

Rider University Counseling Program

Annual Report

AY 2022-2023

This annual report describes: an introduction and summary of the program; announcement CACREP re-accreditation, new faculty hires, 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 CACREP re-accreditation

Our program underwent a rigorous CACREP re-accreditation effort, culminating in a site visit in November 2022. Following the site team report and the CACREP Board's decision, we were granted a full re-accreditation until March 31, 2031!

As part of the site team report, the following strengths were identified in our program:

- **Electives:** the site team commended the program for creating a range of innovative and creative electives, such as play therapy and creativity in counseling
- **Fieldwork:** the site team commended the program's field placement process; the effective communication and problem solving ability of Adam Lucas, Director of Clinical Internships, was specifically highlighted
- **Student Support:** the site team commended the ways in which the program faculty support student learning and success
- **School Counseling:** the site team commended the school counseling program, noting faculty experience in this area and the strong reputation of Rider graduates in the community
- **Clinical Mental Health Counseling:** the site team commended
 - the creativity and uniqueness of the **Dance/Movement Therapy concentration area within the MA CMHC program**, and
 - the strong reputation of Rider graduates in the community

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 2022 KPI 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 2022, faculty reviewed data for assessments linked to four CACREP KPIs (Core 2.D, CMHC 2.J., Core 5.A., and CMHC 1.B).

Students are assessed on “the impact of heritage, attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences on an individual’s views of others” (CACREP Core 2.D) at two separate times in the program. The first measure is an advocacy paper in COUN 520 Multicultural Counseling and Relationship Development and EDSO 510 Sociological and Cultural Foundations of Education. Student scores were consistently at “adequate” or higher in this assessment. The second measure is the comprehensive exam for our program (the CPCE). Most students scored “adequate” or above, but there were several lower scores. This CACREP standard aligns with program objective 2, which addresses training students in diversity issues related to competent client care.

As a faculty, we discussed these scores and determined that, overall, scores are acceptable across both measures, as the average score for both measures across semesters was in the “adequate” or higher range. However, we did note that there were more low scores in measure 2 and that this assessment had the most low scores across all the measures we reviewed this round. We attributed more low scores in the second (versus the first) measure to the nature of the second assessment, which is a didactic multiple choice national exam; the first assessment is a class experiential project. We discussed ways to ensure that students are prepared for the CPCE exam content in this area, such as encouraging tutoring specifically in this area. We alerted the current professional counseling tutor at the Rider Student Success Center about preparing students in this area and communicated with students about the potential need to focus tutoring in this area.

Students are assessed on “theories and models of counseling” (Core 5.A.) at two times. The first measure occurs via midterm and final exams in CNPY 502 Theories of Counseling and Helping Professions. Most scores were at “adequate” or higher in this assessment, with some low scores. The second measure is the comprehensive exam for our program (the CPCE). Most students scored “adequate” or above, with some low scores. The average score across semesters reviewed was in the “adequate” range. This CACREP standard aligns with program objective 5, which discusses student competency in theoretical approaches to client care.

As a faculty, we discussed these scores and determined that, overall, scores are acceptable for both measures, as the average score for both measures across semesters was in the “adequate” or higher range. Some of the low scores on the CNPY 502 exams (first measure) were likely

attributed to the impact of the pandemic in a specific semester. The faculty determined no changes are needed at this time; the CNPY 502 exam is designed to be rigorous and to prepare students for the CPCE. We do plan to regularly send reminders to students about the availability of tutoring for the CPCE exam, which is available via a professional counseling tutor at Rider. In addition, faculty reached out to the professional tutor to request that they hold an event on exam preparation for all students in Fall 2023.

CMHC-specific program KPI data review: CMHC students are assessed on “theories and models related to clinical mental health counseling” (CACREP CMHC 1.B) in CNPY 502 and on the CPCE. This CACREP standard aligns with program objective 5, which underscores the need for student’s to be trained in theoretical approaches to client care. The assessments for this standard are the same as for Core 5.A. above and the scores were comparable. Thus, faculty reached the same conclusions as above related to program modifications.

CMHC students are also assessed on “cultural factors related to clinical mental health counseling” (CACREP CMHC 2.J) in COUN 520 and EDSO 501 and on the CPCE. This CACREP standard aligns with program objective 2, which focuses on diversity issues in which students need knowledge and skill-based competency. The assessments for this standard are the same as for Core 2.D. above and the scores were comparable. Thus, faculty reached the same conclusions as above related to program modifications.

Spring 2023 NCE and CPCE data review

In Spring 2023, we reviewed NCE and CPCE data. We determined that students are doing well in general and mainly are scoring above or within one standard deviation of the national mean on the domains of both exams. Based on a prior data review, we advocated for the hiring of a professional tutor at the Student Success Center at Rider University to emphasize NCE and CPCE exam preparation and we currently have a tutor in place for our program. We are continuing our other efforts to identify students who may struggle on these exams and notify them of this tutoring resource, as they prepare for national licensure/certification and comprehensive exams. At the end of each semester, core and non-core faculty are asked to document students who struggled in a specific class so that those students can be contacted about the availability of tutoring. At the start of the semester when most of our students take the NCE and CPCE (the Internship II semester) we also consult about students that may be likely to struggle on these exams so that specific students can be contacted about the availability of tutoring. The Internship II instructors are also committed to making sure students are aware of this tutoring resource.

Spring 2023 Student Disposition Data Review

Every two years, faculty review student disposition data on an aggregate level; we look at both admissions disposition data and annual review disposition data. We reviewed scores at the time of admissions for students starting in Spring 2021, Fall 2021, Spring 2022 and Fall 2022. We reviewed annual review data from 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022. Overall, scores are acceptable across domains for the admissions data and annual review data, as mean scores are in the “adequate” range.

Faculty noted that, in terms of scores at the time of admissions, faculty rated fewer students as high in domains of openness to new ideas/self management, cooperativeness with others/orientation to others, and initiative/dependability compared to other rubric domains. Faculty discussed the ways in which we are tapping these domains during the interview and if we need to change our admission process, rubric descriptors for these domains, and/or add additional categories in the rubric. Faculty decided to review the admissions rubric and process to determine if modifications are needed.

For the annual review data, faculty focused on understanding some of the low scores in the last two years; the domains with more low scores were initiative/dependability and professionalism. Faculty discussed how the impact of the pandemic and the move to more online and hybrid classes could be an explanation for some students struggling in these areas. Recently, our program worked to emphasize the essential nature of class attendance, which we review at the program orientation, discuss at our adjunct orientation, note in the handbook, and include in our syllabi. Our goal is to emphasize to students and faculty the essential nature of live class attendance. The faculty also discussed if developing stricter attendance policies in classes could have a greater impact on student scores in this area.

III. Program outcomes:

The data below covers the Summer 2022, Fall 2022, and Spring 2023 semesters in almost all cases. Employment data covers the Spring 2022, Summer 2022, and Fall 2022 semesters. Students currently enrolled data is updated to the current Fall 2023 semester.

MA CMHC Program: 60-65 credits*

- Students currently enrolled: 113
- Students graduated in past year: 25
- Completion rate: 100%
- NCE pass rate: 85%
- Job placement rate: 100%

MA COUN Program: 48-60 credits**

- Students currently enrolled: 22
- Students graduated in past year: 12
- Completion rate: 100%
- Job placement rate: 100%

**Students enrolled in the MA CMHC program (with a DMT concentration) complete 65 credits as of students starting in Fall 2022 or later and/or students starting internship in summer 2023 or later; students enrolled in the MA CMHC program (without a DMT concentration) complete 60 credits.*

***This program transitioned to 60-credits for all students who started the program after July 1, 2023.*

IV. Workshops and Events

- 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 2022 and Spring 2023.
- In April 2023, the Rider chapter of the Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Honor Society held their annual induction ceremony.
- In April 2023, the Counseling Program held a Supervision Symposium titled: “Substance Use Supervision Diversity and Inclusion -Talking the Talk and Walking the Walk.” Dr. Elizabeth Conte presented this symposium.
- In February 2023, Dr. Eri Millrod hosted a workshop for undergraduate students at Rider University titled “Embodied Self-Care.”

V. Awards and Honors

- Eri Millrod was awarded a Summer 2023 Research Fellowship from Rider University for a project titled *The Lived Experiences of Wounded Healers in Dance/Movement Therapy: A Descriptive Phenomenological Study*.
- Juleen Buser was awarded a Spring 2024 Research Leave from Rider University for a project titled *Disordered eating and body image: A necessary training focus for counselors*.

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*
- Eri Millrod, ad hoc reviewer for *Arts in Psychotherapy*

VII. National, State, and Local Service

- *Association for Play Therapy*, Research Committee, Yi-Ju Cheng, Committee Chair
- *New Jersey Association for Play Therapy*, Yi-Ju Cheng, President-Elect
- *Pennadel Mental Health Center*, Emmanuel Ahia, Board Member
- *American Dance Therapy Association*, Education Committee, Eri Millrod

VIII. Student Awards and Accomplishments

- Ellen Erickson and Regina Santangelo 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.
- Sindhu S. Thogarchedu, Giulia Santisi, and Jillian Loyas-Stryker 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

- Buser, J. K., Daniels, A.¹, Cheng, Y.¹, Pertuit, T.¹, Peterson, C.¹, Ahia, A.¹, & Lucas, A.¹ (2022, December). *Rider University Digital Delivery Report*. Report for the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). (Comp. A. Lucas). Alexandria, VA.
- Buser, J., Ahia, E.¹, Cheng, Y.¹, Millrod, E.¹, Pertuit, T.¹ (2022, December). *Institutional Response to CACREP Site Team Report*. Report for the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). (Comp. A. Lucas). Alexandria, VA.

X. Publications

- Cheng, Y., & Lin, Y. D. (2022, September). Association for Play Therapy pandemic needs assessment report. *Association for Play Therapy Magazine*.
- Shim, M., Millrod, E., & Gaydos, M. (2022). Trauma-informed dance/movement therapy in the context of medical illness. In R. Dieterich-Hartwell & A. M. Melsom (Eds.), *Dance/movement therapy for trauma survivors: Theoretical, clinical, and cultural perspectives* (pp.215-232). Routledge.
- Yee, T., & Cheng, Y. (2022). Racism in the playroom: Clinical errors that maintain racism. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Counseling*, 8(3), 128-143.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23727810.2022.2113707>

¹ These authors contributed equally to this work

- 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*, 8(3), 144-155.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/23727810.2022.2114772>

XI. Presentations

- Daniels, A. & Pertuit, T. L. (2022, November). *Trauma informed care: Collaboration, care, consistency*. Northern Atlantic Region Association for Counselor Education and Supervision. Pittsburg, PA.
- Lin, Y. D., & Cheng, Y. (2022, November). *Play therapy and play therapists during the pandemic*. Invited and conducted a 1.5-hour virtual presentation as a keynote co-presenter. Taiwan Association for Play Therapy, Taiwan.
- Millrod, E. & Shim, M. & (2022, October). *Moving within the Medical Model: An Embodied Exploration of Opportunities and Challenges in Medical Dance/Movement Therapy*. American Dance Therapy Association 57th Annual Conference in partnership with the Dance Movement Therapy Association in Canada. Montreal, Canada.
- Ogawa, Y., & Cheng, Y. (2022, November). *Cultural humility in the playroom*. Invited and presented a 3-hour virtual workshop. Center for Play Therapy 2022 Multicultural Series, Denton, TX.
- Ray, D. C., Ogawa, Y., & Cheng, Y. (2022, October). *Multicultural play therapy: How to make most of the cultural opportunities*. Proposal accepted and presented a 2-hour program at the 2022 Annual Association for Play Therapy International Conference, St. Louis, MO.

XII. Faculty Hires

We are excited to welcome three new full time Counseling Program faculty members to our program in Fall 2023. Dr. William Sterner joins us as a tenure-track faculty and is teaching Research and Psychopathology in Fall 2023. Dr. Tiffany Rikard joins us as a lecturer faculty and is teaching Group Counseling, Internship II, and Theories in Fall 2023. Marion Rogers joins us as a tenure-track faculty and is teaching Internship I, Psychopathology, and Lab in Fall 2023. These three new faculty members bring important areas of expertise to our program which will strengthen the quality of our program and benefit our students!

XIII. Conclusion

Our counseling program is improved and supported on an ongoing basis by the feedback and contributions of our community—the students, faculty, staff, graduates, site supervisors, and other stakeholders who are committed to a quality counselor education program. We work collaboratively as a team to train students in academic and dispositional competencies, maintain our professional accreditation, and seek program improvement opportunities on a continual basis.