Technology was noted as a critical issue to address in the program. We have expanded our coverage of technology issues and telecounseling in the techniques laboratory class. We also cover telecounseling in the CMHC foundations class.
 - Finally, based on survey feedback, we discussed the need to continue work with students developmentally as they learn to apply theory to practice; students start doing this in the theories and techniques laboratory classes and then need to further this in their fieldwork classes for real-world application.
- *School counseling specific program review:*
 - For much of the feedback, we believe the transition to the 60 credit school counseling program and the addition of a new school counseling course will be able to address many of the areas for growth identified in the surveys, such as trauma content (students will have elective options in the 60-credit program) and issues related to 504 plans, IEPs, etc. (this material will be covered in the new school counseling class).
 - We discussed how several key issues (i.e., HIB and technology content) are covered in existing courses. We discussed a plan to review our school curriculum as a faculty group to discuss how we can be sure we are covering school-specific material in our core classes and discuss issues such as how to differentiate within assignments in core classes (e.g., SC and CMHC students completing targeted assignments).

- Technology was noted as a critical issue to address in the program. We have expanded our coverage of technology issues and telecounseling in the techniques laboratory class.

C. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Evaluation

In Spring 2022, the faculty reviewed data collected from a survey on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Dr. Eri Millrod led the effort to design this survey and collect the data; this survey asked students to reflect on how the program handles various issues related to DEI. Based on a review of these data, faculty decided to carry out the following actions:

- On a regular basis, the faculty will meet to discuss DEI course content in their respective courses. In these meetings, certain faculty will share activities they are using in their courses. Faculty can gain ideas and insights from this discussion, consider how they can add material to their classes, and/or build on activities other professors are using in their courses. We held our first meeting in Spring 2022 and discussed DEI content in the psychopathology, introduction to counseling, techniques laboratory, and substance abuse classes.
- We created a google drive folder where faculty can record the DEI content they use in their courses (e.g., assignments and readings related to DEI, including advocacy). This folder can be a resource for faculty who are looking to add material to their classes.

III. Program outcomes:

The data below covers the Summer 2021, Fall 2021, and Spring 2022 semesters in almost all cases. Employment data covers the Spring 2021, Summer 2021, and Fall 2021 semesters. Students currently enrolled data is updated to the current Fall 2022 semester.

MA CMHC Program - 60 credits

- Students currently enrolled: 108
- Students graduated in past year: 21
- Completion rate: 100%
- NCE pass rate: 91%
- Job placement rate: 100%

MA COUN Program - 48 credits

- Students currently enrolled: 30
- Students graduated in past year: 17
- Completion rate: 100%
- Job placement rate: 100%

IV. Workshops and Events

- Under Yi-Ju Cheng's leadership, Rider's Counseling Program co-sponsored the New Jersey Association for Play Therapy's (NJPT) annual conference in Fall 2021.
- 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 2021 and Spring 2022.
- Rachel Curran (counseling graduate and adjunct instructor at Rider) held a training session for "The Body Project." 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 Summer 2022 for students enrolled in the COUN 502 course *Prevention and Intervention for Body Image and Disordered Eating*.
- In April 2022, the Rider chapter of the Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Honor Society held their annual induction ceremony.

V. Awards and Honors

- Christina Hamme Peterson was the recipient of Rider University's 2021-22 Chairperson Leadership Award.
- Counseling student Caitlin Fair and counseling alum Sravya Gummaluri (2021) received the National Board of Certified Counselors 2022 Minority Fellowship Award
- Sravya Gummaluri, counseling 2021 graduate received the counseling honor society's CSI Outstanding Doctoral Student Award at George Washington University

VI. 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, editorial board member for *Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy*
- 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*

VII. National, State, and Local Service

- *Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling* (2021), Yi-Ju Cheng, Research Award Reviewer
- *Association for Play Therapy* (2022), Yi-Ju Cheng, Research Award Reviewer
- *Association for Play Therapy*, Research Committee, Yi-Ju Cheng, Committee Chair
- *Association for Play Therapy*, University Education Committee, Yi-Ju Cheng, Committee Member

- *New Jersey Association for Play Therapy*, Yi-Ju Cheng, Secretary
- *North Atlantic Region Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (NARACES)*, International Student and Faculty Interest Network (ISFIN), Yi-Ju Cheng, Regional Facilitator
- *New Jersey Counseling Association (NJCA)*, Aubrey Daniels, Conference Proposals Reviewer
- *Penndel Mental Health Center*, Emmanuel Ahia, Board Member
- *The Ninth Candle*, Aubrey Daniels, Board Member

VIII. Student Awards and Accomplishments

- Counseling student Jamie Lewkowitz started the National Eating Disorders Association Campus Warriors club at Rider this spring and is walking at the Radnor PA NEDA walk in April. She has been asked to be a guest speaker at the Montclair walk on May 14th and will share her story and advocacy work.
- Counseling student Jillian Loyas (who is enrolled in the CMHC program and is completing a DMT concentration) serves as a 2022 board member of the NJ ADTA (American Dance Therapy Association) and is the Public Relations Chairperson
- Kafi Nsenkyire was accepted into the doctoral program at Monmouth University.
- Stephani Greenleaf was hired as a counselor and dance movement therapist with the Crystals Counseling Center; Syrah Liles was hired as a full time clinician at Phoenix Behavioral Health; Demi Banchs was hired as a counselor at the center for Counseling and Education in Marlton doing play therapy and EMDR
- Sam Benson joined the diversity, equity, and inclusion committee in her school district to work with colleagues, students and parents about community diversity issues.
- John Morton, Yvonne Lung, and Stephanie Greenleaf were the co-recipients 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(s) who exemplifies the characteristics of a person-centered professional counselor: Warmth, empathy, unconditional positive regard, and genuineness, as determined by the counseling faculty.
- Demi Banchs and Syrah Liles 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

IX. Accreditation and Technical Reports

- Barr, J.¹ & Peterson, C.H.¹ (2021, December). *CAEP Self-Study Report for Rider University's Advanced Programs in Education*. Self-study report for the Council on Accreditation of Educator Preparation. Washington, DC. (870 pages)
- Buser, J. K., Pertuit, T. L., Daniels, A., Peterson, C. H., Cheng, Y. Ahia, E. & Millrod, E.. (2022, February). *Rider University CACREP Self Study Addendum*. Addendum to the self-study report for the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). (Comp. A. Lucas). Alexandria, VA. (46 pages)
- Daniels, A.¹, Cheng, Y.¹, Pertuit, T.¹, Buser, J.¹, Peterson, C.¹, Ahia, A.¹, & Lucas, A.¹ (2021). *Self-study report for Rider University's Counseling Services Programs*. Self-study report for the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), Alexandria, VA. (188 pages)
- Peterson, C.H.¹ & Barr, J.¹ (2022, April) *Addendum to the CAEP Self Study Report for Rider University's Advanced Programs in Education*. Self-study addendum for the Council on Accreditation of Educator Preparation. Washington, DC. (110 pages)
- Peterson, C.H., Buser, J.¹, Casale-Giannola, D.¹, Dombrowski, S.¹, Gairo, J.¹, Goduto, L.¹, Pierce, K.¹, Prol, L.¹, & Stegmaier-Nappi, J.¹ (2022, May). *Middle States assessment report for advanced programs in the College of Education and Human Services*. Report provided to Rider University administration in preparation for Middle States.

X. Publications

- Buser, J. K., Cheng, Y. J., & McLaughlin, R. (in press). Thematic analysis in qualitative research. In T. J. Buser, T. J. & C. Gibson (Eds.), *Reimagining Research: Engaging Research, Data, and Program Evaluation in Counseling Practice*. Routledge. Book chapter in press.
- Daniels, A.D. (2022). Trauma-Informed Child Client Advocacy (TICCA) Plan: Conceptualization and Case Study. *Journal of Counselor Preparation and Supervision*, 15(1). Retrieved from <https://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/jcps/vol15/iss1/7>
- Daniels, A.D. (2022). Combining family systems approaches to address BIPOC families' racial trauma amidst the global pandemic. *The Family Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10664807221078969>
- Ray, D. C., Ogawa, Y., & Cheng, Y. (2022). *Multicultural play therapy: Making the most of cultural opportunities with children*. Routledge.
- Ritzi, R. M., Cheng, Y., Yurkovich, C. V., & Chen, S. (2022). Child parent relationship therapy: Reunification with children and parents with substance use disorders. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Counseling*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23727810.2022.2114772>
- Yee, T., & Cheng, Y. (2022). Racism in the playroom: Clinical errors that maintain racism. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Counseling*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23727810.2022.2113707>

¹ These authors contributed equally to this work

XI. Presentations

- Cheng, Y. J., Buser, J. K., & Pertuit, T. L. (2022, April). *Job search experiences of international counseling doctoral students in the U.S.* Program presented at the New Jersey Counseling Association Annual Conference, Virtual, NJ, United States.
- Pertuit, T. L., Daniels, A. D., & Shoemaker, K. A. (2022, April 22-24) *School-based trauma programs during and in the aftermath of COVID-19.* [Conference Session]. New Jersey Counseling Association Annual Conference, Virtual, NJ, United States.
- Ogawa, Y., & Cheng, Y. (2021, November). *Play therapy with children from Asian cultural background.* Invited and conducted a 3-hour virtual workshop. Center for Play Therapy 2021 Multicultural Series, Denton, TX.
- Ogawa, Y., & Cheng, Y. (2021, October). *Cultural opportunities in play therapy: How they are expressed, how to catch them and respond to them.* Program presented at 2021 Annual Association for Play Therapy International Conference, Little Rock, AR.
- Cheng, Y. & Ray, D. C. (2021, August). *Child-centered group play therapy.* Invited and conducted a 6-hour virtual workshop. Center for Play Therapy Summer Institute, Denton, TX.

XII. Faculty Transitions

Two Counseling Program faculty members left our program this past summer 2022. Dr. Christina Peterson accepted a position as Assistant Provost at Rider University and Dr. Aubrey Daniels accepted a faculty position at another university. We are grateful to both for their work with our students and for our program. We wish them the best in their new positions! We will be engaging in searches to replace these faculty positions this AY, with an intended start date for these new faculty of Fall 2023.

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. Our virtual site visit with CACREP will be held in November 2022.