

## **Evaluation of Graduates and Employers Summary-2008**

Recent graduates (i.e., within the past three years) from the master's, doctoral, and post-master's certificate programs, as well as their employers, were surveyed to evaluate the effectiveness of the counseling program at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro in the Fall of 2008.

### **Surveys administered to program graduates consisted of two parts:**

Part 1: Graduate demographic information

Part 2: UNCG program evaluation- comprised of a series of items to be rated on scales from 1 (highest evaluation) to 5 (lowest evaluation).

### **Surveys administered to employers assessed:**

Knowledge and skills of UNCG graduates relative to counselors and other mental health professionals with comparable experience levels.

### **The composition of graduate survey respondents was as follows:**

- 4 Post-Master's Certificate
- 23 M.S. and M.S./EdS
- 6 PhD

### **Respondents:**

33 graduate respondents completed the survey (respondents are broken down into 27 master's/PMC graduates and 6 doctoral graduates).

17 employer respondents completed the survey.

## Overall Evaluation of the Program

### **Master's Graduates:**

- 14 of the master's/PMC respondents indicated that the program exceeded their expectations.
- 12 indicated that the counseling program met their expectations.
- 1 respondents found that the program failed to meet expectations.
- Those who rated the program as meeting or exceeding expectations reported that exceptional internship and practicum experiences, an emphasis on self-awareness, knowledgeable and accessible faculty, and thorough preparation for the counseling field contributed to these evaluations.

### **Doctoral Graduates:**

- 5 doctoral graduate respondents reported that the counseling program exceeded expectations.
- 1 described it as meeting expectations.
- No doctoral graduate respondents found that the program failed to meet expectations.
- Reasons for these ratings were the high level of rigor and professionalism of the program, the relevant and thorough course curriculum, and the student-centered nature of the program.

### Professional/Personal Development

### **Master's Graduates:**

- Master's/PMC graduate respondents endorsed items pertaining to professional and personal development with scores ranging from strong to extremely strong.
- Respondents indicated that addressing self-awareness, self-evaluation, and the development of students' professional identity as counselors were relative strengths of the program.
- Although all items were rated as "strong" or higher, speaking/presentation skills and involvement in professional associations were rated relatively lower than other items.

### **Doctoral Graduates:**

- Doctoral graduate respondents indicated overall satisfaction with their personal/professional development, with all responses ranging from strong to extremely strong.
- Writing skills, speaking/presentation skills and professional identity as a counselor, received the highest ratings among doctoral respondents.
- Although all items were rated as "above average" or higher, respondents rated self-awareness and professional leadership/volunteer services relatively lower than other items.

### General Aspects of the Counseling Program

### **Master's Graduates:**

- Master's/PMC graduate respondents rated "general aspects" items consistently as very good to exceptional.
- Items that received the strongest endorsements included practica experiences in the Vacc Clinic, Clinic facilities, and faculty members' clinical knowledge and skills.

- Although item mean responses were high across items, opportunities to be involved in research activities and curriculum advisement received relatively lower ratings.

**Doctoral Graduates:**

- Doctoral graduate respondents also rated the “general aspects” items as very good to exceptional.
- All items received strong ratings, including quality of curriculum advisement, assessability/availability of faculty members, and faculty members’ knowledge of subject matter.
- Mean responses for all items were high, yet sites available for field-based practica and internships as well as opportunities to be involved in research activities received relatively lower ratings.

Counseling Knowledge and Skills

**Master’s Graduates:**

- Master’s/PMC graduate respondents rated their counseling knowledge and skills as very good to exceptional.
- Relative strengths in this area were related to professional behavior, basic counseling skills, issues of diversity, and counseling theories.
- Although all item mean responses were high, items related to understanding and applying research results and work settings issues received relatively lower endorsements.

**Doctoral Graduates:**

- Doctoral graduate respondents rated their counseling knowledge and skills as strong, with item responses ranging from very good to exceptional.
- Items with the strongest endorsement in this area included career development theories, issues of diversity, and understanding and applying research results.
- Although all items received strong endorsements, items related to assessment and clinical appraisal received relatively weaker endorsements.

### Employer's Ratings of Graduate Employee Knowledge and Skills

- The majority of employers of graduates from the counseling program at UNCG found their employees to have counseling knowledge and skills higher than other counselors at the same experience level. No employer respondents found their graduate employees to have counseling knowledge and skills lower than other counselors at the same experience level.
- The largest number of employers found that their employees demonstrated higher than average counseling knowledge and skills in areas such as professional behavior, writing skills, self-confidence as a counselor, and ethical standards and legal issues.
- Employers commented that their graduate employees were well trained in counseling techniques and knowledge, possess strong assessment and diagnostic skills, and work well with other mental health professionals in the field. Employers did not note any deficiencies in their graduate employees.

### Comments and Suggestions

#### **Master's Graduates:**

- Master's/PMC graduate respondents noted that along with preparation for the counseling field the program provided the tools for self-exploration and growth on a personal, as well as professional, level.
- Respondents reported that faculty members were extremely knowledgeable as well as accommodating to student needs.
- Several respondents commented on exceptional internship and practicum experiences which provided rich learning environments to compliment the course curriculum of the program.
- Master's/PMC graduate respondents suggested that more emphasis on school counseling students as well as opportunities to learn about the business aspects of the counseling field may be areas of improvement in the program.

#### **Doctoral Graduates:**

- Doctoral graduates noted that the program proved to be challenging, relevant, and extremely effective in training students for the field.
- Respondents reported that the strength of the course curriculum, as well as opportunities for supervision, were vital assets of the program.
- One doctoral graduate respondent suggested that more information on billing and insurance as well as specific assessments may be areas of improvement.