**REHABILITATION COUNSELING PROGRAM**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

**2018 ANNUAL REPORT**

**December 2018**

The 2018 Annual Report presents an overview of our program’s mission and objectives, which guide the evaluation process; the results of our program evaluation; discussion of our findings; a presentation of subsequent program modifications that resulted from the process; and a discussion of other substantial program changes. Data are from 2017-2018, unless otherwise noted.

**Mission and Program Objectives**

*Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling Mission Statement*

The **Mission** of the Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling Program is to enhance the quality of life of persons who have physical or mental disabilities, including addictions, or who are disadvantaged by cultural differences and educational and economic impoverishment, through educational, scholarly, and service activities.

*Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling Program Objectives*

**Program** **Objectives**

*Education*

* To provide high quality professional **education** that includes classroom learning, field experiences, and other applied learning opportunities to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary for successful, effective, and responsible participation in changing diverse state and national rehabilitation counseling environment. Specifically,
	+ Education/Program Objective # 1. Students will demonstrate current knowledge and competencies required for successful practice in the field of professional counseling.
	+ Education/Program Objective # 2. Students will be able to demonstrate specialized clinical and technical knowledge in working with individuals with disabilities to achieve their personal, social, psychological, and vocational goals.

*Scholarship*

* Through research and **scholarship** activities, to advance knowledge and understanding of the effects of disability on the lives of persons with disabilities, the effectiveness of programs and services for people with disabilities, and the role of individuals with disabilities in society, the workplace, and the world.

*Service*

* To provide **consultation** and **training** to agencies and programs to enhance the abilities of their personnel serving disabled and disadvantaged persons in South Carolina and throughout the southeast.
* To provide rehabilitation **services** while offering students the opportunity for hands-on learning under the supervision of qualified, experienced professionals.
* To **support** the operations and activities of the Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science, School of Medicine, and University

*Respect for Diversity*

* To actively demonstrate **respect** for cultural and individual diversity in areas of education, scholarship, and service.

**Section 1. Results of the Evaluation**

Section 1 includes the following data: (1) Demographic and other characteristics of applicants, students, graduates; (2) Vital statistics; (3) Aggregate student assessment data including knowledge, skills, and dispositions; (4) systematic follow-up studies; and (5) external review.

***1.1 Demographic and Other Characteristics of Applicants, Students, and Graduates***

Applicant Data

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | # Applications | Number Accepted | Number Matriculated |
| Fall 2016 | 22 | 9 | 6 |
| Spring 2017 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| **Total AY 16-17** | **27** | **12** | **8** |
|  |  |  |  |
| Fall 2017 | 22 | 17 | 13 |
| Spring 2018 | 7 | 5 | 5 |
| **Total AY 17-18** | **29** | **22** | **18** |

Applicant Demographic Data for AY 2017-2018

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | # ApplicationsN=29 | Number AcceptedN=22 | Number MatriculatedN=18 |
| Gender | Female- 23 (79%)Male- 6 (21%) | Female- 18 (82%)Male- 4 (18%) | Female- 15 (83%)Male- 3 (17%) |
| Race/Ethnicity | African American- 9 (31%) Caucasian- 17 (59%)Hispanic- 0 More than one- 2 (7%)Not Reported- 1 (3%) | African American- 6 (27%)Caucasian- 14 (64%)Hispanic- 0 More than one- 2 (9%)Not Reported- 0  | African American- 5 (28%)Caucasian- 11 (61%)Hispanic- 0 More than one- 2 (11%)Not Reported- 0 |
| Age (average) | 35  | 32 | 32 |

For the 2017-2018 academic year, the average scores for accepted students were as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Undergraduate GPA** | 3.0 |
| **GRE**   | Writing: 3.5Quantitative: 141Verbal: 149  |
| **MAT**  | 389 |

Student Data

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number Enrolled | New students | Graduates |
| Fall 2016 | 37 | 6 |  |
| Spring 2017 | 30 | 2 | 4 |
| **Total AY 16-17** | 44 (unduplicated) |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| Fall 2017 | 38 | 13 | 6 |
| Spring 2018 | 38 | 5 | 2 |
| **Total AY 17-18** | 54 (unduplicated) |  |  |

Student Demographic Data for AY 2017-2018

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number EnrolledN=38 |  |  |
| Gender | Males – 7 (18%)Females – 31 (82%) |  |  |
| Race/Ethnicity | African American- 13 (34%) Caucasian- 12 (55%)Hispanic- 0 More than one- 4 (11%)Not Reported- 0 |  |  |
| Average Age | 32 |  |  |

Graduation Data

Twelve (12) students graduated in academic year 2017-2018. Twelve (12) of 12% of graduates found employment within 6 months of graduation.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number of Graduates  | Number Employed at Graduation | Number Employed 6 Months After Graduation |  |
| Fall 2017 | 4 | 3 | 1 |  |
| Spring 2018 | 6 | 4 | 2 |  |
| Summer 2018 | 2 | 2 | - |  |
| **Total** | **12** |  |  |  |

Graduate Demographic Data for AY 2017-2018

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Number of GraduatesN=12 |  |  |
| Gender |  Female- 10 (83%)Male- 2 (17%) |  |  |
| Race/Ethnicity | African American- 2 (17%)Caucasian- 9 (75%)Hispanic- 0More Than One- 1 (7%) |  |  |
| Average Age | 31 |  |  |

Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) scholarships

The rehabilitation counseling program currently has two Department of Education RSA long-term training grants; both are 5-year grants that will be ending in 2019 and 2020, respectively. Both grants are designed to produce masters-level rehabilitation counselors who agree to work in a public vocational rehabilitation or closely-related setting for 2 years for every one academic year of funding they receive. At this time 22 of 40 enrolled students (55%) are RSA scholars. However, future funding of these federal grants is uncertain as a result of changes occurring in rehabilitation legislation and there have been no recent calls for proposals for new awards. The program is proceeding by providing applicants with information about alternative sources of financial aid.

***1.2 Vital Statistics***

Program Graduates

* 2017-2018: 12 graduates
* 2016-2017: 15 graduates

Program Completion

For students who started the 48 credit-hour master’s degree program in 2015-2016 (N=16):

* 5 graduated in 2 years.
* 7 graduated in 2.5 years.
* 2 are on track to graduate with 60 credit-hours of study in 3.5 years.
* 2 are working with persons with disabilities in other capacities.

Certification

* Spring 2017: 2 of 2 (100%) students took and passed the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) exam.
* Fall 2017: 2 of 2 (100%) students took and passed the CRC exam.

Employment Outcomes

* Fall 2017: 100% of graduates (N=4) are employed as rehabilitation counseling professionals in rehabilitation agencies and university-based student disability services.
* Academic year 2016-2017: 100% of graduates actively seeking employment (N=14) are employed as counselors or therapists in rehabilitation agencies, college or university-based student disability services, community mental health agencies, private practice, and drug and alcohol treatment settings.

***1.3 Aggregate student assessment data including knowledge, skills, and dispositions***

This section addresses the aggregate student assessment data, including, knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions.

Student Learning Outcomes

As mentioned above, a comprehensive review of each student learning outcome, along with recommendations for how to use the results, is submitted using the University’s Academic Composer. The most recent comprehensive report is for the 2016 2017 academic year and is included here as **Appendix 1**. Because of changes in the University’s reporting cycles, data for the 2017-2018 academic year has not yet been uploaded into Academic Composer.

For academic year 2016-2017, the RCP evaluated 13 student learning outcomes (SLOs) using a total of 24 measures. Students met or exceeded the targets for 23 of the 24 measures (95.83%). As in past years, overall, students’ strongest performance was in areas related to counseling skills. Faculty sought to further bolster this strength with minor changes to the counseling courses, such as the addition of a dispositional focus. The relative weaknesses were related to evaluating and addressing the balance between client autonomy and fully addressing clients’ medical and psychological needs. This relative weakness is developmentally appropriate for counselors in training and tends to resolve over time. This process can be facilitated with the use of decision-making models. In addition, a relative weakness was noted in the ICF checklist being used, and the switch was made to the WHO ICF for both ease of use as well as professional currency. Several learning outcomes were updated for purposes of clarity and more accurate assessment, and a number of new measures were added to further SLO enhance data collection. In preparation for a new program, faculty reviewed and updated the entire curriculum. This included a complete update and consideration of both andragogy and content. Several new rubrics were developed and have been deployed as well. As is always the case, literature on all courses was updated to current standards.

Last year’s planned increases in the amount of time dedicated to in-class practice sessions seem to have contributed to enhanced student performance in areas of counseling skills. For the upcoming year, student learning in the area of fostering client autonomy and assessing function will be addressed by an added emphasis on principle-based decision-making processes throughout the curriculum, as well as the switch to the WHO ICF.

Student Learning Outcomes for 2017-2018

For academic year 2017-2018, the RCP evaluated 13 student learning outcomes (SLOs) using a total of 24 measures. Students met or exceeded the targets for 22 of the 24 measures (91.7%).

Students displayed relative strengths in their ability to conceptualize clients’ developmental and rehabilitation needs and priorities. Students were strong in their ability to choose and interpret assessment data, and in utilizing collected data to recognize client strengths. Strengths were also seen in counseling skill development, application of career theory, as well as in the application of vocational and case management concepts. Strengths were also noted in the application of group and individual counseling skills.

Growing edges were noted in students’ ability to utilize the International Classification of Functioning in Medical Aspects of Disability (now Medical and Psychosocial Aspects of Disability) course. Faculty have revised some assignments in an effort to enhance students’ abilities in this area. In addition, growing edges were noted in the application of theory with diverse clients and the application of theory in novel situations. Interestingly, the shift to 60 credit hours has allowed the RCP the ability to ensure that each student takes the Culture and Disability course, which was previously an elective course. It is hoped that this shift will enhance all students’ abilities in this area.

Student Learning Outcomes for 2018-2019

The MRC degree program will continue to evaluate 13 student learning outcomes (SLOs) under 1 overarching program goal. The MA degree program includes 2 overarching program/educational goals, the first of which focuses on the field of professional counseling and has 8 SLOs and a total of 28 measures. The second program/educational goal focuses on the specialization of clinical rehabilitation counseling and has 4 SLO’s which are evaluated by a total of 12 measures.

Key performance indicators (KPIs)

The RCP allows students to matriculate in both fall and Spring semesters and to attend as either part-time or full-time students. Without a cohort model, aggregate data does not always match individual student data. At this time, the program faculty is still formulating a plan for how we will systematically collect Key performance indicators (KPIs) for individual students across time. We anticipate that at this time next year that system will be in place.

Comprehensive examination data

Summarized Results: In 2017-2018, students did well on the Comprehensive Examination. We had a 100% pass rate, overall. Our first time pass rate was 70%, with 30% of students returning to take one or more sections. This iterative process is designed to be an intentional part of the learning process, providing students who have not yet fully developed their knowledge and skills the opportunity to further explore the material and to participate in a different case study. This allows students to gather formative feedback on growth areas, as well as a formal process to address those areas and reflect professional competence.

Faculty Discussion: Faculty meet to discuss comprehensive exam performance every semester, noting trends in performance and examining student’s developmental progress. No changes seemed warranted as a result of the 2017-2018 review process.

Clinical Evaluation Data

In 2017-2018, internship students developed case conceptualizations that include how mental health issues are impacting the rehabilitation process. Competency was assessed as earning a score of Satisfactory or higher on the case conceptualization assignment. 14 of 14 students met this goal and were able to describe the impact of mental health conditions on key areas of functioning, including interpersonal relationships, employment, and independent living. In preparation for accreditation as a clinical rehabilitation counseling program, faculty updated several assignments to enhance student skills and core mental health competencies

Beginning in fall 2018, the case conceptualization assignment will focus on a person with a serious mental illness and include an assessment of the student’s ability to critically evaluate a psychiatric diagnosis.

**Dispositions Data**

A formal process of assessing student dispositions was introduced in Fall 2017. The RCP faculty adapted the work of Spurgeon, Gibbons, and Cochran (2012). Dispositions include commitment, interpersonal competence, openness, respect, integrity, and self-awareness. Professional dispositions are assessed 2 times per year, in each major semester. In addition to faculty review of dispositions, each student completes a self-assessment of dispositions. Designated faculty members meet individually with students to compare the faculty and student assessments as well as to identify areas for growth and continued improvement.

Overall, students did well in the 2017-2018 cycle. In the Fall 2017 cycle (the program’s first with the new Dispositions program), the majority of students were developing well in all areas. A handful were able to benefit from formative feedback (Growth Needed), and many rated as exceptional. All benefitted from a comparison of their own and the faculty’s ratings.

In the Spring 2018 cycle, students seemed more familiar with the process, as expected, and their ratings were closer to the faculty ratings, although the interesting trend of students “under-rating” themselves was still apparent. Students did show an enhanced ability and willingness to comment on their ratings, and faculty noted that students had begun to adopt and use the language of dispositions in evaluating their progress within the program.

Faculty Discussion: Faculty found the trend of students adopting the dispositions as “their own” encouraging. Further, the students that have traditionally needed formative feedback in key areas seem to be getting it earlier and more regularly as a result of this process. This has enabled faculty to have more effective formative conversations with students and seems to have allowed students and enhanced conceptual framework for their own development.

Conclusions and associated action plans: The dispositions process has been effective and will be retained moving forward.

***1.4 Systematic follow-up studies***

Site Supervisor Survey Data

Summarized Results: Of the Site Supervisor Surveys available for 2017 (N=4), Site supervisors average ratings follow: Access to Faculty Members: 10/10, Clarity of USC Documentation Process: 10/10, Ease of Completing required USC Documentation: 10/10 and Student Educational Preparation: 10/10. Overall, supervisors seemed very pleased with students and with the preparedness of those students. Valuable feedback was gained, however, in the form of helpful suggestions. The following growing edge was noted by one supervisor: “Perhaps enhancing students' ability to apply counseling skills with non-traditional counseling and internship settings would be helpful.”

Faculty Discussion: Faculty discussed the possibility of getting students more experience in diverse, non-traditional settings as part of the educational process. RCP faculty also talked about a related growing edge found in another survey area (application of counseling theory with non-traditional clients) and will seek to enhance students learning opportunities in both areas.

Conclusions and associated action plans: Faculty will seek to enhance learning opportunities for students in non-traditional settings and with non-traditional clients.

Employer Survey Data

Summarized Results: The response rate for the Employer survey in 2017-2018 (46.7%) was much improved over the 2016-2017 (20%) version. The RCP faculty switched technologies for this year’s survey, utilizing a format that was much more “user friendly” and much easier to use, in general. This change, along with a different follow up procedure, seemed to enhance the ability and willingness of employers to respond.

Employers averaged 5/5 in rating the following factors: employees’ level of knowledge of the role of the rehabilitation counselor in that agency, knowledge of vocational concepts and the world of work, employee’s proficiency and skill in using disability-related information with clients, attitude in the workplace, attitudes towards co-workers, and attitudes towards supervisors.

Employers averaged 4.86/5 in rating the following factors: Employees’ level of knowledge regarding counseling techniques and theories, employees’ level of knowledge with regard to working with diverse individuals and populations, employees’ level of proficiency and skill with putting into practice counseling theories and techniques in order to help clients, employees’ attitudes towards clients and people with disabilities, and employees’ attitudes towards people from a variety of cultures and backgrounds.

Employers averaged 4.80/5 in rating the employees’ level of proficiency and skill in doing the job of the rehabilitation counselor in that given agency.

Employers averaged 4.71.5 in rating the following factors: employees’ level of proficiency and skill with implementing culturally appropriate interventions in order to help clients, and employees’ level of knowledge with regard todisability.

Employers averaged 4.67/5 in rating employees’ level of proficiency and skill in putting into practice vocational knowledge and helping clients to explore the world of work.

Faculty Discussion: Overall, the RCP faculty was pleased with these results. Attention was given to strengthening the ability to apply theory and knowledge of both counseling theory and vocational factors. Attention was also given to ways to strengthen a student’s abilities in working with culturally diverse clients in culturally appropriate ways. In many ways, it is felt that the shift to the 60-credit hour program, in which ethics, culture and counseling and the addictions course are all now required courses, as opposed to electives (as they had been in the previous 48-hour program), will work to help with these desired outcomes. In short, the program is doing very well in these areas, and the shift in program will help to maximize full coverage of these topics with every student. The faculty has also had the opportunity to examine, in detail, each of the courses, including the vocational courses in preparation for the program modification. As one might expect, RCP faculty took the opportunity to strengthen and maximize the design of these vocational courses. It is hoped that this will also help to strengthen our graduates' abilities in these areas.

Conclusions and associated action plans: The re-design and program modification provided excellent opportunities to address the few needs identified in this survey.

Alumni/Graduate Survey Data

Summarized Results: The faculty met and examined the results of the 2016-2017 Survey of Program Graduates the April meeting. Although a limitation was noted with regard to the small size of the pool and the associated difficulties presented with a lack of anonymity, some trends were noted. The response rate continues to rise, thanks to the work of the program coordinator and other faculty and staff reminding graduates of the opportunity to provide feedback. In large part, students seemed happy with their experiences within the program and would recommend the program to others. Faculty discussed ways to get the alumni more involved with recruiting, given the positive experiences that they report. The survey results are included as **Appendix 2**.

Conclusions and associated action plans: Faculty will reach out to alumni in an effort to re-engage them in both current and future program opportunities. Also, based on input from the Advisory Board, a question related to graduates’ perceptions of their future earning capacity as a result of earning the degree will be added to the annual survey when it is next administered in Spring, 2019.

Student Evaluation of Site Supervisor Survey Data

As part of the Agency Placement Evaluation that is completed by each student at the end of their practicum and internship, students evaluate the perceived effectiveness of their site supervisor. This year, students reported positive experiences with site supervisors (ratings of 8 or higher on a 10-point scale).

***1.5 Additional external review***

Advisory Board Data

The function of the Advisory Board is threefold: It serves as a primary external review of our program. In addition to this vital Program Evaluation function, the Advisory Board is closely linked to two of our Program Objectives. Specifically, the presence of students and professional representatives of private and public rehabilitation agencies, helps us to achieve effective and responsible participation in a changing state and national rehabilitation environment. In addition to advising the program, the Advisory Board also requests consultation and training as specific needs present themselves.

*Highlights of the 2017-2018 Advisory Board process*:

* Updates on personnel changes at both South Carolina Commission for the Blind and South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department.
* The Advisory Board was enthusiastic in its feedback on the program shift to 60 credit hours. The Board endorsed the goal of standardization and professionalization of the counseling field. The Board also gave positive feedback on the final curriculum design.
* The Advisory Council (former name) agreed to shift its formal name to an Advisory Board and to retain the December and June meeting times.
* The Board also accepted and reviewed the results of the latest Employer survey. Discussion was held around the program’s ongoing strengths as well as its growing edges. The Board gave support to faculty conclusions and plans and made suggestions in implementation.

**Section 2. Discussion of findings**

This year’s Program Evaluation process yielded some key insights:

* Student Dispositions ratings were very effective in:
	+ Identifying and highlighting key growth areas for students
	+ Providing formative feedback on students’ skill development.
	+ Providing real time formative feedback on students’ self-monitoring skills
	+ Providing an ongoing forum for faculty to engage with the evaluation process outside of traditional academic areas.
* Student Learning Outcome data was largely positive, and indicated that students are doing well in acquiring key knowledge and skills. Growth areas were noted in the use of the ICF Checklist and learning opportunities with regard to disability evaluation. Faculty will make changes in these key areas.
* Employer surveys indicated that employers were very happy to program graduates on the whole. Further, the employer survey provided insights into several curriculum development opportunities, including the use of skills with diverse clients, the application of theoretical constructs with diverse clients.
* Program graduate surveys indicated that graduates seemed pleased with their educational experience, as a whole. It was also noted that graduates felt more prepared in this year’s survey than was the case in last year’s. This indicates that the survey and review process itself has been successful in enhances program outcomes. As mentioned earlier, based on input from the Advisory Board, a question related to graduates’ perceptions of their future earning capacity as a result of earning the degree will be added to the annual survey when it is next administered in Spring 2019.
* Site supervisor survey data revealed that site supervisors were largely very pleased with student performance and faculty interaction. One opportunity was noted in the enhancing students’ ability to apply concepts and skills in non-traditional settings.
* On the whole, RCP faculty were pleased with both the summative outcomes and the formative processes within the program. As always, Program Evaluation will continue and areas for future growth and development will be noted and developed.
* The 2018 Annual Report was discussed with the rehabilitation counseling program Advisory Board at its December meeting. Board members noted that the new format for the Annual Report is well-organized and easy to follow. They also noted that they were familiar with many portions of the report, having either seen the data before (e.g., the survey of program graduates and the survey of employers of program graduates) or been involved in the development of program activities (e.g. the transition from 48 credit hours to 60 credit hours which is been in process for more than 3 years; the creation and implementation of an instrument to evaluate student dispositions, etc.).

**Section 3. Recent and Subsequent Program Modifications**

***3.1 Implementation of assessment of dispositions***

In response to ongoing Program evaluation in 2014, and 2015, the RCP faculty recognized a growing edge in student-based evaluation. Specifically, RCP faculty wanted a way to provide students formative feedback on the “soft skills’ of counseling. Faculty had noticed that, over the years, when student encountered difficulties with certain personal developmental factors that were essential to the successful assumption of the role of a professional counselor, RCP faculty lacked a formal and professionally accepted framework for the assessment and provision of that type of formative feedback. Being scientist-practitioners, the RCP faculty went to the professional literature, consulted with colleagues, and combed the professional world for help in this area. As it turns out, the field of counseling pioneered the use of professional dispositions as far back as the early 1960’s. Interestingly, although some in the field continued their use, much of field moved away from dispositions in favor of more technical and skill-oriented approaches as the 2000’s approached. Recently, however, there has been renewed interest in the importance of Professional Dispositions in the counseling field.

This search led to an article out of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville describing the development of a set of Professional Dispositions for use in a Counselor Education program. It seems that Spurgeon, Gibbons & Cochran (2012) saw a similar need within their program and took the time to develop a set of Professional Dispositions for use the UTK program.

Using the basic dispositions developed by UTK as a starting point, we engaged in a similar process as the UTK program, convening a special meeting to discuss the dispositional elements of good counselors. Central to the discussion was a question: If you were going to a counselor yourself or were going to refer a close family member, what dispositions would you want to see in a Professional Counselor? After doing this work, we added a disposition and adapted the Spurgeon, Gibbons & Cochran Dispositions Rating Sheet (2012) for our own use. See **Appendix 3.**

***3.2 Implementation of revised Program Evaluation activities***

Conceptually, the RCP program evaluation process based on the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) standards is very consistent with that required by CACREP. However, the formatting of the evaluation plan and the subsequent report required substantial revision. In preparation for the move to CACREP, RCP faculty sought out consultation with colleagues and looked to the professional literature, finding the Accountability Bridge model, for instance, and incorporating these new ideas into a single, comprehensive and systematic approach. In this way, we feel that we have already benefitted from CARCEP accreditation. In this case, that search for quality improvement has resulted in an improved Program Evaluation plan, as well as a more organized and cohesive approach.

The 2017-2018 academic year represented the first full year utilizing this new and improved comprehensive Program Evaluation process. In 2016, RCP faculty initially developed a schedule that seemed to make sense, based on program specific needs. In utilizing that schedule, RCP staff learned that certain practical schedule changes made the implementation easier and/or more effective. For example, it was not feasible to review fall semester learning outcomes in the month of December. We needed time to assemble that data and prepare it for faculty review. Subsequently review of fall learning outcomes now takes place in January.

***3.3 Revision of Agency Placement Evaluation***

In the past year, RCP faculty revised the Agency Placement Evaluation that is completed by each student at the end of their practicum and internship to include an item that gives students the opportunity to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of their site supervisor. As described earlier, students reported positive experiences with site supervisors (ratings of 8 or higher on a 10-point scale).

***3.4 Collaborative skill development***

Whenever possible, students are also asked to self-assess concurrently with the faculty-based assessment. We call this process Collaborative Skill Development. The idea behind this approach is to help students develop skills in self-monitoring by providing ongoing and formative feedback on that process as well as a faculty-based comparison point. An example of this Collaborative Skill Development is our Dispositions process, mentioned in section 3.1. In this process, faculty assess student dispositions in six key areas, while students are also asked to complete the very same rating form. This provides students with practice in considering and evaluating these key professional and personal development areas, and also provides a comparison point for their ratings in the form of faculty ratings. Faculty meet with each student each semester that they are in a counseling course to discuss these ratings. This provides multiple measures of six key areas across multiple points in time, and also provides students feedback in their rating skills. This also provides students with the opportunity to rate themselves with no risk or penalty, and provides formative feedback on their self-evaluation skills in a low risk environment.

Two landmark studies in the field of teaching and human learning revealed that the ability to experiment with new skills in low risk settings, coupled with formative feedback stands in the learning literature as one of the gold standards in teaching Halloun & Hestenes, (1985a, 1985b). RCP faculty chose to employ these teaching techniques in the Dispositions process.

Results seen thus far are extremely positive. Interestingly, many new students often rate themselves lower than do the faculty, while other students find themselves encouraged by the consistency of the student and faculty’s ratings. In some cases, students may rate themselves a bit higher than does the faculty, and this provides invaluable time and space to provide the students critical and informative feedback at multiple points in time throughout the program.

***3.5 Individualized student advisement and planning for degree decisions***

Faculty have engaged in a systematic process of informing students of changes in the degree program. As mentioned earlier, all students currently enrolled in the 48 credit hour degree program have the opportunity to remain in that program or to transfer to the 60 credit hour program. Informational group meetings were followed by individualized student advisement, during which time each student received a proposed program of study for each option. Of the 37 students who were enrolled in the MRC program at the time the MA program was approved, 11 will have graduated with the MRC degree by December 2018; 8 students have decided to remain with the MRC degree and plan to graduate in 2019 or 2020; and 10 students plan to transfer to the MA program. The remaining 8 students have not yet made a decision. Faculty are developing a process for students closest to graduation to transfer to the 60 credit hour program beginning in Spring 2019. The first students to graduate with the MA degree (60 credit hours) will do so in summer of 2019.

**Section 5. Other substantial program changes**

***5.1 Curriculum revision: Change from 48 credit MRC degree to 60 credit hour MA degree***

A major trend the field of counseling is the movement towards the portability of counselor licensure from state to state. Concurrently, a related trend is the desire to standardize Professional Counselor training. This provides a number of advantages: once established, this standardization ensures that a professional counselor has the same basic training, regardless of specialty area. This allows for more effective advocacy for the profession at large, and also allows for the development of a more unified agenda in professional development. For graduates, this shift to more standardized basic professional counselor training should result in a degree that is of more value, and is better understood by the public, legislators and third-party payers, such as insurance companies. It is felt that this shift in the perception and understanding of the counseling profession will lead to more qualified professionals in positions to help to enhance the lives and health of the American public.

A key part of this standardization process is the shift from counseling programs that vary in length by specialty, to counseling programs that share an equal number of “basic” credits, regardless of specialty. In examining a number of fields that have had success in standardizing basic training at the Masters Level, the leadership of the counseling field found that a minimum of 60 credit hours seemed to allow for the best consistency and educational opportunity. This helps to ensure that each professional counselor gets a similar amount of formal, graduate training. The shift to 60 credit hours also allows programs to include as mandatory content, a number of previously elective courses that help to advance the knowledge and skill level of all graduates. For this and a variety of other reasons, the Rehabilitation Counseling program chose to move from a 48 credit hour Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling (MRC) program to a 60-credit hour Masters in Counseling and Rehabilitation, with a specialization in Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling.

In preparation for the transition from accreditation of the 48-credit hour MRC degree to the 60-credit hour MA degree, the RCP faculty undertook a major curriculum review. This resulted in a decision to shift from a 48-credit hour program, which already had an emphasis on clinical rehabilitation counseling, to a 60-credit hour program that would be formally recognized by CACREP as having a specialization in clinical rehabilitation counseling.

After a period of extensive research and consultation, a faculty work group began the program modification process in May 2016. Final approval from the Commission on Higher Education was received in February 2018; the 60-credit hour program accepted its first students in Fall 2018.

***6. Research and scholarship***

In academic year 2017-2018, RCP faculty engaged in several scholarly activities. A partial listing of those activities follows:

*Grants and Awards*:

Dr. Leach was awarded the MUSC Community Engaged Scholars and Practitioners (CES-P) Grant in Fall 2017. His research topic is Needs and Supports for Parents and Families with Children Diagnosed with Hearing Loss in Rural and Urban Settings in SC. (Leach, PI).

Dr. Lachance and Dr. Dawson continue to serve as co-PI’s on two long-term training grants awarded by the Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Both are five-year grants whose primary focus is preparing qualified masters level rehabilitation counselors to work with persons with disabilities in the state vocational rehabilitation system.

Dr. Dawson was awarded four Unity Education Grant Licenses through a competitive proposal process. Unity Technologies. Award value $6,000.

Dr. Dawson was also awarded the Virtual Environments Grant, USC Center for Teaching Excellence, through a competitive award process. University of South Carolina, Funded $2,920.

*National and Local Presentations*:

Dr. Leach, Dr. Walsh, and Dr. Dawson presented “Learning from the Voices of Persons with Disabilities: Natural Disaster Preparation and Recovery” at American Counseling Association Conference in Atlanta, GA on April 26, 2018.

Dr. Lachance presented “Practice into Theory: Rediscovering Counseling Theories during Rehabilitation Counseling Internships” at the National Rehabilitation Educators Conference in Arlington, Virginia in October 2017.

Dr. Walsh presented “Ethics for Human Services Professionals” for the Collaborative Organization of Services for Youth (COSY) in Beaufort, South Carolina in June 2017.

Dr. Leach presented:

* “Compassion Fatigue and Mindfulness for Clinicians” at Three Rivers Lunch and Learn in Lexington, SC on September 21, 2017.
* “Mindfulness” at the Helping the Hurting Conference in West Columbia, SC on November 14, 2017
* “Compassion Fatigue and Mindfulness” at Lenoir Rhyne Lunch and Learn in Columbia, South Carolina on November 30, 2017.

Dr. Dawson presented:

* Dawson, R.D. (2018) Creating accessible virtual reality environments. USC virtual reality boot camp. University of South Carolina Center for Teachings Excellence. Columbia, SC
* Dawson, R.D. (2018) Home Modifications for persons with disabilities: How to make them and How to afford them. South Carolina Assistive Technology Expo. Columbia, S.C.
* Dawson, R.D. (2018) Assistive and adaptive technology with Smart Phones. Empowering a Future: Transitions Conference for Professionals. Columbia, SC

*Publications*:

Walsh, M., Balkin, R. (2017). Program Evaluation. In Balkin (Ed.) *Counseling Research: A Scholar-Practitioner Approach to Research in the Counseling Profession.* American Counseling Association: Alexandria, Virginia.

Walsh, M., Scholl, M, Catena, A. & Bowers, H. (2018). Experiential Family Therapies. In Flamez (Ed.) *Introduction to Marriage and Family Therapy.* Cognella: San Diego, California.

Walsh, M., Scholl, M, Catena, A. & Bowers, H. (2018). Structural Family Therapies. In Flamez (Ed.) *Introduction to Marriage and Family Therapy.* Cognella: San Diego, California.

Walsh, Michael J. & Allison, A. (2018). Bringing it all Together: Effective Program Evaluation. In Wester & Wachter-Morris (Eds.). *Practitioner’s Guide to Research Methods: How to Design and Implement Effective Studies.* Routledge Taylor Francis: New York, New York.

***7. Service***

In academic year 2017-2018, RCP faculty engaged in several service activities. A partial listing of those activities follows:

*Boards of Directors*

Dr. Leach is a member of the Mental Health America Board of Directors beginning June 2017.

Dr. Dawson is president of the Board of Directors ABLE South Carolina, a Center for Independent Living (CIL). Dr. Dawson has been a member of the board since 2012 and president since 2013.

Dr. Lachance is a member of the Board of Directors of the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention - SC Chapter. Dr. Lachance has been a member of this board since 2012.

*Professional Organizations*

Dr. Walsh is involved in several professional organizations and serves in several capacities including:

* American Counseling Association Foundation (ACAF) - Trustee (2017-2022)
* American Counseling Association Ethics Committee (ACA) - Member (2010-2013, 2014-2017) (Co-Chair-2012)
* American Counseling Association (ACA) - ACA National Conference Session Review Committee (2006-Present)
* Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) - Member
* Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES) - Member
* American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA) - Member
* Journal of Counseling and Development Review Board (JCD) - Member

Dr. Lachance is a member of the American Counseling Association, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), and the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA).

Dr. Dawson is a member of the American Counseling Association, ACES, the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA) and is an individual member of the National Council on Rehabilitation Education (NCRE), as well as the National Rehabilitation Association (NRA).

Dr. Leach is a member of the American Counseling Association, and the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA).

*Consultation and training for community agencies*

Dr. Walsh and Dr. Lachance developed a multi-day training, “Counseling Skills for Vocational Rehabilitation Professionals,” for the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department. Since 2014, more than 300 SCVRD employees have completed this training.

Dr. Lachance provided consultation and training to more than 60 state-level managers of SCVRD on the topics of “LGBTQIA+: Beginning the Discussion” and “LGBTQIA+: Continuing the Conversation” in August and October, 2018, respectively.

*University service*

Dr. Walsh partnered with staff of the USC Student Disability Resource Center to educate university faculty about working collaboratively with students with disabilities to identify effective accommodations.

Dr. Lachance represents the School of Medicine on the USC Disability Affairs Committee.

Dr. Dawson was elected to Faculty Senate for 2018-2021.

*Other community service*

Dr. Walsh provided expert witness testimony in Medicaid Disability appeals cases.

Dr. Walsh served as a Hearing Officer in deciding disputes between service agencies and consumers.

Dr. Walsh served as a mediator in disputes between service agencies and consumers.

Dr. Dawson co-developed the South Carolina Center for Assistive Technology and Educational Research (SC-CATER), which offers a place for the advancement and dissemination of assistive technology. SC-ATER emphasizes instruction and research for the School of Medicine, the College of Education, and the School of Computer Science and Engineering.

**Appendices**

1. Academic Composer student learning outcomes report (2016-2017)

2. Survey of program graduates

3. Disposition Rating Form