Department of Counseling
Master of Science in Counseling

2024-2025 Annual Assessment Report
Note: Data includes Summer 2024 – May 2025 semesters

Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Counseling is to equip students with clinical knowledge and skills to serve and advocate for their clients and communities. The department encourages critical thinking by cultivating a learning environment that promotes personal growth and honors the uniqueness of each person within their social and cultural context.

Summary
The Counseling department collects and reviews data on three program objectives as part of the overall program evaluation process. Additionally, the department collects data related to nine student learning outcomes (SLOs) that are measured at least two times for each student throughout students' program of study and three SLOs, one for each CACREP Specialty including Clinical Mental Health; Marriage, Couple, and Family; and School Counseling. Data from SLOs provide indicators of students' level of preparedness to work as future counseling professionals. Counseling faculty review SLOs and other program data each year and make changes as necessary to ensure high quality training and supervision.

Using the Clinical Progress Assessment (CPA), the Counseling department collects data related to clinical competencies for each counseling program student across the following clinical courses: Basic Clinical Methods, Advanced Clinical Methods, and Practicum. Data from CPAs indicate clinical skills competencies and preparedness for Internship I and II and future counseling practice.

The Counseling department collects data related to student professional dispositions recognized as essential for effective, ethical, and responsible functioning in the counseling profession (e.g., professionalism, communication skills, attitude towards peers/instructors, ability to self-regulate, and other characteristics required in a clinical or professional environment) and monitors student progress individually and aggregately.

The Counseling department collects data from key stakeholders (e.g., alumni, site supervisors and employers of graduates) every three years (last assessed in February 2025) to assess the stakeholders' perceptions of the quality of the students' educational experiences and clinical preparedness. This data helps the Counseling department faculty to assess and prioritize curricular and programmatic updates in keeping with professional trends.

Table 1: Program Objectives

Data to be Collected: Program Objectives			
Program Objective	**Measure(s) used to evaluate program objectives**	**Data 2023 – 2024**	**Data 2024 – 2025**

PO.1. Prepare and equip graduates with the knowledge base and skill set necessary to pass the National Counselor Examination (NCE).	National Counselor Exam (NCE) Score reports Key Performance Indicator scores	In 2023 – 2024, 25 students completed the NCE prior to graduation with a 91% pass rate compared to the national exam pass rate of 82%. Note: While the average pass rate changes from year to year, the national pass rate for the NCE for students who take the examination while currently still enrolled in the SMU graduate program in counseling is 99% (on average).	In 2024 – 2025, 23 students took the exam and 22 successfully completed the NCE prior to graduation with a 96% pass rate compared to the national exam pass rate of 84%. Note: While the average pass rate changes from year to year on average the national pass rate for the NCE for students who take the examination while currently still enrolled in the SMU graduate program in counseling is 99%.
PO.2. Maintain or increase the number of prospective student applications each year with the aim of recruiting and enrolling well-qualified applicants.	1) Number of applications 2) Percentage of applicants offered and matriculated	In the Fall of 2023, received 153 completed applications and accepted 63, which is a 41.1% acceptance rate. In the Spring 2024, received 54 applications and accepted 33, which is a 61.1% acceptance rate.	In the Fall of 2024, received 156 completed applications and 61 were accepted and matriculated, which is a 39.1% acceptance rate. In the Spring 2025, received 63 completed applications and accepted and matriculated 39, which is a 61.9% acceptance rate. On average across both semesters, we received 219 applications and accepted and matriculated 100 students which is a 45.6% average acceptance rate.
PO.3. Cultivate a cohesive, programmatic counselor identity among faculty through any of the following: professional organization involvement, professional service, publications,	Annual report on faculty participation in activities related to the counseling profession.	Data is collected through a Qualtrics Survey. During 2023-2024, all Counseling program core faculty maintained memberships in Counseling organizations including American Counseling Association and/or the Texas Counseling Association. Faculty members maintained other professional association memberships related to their specialty areas including the National Career Development	In 2024-2025 all Counseling program core faculty maintained membership in professional counseling organizations including American Counseling Association and/or Texas Counseling Association. There is a noted increase in counseling leadership participation with core faculty members holding 14 professional counseling

		presentations, and/or outreach.			Association, Association for Play Therapy, and the American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors and Therapists. Three full time faculty held positions on professional counseling association boards (e.g., TACES President Elect, TACES Member-at-Large, & TCDA Secretary). Additional data are included below.	organization leadership positions.

Faculty counselor identity data (PO.3)

Faculty Identity Survey	22-23	23-24	24-25
# of core faculty members	10	11	12
Total number of memberships in counseling professional organizations	31	25	42*
Total leadership or office positions in counseling professional organizations	6	10	14
Total number of professional counseling presentations and publications	30	22	33
Total number of community service, outreach, and volunteer activities	22	48	35
Total number of workshops, trainings, and conferences attended		40	38

* - counted "other organizations" option

Faculty report membership in the following organizations:

1	Academy for Play Therapy in Istanbul, Turkey
2	AASECT - American Association of Sex Educators, Counselors & Therapists
3	**ACA - American Counseling Association**
4	ACAC - Association for Child and Adolescent counselors
5	ACES - Association for Counselor Education and Supervision
6	APT - Association of Play therapy
7	ASCA - American School Counselor Association
8	CSI - SMU Chi Sigma Iota Sigma Mu Chapter
9	ICPTA - International Consortium of Play Therapy Associations
10	NCDA - National Career Development Association
11	S.A.I.G.E. - Society for Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities
12	TACES -Texas Association for Counselor Education and Supervision
13	TAPT - Texas Association of Play Therapy
14	**TCA - Texas Counseling Association**
15	TCDA - Texas Career Development Association
16	TSCA - Texas School Counselor Association

Table 2. Key performance indicators

4.A.1. Data to be Collected: Student Learning Outcomes in Core Areas				
Student Learning Outcomes	**Relation to KPI**	**T1 Measure**	**T2 Measure**	**T3 Measure**
ETHICS SLO. 1. Knowledgeably apply professional ethical and legal standards in practice, and exercise ethical and responsible conduct in their profession.	**Ethical Practice** 3.A.10. (2.F.1.i.) ethical standards of professional counseling organizations and credentialing bodies, and applications of ethical and legal considerations in professional counseling across service delivery modalities and specialized practice areas	HDCN 6318: Ethics I & Mental Health **Final exam** (entire examination) *(knowledge)* **2023-24 – 91%** **2024-25 – 90%**	**MoCCe Pre-Practicum Exam** *(knowledge)* **2023-24 – 43%** **2024-25 – 47%**	HDCN 6395 Practicum **Clinical Progress Assessment (CPA)** *(skills)* **2023-24 – 95%** **2024-25 – 95%**
DIVERSITY SLO.2. Integrate multicultural competence in counseling practice.	**Social and Cultural Identities** 3.B.1. (2.F.2.c.) theories and models of multicultural counseling, social justice, and advocacy	HDCN 6304: Counseling Diverse Communities **Final exam** (selected questions) *(knowledge)* **2023-24 – 96%** **2024-25 – 96%**	**MoCCe exam** *(knowledge)* **2023-24 – 79%** **2024-25 – 82%**	HDCN 6395 Practicum **CPA** *(skills)* **2023-24 – 94%** **2024-25 – 96%**
LIFESPAN SLO.3. Promote resilience, optimal development, and wellness for their clients across the lifespan.	**Lifespan Development** 3.C.7. (2.F.3.i). models of resilience, optimal development, and wellness in individuals and families across the lifespan	HDCN 6320 Lifespan Development **Mid-Term** (selected questions) *(knowledge)* **2023-24 – 86%** **2024-25 – 84%**	**MoCCe exam** *(knowledge)* **2023-24 – 63%** **2024-25 – 74%**	No Time 3 measure
CAREER SLO.4. Recognize and skillfully navigate the intersections between mental well-being, work, relationships, and other life roles and factors.	**Career** 3.D.2. (2.F.4. b.) approaches for conceptualizing the interrelationships among and between work, socioeconomic standing, wellness, disability, trauma, relationships, and other life roles and factors	HDCN 6321: Lifestyle & Career Development **Autobiography/Personal Career Report** *(knowledge)* **2023-24 – 98%** **2024-25 – 98%**	Note: Eliminated time 2 measure due to changing MOCCe Exam.	HDCN 6398: Internship **Work-Life Balance Assessments** *(skills)* **2023-24 – 97%** **2024-25 – 100%**

THEORIES SLO.5. Possess a broad knowledge of counseling theories, and capably apply theory to practice.	**Counseling Practice & Relationships Theories** 3.E.1. (2.F.5.a.) theories and models of counseling, including relevance to clients from diverse cultural backgrounds	(5a) HDCN 6301: Counseling Theories **Final Exam** (selected questions) *(knowledge)* **2023-24 – 84%** **2024-25 – 85%**	Note: Eliminated time 2 measure from Advanced Methods due to changing the course design in 2023.	**MOCCe Exam** *(knowledge)* **2023-24 – 79%** **2024-25 – 81%**
Theories BASIC and ADVANCED SLO.5. Possess a broad knowledge of counseling theories, and capably apply theory to practice.	**Counseling Practice & Relationships Theories** 3.E.1. (2.F.5.a.) theories and models of counseling, including relevance to clients from diverse cultural backgrounds	(5f) HDCN 6302: Basic skills KPI was changed to **CPA after video 3.** *(skills)* **2023-24 – 89%** **2024-25 – 88%**	HDCN 6305: Advanced Methods **Final Project CPA** *(skills)* **2023-24 – 91%** **2024-25 – 91%**	
GROUP SLO.6. Achieve competence in clinical skills, including interviewing, counseling, and case conceptualization, in a variety of individual and group modalities.	**Group Counseling** 3.F.2. (2.F.6.b.) dynamics associated with group process and development	HDCN 6303: Group Counseling **Final Exam** (selected questions) *(knowledge)* **2023-24 – 89%** **2024-25 – 88%**	Eliminated time 2 measure due to changing MOCCe Exam.	HDCN 6395 Practicum **CPA** *(skills)* **2023-24 – 94%** **2024-25 – 92%**
ASSESSMENT SLO.7. Demonstrate the ability to use assessments relevant to academic/educational, career, personal, and social development.	**Assessment and Diagnostic Processes** 3.G.8. (2.F.7.i.) use of assessments relevant to academic/educational, career, personal, and social development.	HDCN 6340: Assessment **Term Test Project** *(knowledge and skills)* **2023-24 – 90%** **2024-25 – 93%**	**MOCCe Exam** *(knowledge)* **2023-24 – 83%** **2024-25 – 85%**	HDCN 6395 Practicum **CPA** *(skills)* **2023-24 – 93%** **2024-25 – 92%**

RESEARCH SLO.8. Comprehend research findings and their implications for practice.	Research & Program Evaluation 3.H.3. (2.F.8.f.) qualitative, quantitative, and mixed research methods	HDCN 6349: Research Design and Statistics **Final Exam** (selected questions) *(knowledge)* **2023-24 – 85% 2024-25 – 85%**	**MOCCe Exam** *(knowledge)* **2023-24 – 76% 2024-25 – 74%**	No Time 3 measure
SLO.9. Achieve and maintain a strong counselor identity through affiliation and engagement with professional organizations and professional service.	(No affiliated KPI) **Professional Counseling Orientation** 3.A.6 Professional counseling organizations, including membership benefits, activities, services to members, and current issues **T1 Measure** Basic skills (first semester) – 63.4% of students are members of professional counseling organizations.		Counselors for Social Justice (37 students) Chi Sigma Iota, Sigma Mu Chapter (122 students) Play Therapy Association (34 students) Students Specializing in Addictions Studies (31 students) SMU in the GAP (9 students) **Time2 Measure** Internship (last semester) – 90.1% of students are part of professional counseling organizations.	

SMU Student organizations	23-24	24-25
Chi Sigma Iota (CSI)	61	122
Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ)	19	37
Play Therapy Student Association	32	34
SAS (Students in Addiction Studies)	24	31
SMU in the Gap	13	9

Membership in counseling professional organizations	23-24	24-25
Basic skills (first semester)	78%	63.4%
Internship (last semester)	100%	90.1%

4.A.1. Data to be Collected: Student Learning Outcomes for Entry-Level Specialty Areas -			
Student Learning Outcomes	**Relation to KPI**	**T1 Measure**	**T2 Measure**
SCHOOL COUNSELING SPECIALTY AREA			
SCHOOL COUNSELING SLO.10. Demonstrate theoretical and practical knowledge in designing and evaluating school counseling programs.	**School Counseling Specialty** **5.H.5.** (5.G.3.b.) design and evaluation of school counseling curriculum, lesson plan development, diverse classroom management strategies, and differentiated instructional strategies	HDCN 6309: School Counseling **School Counselor Notebook with First Year Plan** *(skills)* **2023–24 –94.5%** **2024-25 – no data**	**Practice Exam** (selected questions) *(Knowledge)* **2023–24 – 67.03%** **2024-25 – 91.76%**
MARRIAGE, COUPLE AND FAMILY COUNSELING SPECIALTY AREA			
FAMILY COUNSELING SLO. 12. Students will identify key theoretical and practice characteristics of the marriage, couple, and family counseling theories and models.	**Marriage, Couple, & Family Specialty** **5.F.7.** (5.F.1.c.) theories and models of marriage, couple, and family counseling	HDCN 6316: Family Therapy I: Intergenerational Theories and Treatment **Final Exam** (selected questions) (knowledge) **2023-24 – 89%** **2024-25 – 88%**	HDCN 6317: Affirmative Theories & Practices in Couple and Family Counseling **Final Exam** (selected questions) (knowledge) **2023-24 – 95%** **2024-25 – 97%**
CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING AREA			
DIVERSITY SLO.13. Integrate multicultural competence in clinical mental health	**Clinical Mental Health Specialty** 3.B.1. (2.F.2.c.) theories and models of multicultural counseling, social justice, and advocacy	**Time 1** HDCN 6304: Counseling Diverse Communities *(knowledge)* **Final Exam** (selected questions) (knowledge) **2023-24 – 96%** **2024-25 – 96%**	**Time 2** **MOCCe Exam** *(knowledge)* **2023-24 – 79%** **2024-25 – 82%** **Time 3** HDCN 6395 Practicum **CPA** *(skills)* **2023-24 – 94%** **2024-25 – 96%**

Table 3. CPA scores (2024 – 2025) averages.

CPA score (2024 – 2025)	Counselor characteristics (KPI: 3.E.8. (2.F.5.f.)	Assessment (KPI: 3.G.8 (2.F.7.i.)	Ethical standards (KPI: 3.A.10 (2.F.1.i.)	Theories & models (KPI: 3.E.1 (2.F.5.a.)	Multicultural (KPI: 3.B.1 (2.F.2.c.)	Group (KPI: 3.F.2 (2.F.6.b.)	Supervision & Professional Conduct (Disposition)
Basic skills	92%	90%	94%	88%	92%	93%	95%
Advanced	94%	91%	92%	91%	92%	91%	95%
Practicum	97%	92%	95%	93%	96%	92%	98%

CPA score (2023 – 2024)	KPI: 2.F.5.f. counselor characteristics	KPI: 2.F.7.e. assessment	KPI: 2.F.1.i. ethical standards	KPI 2.F.5.a. theories & models	KPI 2.F.2c. multicultural	KPI 2.F.6.b. Group	Supervision & Professional Conduct (Disposition)
Basic skills	94%	90%	97%	89%	95%	94%	96%
Advanced	93%	91%	92%	91%	93%	93%	96%
Practicum	96%	93%	95%	92%	94%	94%	96%

Data Collected: Student Professional Dispositions		
Disposition	**Time 1 measure**	**Time 2 measure**
PD.1. Personal motivation and enthusiasm	Student Update (SU) Reports	CPA disposition scores practicum (Final CPA)
PD.2. Ability to communicate (written)	Application Essay Scores	Student Update Reports
PD.3. Ability to communicate (verbal)	PONI Interview Day scores (Introductions and Group Interview)	Student Update Reports
PD.4. Attitude towards peers	PONI Interview Day scores (Group Fit)	Student Update Reports
PD.5. Concern for others (empathy, compassion, etc.)	PONI Interview Day scores – (Warmth and Approachability)	Student Update Reports
PD.6. Overall rating of student	Admissions Application and PONI Interview Day scores	Student Update Reports
PD.7. Attitude towards instructor/staff	Student Update Reports	CPA disposition scores (feedback) practicum (Final CPA)
PD.8. Ability to self-regulate	PONI Interview Day scores (Emotional and Professional Maturity)	Student Update Reports

Table 4. Student Professional Dispositions

	2023 - 2024	2024- 2025
Disposition 1 - Personal motivation and enthusiasm		
Time 1 - SU report Average of Personal motivation/enthusiasm %	85%	73%
Time 2 – CPA Counselor characteristics average of all classes	96%	97%
Disposition 2 - Ability to communicate (written)		
Time 1- PONI	No data	No data
Time 2 - SU report Average of Ability to communicate (Written) %	75%	69%
Disposition 3 - Ability to communicate (verbal)		
Time 1 – PONI Average of Speak Attire %	75%	75%
Time 2 - SU report Average of Ability to communicate (verbal) %	76%	74%
Disposition 4 - Attitude towards peers		
Time 1 – PONI Average of Group Fit %	76%	74%
Time 2 - SU report Average of Student's attitude towards peers %	84%	79%
Disposition 5 - Concern for others (empathy, compassion, etc.)		
Time 1 – PONI Average of Warm %	75%	74%
Time 2 - SU report Average of Concern for others (empathy, compassion) %	83%	75%
Disposition 6 - Overall rating of student		
Time 1 - PONI total Average of Eval Total %	76%	76%
Time 2 - SU report Average of Overall rating of student %	70%	66%
Disposition 7 - Attitude towards instructor/staff		
Time 1 - SU report Average of Attitude toward instructor /staff %	85%	82%
Time 2 - CPA Supervision & Professional Conduct Average of all classes	98%	98%
Disposition 8 - Ability to self-regulate		
Time 1 – PONI Average of Emotion Maturity %	75%	75%
Time 2 - SU report Average of Ability to regulate self inside and outside the class %	72%	71%

Table 5. Student Update Reports versus Program Enrollment

2024-2025	# of Students who got concerns (NO FYI)	Student Headcount (including Withdrawn)	# of Enrolled Students Withdrawn	% of Students who had concerned forms filled out for them
Summer 2024	4	201	3	1.99%
Fall 2024	26	290	7	8.96%
Jan 2025	2	93	2	2.15%
Spring 2025	12	306	6	3.92%
May 2025	0	73	0	0%
Total	44	963	**Average**	4.56%

2023-2024	# of Students who got concerns (NO FYI)	Student Headcount (including Withdrawn)	# of Enrolled Students Withdrawn	% of Students who had concerned forms filled out for them
Summer 2023	6	206	2	2.91%
Fall 2023	12	282	3	4.26%
Jan 2024	1	74	1	1.35%
Spring 2024	18	286	3	6.29%
May 2024	3	66	2	4.55%
Total	40	914	**Average**	4.37%

Table 6. Stakeholder Survey Data (Ratings of Competencies in 2025)

Internship site supervisors, known employers, and alumni ratings (combined) of knowledge and skills in 9 competency areas. While 113 responded to the survey, approximately 90 individuals responded to the competency ratings rating question, "Based on your observations of SMU students, how would you collectively rate their level of knowledge and skills in the following competency areas?"

2025 ALUMNI and STAKEHOLDER observations

KPI and stakeholder ratings	Extremely Knowledgeable	Very Knowledgeable	Moderately Knowledgeable	Slightly Knowledgeable	Not Knowledgeable	Did not observe this competency	Total # responses
Dynamics associated with **group** process and development	33.33%	43.33%	11.11%	6.67%	0.0%	5.56%	90
Ethically and culturally relevant strategies that promote development and wellness across the **lifespan**	38.89%	42.22%	10.0%	4.44%	0.0%	4.44%	90
Interrelationship between **work**, mental well being and other life roles and factors	41.11%	35.56%	17.78%	4.44%	0.0%	4.44%	90
Knowledge about **counselor**	45.56%	37.78%	12.22%	3.33%	0.0%	4.44%	90

characteristics that influence counseling process							
Knowledge about **research** methods	16.67%	40.0%	20.0%	12.22%	0.0%	11.11%	90
Multicultural competence in counseling practice	37.08%	38.2%	17.98%	2.25%	0.0%	4.49%	89
Professional **ethical** and legal standards	50.0%	43.33%	5.56%	0.0%	0.0%	1.11%	90
Theories and models in counseling	32.22%	50.0%	14.44%	1.11%	1.11%	1.11%	90
Use of **assessment** relevant to academic/educational, career, personal, and social development.	20.0%	43.33%	24.44%	6.67%	0.0%	5.56%	90

Table 7. Stakeholder Survey Data (Ratings of Competencies in 2022)

Internship site supervisors, known employers, and alumni ratings (combined) of knowledge and skills in 9 competency areas. While 107 responded to the survey, approximately 77 individuals responded to the competency ratings rating question, "Based on your observations of SMU students, how would you collectively rate their level of knowledge and skills in the following competency areas?"

2022 ALUMNI and STAKEHOLDER observations

KPI and stakeholder ratings	Extremely Knowledgeable	Very Knowledgeable	Moderately Knowledgeable	Slightly Knowledgeable	Not Knowledgeable	Did not observe this competency	Total # responses
Dynamics associated with **group** process and development	40.26%	35.06%	15.58%	0.00%	0.00%	9.09%	77
Ethically and culturally relevant strategies that promote development and wellness across the **lifespan**	44.16%	41.56%	7.79%	1.30%	0.00%	5.19%	77
Interrelationship between **work**, mental well being and other life roles and factors	51.95%	35.06%	6.49%	1.30%	0.00%	5.19%	77
Knowledge about **counselor characteristics** that influence counseling process	62.34%	29.87%	2.60%	0.00%	0.00%	5.19%	77
Knowledge about **research** methods	28.95%	26.32%	19.74%	5.26%	1.32%	18.42%	76
Multicultural competence in counseling practice	45.45%	35.06%	11.69%	1.30%	0.00%	6.49%	77

Professional **ethical** and legal standards	54.55%	37.66%	3.90%	0.00%	0.00%	3.90%	77
Theories and models in counseling	48.05%	33.77%	11.69%	1.30%	0.00%	5.19%	77
Use of **assessment** relevant to academic/educational, career, personal, and social development.	30.26%	35.53%	22.37%	1.32%	0.00%	10.53%	76

Table 8. Stakeholder Survey Data (Ratings of Preparedness in 2025)
Internship site supervisors, known employers, and alumni ratings (combined) responded to the question, "How would you rate the level of general preparedness of SMU students to enter the counseling field in comparison to other programs?"

Answer	%	Count
Much higher	76.28%	45
Moderately higher	15.25%	9
About the same	8.47%	5
Moderately lower	0.00%	0
Much lower	0.00%	0
Total	100%	59

Table 9. Stakeholder Survey Data (Ratings of Preparedness in 2022)

Internship site supervisors, known employers, and alumni ratings (combined) responded to the question, "How would you rate the level of general preparedness of SMU students to enter the counseling field in comparison to other programs?"

Answer	%	Count
Much higher	64.47%	49
Moderately higher	28.95%	22
About the same	6.58%	5
Moderately lower	0.00%	0
Much lower	0.00%	0
Total	100%	76

Observations and Program Modifications

Each year faculty engage in a formal assessment review process, review approved changes, document program modifications, review the most recent year data collection as well as 5+ year trend data, and make decisions on any additional program modifications needed. The faculty met October 7, 2025, to review this data.

Documenting previous program modifications, recommendations, and changes
In the annual assessment meeting in October 2024 (reviewing data from 2023-2024) faculty noted depressed scores on the Master of Core Competencies exam (MOCCe) across most of the student learning outcomes where the MOCCe is used as a Time 2 or Time 3 measure. The faculty decided to create a study guide for the exam with implementation and first use in Summer 2025. A faculty led, collaborative process resulted in the accomplishment of this goal. A study guide was produced and approved by the faculty and was used for the first time in Summer 2025. We will continue to observe the Time 2 and Time 3 MOCCe ratings to assess potential impact of the survey on student performance.

Faculty noticed that the acceptance rate continues to improve and this has been observed as trend since 2019. In 2019-2020, the program accepted about 90% of applicants compared to 2022-2023 when the acceptance rate was approximately 63% of applicants. In 2023-2024 the program accepted 46.37% of applicants (on average across fall and spring). This year (2024-2025) the average acceptance rate across admissions cycles remained consistent at 45.6%. While the program application numbers continue to increase, the overall percentage acceptance rate is decreasing which makes application to the program more competitive.

In October 2024 Faculty noted the need to expand capacity in Practicum in the clinical sequence, particularly in the Summer session beginning in Summer 2025. A memorandum of understanding was established between SMU and Mesquite Independent School District (MISD) to formalize a Practicum and Internship partnership that began in Summer 2025, expanding access to two additional sections of Practicum in Summer at the MISD Care Clinic. The Department plans to renew the partnership agreement for next academic year starting Summer 2026 and extending through May 2027.

The faculty reviewed the May 2024 updated CACREP standards and realized we needed to more formally document the systemic process of communicating feedback to students. In mid-fall 2024, the faculty implemented a procedure to document the systematic process of communicating feedback to students on their individual assessments of knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions (CACREP standard 2.C.3) at the Practicum Eligibility meeting and again prior to Conferral. This is now formally documented on this Practicum and Conferral Advising form, which is required for all students to complete.

The faculty decided to add questions to the bi-annual pre-registration survey to assess student experiences and collect data on accessibility of faculty advisors in the program. The first pre-registration survey with these questions was administered in August 2025.

Faculty also formalized a diversity statement to be included in all syllabi in academic year 2024-2025 to be compliance with the new CACREP standard 1.N.6. All syllabi incorporated this statement in Spring 2025.

Faculty also updated every syllabus to include the new numbering of curricular standards as updated by CACREP in May 2024. All syllabi were compliant by the beginning of Spring 2025.

Observations of 2024-2025 Data and Recommendations
Scaling Resources
The faculty noted enrollment headcount has increased steadily over the past 5-7 years. The scaled growth was intentional as the program needed to make headcount adjustments after switching from a 10-week term to a 15-week semester system. The additional headcount initially resulted in flat enrollment growth. However, since 2021, the slow but steady enrollment growth has reached a point where additional resources were needed beyond increasing faculty. During 2023-2024 the Department successfully petitioned the Simmons School for additional resources including extra space in the current building and resources to support the purchase of electronic notetaking system for the Practicum clinic. Additionally, the Department received approval in 2023-2024 to increase the faculty by one full-time faculty member, which allowed for a search in 2024-2025 for a start date of August 2025. Looking to the future, we recommend adding a full-time dedicated faculty member to support the Clinic as well as increase the faculty by an additional full-time faculty member effective Fall 2026. Postings positions in the 2025-2026 academic year will result in a net increase of two full-time faculty members.

Advising
The faculty discussed students' perceptions of the accessibility of advising and found this to be a potential area of improvement. According to the Pre-Registration Survey data gathered in August 2025, 80% of students Strongly Agreed or Agreed that their advisor was accessible or somewhat accessible to them, 16% indicated a neutral response (neither agree nor disagree), 2% indicated Somewhat Disagree and 2% indicated they Strongly Disagreed that their advisor was accessible. Furthermore, the open-ended qualitative data revealed a number of students reported a desire for more structured advising opportunities. The faculty noted that hosting group advising sessions in addition to individual advising sessions may help increase accessibility and structure. The Program Director, Student Affairs will plan to host intermittent group advising sessions in 2025-2026 academic school year.

Stakeholder Feedback
The program collects data from the stakeholders every three years via a Qualtrics survey. In the survey, respondents indicate their affiliation with SMU Graduate Counseling Program as either an Internship site supervisor, employer of SMU students or alumni, or former graduate student of the SMU Counseling program. The stakeholder survey was administered in 2022 and again in 2025 in keeping with the program evaluation manual timeline.

The purpose of the survey is to gather meaningful feedback on the effectiveness and impact of our program from those who interact directly with our students and graduates. Respondents are asked to evaluate our students' skills, knowledge, and competencies in relation to our established Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), as well as to provide feedback on the overall strengths of the program and areas for potential growth.

Both the 2022 and 2025 surveys collected feedback from supervisors, alumni, employers, and other stakeholders who interacted with SMU Counseling Program students. The surveys assessed perceptions of students' skills, program strengths, areas for growth, and overall preparedness compared to other programs. Comparisons between data collected in 2022 and 2025 includes:

Student Competency Ratings
- Knowledge and Skills:
    - 2022: Students were highly rated in professional ethics (54% "extremely knowledgeable"), multicultural competence (45%), and counseling theory (48%).
    - 2025: Consistently high ratings continued, with many stakeholders noting students as "extremely" or "very knowledgeable" across all competency areas, especially in ethical and multicultural competencies.
    - Observation: Students in 2025 showed slight increases in perceived strengths across more competencies, suggesting curriculum improvements since 2022.

General Preparedness Compared to Other Programs
- 2022 Results:
    - 64% rated SMU students' preparedness as "much higher" than other programs.
    - 29% rated it "moderately higher."
- 2025 Results:
    - 76% rated SMU students' preparedness as "much higher."
    - 15% rated it "moderately higher."
- Observation: Stakeholders in 2025 expressed even greater confidence in SMU students' preparation, showing clear improvement over time.

Willingness to Hire SMU Graduates
- 2022:
    - 92% of stakeholders said "Yes" they would hire an SMU graduate.
- 2025:
    - 97% of stakeholders said "Yes" they would hire an SMU graduate.
- Observation: Employer confidence increased slightly, indicating growing satisfaction with the quality of graduates.

This feedback was particularly valuable in capturing both quantitative data and rich qualitative insights, especially within the open-ended narrative responses. These responses offer nuanced perspectives on how our graduates are functioning in real-world contexts.

The 2022 data collected played a critical role in guiding departmental reflection and program evaluation, providing evidence that graduates maintain proficiency in student learning outcome areas assessed in the program. The 2025 survey results demonstrate that we have built upon our strengths identified in 2022, further elevating students' ethical grounding, clinical preparation, and field readiness. While stakeholders continue to praise the program's strong academic and professional standards, they also encourage ongoing enhancement in cultural competence, trauma training, and business practice preparation. Overall, the feedback trends indicate steady improvement and increased external validation of SMU Counseling Program graduates over the three-year period. Engaging with our stakeholders and reviewing trend data reflects our ongoing commitment to stakeholder engagement, accountability, and excellence in counselor education.