

Spring Arbor University
Master of Arts in Counseling
Annual Program Report: 2022-2023

In keeping with ongoing CACREP accreditation requirements, the MAC program provides an annual self-report to be distributed to all stakeholders. The primary purpose of this process is accountability – to the ideals of Spring Arbor University, to our current students, and to those who employ and seek the services of our graduates. Per CACREP guidelines, our report is divided into two sections: a summary of our program evaluation results and a summary of the modifications we have made/are planning to make in the near future based on those results.

Section 1 – Summary of Program Evaluation Results

CACREP standards require that we evaluate the MAC program according to three broad standards. These are listed in summary form below:

A: Aggregate student assessment addressing knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions.

- Knowledge: Nine CACREP-aligned core competencies are analyzed to reflect overall program effectiveness. Each competency is tagged to two specific assignments turned in during different semesters over the course of the degree program. The minimum expectation is that at least 80% of students will achieve a score of 80% or more on these domains. The domains and their outcomes are as follow:
 - Faith Integration – 94% competency
 - History, Philosophy, Ethics, and Trends in Counseling – 92%
 - Multicultural Issues and Social Justice – 86%
 - Lifespan Development and Interventions – 97%
 - Career Theory, Development and Assessment – 97%
 - Counseling Theory, Consultation, and Crisis Intervention – 96%
 - Group Work – 98%
 - Tests, Measurement, and Assessment – 95%
 - Research and Program Evaluation – 96%
 - **Mean Aggregate Assessment Percentage – 95%**

- Skills and Professional Disposition: Professional Competency Profile instruments designed to assess proficiency in the domains of effective listening skills, multicultural sensitivity and awareness of diversity issues, and overall fit for the counseling field are completed by students and instructors at the end CNS 603, CNS 621, and CNS 654. The outcomes summarized below show that all students meet expectations, with close to 25% exceeding expectations.

Criterion	Level 1 – Needs Improvement	Level 2 – Meets Expectations	Level 3 – Exceeds Expectations	Mean Score
Effective Communication Skills: Listening	0	77%	33%	2.22
Multicultural Sensitivity and Awareness of Diversity Issues	0	84%	16%	2.14
Fit for the Counseling Field	0	67%	33%	2.32
Overall Mean	0	49.3%	27.3%	2.23

B: Demographic and other characteristics of applicants, students, and graduates.

Data collected for the 2022-2023 academic year for ethnicity and gender is summarized as follows:

Year	Ethnicity	Applications*	Accepted	Registered
2022-2023	Pacific Islander	1	1	0
	Asian	2	2	2
	Black	28	18 (64%)	14
	Hispanic	6	5 (83%)	5
	White	108	88 (81%)	74
	Multi-Race	3	2	2
	Unknown	7	1	1
Total		155	117	98

*Application does not denote a completed file.

Year	Male Applied	Female Applied	Male Accepted	Female Accepted	Male Registered	Female Registered
2022-2023	30	125	19 (63%)	98 (78%)	16 (84%)	82 (78%)

Year	Ethnicity	Graduated
2022-2023	Asian	1
	Black	13
	Hispanic	1
	White	42
	Multi-Race	1
	Unknown	0
Total		58

C: Data from systematic follow-up studies of graduates, site supervisors, and employers fo program graduates.

A series of three surveys are systematically disseminated to gauge MAC program effectiveness via feedback from students regarding their satisfaction with their clinical experience and preparation for it, clinical supervisors regarding their satisfaction with the preparation of students for clinical work and the level of support provided by MAC faculty and staff, and for employers of MAC graduates regarding their satisfaction with the preparation and professionalism of program graduates in clinical settings. The most recent data is summarized below:

Student Clinical Experience Feedback

Question 1:

I am satisfied with the clinical preparation I have received to this point in the program.

Agree	37.04%
Strongly Agree	24.07%
Total	61.11%

Question 2:

I am satisfied with the professionalism demonstrated by my SAU supervisor.

Agree	33.33%
Strongly Agree	48.15%
Total	81.48%

Question 3:

I am satisfied with the level of communication I receive from SAU about the internship program.

Agree	35.19%
Strongly Agree	16.67%
Total	51.86%

Question 4:

I am satisfied with the level of responsiveness to my concerns demonstrated by SAU faculty and staff.

Agree	29.63%
Strongly Agree	16.67%

Total	46.30%
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Question 5:

My overall impression of SAU Master of Arts in Counseling program is positive.

Agree	50.00%
Strongly Agree	16.67%
Total	66.67%

Clinical Site Supervisors Feedback

Question 1:

I am satisfied with the clinical preparation of my SAU interns.

Agree	32.00%
Strongly Agree	52.00%
Total	84.00%

Question 2:

I am satisfied with the professionalism demonstrated by my SAU intern.

Agree	20.00%
Strongly Agree	68.00%
Total	88.00%

Question 3:

I am satisfied with the level of communication I receive from SAU about the internship program.

Agree	52.00%
Strongly Agree	28.00%
Total	80.00%

Question 4:

I am satisfied with the level of responsiveness to my concerns demonstrated by SAU faculty and staff.

Agree	36.00%
Strongly Agree	28.00%

Total	64.00%
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Question 5:

My overall impression of SAU Master of Arts in Counseling program is positive.

Agree	44.00%
Strongly Agree	36.00%
Total	80.00%

Graduate Employers Feedback

Question 1:

I am satisfied with the clinical preparation of my SAU graduate clinician.

Agree	7.69%
Strongly Agree	61.54%
Total	69.23%

Question 2:

I am satisfied with the professionalism demonstrated by my SAU graduate clinician.

Agree	7.69%
Strongly Agree	61.54%
Total	69.23%

Question 3:

I am satisfied with the level of knowledge demonstrated by my SAU graduate clinician.

Agree	7.69%
Strongly Agree	61.54%
Total	69.23%

Question 4:

My overall impression of SAU Master of Arts in Counseling program is positive.

Agree	0.00%
Strongly Agree	61.54%
Total	61.54%

Section 2 – Subsequent Program Modifications

This year's analysis included an evaluation of the MAC program through comparison with three benchmarked programs. The comparison is summarized below:

Institution	Cornerstone University	California Baptist University	Mid-America Christian University	Spring Arbor University
Years to Complete	2	2	2	2 ½ +
Accreditation	None	California Board of Behavioral Sciences	CACREP	CACREP
On-Campus Element	3 days per year	None	None	None
Faith Integration Coursework	Distributed within each course	Christian Perspectives in Counseling (3)	Distributed within each course	Capstone A and B (2)
Delivery	Asynchronous	Asynchronous	Asynchronous	Synchronous
Course Length	15 weeks	8 weeks	6 weeks	8 weeks
Other Concentrations	MFT Addictions Trauma	MFT Clinical Counseling	None	School
Psychopharmacology	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Neuropsychology	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Analysis of current trends in the field and among similar programs has led to the conclusion that some elements of the curriculum need to be adjusted for the 2024-25 year. In comparison to the three benchmarked institutions, there are several notable differences.

Concern 1: Time to Complete Program - Among the most significant is the time required to complete the degree. In all three benchmark programs students are able to complete the program in two years – four semesters plus two summers. This could be interpreted as a weakness for SAU, as our program is designed for students to take almost 3 years to finish. Additionally, analysis of curricular items suggests overlap in several courses.

Solution 1: Options for Faster Completion – Beginning with the 2024-2025 academic year, the program has streamlined the curriculum to avoid overlap, while still meeting CACREP and LPC standards. Courses have been identified as either core or electives, which allowed for different scheduling options. Additionally, the schedule will move from a defined cohort plan to a carousel rotation. The new rotation will enable students to enter the program at four different points during the year rather than two and will also give students additional flexibility related to scheduling and time to complete. Students will now be able to finish in as little as two years if they so desire.

Concern 2: Rigidity of Delivery Format - A second difference is the delivery format. While SAU has primarily stuck to the synchronous Zoom-based setting, all three benchmarked programs have moved to an asynchronous online delivery that does not require a set weekly meeting time. Courses are pre-loaded and may include a video lecture as well as discussion boards but rely on the adult learner to initiate contact with professors if needed. This is a common source of dissatisfaction among SAU students, as it is cumbersome for them to block out four hours at a time for class on top of coursework. Analysis would indicate that a move to completely online asynchronous delivery is warranted to remain competitive.

Solution 2: Movement to a hybrid delivery format – Beginning with the 2024-2025 academic year, courses will shift from a continuous 8-week synchronous Zoom-based format to a seven-week hybrid format. Students have an optional weekly Zoom session to discuss material with classmates and instructors and/or can follow an asynchronous discussion-based/assignment completion format. This will allow students to tailor their learning experience based on their needs, preferences, and the demands of their lives outside of school. Additionally, the shift to a 7-week format will allow a one-week break between courses.

Concern 3: Need for Updated Curriculum - Another major difference is the incorporation of psychopharmacology and neuropsychology coursework in the degree program. All three benchmark schools require coverage of these two domains, with Cornerstone offering each as a separate course and Cal Baptist and Mid-America offering them condensed into one three-hour course. This is an acknowledged area of weakness in the SAU program. Analysis indicates that SAU needs to add coursework in both psychopharmacology and neuropsychology to keep pace with changes in the field.

Solution 3: Work has begun to develop courses in psychopharmacology and neuropsychology which will then be made available to Counseling students as program electives. The department's goal is to have those courses available to students in the 2025-26 academic year

Concern 4: Few Curricular Concentration Options - Offering different concentrations is an increasingly popular feature of similar programs. As the chart indicates, SAU is lagging behind two of the three benchmark programs, especially where options in Marriage and Family Counseling is concerned.

Solution 4: In order to open up space in the program for concentrations and electives in the curriculum, areas of redundancy were identified in the course offerings and were addressed by condensing courses. The following changes will be in effect beginning with the 2024-2025 academic year:

Former Courses	Former Hours	New Course	New Hours
CNS 603 Intro to Counseling/ CNS 621 Counseling Theory	6	CNS 604 Theories of Counseling	4
CNS 606 Advanced Psychopathology/ CNS 672 Clinical Psychopathology	6	CNS 616 Clinical Psychopathology	4
CNS 622 Counseling Techniques/ CNS 654 Conceptualization and Treatment	6	CNS 620 Counseling Techniques	4
CNS 614 Crisis Intervention/ CNS 645 Developmental Issues	6	CNS 618 Developmental Issues in Counseling	4
CNS 664 Career Counseling/ CNS 668 Consulting in the Helping Professions	6	CNS 665 Career Counseling and Consulting	4
CNS 668A Capstone A/ CNS668B Capstone B	2	CNS 610 Integration of Faith	3
Total Hours – Old Program	32	Total Hours – New Program	23

As the chart indicates, this frees up nine hours in the core of the curriculum which can be used as the student sees fit to tailor their program to areas of interest. In addition to the upcoming offerings in psychopharmacology and neuropsychology, three new three-hour courses in play therapy have been added for 2024-2025. When taken together, they satisfy the coursework necessary for the student to apply for status as a Registered Play Therapist™.

Course Number	Course Title	Credits
CNS 640	Foundational Concepts in Play Therapy	3
CNS 642	Play Therapy for Traumatized Clients	3
CNS 644	Child-Centered Play Therapy for Individuals and Families	3

Additionally, exploratory work has been done regarding the addition of a CACREP-accredited program in Marriage and Family Counseling, as well as one in Addictions. Look for updates on these potential changes in the next academic year.