

**Program Evaluation Report**  
**2023-2024**  
**Stephen F. Austin State University**  
**Professional Counseling Program**  
**Department of Human Services and Educational Leadership**  
**James I. Perkins College of Education**

Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU) is a regional university located in Nacogdoches; a historic community nestled in East Texas's piney woods. It is located 132 miles from Houston and 165 miles from Dallas. With a student population of approximately 13,000, SFASU has a reputation for excellence. The Professional Counseling Program at SFASU is within the Department of Human Services and Educational Leadership (HSEL) housed within the James I. Perkins College of Education (PCOE). The Professional Counseling Program operates under Interim Chair Dr. Michael Walker's and Dean Dr. Judy Abbott's leadership. The James I. Perkins College of Education is one of six colleges at Stephen F. Austin State University.

### **Professional Counseling Program**

The Professional Counseling Program at SFASU has a mission of providing quality master's level training to develop highly qualified counselors who demonstrate a strong professional identity, engage in ethical and competent practice, and are effective in serving diverse populations. The program also offers students in-house clinical experience within the Human Services Counseling Clinic. The program consists of three 60-hour specialization areas, including Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Upon graduation, all students are eligible for licensure in Texas as a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC).

### **Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)**

The Professional Counseling Program at SFASU has maintained accreditation from the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs for all three specializations. The Community Counseling program was initially accredited in October 1993. It became the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program in January 2017 and is accredited through March of 2022. The School Counseling Program received its accreditation in October of 1995 and is accredited through March of 2022. The Clinical Rehabilitation Program was initially accredited by the Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) and earned its CACREP accreditation in January of 2017. This program is also accredited through March of 2022. As part of on-going systematic improvement, the program engages in program evaluation. In the spring of 2022, the decision was made to sunset both the Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling and School Counseling specialty areas. Students were no longer admitted to this program and courses will be taught-out through Fall 2024.

## Program Evaluation

The professional counseling program at SFASU engages in on-going, systematic program evaluation to ensure that students are well-prepared to work in the field of counseling. The chart below provides a snapshot of the data utilized and when it is collected

<b>Data</b>	<b>Collected</b>	<b>Data Reviewed</b>
Advisory Board	Every other year	Program Meeting 10-25-2023
Candidacy (student feedback)	Every semester	Program Meetings
Survey of Alumni and Students	Every three years	Program Meetings 04-30-2024
Survey of Employers/Supervisors	Every three years	Program Meetings 03-30-2023
Program Learning Outcomes	Every year	Data Day 04-19-2024
CPCE –Comprehensive Exam Results	Every semester	Every semester

### Spring 2023 Advisory Board

#### *Description of Advisory Board Meetings*

The advisory board met in April 2023. This meeting provided the advisory board with information about the current program and opportunity for stakeholders to offer feedback about the program. Invited members of the advisory board included supervisors, employers, and alumni. Feedback from the advisory board stated that overall students/graduates were well prepared to work with clients. The board expressed no major concerns.

#### *Discussion of Data*

The faculty formally discussed the data after the Spring 2023 semester and considered past changes and how continued changes can be made to strengthen the program. All questions and data were reviewed during the meetings.

#### *Program Modification Changes*

Based on feedback from the Advisory Board's feedback no changes were made to the program.

## Spring 2023 Current Student Survey Data

### *Description of Survey*

In the Fall of 2023, it was brought to the faculty's attention that students were struggling to focus during late evening courses. In response, the program faculty developed a plan to adjust class times by 30 minutes to accommodate students. To gather students' input on this plan, a survey was sent to all current students regarding the proposed change.

### *Discussion of Results*

Results indicated an overwhelming response in favor of moving class times earlier. However, it was clear that feedback was received from students earlier in the program.

### *Program Modifications/Changes*

In response to student's feedback, the faculty decided to adjust the time for classes by 30 minutes but only for incoming cohorts in efforts to not disrupted scheduling for students further in the program who have established schedules through the program.

## Spring 2021 Alumni Survey Data

### *Description of the Survey*

In the Fall of 2021, faculty sent out a request via email to program alumni to participate in a survey about their experiences in the SFASU Professional Counseling Program. The survey was sent to 54 alumni. The survey included 48 questions using a Likert scale. The email included a cover letter explaining the survey was intended to help the program make modifications based on information provided by alumni regarding their experiences in the program. There was a limited response rate of 16 responses approximately a 30% response rate. Respondents have all graduated within the last five years.

### *Discussion of Results*

Thirteen participants indicated they were working full-time in counseling positions. Participants indicated that courses were beneficial in their work except for career counseling. Most survey respondents indicated that the course was not beneficial. Participants noted that faculty communication was not always timely and about half of respondents indicated that faculty and staff were not as assessable as they would have liked. It was noted during the review of the results that a question regarding licensure status needs to have the option of Licensed Professional Counselor-Associate added.

### *Program Modification/Changes*

Faculty noted the similarity in responses in the Current Student Survey and Alumni survey. This observation reinforced the program modifications discussed in the review of the Current Student Survey. No additional program modifications were made after review of Alumni Survey results. The most recent Alumni survey was sent in Spring 2024. Data for the Spring 2024 survey is currently being collected and data will be used to inform program changes in Fall 2024.

## Spring 2023 Employer and Site Supervisor Survey

### *Description of the Survey*

A survey was sent out to more than 60 employers and internship site supervisors regarding the knowledge and skill level of our graduates and interns. Twenty-two of the surveys were returned. Fourteen questions were asked varying from our graduates' ability to deal with work stressors to their ability to assess barriers for persons with mental health or behavioral issues, or disabilities.

### *Discussion of the Data*

Results from the survey were extremely positive. No deficits were reported from the survey.

### *Program Modifications/Changes*

No changes were made in the program based on the survey results.

## Candidacy (student feedback)

### *Description of Candidacy*

Students meet individually with at least two faculty members once they have completed between 15 and 18 credit hours. This is considered a gatekeeping task to determine if students are making adequate progress in the program both professionally and personally. During the meetings, students are given the opportunity to provide feedback about their experiences in the program.

### *Discussion of the Data*

Students have reported during recent candidacy challenges related to program communication. These concerns appeared to be related to changing point of contact for courses, clinical experiences, interim department chairs, and program coordinators.

### *Program Modifications/Changes*

In response, the program faculty developed two email accounts for general communication to and from the program, one for the profession counseling and one for practicum and internship. Access to this account is given to the program administrative assistant, coordinator, and clinic director. The professional counseling email is used for applications, advising questions, and general questions about the program. The practicum and internship were set up to communicate with current students regarding the clinical components of the program, such as clinical documentations, applications, and form.

## Program Learning Outcome (PLO)

### *Description of Program Learning Outcomes*

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) are aligned to meet the eight CACREP standards and there are two measures of each standard to evaluate students' knowledge and/or skills.

Students submit the measure (e.g., assignment) through QClassroom and faculty assess the work with a rubric. QClassroom data is collected every semester in which the course is taught to ensure that all students are assessed. During the Fall semester, the James I. Perkins College of Education has a Data Day for faculty to review, analyze, summarize, and report program data. Each academic year, the PLOs are compiled and posted under Accreditation Data for Public Review posted on the program website [Professional Counseling Webpage](#). This section contains current Program Evaluation and Accountability Reports.

### *PLO 1 - Professional Orientation and Ethical Practice (CACREP 2.F.1)*

Students will be able to articulate the elements related to professional identity including the history and philosophy of the counseling profession, the value of professional organizations, the need for legal and ethical practice, and advocating for the profession and clients that are served.

Measure 1 – Counseling Philosophy Paper (knowledge)

Measure 2 – Advocacy Letter (knowledge & skills)

### *PLO 2 – Social and Cultural Diversity (CACREP 2.F.2)*

Students will demonstrate multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills necessary for competency in working with a diverse population.

Measure 1 - Guided Journal (knowledge)

Measure 2 – Challenge Experience Project (knowledge)

### *PLO 3 - Human Growth and Development (CACREP 2.F.3)*

Students are able to demonstrate an understanding of development across the lifespan and the impact on normal and abnormal functioning

Measure 1 – Introspective Journals (knowledge & skills)

Measure 2 – Developmental Interview (knowledge & skills)

### *PLO 4 – Career Development (CACREP 2.F.4)*

Students are able to utilize career development theory in the development of individualized and developmentally appropriate career development activities and interventions

Measure 1 – Career Theory Application Project (knowledge & skills)

Measure 2 – Parent Training Project (CMH and RHB) (knowledge & skills)

Measure 2 – Career Planning Resource File (SCH) (knowledge)

### *PLO 5 – Counseling and Helping Relationships (CACREP 2.F.5)*

Students are able to demonstrate the skills necessary to engage in an effective and therapeutic helping relationship

Measure 1 – Skills Videotape (skills)

Measure 2 – Practicum Videotape (skills)

*PLO 6 – Group Counseling and Group Work (CACREP 2.F.6)*

Students demonstrate competency in preparing for and facilitation of group counseling.

Measure 1 – Group Plan (knowledge)

Measure 2 – Group Facilitation Video (skills)

*PLO 7 - Assessment and Treatment Planning (CACREP 2.F.7)*

Students demonstrate the ability to identify effective assessment strategies in order to facilitate treatment planning

Measure 1 – Test Critique (knowledge)

Measure 2 – Treatment Plan (knowledge & skills)

*PLO 8 - Research and Program Evaluation (CACREP 2.F.8)*

Students will demonstrate an understanding of research methods to inform evidence-based practice.

Measure 1 (All programs) Research Proposal (knowledge)

Measure 2 (School) Action Research Project (knowledge & skills)

Measure 2 (Clinical Mental Health) Grant Proposal (knowledge)

Measure 2 (Rehabilitation) Patient Education Module (knowledge & skills)

*Discussion of the Data*

All PLO data from each Calander year are reviewed during Data Day. These assignments are evaluated to determine student knowledge and skills in specific core areas of counseling.

*Program Modifications/Changes*

In response to the new 2024 CACREP Standards the program faculty developed new methods for meeting PLOs based on these new standards. These updated PLOs will be implemented in Fall 2024.

**Program Learning Outcomes**

**Ethical Standards and Legal Considerations:** Counseling students adhere to strict ethical guidelines and maintain professional behavior. This includes maintaining confidentiality, obtaining informed consent, avoiding conflicts of interest, and ensuring the well-being of clients.

Counseling students comply with the ACA Code of Ethics and the rules and regulations of Texas.

[\*Informed Consent Assignment in Ethics\*](#)

[\*Texas Rules and Regulations Quiz\*](#)

**Multicultural Counseling and Social Justice:** Counseling students understand theories and models of multicultural counseling, cultural identity development, and social justice. This includes recognizing and addressing issues related to cultural diversity and social inequalities in their counseling practice. They advocate on behalf of their clients and the profession itself to address institutional and social barriers that impede access, equity, and success for their clients.

[\*Advocacy Letter\*](#)

[\*Cultural Experience Assignment\*](#)

**Factors Affecting Human Development:** Counseling students consider systemic and environmental factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior. They apply theories of individual and family development across the lifespan to better understand and assist their clients.

*Family Assignment*

*Lifespan Developmental Interview*

**Career Development and Assessment:** Counseling students help clients assess their abilities, interests, values, and personalities to guide career development. They use assessment tools and techniques to aid clients in making informed career decisions.

*Career Assignment – Mock Session Skit*

*Assessment - Case Study Assignment*

**Counseling Theories and Models:** Counseling students apply various counseling theories and models to provide effective therapeutic interventions. These may include cognitive-behavioral therapy, person-centered therapy, and more.

*Case Conceptualization Paper*

*Theories Paper*

**Counseling Skills:** Counseling students demonstrate competence in essential interviewing, counseling, and case conceptualization skills, ensuring they can effectively work with clients to address their mental health concerns. This includes gaining hands on experience working with clients in practicum and internship.

*Skills Tape*

*Practicum Assessment*

**Group Counseling:** Counseling students design and facilitate groups, employing ethical and culturally relevant strategies to help clients in a group setting.

*Practicum or Internship*

*Group Assignment -work groups*

**Assessment and Test Administration:** Counselors select, administer, and interpret assessments and tests ethically and in a culturally relevant manner to support their clients' needs. This involves understanding and analyzing test scores, psychological assessments, and other relevant data to make informed decisions about a client's mental health and to plan appropriate interventions.

*Assessment Assignments – Test Critique, Case Study Assignment*

*Career Counseling – Career Assessment Report*

**Research and Statistical Principles:** Counselors need to understand the scientific and statistical principles that underlie evidence-based research. This includes knowledge of research methods, experimental design, data analysis, and the ability to critically evaluate research studies to

determine their quality and relevance. Counselors understand the significance of research in advancing the profession. They can critique research to inform their counseling practice and provide evidence-based interventions.

*Research Proposal*

*Annotated Bibliography*

**Communication and Presentation Skills:** Effective communication is crucial for counseling students. They must convey complex mental health concepts and findings to clients, colleagues, and the public. This includes both oral and written communication.

*Presentation in Family Counseling*

*Case Presentation in Internship*

## CPCE – Comprehensive Exams

### *Description of CPCE and Use*

The SFASU Professional Counseling Program uses the CPCE (Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination) for its comprehensive exam that students are required to pass. The cutoff score is noted in the handbook under which the student entered the program. Students are allowed to take the examination twice and must have a passing score prior to enrollment in internship. The examination covers the core areas of counseling and is used to ensure that students have the necessary knowledge to be successful as counselors.

### *Discussion of the Data*

Faculty reviewed results of the examination every semester. In reviewing results, it was noted that some students were not successful in their first attempt at the CPCE. Furthermore, students reported confusion regarding the passing scores based on the one standard deviation below the mean.

### *Program Modifications/Changes*

Faculty discussed ways in which students could be supported in their examination attempts. Inclusion of supportive efforts from faculty for students not successful in their first attempt at CPCE. A list of recommended study resources was created by students who previously passed the CPCE. This list is provided to students during PCOU 5333 Counseling Skills and Techniques. The faculty put together a panel of previous students who were successful in passing the CPCE to present during the Practicum Class. This allowed for students to ask other students questions about study recommendations or tips to help them be successful. These efforts will be implemented as a program evaluation change for Spring 2022 and are being named the comprehensive exam student support plan. Additionally, students have voluntarily established student-led study groups in preparation for CPCE starting in Fall 2023.