

U W - W H I T E W A T E R

Counselor Education
Department
Strategic Plan
2011 – 2016

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Counselor Education Department Faculty & Staff

Cindy Anderton, Ph.D.
Donald M. Norman, Ph.D. (Chair & Program Coordinator)
Brenda Rust O'Beirne, Ph.D.
Aneneosa A.G. Okocha, Ph.D.
David Van Doren, Ed.D.

Krista R. Kim, M.S.
Lab Manager

Alicia Stone-Jackson
Department Associate

Strategic Planning Consultant

Dean A. Pribbenow, Ph.D.

Preamble

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater Department of Counselor Education is recognized as a leader in the Upper Midwest in preparing counselors to serve in community, school, and higher education settings. The quality of our faculty, staff, students, curriculum, and learning environment all contribute to this positive reputation. Maintaining this quality and continuing to offer an excellent educational experience for students requires that we be strategic and focus our efforts on priorities that add the greatest value.

Because we believe that counseling is both an art and a science, our program develops students not only as behavioral scientists but also as persons concerned with applying knowledge for the improvement of the human condition. We do this in a learning environment that represents and embraces diversity and multiculturalism and strives to link theory to practice for social justice. This strategic plan—an evolving document—is our guide to ensuring that the Department of Counselor Education has strong faculty, leading-edge curricula, and the students, partners, and learning environments necessary to continue to prepare professional counselors for meaningful, ethical, and effective work now and in the future.

Mission

A mission statement describes why an organization exists and for whom. An effective statement will include both an explanation of purpose and an identification of the core processes or functions by which that purpose is achieved.

The mission of the Department of Counselor Education is...

To prepare professional counselors to improve the human condition and advocate for social justice in an increasingly diverse and complex world. Rigorous academic learning, relevant experiential learning, and deep self-reflective learning are grounded in professional standards and contemporary research and occur within a mutually-engaging environment that embraces diversity, positive regard, and authenticity.

Core Values

Core values are the principles, beliefs, and commitments that guide the ways an organization carries out its work, the way it interacts with others, and the ways it lives out its mission. The Department of Counselor Education affirms the following core values:

- Commitment to students and their learning
- Dedication to ongoing personal and professional learning
- Authenticity of care, concern and encouragement toward students
- Positive regard as it relates to student, client, and colleague relationships
- Honoring of individuality and diversity of gifts and strengths

We hold ourselves accountable to these values and commit to regularly assessing the degree to which these values are evident to us and to others.

Vision

A clear, agreed-upon vision for the future is critical for any department that hopes to be relevant and distinctive. An effective vision statement stretches the department – yet it is not so unrealistic that it is unachievable, nor is it so tactical that it fails to inspire.

In five years, the Department of Counselor Education will be nationally/regionally recognized for our comprehensive, intentionally constructed, CACREP-accredited programs. Having achieved this recognition, we will be characterized by a vibrant, stable core of faculty; leading edge curricula; a diverse student body; a technologically state-of-the-art lab; and expanded social justice-oriented partnerships.

Situational Analysis

An essential component of setting strategies for any program is to develop an awareness of program strengths and challenges, and an understanding of external trends, opportunities, and threats that must be taken into consideration when making decisions about where to place emphasis and invest resources. Below is a summary of strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats that were compiled from Counselor Education planning exercises over the last three years, most recently in January 2011.

What **strengths** exist within the Department of Counselor Education that can be leveraged or built upon in the future?

- **Dedicated and knowledgeable faculty** who respect, like, and value each other and our students
- A positive history and **excellent reputation**, reflected in—among other things—a steady flow of students into the program
- A healthy and **thriving counseling lab**, which provides services to our community and is a place of learning for our students
- **Service provided to local communities** and the profession in general (Clinical sites around SE WI respect our work and want our students)
- A departmental commitment to enhancing our **diversity and multiculturalism**
- A positive and supportive **relationship with the Dean** of the College of Education and Professional Studies

What **challenges** exist within the Department of Counselor Education that must be addressed or mitigated?

- The need to leverage the creative tension that exists between faculty ideas and emerging opportunities and the Department's needs and capacity for accomplishing all that needs to be done
- Ensuring clarity of expectations for all department members during periods of growth and transition
- Having the time and capacity to fully develop ideas before implementation
- Need for increased collaboration within and beyond the university
- Limited resources, especially human resources, to carry out all of the work, resulting in over-extended faculty
- The need to more fully adopt instructional technology to enhance teaching and learning

- Limited time for focused dialogue on specialized areas (i.e., advances in brain research, trauma, new recording technology) or to engage with each other about our research, new ideas in the field, etc.

What **opportunities** exist on campus or in the community of which we should take advantage?

- New faculty will arrive with new ideas and opportunities
- There continues to be tremendous interest in the program (from prospective students)
- Institutional leadership who understand and value the work of the Counselor Education Department
- College of Education and Professional Studies priorities that align with Counselor Education priorities (e.g., blended learning opportunities)
- Other departments on campus have expressed interest in collaboration on teaching, research, and service. Counseling and our skills can be applied to many different departments' learning objectives
- Openness to using existing resources to work smarter not harder

What **threats** exist of which we should remain aware and either deal with or avoid?

- Requests or invitations to activities that are compelling and distract from departmental goals.
- Limited energy to accomplish all that is being asked (and all that we would want to initiate)
- Capacity to adapt to culture of on-line learning and other forms of technology
- Ongoing competition for limited resources – how best do we make our case?
- The increasing presence of for-profit institutions and programs, especially the on-line counseling programs
- Competition for attracting and retaining new faculty as current faculty plan for retirement

Strategic Priorities

Issue to be addressed: Enrollment growth, increased workload demands, and faculty turnover have placed challenges on existing faculty

Strategic Priority 1: Expand and Strengthen Core Faculty and Staff

Issue to be addressed: Curriculum needs to be updated; uncertain about where to invest curriculum development resources

Strategic Priority 2: Maintain Leading-edge, Responsive Curricula

Issue to be addressed: Student enrollment needs to be better managed and monitored to ensure diversity and appropriate capacity

Strategic Priority 3: Increase the Diversity and Excellence of Our Students

Issue to be addressed: Lab space and improved technology have not kept pace with program growth and student learning needs

Strategic Priority 4: Equip Laboratory with State-of-the-Art Technology that Facilitates Learning and Counseling

Issue to be addressed: We need increased numbers of community partnerships to support student learning and contribute to our outreach mission.

Strategic Priority 5: Expand Reciprocal, Social Justice-Oriented Partnerships

Goals and Measures

[2011-12 Detailed Action Plans Available Upon Request]

Strategic Priority 1: Strengthen Core Faculty and Staff

Goals

1. Hire one new full-time faculty by Fall 2011 and another by Fall 2012
2. Develop mentoring plan to support success of new hires
3. Hire full-time Assistant Department Administrator (ADA)
4. Re-examine faculty workload and strategically redistribute as appropriate
5. Recruit, retain, and integrate part-time faculty into the life of the department

Select Measures

1. Full-time Administrative Department Associate is hired by Fall 2011
2. Total of seven (7) full-time tenure-track faculty exist and are retained
3. Full-time lab manager is on staff
4. Survey of departmental climate reveals satisfaction with departmental expectations and climate

Strategic Priority 2: Maintain Leading-edge, Responsive Curricula

Goals

1. Develop a 60-credit Mental Health Counseling program by 2013
2. Review existing courses in light of new CACREP standards by Fall 2011
3. Analyze impact of curriculum redesign on school and higher education emphases
4. School-focused students use e-Portfolios beginning with those submitting their first submissions in Fall 2011
5. Develop new curricular offerings based on faculty expertise and school/community need
6. Create a trauma-informed certificate by 2013
7. Offer trauma/addiction-informed workshops in school/community settings
8. Identify 1-2 additional topics for workshop offerings each year

Select Measures

1. 60-credit Mental Health Counseling program exists (includes new courses and foci)
2. Increased number of certificate programs (trauma-informed, addiction-informed), and certificate programs reflect state standards
3. Meaningful electronic assessment of learning exists (e-Portfolios)
4. Faculty are using technology to enhance pedagogy (Google docs; web-enhanced course delivery, etc.)

**Strategic Priority 3:
Increase the Diversity and Excellence of Our Students**Goals

1. Develop an admission/enrollment plan and process by Spring 2012 (timeline, criteria, number of student slots)
2. Increase diversity of CE students
3. Expand number of Spanish-speaking students in CE
4. Develop an international exchange program or immersion program

Select Measures

1. Effective enrollment plan exists with overall enrollment reduced by 15%
2. Increased percentage of diversity (broadly defined) among CE students by 2015, with attention to race/ethnicity but also including sexual orientation, disability, age, and gender
3. Increased percentage of Spanish-speaking students
4. Increased number of international exchange students

**Strategic Priority 4:
Equip Laboratory with State-of-the-Art Technology that Facilitates Learning and Counseling**Goals

1. Research and purchase digital recording equipment
2. Research and purchase hardware and software that facilitate learning and ensure confidentiality
3. Expand lab space to include additional counseling and observation rooms

Select Measures

1. Counseling sessions are digitally recorded
2. The lab functions more effectively and securely, documented with the use of new software
3. An additional family-sized counseling room is developed

**Strategic Priority 5:
Expand Reciprocal, Social Justice-Oriented Partnerships**Goals

1. Identify partnership agencies that will support our work with underprivileged and under-insured populations and develop agreements as appropriate

2. Initiate specific partnerships with campus services (e.g., Academic Support Services, Residence Life, UHCS, Impact)
3. Intentionally integrate social justice issues and themes into core courses
4. Expand use of lab to marginalized populations (hours, summer, etc.)

Select Measures

1. Partnerships exist with at least two agencies to deliver service to those who don't have access
2. Increased service work measured among students
3. Increased awareness among students of social justice issues, as measured by job placement and student/departmental assessment

Partners and Collaborators

No department or program can effectively fulfill its mission and vision without meaningful partners both on and off campus. The Department of Counselor Education is no exception. We are able to function effectively because of the support and collaboration of others who share our commitment to high-quality student learning.

Rather than provide an exhaustive list of those organizations, offices, and programs with whom we partner, below is a select list of partners with whom we collaborate most often or who are essential to the implementation of our mission.

Internal (UW-Whitewater) Partners

Offices of the Chancellor and Provost
 Offices of the Dean of the College of Education and Professional Studies
 Graduate School
 University Health and Counseling Services
 Residence Life
 Career and Leadership Development Office

External Partners

Our many partners who offer internships for our students
 Department of Counselor Education Advisory Council
 Whitewater School District
 United Church of Christ Congregation
 Area court systems
 Our alumni

We are also committed to forging and strengthening partnerships with the following internal partners: Center for Students with Disabilities, Communication Science and Disorders, Technology Services (ICIT), and the Departments of Psychology and Social Work.