

## **Program Summary**

### **School Counseling / Child Welfare & Attendance**

#### **Program Design**

The M.A. in Counseling and Student Personnel provides professional training in the area of counseling and student services. The Pupil Personnel Services Credential has three specializations: K-12 School Counseling Specialization, K-12 School Counseling Specialization - Internship, and Child Welfare & Attendance Services Specialization. The Program is offered in the Department of Counselor Education within the College of Education. In 2001, the College restructured and Counselor Education is its own department.

The College of Education has a Dean who reports directly to the Provost. The Department of Counselor Education has faculty development sessions and annual retreats that build a scholarly community within the Department. Department Chairs meet biweekly to discuss leadership, management, and planning issues. This leadership team works together with the faculty to support the Program and ensure alignment of the standards and program coherence.

The Department has two coordinators to share management of the PPS program. The first is a Graduate Coordinator who is responsible for student recruitment and admission and recommendation for the credential. The other Coordinator – the Field Supervision Coordinator – provides coordination with the district administrators.

Communication with the candidates is facilitated by an open advisement system. Fulltime faculty serve as advisors and a website provides support information to all of the candidates. The advisor can serve as a mentor and advocate for the candidate as they progress through the system.

The structure of the coursework and field experiences is well sequenced. Master of Arts degree candidates take a common core curriculum as a prerequisite for the Advanced Professional Development Curriculum. The advanced graduate curriculum includes a sequence of classes, which is developed according to each candidate's career goal. This consists of Basic Foundation courses, Core requirements, advanced professional development requirements, and Practicum and Field Practice Courses, Supervised Experience in Counseling.

During 1997 – 2002, the Counselor Education faculty evaluated the school counseling program through several collaborations with local school districts. Through this process, they developed a new vision and a strategic plan. They worked with state and national organizations to reform the school counselor preparation program. This impacted the content of several courses and is reflected in each of the standards. These collaborations allowed for stakeholder inputs. They have an advisory structure that provides continuing input into the program. The department desires to remain current with the changing school-community needs.

The Program is available to full- and part-time graduate candidates through evening and weekend classes. Outreach classes are offered through instructional television centers at several

locations. These locations enable graduate candidates to have increased access to graduate study.

### **Course of Study**

The curriculum appears to be well thought out and sequenced. The Department developed a mission statement that is included in all course syllabi and permeates the program. “The mission of the Counselor Education Department is to prepare school counselors to work in a highly diverse and technologically advanced community. The program seeks to develop candidates who play leadership roles in collaboration with school personnel and other social resources to ensure that all students have equal opportunity and access to school success and personal development, all leading to a richer quality of life.”

The curriculum includes basic foundation core requirements and advanced professional development requirements. The basic foundation core requirements are consistent with the Generic Core of the credential standards and include thirty semester units of didactic and practicum courses. The advanced professional development requirements include twenty seven semester units. It appears the field experience is a 3 unit requirement (there is a lack of clarity of the number of units) for a total of 60 units.

The Supervised Experience in Counseling includes internships for a minimum of six hundred clock hours at two school levels (elementary, middle, or high school). The six hundred clock hours can be translated into nine semester units with two hundred clock hours per three-unit class.

Coursework appears to be well integrated with field experiences. Two coordinators provide leadership for the program which serves to integrate the course work with the field experiences. The Field Supervision Coordinator provides the linkage with the district administrators. The Counselor Education Department is increasing their partnerships with schools and the community so that there can be more collaboration between counselors-in-training, campus designated supervisors, district designated counselor supervisors, and professional advisory consultants. Students uniformly regard their field experience as a positive experience that prepares them to work as school counselors.

The field experiences are completed after the basic core, the professional competency coursework and the practicum. The Counselor Education Department requires its candidates to complete up to three semesters of field experiences with six hundred clock hours, which includes at least two levels of experiences for the PPS credential in elementary, middle or high school. Four hundred hours are completed in public schools. One hundred fifty clock hours are devoted to issues of diversity.

Candidates are required to attend an orientation meeting at the beginning of each semester. There is a Handbook for the Field Experience that is well developed. Candidates participate in supervised experience meetings that ensure they practice appropriate interactions with pupils at their fieldwork school sites. Cases are discussed that help build skills in counseling domains

through both individual, small and large group counseling and guidance activities throughout the program.

### **Assessment of Candidates**

The program has established a number of checkpoints to ensure student knowledge, skills and competencies to be effective school counselors. Instruments for assessment appear to be clear, fair and effective in providing candidate feedback. The assessments are completed by a wide array of individuals that include: instructors, admissions and records office, credential analyst, supervisors from the university and the site, the university advisor and the department chair. Candidates receive information about their performance throughout multiple points in the program.

Candidates are informed about their process as they move through the program and are counseled if problems develop. When appropriate, a remediation plan is developed to assist candidates who are experiencing difficulty either in their coursework or their fieldwork.

A candidate progress review summary is attached to each candidate's file so that the candidate and advisor(s) can determine the status of progress throughout the program of study. A comprehensive exam is administered to the candidate that describes student populations and the needs for counseling services.

A follow up anonymous survey is completed by the graduates of the program. The survey gives insight into advisement, the program courses, strengths, weaknesses and satisfaction with the program. This information is utilized in program enhancements and improvements.