



Report to the Legislative Health and Human Services Committee

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I am representing the behavioral health programs that are housed in the School of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences. Both programs are nationally accredited programs. The MA in counseling with concentrations in School Counseling, Clinical Mental Health Counseling, and Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling are CACREP accredited by the Counseling for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. The MS in Clinical Psychology - Counseling Track is accredited by the Masters in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council.

Both the Clinical Psychology Program and the Counseling Program are available from the Las Vegas campus. The Counseling Program and its concentrations are also available from three of our centers. During the academic year 2024-25 through this summer, there were 11 in the Clinical Psychology-Counseling Track and 250 in the Counseling Program.

The Las Vegas Campus serves approximately 19 counseling students and 11 psychology students from the Las Vegas area. Counseling students are also served at the Rio Rancho Center, the Santa Fe Center, and the Farmington Center.

Students in the Counseling Program are from all over the State with a small number from out-of-state. 62% of our students live in large cities in New Mexico, primarily in Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Santa Fe, and Farmington. 18% of our students come from our smaller cities like Las Vegas, Raton, Espanola, and Taos. 20% of our students are from our rural areas or small towns and villages such as Pecos, Cerrillos, and Jemez Pueblo.

Las Vegas campus serves 7% of the 250 counseling students. Rio Rancho serves 49%. Santa Fe serves 22% and Farmington serves 14%. We identify students who live more than an hour ½ from Las Vegas or one of these three Centers as Distance students. 8% of our students are Distance students and are served by the Las Vegas Campus.

Demographically speaking, during the 2024-25 academic year, almost 90% of the 11 Clinical Psychology – Counseling Track students were women with 11% men. These

numbers are similar in the Counseling Program with 82% women, almost 17% men, and .4% non-binary. The Counseling Program also has data on the different racial and ethnic groups. 45% of our students identify as White, 37%, Hispanic, 11% Native American, and 7% made up of Asian, African American, International, or unknown. The numbers between our White and our Hispanic students fluctuate, generally one side or the other of 40%. Our mission in the School of Education and in the Counseling Department is to increase significantly the number of professionals of color to more accurately reflect our New Mexico communities.

The Clinical Psychology - Counseling Track students are traditional students. They are typically in their early twenties. The traditional students attend classes on the Las Vegas campus, and most remain in New Mexico after graduation. Our traditional students are heading into their 1st career.

Our nontraditional students are in their mid-twenties to sixties. The average age of our nontraditional students is 34. The age range is 21 to 82. Our nontraditional students are typically established in their New Mexico communities. They have families and they're working. Our nontraditional students are usually heading into their second, third, or fourth career.

The School of Education has worked diligently with our centers to be flexible with non-traditional students so that we can meet the needs of students who do not have the time for commuting or are too far away from a center to get to classes once or twice a week. Our classes are scheduled in the evenings, and our programs are 100% available in a distance format. The Counseling Program in particular, seldom has classes on ground. Classes are taught in real time through ZOOM technology. A small number of our classes are taught asynchronously.

The Counseling Program offers three concentrations and several certificates. 93% of our students are degree-seeking. 75% of those are pursuing a concentration in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and will apply to become Licensed Mental Health Counselors. 4% are Clinical Rehabilitation Counselors. Clinical Rehabilitation Counselors can apply to become both Licensed Mental Health Counselors and Nationally Certified Rehabilitation Counselors. They work with the chronically mentally ill, those with addictions, adults with developmental delay, individuals with physical disabilities, and students with disabilities transitioning between schools and into the workforce. 13% of our students are pursuing School Counseling and 1% are doing a dual concentration with both Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling.

7% of our students are pursuing certificates. These are students who already have a master's degree in counseling, or a very closely related field. For example, a person might have a degree with a school counseling concentration and now want to add a clinical license. They take the extra courses needed to qualify for licensure in that area. We have Certificates in Professional Counseling, School Counseling, Rehabilitation Counseling,

and our newest Certificate in Addictions Counseling. As with the Degree Program, the courses are all available in distance modalities.

Some vital statistics for the Counseling Program include our annual number of graduates which is between 35 and 50. The completion rate within 7 years is 70%. Our pass rate overall for licensure and certification exams is 85%, and 90% of Counseling students are employed within one year of graduation.

Students pursuing a professional counseling degree do field placement in the last few semesters of their program. We have recently begun keeping track of the hours of service our students are providing to the communities that they live in through their practicum and internships. The breakdown of hours for each concentration is significant with the total just in the Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 semesters indicating over 25,000 hours at approved sites and schools. These counselors-in-training are also providing over 10,000 hours of direct behavioral health services under the supervision of independently licensed clinicians for clients and students.

Finally, I would like to highlight how grateful we are that many of our students have received much needed financial support from the State. I am sure you know, graduate students are not qualified to receive Pell grants. They do not qualify for the Lottery Scholarship or the Opportunity Scholarship. They are often dependent upon loans to cover the cost of their education.

The Expanding Opportunities Project through the New Mexico Public Education Department has supported more than 25 of our school counseling students with the NM EOP Grant which provides tuition assistance, stipends during their field placement, and also salary incentives after they get their license. I'm afraid that particular grant is coming to an end which is very sad for our students, because they have made good use of it. We recently were able to participate in the Grow Fund for Noncredit Workforce Training because our students seldom get paid for their fieldwork time which for each Internship is typically 20 hours/week. In the Fall of 2024 and the Spring of 2025, 31 of our students benefited from the \$1,500 to \$1,650 stipends during their 1st field experience. 66 of our students benefited from the \$3,350 to \$4,500 stipends during their Internships. We are very appreciative of the funding that the State has provided for these graduate students.

Thank you for allowing me to share this information.