

MISSION & PROGRAM OBJECTIVES SURVEY REPORT



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Department of Counselor Education
The College at Brockport, State University of New
York

Abstract

The purpose of this document is to examine stakeholders' responses ($n = 67$) on a survey regarding the Department's Mission and Program Objectives, to identify closing the loop implications, and to inform stakeholders of the outcomes of the survey. Ninety-six percent of all stakeholders agreed or strongly agreed that the mission reflects the Department of Counselor Education and the program objectives support the mission. The Department determined that, given stakeholders strong support of the mission and objectives, no changes were needed at this time.

Mission & Program Objectives Survey Report

DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELOR EDUCATION
THE COLLEGE AT BROCKPORT, STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

PURPOSE

The purpose of the survey was to assess perceptions of key department stakeholders of the Department of Counselor Education’s Mission and program objectives, revised by faculty during the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 academic years. Relevant stakeholders surveyed included faculty, current students, alumni, site supervisors.

POPULATION, SURVEY AND INVITATION

Population

Surveys were distributed online to a total of 527 people. The department maintains an email listserv of all current students and teaching faculty, including core and adjunct faculty. Of the 1,154 total alumni, 386 had email addresses. Because of the online survey design, alumni with email addresses were surveyed. Site supervisors of interns registered during the 2013 – 2014 academic year were surveyed. The following is a breakdown of key stakeholders surveyed:

Current students	135
Alumni	386
Site supervisors	<u>27</u>
Total	527

Survey

The survey was distributed using the College’s online survey tool, MachForm. Following an introduction that identified the department’s mission and survey purpose, there were two items on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, 4 = strongly disagree). The first item asked respondents to provide their perception of the following statement: *The mission reflects the Department of Counselor Education at the College at Brockport, SUNY.* The mission statement was provided: *The Mission of the Department of Counselor Education is to prepare and mentor scholar practitioners, with a deep level of self-understanding, in the art and science of professional counseling.* The second item asked respondents to provide their perception of the following statement: *The program objectives support the Department’s mission* and followed with the Department’s three program objectives:

1. Program Objective 1: Demonstrate Self Awareness and Understanding
2. Program Objective 2: Demonstrate a Scholar/Practitioner Counselor Identity
3. Program Objective 3: Demonstrate the attitudes, knowledge and skills of a Professional Counselor

The final item was an open-ended opportunity for participants to provide feedback. The survey concluded with a hyperlink to the department's philosophy and program objectives, an optional item inviting the participants to provide an e-mail address, and a forced-choice item identifying the participant's relationship(s) with the department. Options included: current students, alumnus or alumna, adjunct faculty, site supervisor, employer, and other (with space to clarify).

Invitation

The following e-mail invitation was distributed on March 6, 2014. The Spring 2014 Nu Insights newsletter was attached to the invitation to help inform stakeholders of current news in the department and to showcase the work of current students.

Good afternoon,

I hope this email finds you well and either frolicking in the snow or seriously visualizing spring! We're enjoying a beautifully sunny, balmy 16 degree day here in Brockport!

As an alum of our Counselor Education program, we are curious to learn your feedback on our revised mission statement and program objectives. As you know, we have a unique program - focusing on developing the self of the counselor - and believe the mission and objectives capture our program's spirit and philosophy. Would you please consider taking a few moments to respond to this brief survey, located at <https://forms.brockport.edu/view.php?id=471412>.

If it's been a while since you've been in touch, you may be interested in our newly updated webpage, located at <https://www.brockport.edu/edc/>.

Also, I'm attaching the Spring Nu Chapter Chi Sigma Iota newsletter, hot off the presses this week! We would love to hear how you are doing and welcome a visit from you!

We are so grateful for your participation and wish you a happy spring!

The second paragraph of the invitation was unique to the specific stakeholder. For site supervisors, the following paragraph was used:

As a site supervisor of interns in our Counselor Education program, we are curious to learn your feedback on our revised mission statement and program objectives. We have a unique program - focusing on developing the self of the counselor - and believe the mission and objectives capture our program's spirit and philosophy. Would you please consider taking a few moments to respond to this brief survey, located at <https://forms.brockport.edu/view.php?id=471412>.

For current students, the following paragraph was used:

As a current student in our Counselor Education program, we are curious to learn your feedback on our revised mission statement and program objectives. As you know, we have a unique program - focusing on developing the self of the counselor - and believe the mission and objectives capture our program's spirit and philosophy. Would you please consider taking a few moments to respond to this brief survey, located at <https://forms.brockport.edu/view.php?id=471412>.

RESULTS

Participants

The survey was distributed to a total of 527 people. Of the 386 alumni, 17 e-mails were returned for inaccurate addresses. Of the 135 faculty and students, four individuals were no longer connected with the program. All 27 site supervisors' e-mail addresses were accurate. Of the 506 participants with viable e-mail

addresses, 68 responses were received for a total 13.4% response rate. According to Dillman et al. (2008), web surveys have a 13% response rate. Of the 135 eligible students, 23% responded. Of the 27 site supervisors, 48.1% responded. Of the 369 eligible alumni, 7.9% responded.

Participant Response Table

Multiple identities				
Current students (CS)	Alumni (A)	Site supervisor (SS)	CS&A	A&SS
29	24	10	2	3

Quantitative Findings

Overall Mission and Program Objectives Frequency Table

	Mission	Program objective 1	Program objective 2	Program objective 3
(1) Strongly agree	58.2% (n = 39)	71.6% (n = 48)	55.2% (n = 37)	61.2% (n = 41)
(2) Agree	37.3% (n = 25)	23.9% (n = 16)	38.8% (n = 26)	34.3% (n = 23)
(3) Disagree	1.5% (n = 1)	1.5% (n = 1)	3.0% (n = 2)	1.5% (n = 1)
(4) Strongly Disagree	3.0% (n = 2)	3.0% (n = 2)	3.0% (n = 2)	3.0% (n = 2)

Overall Mission and Program Objectives Average Response by Stakeholder Table

	Mission	Program objective 1	Program objective 2	Program objective 3
Current Student (n = 31)	1.48	1.39	1.58	1.45
Alumni (n = 29)	1.51	1.31	1.55	1.52
Site Supervisor (n = 13)	1.54	1.54	1.46	1.46

Note. 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Disagree, and 4 = Strongly Disagree.

Qualitative Feedback

Twenty-three (23) participants provided qualitative feedback. Types of feedback included alumni news, supportive and critical feedback, and recommendations. The following are sample excerpts from these categories.

Alumni News

- As a counselor ed. graduate, I chose a different career path. My career was totally in business employee relations and interviewing. My BSU education was extremely valuable and I was rewarded accordingly for my ability to listen and communicate with people. I completed my masters there in '72 and retired this year. I am forever grateful for the professors I had and what they taught me. This education is so valuable in other fields besides the clinical area. I'm not sure if that is emphasized at all to current or potential students- but people with this educational background have a leg up on other potential employees who are interested in the various fields of human resources. (Alumni)
- As a graduate in 1969 I have applied my counseling skills in a wide spectrum of professional experiences secondary school, college/university and private sector financial services and consulting. I do not recall the mission in the programs inaugural years only the founding professors; Dr. Houghton and Joe Kandor. My responses, had the option been offered, would be unknown or not applicable. (Alumni)
- I graduated from the program in 1990. I have worked continuously as a therapist then. I have been in private practice in North Carolina since 1997. I teach as an adjunct instructor an undergraduate counseling class. Self-awareness and understanding is a major goal of this class, as I have found knowing my self has been the most important component in my working with clients.

Supportive Feedback

- Understanding of self is critical to displaying empathy to the client, and of course assisting your client in developing the same self understanding. I have difficulty with current intervention trends that appear to be reactive and purely behavioral with less attention to developing the inner knowledge that brings client change that lasts. (Alumni)
- I think that this new mission is an accurate representation of what I have learned so far in the program and accurately states what an applicant should expect to learn in this program. (Current Student)
- I honestly believe that a student would need to be actively resisting the self-awareness that this program encourages and helps students achieve. The amount of support and encouragement that this program and the faculty give students is fantastic especially in regards to these three objectives. (Current Student)
- The mission statement is beautiful: clear, concise and focused. And it gives direction for learning and instruction. I'd say it was perfect, but then I'd sound biased. (Alumni)
- I feel very supported as a student of the Counselor Education program. I'm very glad I picked this program for grad school. (Current Student)
- Our intern this year, Danielle, absolutely demonstrates these objectives. I assume this is a reflection of her own personality and motivation, as well as her graduate program. (Site Supervisor)
- Your mission and objectives are a good description of a professional counselor. (Alumni, Site Supervisor)
- Excellent! (Alumni)
- It's been a long time since I've taken a class but my interns always seem to be well prepared. My contact with professors is always helpful and Brockport's program has long been recognized with CACREP accreditation and strong in supporting professional affiliation with ASCA and NYSCA and the national standards and model approach for school counseling. (Alumni)
- Although the program has changed a bit since I was there over 40 years ago, I am glad to see that the goal of exploring and understanding oneself is still a major objective. I was also pleased to see a that scholarship is emphasized to a greater degree than when I was there, especially the opportunity

to work with faculty on their research and to present and publish with the faculty. In the current job market, applied research skills are invaluable and are prized in such environments, as colleges and some community agencies. (Grant writing skills, although not a requirement for most counseling jobs, is also a skill that will give applicants a competitive edge in finding work in colleges and some community settings.) Finally, professionalism and ethical behavior was emphasized when I was a student there, and I'm glad to see it is still a major objective. (Alumni)

- The program has helped to me discover my professional and personal self at a deeper level than I would have thought possible. I have been able to expand my knowledge of myself and the profession through each class. (Current Student)

Critical Feedback

- I think you could expand upon it a bit more and be more descriptive. I feel it is almost too general. (Current Student)
- Could be more confrontational in the manner of an encounter group. I believe many of us students get through Self and Group without confronting our most debilitating attitudes and beliefs. (Current Student)
- I found the CE program very disappointing. At the time, I found the professors to be egotistical, impatient and aloof. I'm thankful my undergraduate years at Brockport were so wonderful, because my graduate experience was terrible. I did not find a helpful mentor among the graduate faculty, but, rather, during my internship. I've since decided to look upon my graduate time at Brockport as a series of lessons in what not to do and how not to treat others - which can be as valuable as having positive role models. Many of my peers agree with my sentiments, and many do not. I sincerely hope things have greatly improved since the 90's. (Alumni)

Recommendations

- I would hope you still emphasize the experiential piece in the program (Alumni)
- a thorough knowledge in developing model programs and the importance of networking and continuing professional development (Alumni)
- ORIGINAL: The Mission of the Department of Counselor Education is to prepare and mentor scholar practitioners, with a deep level of self-understanding, in the art and science of professional counseling.
CHANGE: The Mission of the Department of Counselor Education is to prepare and mentor scholar practitioners in the art and science of professional counseling with a particular focus placed on self-understanding. (Current Student)
- I particularly like seeing the word "art" used in the mission statement, but I wonder if a more complete mission would include the word "business" -- '...to prepare and mentor scholar practitioners, with a deep level of self-understanding, in the art, science and BUSINESS of professional counseling.'
It has been twenty years since I graduated from Brockport's program with a school-counseling focus; I was well trained and look back on my experience positively. However, something I wish I'd had had during my Master's program was at least one course on the business of counseling... to include information and best practices regarding record-keeping, paperwork management, basic business accounting, tax and insurance topics, continuing professional development, insurance network provider options, private practice development, special issues in non-profit organizations, grant writing, article publishing, community collaborations, curriculum vitae creation, and opportunities in supplementing work as a professional trainer, product creator or in curriculum design. Because I moved out of state, I

ended up working in a community-based setting for ten years, which was wonderful, and I was exceptionally prepared in clinical skills. However, additional income streams for me over the years have come from my additional expertise in arts (combining writing and art-making with counseling) and becoming a trainer and speaker in the community. I really would have benefitted from having a base knowledge in these kinds of opportunities to have them in mind as I entered and developed my career. I see now that having a good business head is crucial to working in the counseling profession, no matter what the setting. This was very lacking in my Brockport experience. Certainly for students today, there is also a need for understanding the utilization of technology in the counseling practice, an expanding field, that could be appropriately addressed in a "Business of Counseling" course, as well. An additional element in a "Business of Counseling" course could be a variety of guest speakers who talk about how they crafted their niche, or expanded the reach of their work, or built their business and reputation in the larger community. Thanks for the opportunity to share this feedback. I feel strongly about this topic and am now excited to develop a course like this for the graduate school setting! (Alumni)

- There will always be way to integrate more about diversity in the classroom. Also I think that use of more technical language would be helpful especially for mental health students. (Current Students)

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

All stakeholders supported the Mission and Program Objectives as currently defined. In addition, a site supervisor commented that her intern demonstrated the program objectives in her internship. Both students and alumni commented on the benefits of the program's focus on the self of the counselor. For example, one current student reported, "The program has helped to me discover my professional and personal self at a deeper level than I would have thought possible. I have been able to expand my knowledge of myself and the profession through each class."

Recommendations included infusing networking and professional development into the curricular experience and creating opportunities for students to learn about the "business of counseling" such as private practice and other entrepreneurial endeavors. Given the level of agreement on the mission and program objectives, and the fact that respondent recommendations focused on curriculum and not mission and program objectives, the Department finds no reason to further revise the mission or program objectives at the present time.

ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

The 2013-2014 Assessment Committee members included Kitty Fallon, Assistant Professor and Committee Chair; Thomas Hernandez, Professor and Interim Chair; and Summer Reiner, Associate Professor.

References

Dillman, D.A., Phelps, G., Tortora, R., Swift, K., Kohrell, J., Berck, J., & Messer, B.L. (2008). [Response rate and measurement differences in mixed mode surveys using mail, telephone, Interactive Voice Response \(IVR\) and the internet](http://www.sesrc.wsu.edu/dillman/papers/ResponseRateandMeasurement.pdf). Retrieved on August 30, 2008, from <http://www.sesrc.wsu.edu/dillman/papers/ResponseRateandMeasurement.pdf>