OBJECTIVES OF THE CLINICAL COUNSELING PROGRAM

The professional counselor works from an integrated understanding that combines theory and practice. The objectives of the program are therefore presented in these two categories. The knowledge objectives are formulated in reference to eight common-core areas: human growth and development, social and cultural foundation, helping relationships, group work, lifestyle and career development, appraisal, research and evaluation and professional orientation. The counseling objectives reflect the CACREP (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs) criteria as well as the conviction of this faculty that a program that aims to prepare effective counseling professional must have a strong clinical orientation.

1. Knowledge-based objectives
   a. to orient students to the nature of professional counseling by 1) introducing them to the history, goals, professional roles, ethical and legal standards, preparation standards, professional organizations, and credentialing processes of the field and 2) helping them to measure their own strengths and limitations against the demands of the profession;
   b. to help students to see the individual within a developmental context by introducing them to the basic theories, concepts, and principles that comprise the body of knowledge about normal and abnormal human development;
   c. to acquaint students with the nature of social and cultural change within a pluralistic society and to prepare them to deal with the ramifications of on-going change in their work as professional counselors;
   d. to introduce students to the major theories of counseling/psychotherapy, to help them to develop a working understanding of the relation between theory and practice in their work as counselors, and to guide them as they formulate their own personal theory of counseling -- an initial formulation that will be revised, modified, and reformulated as they grow and develop professionally;
   e. to help students to understand the role of the counselor in terms of the counselor client relationship, the stages of counseling as defined by representative counseling models, and the counseling strategies and interventions that help to facilitate change in the client;
f. to introduce students to the principles of group dynamic, theories of group
counseling, alternative leadership styles, and ethical considerations that comprise the
body of knowledge about group counseling;
g. to help students to understand the processes and counseling implications of
lifestyle and career development by introducing them to the theories, informational
systems, planning models, assessment instruments, and placement and evaluation
strategies that characterize this area;
h. to acquaint students with the principles, theories, and methodologies of
educational and psychological appraisal (including psychometric statistics and
computer-assisted approaches) that are appropriate to their work as professional
counselors;
i. to introduce students to a theoretical framework for meeting the counseling
needs of target populations in a programmatic fashion by focusing on the processes of
population identification, need assessment, goal formulation, intervention design, and
program evaluation.
j. to help students to understand social scientific research as a means of problem
solving within the counseling field and require them to demonstrate their knowledge by
reviewing, designing, and conceptualizing a relevant research project.

2. Counseling proficiency objectives
   a. to involve students in the application of learning to practical situations by
      requiring within all didactic courses a range of self-assessment assignments, group
      process activities, case studies, and individual projects;
b. to help students to acquire, through supervised laboratory practice, the verbal
   and non-verbal interaction skills that are basic to the helping process, including
   appropriate physical orientation to the client; careful listening; communication of
   empathy through reflection of feeling and paraphrases; effective use of open and
   indirect questions, probing statements, summarization, and self-disclosure; and
   appropriate use of a range of challenging techniques;
c. to involve students in a range of group counseling activities by means of
   supervised counseling sessions in which they function as both group members and
   group leaders;
d. to require students to complete a minimum of 100 hours of closely supervised
   practicum experiences in appropriate settings, in which they engage in on-going
   counseling activities with both individuals and groups, using a range of counseling
   models, interpretive frameworks, and intervention strategies;
e. to require students to complete, under both university and site supervision, a
   600 hour post-practicum internship in which they demonstrate their readiness for the
   professional counseling role by performing all of the activities that a counselor
   employed in that setting would be required to perform.