

## ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

### Waynesburg University Graduate Counseling Programs

The Graduate Counseling Programs of Waynesburg University include a Master of Arts in Counseling with two specialization tracks: (a) Clinical Mental Health and (b) Addictions, and a Doctorate of Philosophy in Counselor Education and Supervision. The Graduate Counseling Programs also offer multiple certificates and advanced training opportunities for mental health professionals. This annual report outlines successes, areas for growth, and changes within the Graduate Counseling Programs during the 2023-2024 Academic Year.

***M.A. Program Purpose Statement:***

*To develop self-reflective counselors who have the ability and the willingness to enhance the emotional, cognitive, social, and spiritual development of others. This program provides opportunities for students to grow in their personal and professional lives and inspires a commitment to service and social justice as part of the Waynesburg University tradition.*

<b>Master of Arts in Counseling – Annual Statistics</b>	
Total Number of Graduates in Past Year	22
Clinical Mental Health Graduates	18
Addictions Counseling Graduates	4
Completion Rate	97%
National Counselor Exam (NCE) Pass Rate	100%
NCE Pass Rate Clinical Mental Health Graduates	100%
NCE Pass Rate Addictions Counseling Graduates	100%
Job Placement Rate All Graduates - Addictions	100%
Job Placement Rate All Graduates - Mental Health	100%
Average Class Size	10 -15 students

This academic year, twenty-two students graduated from the Master of Arts in Counseling program. Of these graduates, eighteen were enrolled in the Clinical Mental Health track, and four were enrolled in the Addictions track. As of the start of Fall 2024, the Master of Arts in Counseling program has 43 enrolled students.

***Ph.D. Program Purpose Statement:***

*The mission of the Ph.D. program in Counseling at Waynesburg University is to prepare professional counselors to provide leadership in the profession of counseling. Counseling leaders must be best practice counselors, supervisors and teachers. They should be grounded in the ethical codes of the American Counseling Association and its subdivisions. Counseling leaders are diversity informed and culturally competent. Finally, they use best practice standards in research and scholarly activities. The program is designed to enhance the counseling skills of doctoral students, prepare counselors for the roles of clinical and administrative supervisor, develop the teaching skills of students, teach students to conduct research, and prepare students to become counseling scholars. The program prepares doctoral students to become university faculty members in counselor education programs and leaders in*

*the specializations of clinical mental health counseling, addictions counseling, and school counseling.*

<b>Ph.D. Counselor Education &amp; Supervision – Annual Statistics</b>	
Total Number of Graduates in Past Year	3
Completion Rate for Coursework	82%
Job Placement Rate All Graduates	100%
Average Class Size	6-7 students

This academic year, three doctoral candidates graduated from the program after successful completion of their dissertations. At the beginning of the Fall 2024 semester, there are sixteen students enrolled in coursework at the PhD level and fifteen doctoral candidates in the dissertation process.

## **CACREP ACCREDITATION UPDATE**

In 2021, our in-person Master of Arts in Counseling program and Ph.D. Counselor Education & Supervision programs were awarded an eight-year accreditation status by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP). In addition to the general prestige of graduating from a program recognized as having met national standards, there are some tangible advantages of having graduated from a CACREP-accredited graduate program in counseling. A CACREP-accredited Master of Arts in Counseling meets the educational requirements for licensure as a professional counselor in the majority of states. Furthermore, graduates are able to become a National Certified Counselor (NCC) upon graduation from the Waynesburg University master's degree programs in Counseling and have a potential advantage as a candidate for employment as a counselor post-graduation.

In 2019, our faculty began designing a digitally delivered (online) option for our Master of Arts in Counseling program. Our first online cohort matriculated in Fall 2020. After considerable effort and advocacy for our program, this delivery method was officially awarded CACREP accredited status in 2024. Now, regardless of delivery method, all students in our Master of Arts in Counseling program are now able to claim the recognition afforded by this CACREP status. This status was also awarded retroactively to online cohorts who graduated in Spring 2022 and 2023, meaning that these alumni can now state they have graduated from a CACREP-accredited program.

With the introduction of the 2024 CACREP Standards, our programs are undergoing review to ensure continued alignment with our accrediting body. Our next full CACREP accreditation review is expected to occur in the 2028-2029 academic year.

## **PROGRAM UPDATES AND MODIFICATIONS**

The following updates and modifications were made within the Graduate Counseling Programs during the 2023-2024 academic year. These changes were informed by both program evaluation data and stakeholder input and align with our programmatic and institutional goals.

### **PhD Program Delivery Update**

Waynesburg University's Graduate Counseling Programs maintain an ongoing commitment to providing accessible, high-quality education that meets the evolving needs of our students. In alignment with enrollment and after extensive review, the Graduate Counseling Programs elected to transition our Ph.D. Counselor Education & Supervision program from an in-person format to a fully online delivery model as of Fall 2024. The program will continue to offer the same rigorous curriculum and expert faculty mentorship, now with the added flexibility of synchronous online learning. This shift expands opportunities for a diverse population of students nationwide to engage in advanced research and scholarship without the constraints of geographic location, and enrollment trends have already reflected positively on this change. We remain dedicated to fostering a dynamic, interactive learning environment through virtual platforms that promote meaningful collaboration, support, and engagement, with synchronous classes continuing to meet in this digital format.

### **PhD Comprehensive Examination Process**

In response to student and faculty input and academic performance indicators, the Graduate Counseling faculty substantially revised the doctoral comprehensive examination process. These updates reflect an emphasis on leadership and competencies in counseling, counselor education, and supervision, with opportunities for individualized demonstration of skills and knowledge. The revised process was implemented in May 2024.

### **Modification of Counseling Trauma Survivors course**

In response to student, alumni, site supervisor, and faculty input, the Counseling Trauma Survivors course was updated to emphasize assessment and treatment methods for working with individuals with trauma. These revisions are being implemented in the Fall 2024 semester and will be evaluated for effectiveness in relation to course and program outcomes.

### **Digitally-Delivered Learning**

In response to increased enrollment in our online (digitally delivered) cohorts, the Graduate Counseling faculty continue to explore innovative and engaging ways for students to practice and grow their competence in counseling skills. Grant funding is being used to offer simulation trainings to students as a way to further their opportunities for implementing counseling skills prior to live clinical experiences. The faculty are assessing outcomes in these areas to ensure these tools are effective and appropriate, with a focus on increasing "hands on" opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate their counseling skills. Finally, our training for site supervisors was updated this year to address digitally delivered considerations in clinical field experience and supervision.

## **2023-2024 GRANT SUMMARIES**

### **HRSA/BHWET Grant**

Waynesburg University received a \$1,069,239 grant from the Department of Health and Human Resources (HRSA) for the Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training Program (BHWET). This program focuses on increasing the behavioral health workforce in underserved areas or working with high need populations. This grant provides a \$10,000 annual stipend to qualifying students completing their internships in field placements that meet the requirements

for serving clients in high need and high demand areas. The grant also allows the Graduate Counseling Programs to provide increased training opportunities for faculty and students, as well as support an annual regional conference for mental health professionals, administrators, and allied health professionals.

Our third BHWET Scholar cohort, active during the 2023-2024 academic year, was comprised of 19 Master of Arts in Counseling students. These students and their site supervisors were provided with a series of professional development workshops throughout the program. With the help of an advisory board, we hosted an in-person counseling symposium in March 2024. This symposium saw unprecedented attendance, with over 150 participants joining together for a full day of workshops. The Waynesburg University Counseling Training Clinic launched in the 2022-2023 academic year, and continued to provide training opportunities to Master of Arts in Counseling students while offering telemental health services to the members of our community. The clinic paused operations as of September 2024 due to low enrollment.

### **HRSA/HWRT Grant**

In 2022, Waynesburg University was awarded a three-year grant totaling more than \$1.5 million from the Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) for the launch of its Healthcare Workforce Resiliency Training (HWRT) Program. The purpose of this program is to enhance the resilience, health and safety of healthcare workers in order to impact community resilience and mental health in the face of long-term stressors and health impacts amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Facilitated through the Graduate Counseling Programs, the program provides a comprehensive training curriculum to healthcare workers, first responders, and similar professionals tasked with the care of others.

Training execution through the first two years of the grant period was impacted by a disconnect between the initial proposed online training modality and rural Appalachian cultural factors. These factors include a distrust of outside agencies, aversion to technology, and aversion to online training. Because of this, the primary training delivery modality has been realigned to in-person trainings, borne out of the opportunities created through lengthy relationship and trust building with professional entities and organizations throughout Western Pennsylvania. From 2022 to 2023, we were able to serve almost 200 individuals through this program. In 2024, enrollment grew exponentially, with over 700 individuals served in that year alone. In Fall 2024, Waynesburg University was awarded an extension for this grant funding, allowing operations to continue through December 2025.

### **Staunton Farm Foundation: Certificate in Clinical Supervision**

The Certificate in Clinical Supervision program successfully launched in the Spring of 2023. The development and implementation of this program has been supported through a capacity building grant awarded by the Staunton Farm Foundation. The Clinical Supervision Certificate program is intended to enhance the professional identity and competence of clinical supervisors in the behavioral health workforce by offering an advanced educational training program. The certificate is a 12-credit, non-degree, post-baccalaureate program that is available 100% asynchronous online and can be successfully completed in as little as two semesters. At the close of this grant in 2024, Waynesburg University (WU) met all program goals, with a primary aim of

enhancing supervisor self-efficacy across several areas of competence. During this grant period, 19 students received this specialized, formal training program.

## PROGRAM EVALUATION DATA AND ANALYSIS

### Applicant and Student Demographics

Applications to the Master of Arts and PhD programs increased from previous years. Incoming enrollments were consistent with enrollment rates from the previous academic year: the Master of Arts in Counseling program enrolled 24 incoming students for the Fall 2024 cohort, while the PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision program enrolled nine incoming students.

Demographic information related to applicants are provided in Table 2.1. and Table 2.2 below.

### MA Counseling Applicant Demographics

	5 Year Average	2023	2024
<b>Total Number of Applicants</b>	28	25	32
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	19%	28%	28%
Female	80%	68%	72%
Did not disclose	0%	4%	0%
<b>Ethnicity (Latino/Latina or Hispanic/Latino origin)</b>	3%	8%	3%
<b>Race</b>			
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	0%	0%
Asian	0%	0%	0%
Black or African American	10%	12%	22%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%
White	87%	76%	72%

*\*These numbers reflect students who self-identified for each demographic category. Applicants were able to indicate more than one racial category.*

### PhD Applicant Demographics

	5 Year Average	2023	2024
<b>Total Number of Applicants</b>	7	4	9
<b>Sex</b>			
Male	14%	0%	22%
Female	84%	100%	78%
<b>Ethnicity (Latino/Latina or Hispanic/Latino origin)</b>	5%	0%	0%
<b>Race</b>			
American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	0%	0%
Asian	5%	0%	11%
Black or African American	14%	25%	22%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	3%	0%	0%
White	68%	75%	67%

*\*These numbers reflect students who self-identified for each demographic category. Applicants were able to indicate more than one racial category.*

### **Key Performance Indicators**

Program faculty systematically assess each student's progress throughout the program by identifying key performance indicators of student learning in each of the eight core areas for the Master of Arts in Counseling program as well as in each student's respective specialty area. Additionally, key performance indicators (KPIs) are identified in each of the five doctoral core areas for the Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision program. A KPI related to counselor disposition is also assessed throughout the M.A. and Ph.D. programs.

The primary use of KPIs is to assess and monitor student development across a program of study. Ratings for each KPI are evaluated in context of the course of study; there are three to five measurement points for each KPI. It is expected that most students would receive a "2" rating during earlier courses, moving to a "3" rating by the end of their studies. Ratings of "1" would not be expected beyond the first measurement point for each standard area; receiving a "1" at any point beyond this first measurement point would be an indicator of potential concerns. Ratings of "4" are not expected to be a common occurrence and would indicate an area of particular strength for a student beyond expectations for that stage in counselor/counselor educator development.

### **MA KPI Ratings – Average Student Progress**

<b>Key Performance Indicator Area</b>		<b>Point 1</b>	<b>Point 2</b>	<b>Point 3</b>	<b>Point 4/5</b>
Professional Counseling & Ethical Practice	2024 Graduates	1.80	1.65	2.70	3.00
	<b>3 Year Average</b>	<b>2.02</b>	<b>2.15</b>	<b>2.57</b>	<b>3.07</b>
Social & Cultural Foundations	2024 Graduates	1.88	1.60	3.09	3.00
	<b>3 Year Average</b>	<b>1.96</b>	<b>2.03</b>	<b>2.77</b>	<b>3.25</b>
Human Growth & Development	2024 Graduates	1.80	2.95	3.00	
	<b>3 Year Average</b>	<b>2.02</b>	<b>2.79</b>	<b>3.11</b>	
Career Development	2024 Graduates	1.88	3.00	3.00	
	<b>3 Year Average</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>2.80</b>	<b>3.09</b>	
Counseling & Helping Relationships (Knowledge)	2024 Graduates	1.68	2.05	3.00	
	<b>3 Year Average</b>	<b>1.68</b>	<b>2.44</b>	<b>3.31</b>	
Counseling & Helping Relationships (Skills)	2024 Graduates	1.68	1.92	3.00	
	<b>3 Year Average</b>	<b>1.87</b>	<b>2.02</b>	<b>3.00</b>	
Group Counseling	2024 Graduates	1.56	2.59	3.14	3.00
	<b>3 Year Average</b>	<b>1.65</b>	<b>2.64</b>	<b>2.49</b>	<b>3.24</b>
Assessment	2024 Graduates	1.92	2.65	3.05	
	<b>3 Year Average</b>	<b>1.98</b>	<b>2.24</b>	<b>3.10</b>	
Research Design & Program Evaluation	2024 Graduates	2.23	2.50	3.12	
	<b>3 Year Average</b>	<b>2.35</b>	<b>2.86</b>	<b>3.20</b>	
Disposition	2024 Graduates	1.96	2.63	3.00	3.33
	<b>3 Year Average</b>	<b>2.20</b>	<b>2.43</b>	<b>2.98</b>	<b>3.41</b>
Addiction Counseling Track	2024 Graduates	2.43	2.50	3.00	
	<b>3 Year Average</b>	<b>2.11</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>2.83</b>	

Clinical Mental Health	2024 Graduates	1.83	2.00	3.00
Counseling Track	<b>3 Year Average</b>	<b>1.86</b>	<b>2.60</b>	<b>3.10</b>

Average ratings across M.A. and Ph.D. programs for 2023-2024 were consistent with expectations and demonstrated student mastery of targeted knowledge/skills by the completion of the program. Ph.D. KPI ratings are summarized below as a five-year average. Students are demonstrating expected skill and knowledge development as they move through the program.

### **PhD KPI Ratings – Average Student Progress**

<b>5-Year Average</b>	<b>Point 1</b>	<b>Point 2</b>	<b>Point 3</b>	<b>Point 4/5</b>
Counseling	2.44	2.68	2.75	3.14
Supervision	2.03	2.43	2.82	3.43
Teaching	2.38	2.60	2.89	3.30
Research	2.62	2.82	3.31	3.00
Leadership & Advocacy	2.41	2.63	3.27	3.47
Disposition	2.57	2.91	2.99	3.20

### **Course Evaluations**

Course evaluations serve as an opportunity for students to provide feedback on courses and instructors. These evaluations are reviewed on a regular basis and used to inform continuous improvement of courses as well as ongoing instructor training and support.

### **Site Supervisor Evaluations**

The Master of Arts Program asks site supervisors to complete two different evaluations each semester to assess practicum and internship student field experiences. Midterm evaluations indicate that both practicum students and interns are consistently rated “Acceptable” to “Above Expectations” across clinical areas. Using the Counselor Competencies Scale - Revised (CCS-R), site supervisors provided an average rating of 4.64 for students enrolled in field placement courses in 2023-2024. A combined assessment of these averages indicated that students were demonstrating strong competence in counseling knowledge, skills, and disposition.

At the doctoral level, site supervisor and student self-evaluations for field experiences in counseling, supervision, and teaching are given twice per semester during each field experience course. Counseling ratings use a 5-point rating scale consistent with the MA Site Supervisor evaluation. PhD students consistently scored “Above Expectations” for counseling skills. Supervision and teaching evaluations use a ranged rating scale: Exemplary (9 points), Proficient (6-8 points); Emerging (3-5 points), and Unsatisfactory (0-2 points). Waynesburg PhD students were consistently rated as “proficient” in both teaching and supervision field experiences in the 2023-2024 academic year. This indicates that doctoral students usually and extensively demonstrate indicators of progress in teaching and supervision skills within their field experience placements. As doctoral students provide triadic supervision to our Master of Arts in Counseling practicum students, MA students are also able to provide feedback on their supervisory experience. This feedback highlighted supervisory competence and support, reinforcing the benefit of this experience for both MA and PhD students.



### **Graduate Counseling Exit Survey Results Spring 2024**

Master of Arts in Counseling exit survey data is collected from students upon completion of their degree each year. The MA Counseling Exit Survey uses a five-point rating scale, with 1 = Poor, 2 = Fair, 3 = Satisfactory, 4 = Very Good, and 5 = Excellent. PhD exit survey data is collected from students upon completion of their doctoral degree in a given semester. The Ph.D. Counselor Education and Supervision Exit Survey uses a five-point rating scale, with 1 = Very Dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Somewhat Satisfied, 4 = Satisfied, and 5 = Very Satisfied. The results for the 2023-2024 graduates are discussed below.

#### **M.A. Counseling Exit Interview Results 2023-2024**

	Average Rating	
	5 Year Average (2020-2024)	2023-2024 Graduates (n = 7)
Resources	4.00	3.38
Program Administration and Policies	4.29	3.75
Faculty	4.48	4.04
Curriculum	4.23	3.93

Average ratings by students who graduated in the 2023-2024 Academic Year were in the “Very Good”/”Satisfied” (4) to “Excellent”/”Very Satisfied” (5) range for most items. Programmatic changes were implemented to address utilization and integration of university resources into Graduate Counseling courses to help increase student success in 2023-2024, and this appears to have had a positive impact on students. Canvas course management system was rated as lower than past years; respondent comments indicated that consistency across courses would be favorable. Ongoing trainings and support for both full-time and part-time faculty are part of the continued efforts to ensure consistency in digital delivery. The research area of the curriculum, which is historically rated as lower than other curriculum areas, indicated a possible need for modifications in this area. It was noted, however, that all 2024 graduates who took the National Counselor Exam (NCE) have passed the Research area with an average consistent with the current national average. Less than 50% of the 2023-2024 graduates completed this survey, so this response rate may have also skewed the above results.

#### **Ph.D. Exit Interview Results 2023-2024**

	Average Rating	
	Overall Average (2018-2024)	2023-2024 Graduates (n = 3)
Resources	4.87	5.00
Program Administration and Policies	4.66	5.00
Faculty	4.69	5.00
Curriculum	4.78	5.00

The Ph.D. Exit Interview continues with a 100% response rate from graduates. The responses of 2023-2024 Ph.D. graduates reflected an overall favorable view of their experience and were consistent with responses from previous graduate cohorts, indicating that the program continues



to provide a quality education in a supportive environment. PhD graduate ratings of doctoral content areas were consistent with averages of past years. Graduates were unanimous in their recommendation of the program, with one respondent describing the program as “transformative.”

### **Alumni Survey**

Alumni from the Master of Arts in Counseling and Ph.D. Counselor Education & Supervision programs are surveyed every three years. The most recent survey was distributed in Summer 2024.

A total of 42 alumni responded to Master of Arts in Counseling Alumni Survey in 2024. Of those responses, the majority were from alumni who graduated in the past 5 years, with nine more responses by alumni who graduated between 2011 and 2015, and the remaining five by alumni who graduated between 2003 and 2010. Ninety-three percent of alumni stated they would recommend the Graduate Counseling Programs to a friend. The most common reasons provided were the professors, the cohort experience, the curriculum, and the affordability.

### **Graduate Counseling Program Alumni Survey Results**

	<b>Average Ratings</b>	
	Surveyed in 2021 (N = 29)	Surveyed in 2024 (N = 42)
<b>Overall rating of the program</b>	<b>4.28</b>	<b>4.56</b>
Faculty demonstrated professional/theoretical expertise	4.45	4.69
Faculty demonstrated classroom expertise	4.52	4.60
Faculty were available and accessible	4.48	4.50
Faculty were helpful with curricula matters	4.54	4.52
Faculty were helpful with personal matters that impacted studies	4.54	4.38
The program facilitated professional and personal well-being	4.31	4.36
Quality of your preparation compared to colleagues of other programs	4.35	4.59
Quality of online learning experience	N/A	4.38
<b>Ability to apply the following content from your curriculum.</b>		
Helping relationships	4.63	4.74
Group work	3.89	4.38
Human growth and development	4.12	4.43
Career development	3.65	3.83
Multicultural competencies and counseling diverse populations	4.23	4.48
Ethical and legal issues in counseling	4.59	4.45
Integration of spiritual and/or Christian values in counseling	3.68	3.67
Assessment	3.93	4.00
Program Evaluation	3.75	4.03

Advocacy and community outreach	3.80	4.17
Practicum and internship	4.25	4.60
Professional identity and service	4.20	4.38
Professional writing and research	3.64	4.13
Preparation for certification and/or licensing exam	4.22	4.55

5= Excellent, 4= Very Good, 3= Satisfactory, 2= Fair, 1= Poor

A total of six alumni responded to Ph.D. Alumni Survey in 2024. Ninety-three percent of alumni stated they would recommend the Graduate Counseling Programs to a friend. The most common reasons provided were the professors, their cohort experience, the curriculum, and the affordability.

### PhD Counselor Education & Supervision Alumni Survey Results 2024

	Average Ratings	
	Surveyed in 2022 (N = 6)	Surveyed in 2024 (N = 6)
Faculty demonstrated professional/theoretical expertise	4.83	5.00
Faculty demonstrated classroom expertise	4.67	5.00
Faculty were available and accessible	4.33	4.67
Faculty were helpful with curricula matters	4.50	4.83
Faculty were helpful with personal matters that impacted studies	4.00	4.33
The program facilitated professional and personal well-being	4.67	4.50
Quality of your preparation compared to colleagues of other programs	4.40	4.67
Advanced counseling knowledge and skills	4.67	4.67
Counselor supervision	4.40	4.80
Counselor education	4.50	5.00
Professional writing and research	4.50	4.33
Multicultural competencies in counseling, supervision, education, research, and leadership	4.33	4.50
Advocacy and community outreach	4.17	4.50
Professional identity and leadership	4.67	4.50
Overall satisfaction with the PhD Counselor Education and Supervision program.	4.67	5.00

5= Excellent, 4= Very Good, 3= Satisfactory, 2= Fair, 1= Poor

PhD alumni reported continued active involvement in professional organizations and are employed as clinicians and faculty, indicating successful outcomes of their doctoral education. In describing the strengths of the program, PhD alumni primarily emphasized the program faculty and the cohort model. Respondents identified research, writing, and professional development as the most highly valued skills gained in this program.

**Graduate Counseling Program Site Supervisor and Employer Survey**

Data is collected at least once every three years. Surveys were last sent out in Summer 2022; our next scheduled survey distribution is Summer 2025.

**Diversity & Belonging Progress Report – August 2024**

In the 2020-2021 academic year, the Graduate Counseling Programs of Waynesburg University conducted a comprehensive diversity and inclusion assessment of its programs, policies, and practices. In this context, diversity was defined as characteristics or identities that separate people into different groups. Most often, diversity is equated with dimensions of cultural identity, such as race, gender, religion, or socioeconomic status. It can also include identified cultural groups such as veterans, service members, and students classified as non-traditional. There are clear benefits to having a diverse community; in higher education, the most evident benefit is the richness of ideas that comes from having a variety of perspectives and voices come together in search of truth and knowledge. The term “inclusion” focused on the degree to which members of a community are able to be heard, valued, and respected within that community. Criteria specific to diversity and inclusion were informed by accreditation standards and the Waynesburg University mission.

Analysis of the findings of the Diversity and Inclusion Audit were used to develop a purposeful and measurable action plan for diversity and inclusion efforts in the Graduate Counseling Programs. These actions are monitored as part of the Graduate Counseling Programs’ ongoing program evaluation process, with assessment of current progress in meeting diversity/inclusion goals disseminated to stakeholders as part of our annual program reports. As of 2024, the majority of the outcomes established in 2021 have been met; the following details ongoing monitoring and efforts. A full review is planned to be conducted again in the 2025-2026 academic year.

***Increase enrollment and diversity in student populations through targeted marketing plan that includes recruitment and retention of underrepresented populations in both the counseling profession and in higher education.*** Progress toward this goal is consistently tracked, with adjustments made to the plan based on enrollment patterns. Grant funding has provided critical financial support to assist Graduate Counseling students in offsetting expenses related to professional development, particularly during clinical field placements. The Graduate Counseling Program faculty remains committed to pursuing grants and external funding opportunities to further support student success.

***Increase opportunities for application of multicultural competencies across the MA and PhD programs.*** Each academic year, program and university activities designed to expand students' exposure to and awareness of diverse perspectives are identified, with particular emphasis on service learning. These experiences enrich students' understanding of diversity while addressing the needs of underserved communities.

***Offer intentional activities to increase both awareness of and exposure to diversity, both inside the University and in engagement with larger communities.*** The Graduate Counseling Program faculty has further expanded its leadership and collaborative efforts within the Waynesburg University community to advance initiatives related to diversity and belonging. This includes collaboration in institutional assessment and development, participation in grant-funded projects that foster a more diverse university community, support underserved populations in our region, including veteran and active-duty military, individuals with substance use disorders, and neurodiverse students. Progress on this goal is assessed annually.

## **REVIEW OF PROGRAM GOALS**

### **Master of Arts in Counseling**

*1) To instill in students a respect for the dignity, integrity and humanity of all those they serve in their counseling activities, reflected in competent counseling that is guided by the ethical principles of the American Counseling Association and the values inherent in Waynesburg University's Christian heritage.*

Dispositional and cultural key performance indicator ratings show that students demonstrate awareness of and respect for the dignity, integrity, and humanity of others in their counseling and multicultural competencies. Graduates consistently rated multiculturalism-related content as "Very Good" to "Excellent," indicating that respect for cultural diversity is deeply embedded in the counseling curriculum. Similarly, MA Counseling alumni reported high levels of confidence in applying multicultural competencies, working with diverse populations, and adhering to counseling ethics. Feedback from site supervisors and employers continues to affirm that Waynesburg University students exhibit strong counseling skills, professionalism, and cultural competence in practice. The program excels in fostering respect for ethical principles, as evidenced by a 100% National Counselor Exam (NCE) pass rate and strong site supervisor evaluations averaging 4.64/5. The curriculum's alignment with CACREP's eight core areas and positive alumni feedback on ethical preparation (4.45/5) further affirm its success in instilling a commitment to ethical and competent counseling.

*2) To encourage students to maintain adequate self-awareness, emotional health and moral integrity in order to enhance their responsiveness to the needs of others.*

Counselor potential rating scales, used during the initial semesters of the program, continue to provide valuable insights into students' areas of growth and strength. These assessments help students build self-awareness and inform targeted advising and developmental support. Evaluations from site supervisors confirm that students remain open to feedback, responsive to supervision, and demonstrate high levels of ethical conduct in their fieldwork. Employers and site supervisors continue to rate interns and graduates as "above average" in professionalism and interpersonal effectiveness. Students demonstrate growth in self-awareness and moral integrity, as reflected by significant improvements in disposition ratings from "Emerging" to "Proficient"

during the program. Graduates rated faculty support for personal challenges at 4.38/5, indicating a supportive environment that nurtures students' emotional health and responsiveness to others' needs.

*3) To develop students with the knowledge and skills to be effective counselors, as outlined by CACREP's eight core areas of counselor training.*

Development of counseling knowledge and skills across CACREP's eight core areas was measured through coursework, candidacy evaluations, site supervisor assessments, and key performance indicators. Data from these assessments show favorable results, with students demonstrating consistent growth as they progress through the program. Use of digital tools have been a focus in faculty development, emphasizing innovative strategies for student skill development in online learning settings.

Site supervisors continue to rate Waynesburg University practicum students as "acceptable" to "above expectations" and interns as "above expectations" to "far above expectations." Key performance indicators and course evaluations confirm that the curriculum aligns with CACREP Standards and effectively prepares students for clinical practice. Employers and site supervisors reported that MA Counseling interns and graduates are well-prepared, with academic knowledge and clinical skills that exceed expectations.

Key performance indicator (KPI) ratings show consistent mastery across CACREP's eight core areas, with most students achieving proficiency by the final assessment point. Positive exit survey feedback on faculty expertise and curriculum strength further highlights the program's effectiveness in equipping students with the necessary counseling skills and knowledge.

Despite the evidence that students are effectively prepared in Research Design & Program Evaluation, as indicated by National Counseling Exam pass rates and KPI ratings, course evaluations and exit survey feedback indicate that Research Design & Program Evaluation remains a particularly challenging area for students. Student engagement in this content area remains a key focus, with ongoing evaluations and adjustments aimed at enhancing student confidence and understanding.

*4) To engage students as active servant leaders in their communities by applying and obtaining knowledge and skills in service opportunities that address the specific social and systemic needs of the communities they serve.*

The program integrates service learning and diversity-focused initiatives to cultivate servant leadership and address community needs. Engagement in projects with underserved populations demonstrates a practical application of counseling knowledge to promote social and systemic change. Throughout the 2023-2024 academic year, the Graduate Counseling Programs continued to expand service initiatives, with growing student participation in activities such as the Behavioral Healthcare Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) program. The program continues to leverage grant funding to support student engagement in rural and underserved communities. Students have also remained active in professional counseling organizations and

have taken part in seminars, workshops, and other activities aimed at fostering both personal and professional growth.

### **Ph.D. Counselor Education & Supervision**

*1) To build upon the knowledge and skills received in master's level CACREP accredited degree programs (or the equivalent) through advanced studies in: Ethical and legal considerations in counselor education and supervision; Theories pertaining to the principles and practice of counseling, career development, group work, systems, consultation, and crises, disasters, and other trauma-causing events; theories and practices of counselor supervision; instructional theory and methods relevant to counselor education; pedagogy relevant to multicultural issues and competencies, including social change theory and advocacy action planning; design, implementation, and analysis of quantitative and qualitative research; models and methods of assessment and use of data.*

Key performance indicators, field experience assessments, and feedback from site supervisors and employers indicate that PhD students continue to perform at or above expectations in these key areas of advanced study. Exit survey responses aligned with past years, as graduates rated their doctoral learning experience as “Very Good” to “Excellent” across the five core domains: counseling, supervision, teaching, research, and leadership & advocacy. PhD alumni ratings reinforced these findings, consistently reflecting high satisfaction with the program’s comprehensive content. Ph.D. students show significant growth in counseling, supervision, and teaching skills, with KPI ratings reaching “Proficient” or higher by graduation. Alumni survey responses highlight exceptional preparation in supervision (4.80/5) and counselor education (5.00/5), confirming the program’s success in delivering advanced training.

*2) To provide rigorous studies and experiences that prepare graduates for leadership roles in counseling, counseling research, counselor education, supervision, and advocacy.*

Conference attendance and presentation activities have increased as pandemic-related restrictions have eased. To support student involvement in professional events, program faculty have established a modest professional development fund to help mitigate the financial burden of conference participation. Mentorship remains a focal point of the PhD program, with alumni feedback frequently emphasizing the importance of peer mentorship as well as mentorship within cohorts. Graduates are employed in leadership roles as faculty members and clinicians, supported by leadership and advocacy KPI ratings averaging 3.47 at advanced stages. These outcomes demonstrate the program’s ability to prepare students for influential positions in counseling and education.

In response to ongoing reflection and assessment, the Graduate Counseling faculty implemented substantial revisions to the comprehensive examination process during the 2023-2024 academic year to further emphasize competence and leadership across areas of doctoral study.

Doctoral students have been invited to contribute to research and course development within the Graduate Counseling Programs to strengthen their skills and gain practical experience. In response to key performance indicator data, student input, and faculty feedback, targeted

adjustments have been implemented within the curriculum to enhance students' preparation for leadership roles. Use of digital tools have been a focus in faculty development, emphasizing innovative strategies for student skill development in online learning settings.

*3) To provide studies and experiences that emphasize a culturally competent and social justice perspective of leadership in counseling, counselor education, supervision, and research.*

The PhD program continues to embed cultural competence and social justice perspectives throughout courses and program activities, as evidenced by the data collected during this academic year. Graduates, alumni, and employers consistently provided strong ratings for students' cultural competence in the core areas of doctoral education. Doctoral candidates demonstrated proficiency in addressing culturally responsive practices in both written and oral comprehensive exams. Key performance indicators highlighted student growth in dispositional and leadership competencies related to cultural awareness. Consistent with previous years, many dissertation topics proposed during this academic year addressed needs and gaps in services for specific counseling populations.

A new course, CNS 617 Service and Leadership in Counselor Education and Supervision, was introduced in Summer 2024 to further emphasize leadership and service in the counseling profession. This course was met with positive feedback from students.

*4) To provide learning experiences for students to ethically and competently integrate Christian principles into their personal and professional career development.*

Site supervisor/employer surveys as well as alumni surveys indicate that doctoral students are prepared to ethically and professionally integrate principles of Christianity into their personal and professional career development, in line with the mission of Waynesburg University. Students, graduates, and alumni continued to emphasize the value of the program faculty, who actively model the integration of these principles in personal and professional development.

*5) To engage students as active servant leaders in their communities by applying knowledge and skills from courses to service opportunities that address the specific social and systemic needs of the communities they serve.*

The program prepares students to address community needs through service opportunities and field placements. Grant-funded initiatives supporting underserved populations further exemplify how students actively apply their skills to promote systemic change and community well-being. Dissertation topics from this academic year were designed to address pressing community and professional issues, reflecting the program's commitment to service and leadership in the field of counseling. In response to student input, students are able to incorporate leadership, research, and advocacy activities as part of their internship experience, providing opportunities for students to engage in these initiatives during their internship semesters. Students are encouraged to take an active role in conference presentations and professional publications as part of their service to the community. Alumni indicated feeling prepared for leadership in the professional community, and this leadership quality was identified as much higher than average by site supervisors and employers.