Counselor Education
Strategic Plan
April 1, 2005

The Program:
The UCF Counselor Education Program offers three degree programs approved by the Council on Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP): Master’s Degrees (M.A. & M.Ed.), and Doctor of Philosophy in Education-Counselor Education. The three tracks leading to a Master’s degree are M.Ed. in School Counseling, M.A. in School Counseling, M.A., and in Mental Health Counseling. A Degree Program in Marriage and Family Therapy will begin in Fall 2005. The UCF Counselor Education Program also offers an Ed.S. in School Counseling and Certificate programs in Marriage and Family Counseling, Career Counseling and Play Therapy. The Counselor Education Program emphasizes a holistic approach to counseling. The program emphasizes the development of the reflective practitioner, capable of utilizing proven and promising practices based on existing knowledge and research coupled with developing personal awareness through the supervision process. It requires the ability to be adaptive to the needs of a complex and increasingly diverse world through study, experience, reflection, consultation and action research. It further requires the student to develop the understanding and skills necessary to provide advocacy for clients, students and the profession. Distinguishing features of UCF’s Counselor Education Program can be seen in faculty, student and program characteristics. Counselor Education faculty are represented in the leadership in national and international professional organizations. In addition, faculty teach and provide mentoring support for large number of students on the main campus and four area campuses. All faculty have an excellent and consistent record of scholarship. The Counselor Education program enrolls and matriculates a large number of quality mental health professionals; and the admissions process is becoming increasingly more competitive. The intensive clinical component is distinguished by experience supervised in the Community Counseling Clinic that serves individuals in the UCF and Central Florida community. The program has a state-of-the-art laboratory/clinic space with audio and video technology enabling close supervision of student counselors.

The Counselor Education Program at UCF is being considered as one the university’s programs of national prominence owing in large part to the number of students in our program, number of degrees awarded, number of individuals in the university and Central Florida community served by our Community Counseling Clinic, and scholarly activities of the faculty. The Counselor Education Program’s objective is to be the best graduate program in the country in the preparation of counselors, and counselor educator. The Association of Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) recently named the program the Outstanding Counselor Education Program of 2004-05.

Student Data:
Masters Programs
- The average GPA is 3.84
- The average GRE is 1015
Minority representation is 14.8% (all minorities)
Males represent 15.8% of students

Fall 2004/Spring 2005 Class
- Admitted 75 students out of 129 applicants
- The average GRE 1023
- The average GPA 3.45
- 13% male
- 26% minority students

Doctoral Program
- Currently admitting approximately 50% of the applicants
- The average GPA is 3.20
- The average GRE is 1121
- Minority representation is 25% (all minorities)
- Males represent 20% of students

Fall 2004 Class
- Admitted 8 students
- Eight students have indicated that they will matriculate
- The average GRE 1105
- The average GPA 3.51
- 33% international students
- 16% minority students

Current Student Enrolment as of Fall 2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GC0812 COUNS ED-MARRIAGE/FAM THERAPY</td>
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<tr>
<td>000826 COUNS EDU-MENTAL HEALTH</td>
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<td>000860 COUNS EDU-SCHOOL COUNS/GUID</td>
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<td>GC0811 COUNSELOR EDU- PLAY THERAPY</td>
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<td>000871 EDU(PH.D)-COUNSELOR EDUCATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>GC0813 COUNSELOR EDU – CAREER COUNSELING</td>
<td>3</td>
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The program enrolls almost 25% of all graduate students in the College of Education and 20% of all full time students in the college. Masters programs average 66 hours. All in the college of education and all but two courses are counselor education courses in the department.

The Need for Counselors:
Mental health continues to be one of the most overlooked and undervalued health issues of our time. Consistently, society disregards its impact on our communities and individual’s personal
well being. Consider this, a report by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that less than one-third of adults with a diagnosable mental disorder receive treatment in one year. Additionally, a survey by the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation found that 11 percent of those surveyed saw a need for mental health services; however, 25 percent reported difficulties in receiving needed care. The number one reason – cost. Cost was listed as the highest reason for not receiving care, with 83 percent of the uninsured and 55 percent of the privately insured listing this reason.

For children and adolescents, the issue is even more critical. Approximately 70 percent of children and adolescents, in need of mental health treatment, do not receive services. Again, cost was listed as the key reason parents do not seek counseling for their children. Over the next decade almost half of the school counselors in the Florida will leave the profession most of them through retirement. At the current time the graduate programs in the state cannot stay up with demand and according to Rich Downs the DOE service provider for school counseling in the state each year we fall further behind. Last year the state department considered adding school counseling to the list of critical need

The U.S. Labor Department also forecasts a shortage of counselors.

“Overall employment of counselors is expected to grow faster than the average" for all occupations through 2010. In addition, numerous job openings will occur as many counselors reach retirement age.

Employment of educational, vocational, and school counselors is expected to grow as a result of increasing student enrollments, particularly in secondary and postsecondary schools; State legislation requiring counselors in elementary schools; and expansion of the responsibilities of counselors. For example, counselors are becoming more involved in crisis and preventive counseling, helping students deal with issues ranging from drug and alcohol abuse to death and suicide. Also, in order to decrease the student-to-counselor ratio, school districts in many States are using Federal grants to establish or expand elementary school counseling programs. Over the long term, however, budget constraints may dampen job growth of school counselors.

The demand for vocational, or employment, counselors, who work primarily for State and local government, is expected to continue to grow as current welfare laws require welfare recipients to find jobs. However, uncertainty about the future of welfare reform (the Welfare Reform Act of 1996 expires in September 2002) could limit this growth. Opportunities for employment counselors working in private job-training services should grow as counselors provide training and other services to laid-off workers, experienced workers seeking a new or second career, full-time homemakers seeking to enter or reenter the workforce, and workers who want to upgrade their skills.

Demand is expected to be strong for substance abuse and behavioral, mental health, and marriage and family therapists and for rehabilitation counselors, for a variety of reasons. The increasing availability of funds to build statewide networks to improve services for children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbances and their family members should increase employment opportunities for counselors. Under managed care systems, insurance companies increasingly provide for reimbursement of counselors, enabling many counselors to move from schools and government agencies to private practice. Counselors also are forming group practices to receive expanded insurance coverage. The number of people who need rehabilitation services will grow as advances in medical technology continue to save lives that only a few years ago would have been lost. In addition, legislation requiring equal employment rights for people with disabilities will spur demand for counselors. Counselors not only will help individuals with disabilities with their transition into the workforce, but also will help companies comply with the law. Employers also are increasingly offering employee assistance programs that provide mental health and alcohol and drug abuse services. More people are expected to use these services as the elderly population grows and as society
focuses on ways of developing mental well-being, such as controlling stress associated with job and family responsibilities.

Clinical Demand:
The demand on faculty time and effort to manage the clinical aspects of the program is enormous. Every student must complete practicum, half complete two practica, and every student must complete internship, which requires site visits to schools and agencies. In addition quality of clinical experiences must be monitored, including, supervisor qualification and approval, internship site approval, supervisor and site evaluation, training opportunities for site supervisors, practicum client records and files, court ordered summary documents, HIPPA compliances etc.

NCATE/DOE/CACREP Considerations:
Accreditation demands also require constant monitoring not only in conjunction with clinical demand but curricular and outcome issues as well. Faculty spend a great deal of time and effort assuring compliance with professional standards, including interview based admission standards, periodic student review, orientation, personal and professional development opportunities for students, clinical issues, curricula scope and sequencing issues, follow-up students etc.

Faculty Teaching Loads:
Faculty teach a full load for fall and for spring. Most faculty teach at least two courses during summer sessions. Because the program is a full time program, including required course in the summer, faculty must provide the same level of service to students in the summer as they do during the other semesters. In addition to full teaching loads, faculty serve on dissertation committees and direct research projects including dissertations. Faculty average 2.5 publications per year, 3.8 professional papers presented at national or international conferences per year.

Curricular Issues:
An internal review by the faculty has brought up a number of curricular issues. These break down by program and by instructional issues.

School Counseling program feedback and analysis indicates a need to provide specific training in understanding advocacy, consultation, diagnosis, exceptional students and case management.

Mental Health program needs to look at how students develop an understanding of Crisis management.

The Plans:
The faculty have identified the following steps to address:

   Recruitment:

Plan Objectives

1. Increase quantity and quality of enrollments in M.A. and M.Ed. programs.
   a. Increase total enrollments
2. Increase quantity of enrollments in Ph.D. programs.
   a. Increase international/national representation in enrollments
   b. Increase average GPAs

Goal for M.Ed./M.A.: Increase Enrollments, Increase Quality of Students and increase the number of minority and male students from the local professionals mature career changers population.

Messages:
- “Take the Next Step …in your professional development”
- The poster and information will stress we have a program
- Certificate, Master’s Degree or Ph.D. that can take anyone in the counseling/therapy field to the next level of professionalism.
- We have courses on different campus, and at convenient times for people in the field.

Activities:
- Continue to distribute posters to local social service agencies annually
- Look for funding opportunities to finance newspaper ads in local papers
- Advertise web site on community, school and company message boards.
- Attend Professional Development Fairs in service area
- Request support from regional campus office to send posters to schools and to target newspaper ads for young professionals
- Establish a Marriage and Family Therapy Degree Program

Goal For M.Ed./M.A.: Increase Enrollments, Increase Quality of Students and increase the number of minority and male students from the SUS System

Messages:
- Nationally known faculty
- CACREP program
- Research opportunities
- Internship possibilities
- Location
- Assistantships and financial aid

Activities:
- Identify potential applicants through the SUS directory, particularly male and minority clients, and contact through e-mail describing the program with a link to the website
- Update the Counselor Education website to include sections for prospective applicants, Chi Sigma Iota, program profile, faculty pages, and student corner and alumni registration page
- On the web site stress the advantages of Living in Orlando with links to community information.
Goal For M.Ed./M.A.: Increase Enrollments, Increase Quality of Students and increase the number of minority and male students from the UCF Undergraduates

Messages:
- Nationally known faculty
- CACREP program
- Research opportunities
- Internship possibilities
- Location
- Undergrad to Grad, Assistantships and financial aid

Activities:
- Identify potential applicants through the SUS directory, particularly male and minority clients
- Contact through e-mail describing the program with a link to the website
- Attend Career Fair(s) on campus including College of Education
- Contact advisors in Arts and Sciences with focus on Psychology and Sociology

Goal for Ph.D.: Increase Applicant pool from CACREP program masters graduates in order to, increase quality of students and develop an increased national applicant pool to gain quality targets.

Messages:
- CACREP Program
- Fellowship/Assistantship Advantages
- Nationally Known Faculty
- Research/Intern opportunities in Orlando
- UCF Academy and Tony Jennings Ex Ed Institute

Activities:
- Mail Ph.D. brochure to all CACREP institutions and select Masters level institutions nationwide
- Place ad in Counseling Today emphasizing the Ph.D. program

Plan of Action

The program has risen rapidly in reputation in the last five years due national accreditation and the addition of productive and prominent faculty. The program now has a functioning clinic and an increased number of GRA’s. The program is most comparable to top institutions in terms of size of our endowment, external funding, and number of minority students. It is less comparable in student GRE scores, student/faculty ratio and the issue of student support. Currently, the program provides support for only 18% of its students compared to more than 50% at the best programs. In summary, the Counselor Education Program is on the cusp of national prominence with many strengths but a few notable areas that should be addressed if it is to take the next step in quality and recognition.
1. **Increase the quality of incoming students as measured by the GRE scores.** The action steps needed include:

   - Obtaining an expanded advertising budget, and;
   - Develop and maintain a quality web site to attract students to the program;
   - Most importantly, we need to increase financial support for students to attract the best.

2. **Increase the number of publications by faculty and increase funding.** While all of our faculty are publishing, when compared with the best institutions in the country, we are slightly below all of these universities in publications per faculty. We also need to increase external funding through grant submissions.

   - Decreasing the student/faculty ratio will help to spur more publication and grant writing activity. Additional faculty would mean more help in doctoral dissertation committees and administrative responsibilities of the program.
   - Administrative changes might also improve the ability of faculty to publish and obtain funding. For example, finding new ways to encourage co-authorship with both doctoral and master’s degree students and examining the unusual amount of time needed to teach certain courses such as practicum.

**Staffing needs**

- Search for a non-tenure earning instructor for the Marriage and Family Therapy Program in Fall 2005

**Curricular needs:**

- Add consultation, advocacy, and leadership to school course. 2006
- Add Diagnosis and Treatment for school counselors. 2006
- Adjust the Mental Health curriculum to include information on business aspects of mental health practice, leadership management, marketing, budget, networking, managed care and personal growth. 2005
- Increase Master’s degree Program to 66 hours for non-school certified candidates and 57 hours for those with school certification. 2005
- Develop courses to aid counselors to move toward National Board certification. 2005
- Develop certificate program in College Counseling. 2006
- Develop Certificate Program in personal coaching. 2006

**Course Offering Issues:**

- Offer Testing I twice a year summer and Spring on the Orlando campus. Currently enrolling approx. 60 per class once a year on Orlando Campus. 2005
• Offer Ethical and Legal twice a year summer and Spring on the Orlando. Currently enrolling approx. 60 per class once a year on Orlando Campus.2006
• Offer Diagnosis and Treatment twice a year once on Orlando Campus.2006
• Offer Mental health Care Systems twice a year once on Orlando Campus.2006
• Offer Child and Adolescent twice a year once on Orlando Campus.2006

Accreditation Issues:
• Continue work with college committees for NCATE accreditation
  o Develop student outcome measures for accountability
  o Develop client outcome measures for accountability
• Continue development of Matrix for courses for the defined minimum competencies for school counseling Fall 2005
• Continue following work
  o Alumni and Graduate survey
    ▪ Website posting. Fall 2005