

**UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL GUIDANCE COUNSELOR EDUCATION PROGRAM**

DATA BASED DECISION MAKING

The steering and advisory committee and faculty of the Professional School Counselor Education Program participate in ongoing self-assessment and evidence-based program improvement. Program faculty share in the responsibility of reviewing outcome data and making adjustments to curriculum, methods of instruction and assessment in classes, program organization, and evaluation procedures. The program adheres to a model of collaborative decision-making, with a goal of responding appropriately to trends in the profession and to outcome data derived from ongoing program evaluation. A variety of data inform programmatic discussion and decision-making. These include:

1) Student Feedback

- a. The USU Professional School Counselor Education Program Graduate Survey, an on-line survey, was created in 2009 to assess student satisfaction on various components of the training program. Since 2009 the survey has been emailed in February or March to program graduates from the most recent three years. The survey consists of items on which graduates rate their satisfaction with a broad spectrum of topics related to participation in the program. A copy of the survey is included in the Appendix of this section.
- b. During the program, student evaluations of teacher and course effectiveness are conducted by USU at the conclusion of each course. These evaluations are compiled and analyzed by USU's Office of Analysis and Research. A summary report is sent to individual course instructors and department heads. Our department head, Dr. Gretchen Peacock, passes the report onto the program director who reviews them with instructors. If course and/or instructor ratings fall below average, the evaluation is reviewed by the Program steering and advisory committee and a plan of action is put in place to address weaknesses and concerns.
- c. Graduates of the Professional School Counselor Education Program are contacted by the College and are requested to provide feedback via a written questionnaire. The form allows students to rate various aspects of the program on a numerical scale as well as to provide written comments about the program. Evaluations are reviewed by the head of the department of Psychology and the program director. The director presents findings to the faculty of the program. A copy of the survey is included in the Appendix of this document.

2) Employer Feedback

The Graduate Employer Survey was developed over academic year 2014-15 with faculty and employer input. The survey was first launched in March 2015 to employers of Program graduates from the past three years. The return rate has been 10 percent, which is typical of

employer surveys of education program graduates. Basic quantitative and qualitative analysis was undertaken and outcomes were reported to program faculty. The Employer survey will be sent each spring and will be used to guide programmatic change where indicated. A copy of the survey is included in the Appendix of this document.

- 3) Praxis Exam II. The Praxis School Guidance and Counseling test is intended primarily for persons who are completing master's-level programs for counselors and intend to become counselors in the public schools. It measures knowledge and skills required of the professional school counselor in relation to those areas that constitute most of the work of the counselor. Students in the School Counseling Program take the Praxis II Exam at the end of the second year when didactic course work is complete. The Praxis II is deemed to be an appropriate exit exam, and informs faculty of relative strengths and weaknesses of our training program. This decision was informed by data showing that all program completers have passed the Praxis with a score at or above the Utah cut-off for the past five year. To view Praxis Exam II performance by our students, please utilize this link to the Outcomes Data section of this report:
<http://cehs.usu.edu/assessment/files/SC%20Tables%20for%20Website%202016%20CAEP%20Annual%20Report.pdf>
- 4) Evaluations by practicum and internship classroom and site supervisors. Each student in the Professional School Counselor Education program is required to meet with their individual practicum and internship supervisors for evaluation. During these meetings, the evaluation form is discussed and feedback is encouraged. The evaluation form is completed by practicum and internship supervisors, who are Level 2- Highly Qualified School Counselors in the State of Utah. Items are answered on a 9-point Likert scale. Additionally, supervisors are asked to write comments about students' strengths and weaknesses. Copies of the Practicum and Internship Evaluation forms are in the Appendix to this document. Please note that the practicum evaluation is identical to the internship evaluation, with the exception of four areas on the Internship evaluation that are not included on the practicum evaluation. The four areas are reflective of course work not yet completed by practicum students. Copies of the Practicum and Internship Supervisor Evaluations are in the Appendix of this section. To view results of the Internship Evaluation, please utilize this link to the Outcomes Data section of this report:
<http://cehs.usu.edu/assessment/files/SC%20Tables%20for%20Website%202016%20CAEP%20Annual%20Report.pdf>
- 5) TEAC-CAEP Accreditation. USU's Professional School Counselor Education program received full, 7-year accreditation with no weaknesses or stipulations in June 2012 by the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), which merged with NCATE to become the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Development of our original Inquiry Brief, the follow-up formal site visit in fall 2011 and annual reports since that time have provided opportunities for program evaluation by our faculty.

Changes have been made to the Professional School Counselor Education program, based upon data gathered from the sources listed above and other sources. Modifications made since the last Northwest Accreditation in 2009 appear first in the list below. Changes made prior to 2009 are maintained later in the list for their historical value.

Changes listed below have been made since our last Northwest accreditation review in 2009:

Policy regarding what is acceptable as a minimum grade in courses on the Program of Study for the Professional School Counselor Education program was established. Program faculty recognized that the program did not have a formal policy on minimum acceptable grades for students. Current best practices in graduate-level education instructs the faculty to develop a policy that is informed by data, reflects the experience of the faculty, and is consistent with Psychology department and School of Graduate Study policy. An examination of causes regarding the infrequent awarding of a grade below the B-range by a faculty member indicated that students in this situation were underperforming due to a variety of reasons. At the crux of the issue is the faculty's unanimous agreement that a student performing below the B range are not exhibiting mastery learning. The following policy statement was approved by program faculty on August 17, 2016 and is now in the Handbook and on the program's website:

Students must maintain a minimum of a 3.0 GPA overall. Work below a B range is not acceptable. In cases where a student earns a grade of C+ or below, the situation will be considered by a committee comprised of program faculty, including the instructor of the course the grade was earned in. The committee will outline what actions should be taken. Actions may include retaking the course, remediation, probation, or dismissal.

Make the Praxis II Exam in School Counseling a requirement for graduation. In August 2016 the faculty of the School Counselor Education program voted that in order to graduate, a student is required to earn a score at or above the Utah cut-off for obtaining a Level 1 license in school counseling. This decision was informed by data showing that all USU School Counseling program completers have passed the Praxis with a score at or above the Utah cut-off for the past five years. Program faculty agreed that a score below the Utah cutoff is unacceptable and may indicate lack of mastery-level learning. A student who scores below the Utah cutoff may be in need of remediation. The faculty also identified the Praxis II as a reliable exit measure to be used to examine trends in student performance on each of the four subtests and the overall. This analysis will allow faculty to identify relative strengths and weaknesses of the training program. Weaknesses will be reviewed, analyzed and addressed. To view Praxis Exam II performance by our students, please utilize this link to the Outcomes Data section of this report:

<http://cehs.usu.edu/assessment/files/SC%20Tables%20for%20Website%202016%20CAEP%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

Change in the overall GPA required for admission to the Program. Analysis of metrics associated with the required GPA indicated that students admitted to the program who had lower than a 3.2 GPA struggled in the program. The admissions committee of the program was advised of these findings and proposed to the program faculty that the minimum GPA be increased to 3.2 overall. The faculty voted to raise minimum GPA for admission to 3.2 for applicants of the program beginning with the 2010 cohort.

Change to the degree designation on transcripts of graduates of the Professional School Counselor Education Program. When he was appointed Vice President for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies, Dr. Mark McLellan initiated a review of policies associated with the degree designation for graduate programs. The review indicated that the Master of Science degree designation was not appropriate for programs which do not require formal research nor a thesis or dissertation. Like the vast majority of master's-level training programs in school counseling across the U.S, USU's school counselor education program does not require formal research nor a thesis. Rather, the focus is on highly specific, didactic course work and significant experience in applied settings. Beginning in

December 2012, degrees awarded for the School Counselor Education program are the Master of Education (MEd) with specialization in school counseling.

PSY 6610 – College and Career Readiness for School Counselors. This course was added to bring curriculum for the program in line with state and national trends for school counseling. The three-credit course was developed by the program director, a faculty member in the program, a district comprehensive guidance specialist, and a practicing school counselor. Funding for course development was provided by the College Access Challenge Grant. Curriculum is based on the College and Career Counseling Initiative (CCCI) developed by the Southern Regional Education Board. The course was piloted with our students during summer 2011 in a hybrid course which combined PSY 6340 – Consultation in the Schools and the new course. The following summer the full course was taught as a stand-alone class.

PSY 6260 – Career Development. In response to faculty input and discussion this course was changed from a 3-credit course utilizing a lecture format to a 2-credit, online course. The course instructor suggested that the material could be covered in two credits rather than three, and that the online format would work equally as well if not better for covering the curriculum in a way conducive to student learning and experience. Reducing the credits associated with the course and changing the format to an online format allowed the program to add the previously mentioned course in college and career readiness to be added to our program of study without lengthening the time required to complete the program.

PSY 6250 – Internship. Required credits for this experiential course was reduced from 10 to 6 in an effort to address issues surrounding a national awareness that students in professions requiring internships often require students to pay for courses which are not didactic in nature. Program graduates indicated that they felt the credit hours should be reduced, and program administration and faculty agreed. The consensus was that these experiential, applied courses do not require as much formal faculty instruction or involvement as didactic classes. The number of hours devoted to the experiential process remains the same at 600 clock hours (400 for teachers with 3 years of experience in the schools). This meets the requirements of the Utah State Office of Education as well as conforming to national standards. Supervision practices at both the university and on-site in the schools has not changed. The outcome of this modification is a significant financial savings for students without negatively impacting the educational experience.

Changes to the Practicum and Internship Supervisor Evaluation Form. Analysis of data collected by the Practicum and Internship Supervisor Evaluation Forms for TEAC-CAEP accreditation indicated a range of restriction which impacted data analysis. Beginning in fall 2011 the Likert scale was changed from 5-point to 9-point Likert scale. (Please see Appendix A under Outcomes Data to view the evaluation in its entirety)

Changes cited below were made prior to our Northwest review in 2009:

Curriculum changes to PSY 6150 Evidence-Based Practice: Children and Adolescents and PSY 6370 - Practicum. Feedback from Program graduates cited the desire for additional instruction in behavior management for K – 12 students. After consultation with program faculty, steering and advisory committee members and the Director of Curriculum, additional instruction on the topic was added to course curriculum. For example, this past fall, an instructor from USU's Department of Secondary Education was paid by the Program to lecture on behavior management in K – 12 settings. Additionally, the topic was covered in greater detail in lectures in our practicum course. Finally, the Practicum and

Internship Student Contracts were revised through the addition of a goal which requires students to develop a mini-lesson appropriate to the school setting, present it to a K-12 classroom, and receive feedback from the school supervisor. The formal Practicum and Internship Supervisor Evaluations now ask for a rating of skill level in behavior management.

Change in prerequisites for admission to the Program. To prepare students for instruction in behavior management, Program faculty, steering and advisory committee members changed the prerequisite requirements for the program to include a class in analysis of behavior.

All courses in the Program utilize Blackboard. Student evaluations of teacher and course effectiveness, and graduate student responses indicated that students preferred courses which utilized Blackboard. Through consultation with faculty members, the steering and advisory committee, and USU's FACT Center, all courses in the Professional School Counselor Education Program now utilize Blackboard, including the Practicum course and Internship.

Increased emphasis on communication skills. Responses to the online graduate survey, and feedback from program faculty indicated that our students may be leaving the program with a deficit in communication/presentation skills. This is possibly due to the fact that our students attend classes at broadcast sites, where they are not required to verbalize in front of large numbers of students. At our semi-annual faculty meeting in June 2009, this topic was discussed. Consensus of the faculty consisted of a three-part intervention: 1) During program orientation and in advisement sessions, the program associate director will encourage students to engage in classroom verbal discussion, citing the need for students to develop this critical skill for professional success; 2) Instructors will encourage, and when deemed appropriate, require students to participate verbally during class. This may include additional assignments which require presentations in front of classmates; 3) During the Practicum class specific instruction on presentation skills for job interviews and formal presentations will be provided and students will practice the skills for an assignment.

Communication between the Program, interns and internship supervisors will be increased. Feedback from interns and internship site supervisors indicated that both interns and site supervisors felt the need for a stronger connection to USU during the internship experience. In consultation with Program faculty and the steering and advisement committee a decision was made to hire a liaison to increase communication between the Program, site supervisors and students. Dr. Carolyn Barcus was hired for this position. Dr. Barcus will communicate with interns and their supervisors at least once during each semester via a conference call. She and the Associate Director will be available for telephone calls and emails throughout the internship. A graduate teaching assistant was hired to assist with facilitating scheduling of the conference calls.

Program faculty will keep student projects to provide evidence needed for TEAC accreditation. At our spring 2009 faculty accreditation workshop we were informed by Richard Rhees, USU TEAC Coordinator, that we would need evidence for our claim that we meet the three Quality Principals of TEAC. While we have meaningful evidence already, it was postulated that we need additional documentation. Program faculty members committed to saving a selection of student-submitted work, including student-produced DVDs, written assignments and projects. Each instructor will file one or two appropriate items per student. The items will be referred to in the Inquiry Brief and will be available for perusal by TEAC site visitors.

USU SCHOOL COUNSELOR EDUCATION PROGRAM
Data-Based Decision Making
APPENDIX

Graduate Student Survey

In what year did you graduate from the USU Professional School Counselor Education Program?

- 2011
- 2012
- 2013
- 2014

Which format did you use for the majority of your courses?

- Statewide broadcast
- Face-to-Face Instructorship in Kaysville

What is/are your current primary employment position(s)? (Check all that apply)

- Level 1 school guidance counselor
- Level 2 school guidance counselor
- Head of school-level school guidance program
- Head of district-level school guidance program
- Other:

In what setting(s) are you currently employed? (Check all that apply)

- Elementary School
- Middle School/Junior High
- High School
- College/University
- Other:

Which best describes the school(s) where you are employed? (Check all that apply)

- Private
- Public
- Charter
- Other:

Are you working in a rural or urban setting (rural < 50,000)?

- Rural
- Urban

(Please fill in the blank) What is the estimated counselor to student ratio at your school? One counselor to _____ students.

How long have you been working in this position?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 Year
- 2 Years
- 3 Years
- 4 Years
- 5 or more years

Are you currently working full-time or part-time in this position?

- Full-time
- Part-time

What is your current annual salary based on a full-time salary? (This question is optional, however,

your response would be greatly appreciated. Your response will be anonymous.)

- \$25,000 - \$29,999
- \$30,000 - \$34,999
- \$35,000 - \$44,999
- \$45,000 - \$54,999
- \$55,000 - \$64,999
- \$65,000 - \$69,999
- >\$70,000

With regards to the USU Professional School Counselor Education Program, how would you rate the following:

	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent
The overall quality of the instruction?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The overall availability of the faculty?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Program curriculum?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technology?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Course availability?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Course scheduling?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your satisfaction with the practicum experience?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent
Your satisfaction with the internship experience?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Effectiveness of advising?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Given the cost, how would you rate the value of your education?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well do you feel your training compares to the training received by school counselors you have worked with who graduated from other school counselor education programs?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well do you feel your training in the program prepared you to use technology in your professional position?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well do you feel your training in the program prepared you to use your school data management system?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
How well do you feel your training in the program prepared you to deal with	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

issues surrounding diversity/multiculturalism in your school(s)?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poor	Below Average	Average	Above Average	Excellent

Please rate the contribution of the program to your development of the skills necessary to evaluate and make changes to your program based on empirical evidence?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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How well did the program prepare you in terms of the content and information which you provide to students, parents, and educators?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Please rate your preparation in terms of the skills required to be an effective school counselor?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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How well do you feel the program prepared you to act in a caring and professional manner with your students?

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Please rate the degree to which you think the children and adolescents with whom you work see you as caring about them.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Please rate your preparation to work towards the goal specified in the mission statement of the Utah Comprehensive Counseling and Guidance Model, "Every student in Utah will graduate from high school with the skills, knowledge and dispositions essential for success."

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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What did you like best or find most useful about the program?

How could the program improve?

What skills do you need as a school counselor that were not addressed by the program?

What do our present students need to know to help them succeed upon graduation?

How satisfied are you in your career as a school counselor?

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

Thank you again for your participation in this survey. In closing, is there any other information that might be useful to us as we work towards maintaining a high-quality program?