

Executive Summary

**Comprehensive Program Review
Ed.S. School Counseling**

**Columbus State University
Spring 2013**

Executive Summary for the Ed.S. School Counseling Program

Major Findings of the Program's Quality and Productivity

Program Quality and Productivity:

The mission of educator preparation programs at Columbus State University is to prepare highly qualified teachers, counselors, and leaders who promote high levels of learning for all P-12 students by demonstrating excellence in teaching, scholarship, and professionalism. These three themes (i.e., excellence in teaching, scholarship, and professionalism) are the principles that form the foundation of the Educator Preparation conceptual framework and encompass the principles and standards derived from the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, and various specialty association guidelines. Consistent with the mission and conceptual framework of educator preparation, the Ed.S. program in School Counseling is designed to prepare students to refine their expertise in school counseling and to develop leadership within educational settings.

The M.Ed. program in School Counseling is nationally accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs ([CACREP](#)); and the Ed.S. program is based on the expectation that candidates will have a CACREP-equivalent master's-level experience. While CACREP does not accredit Ed.S. programs, the guidelines that have been established for master's preparation are believed by faculty to be a solid professional base upon which to build the curriculum for training at the Ed.S. level.

The program leading to the Ed.S. degree in School Counseling is designed to prepare students to integrate leadership skills and abilities and to provide students with an elective, specialized focus of training to enhance their knowledge base in school counseling. Furthermore, students are given the opportunity for didactic coursework in clinical supervision, a feature that is typically unique to doctoral-level training.

In February 2013, a continuing approval review of the Educator Preparation Unit at CSU was conducted by a Board of Examiners (BOE) consisting of representatives from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC). The 2008 NCATE Standards and the Georgia 2008 Standards were used to assess the unit and its programs. The BOE judged all standards to be met for the unit and for all initial and advanced programs. There were no areas for improvement cited, and the team noted multiple areas of strength. Through these processes and completion of annual assessments such as the Annual Program Review and Improvement Report, evaluation of the Ed.S. School Counseling program is ongoing.

The program was reactivated in Spring 2009. Data indicates that as of 2011-2012, 4 degrees have been conferred. Although the number of students enrolled is small, the program has been functioning on existing resources. Faculty member resources have been limited in this area, and there has been a need for an additional faculty member for the School Counseling programs, in general. With the support of the administration, a new faculty member joined the Counseling programs at the beginning of Fall 2012. Strategic planning efforts assessing program viability are underway, and a needs assessment with school counselors in the area has recently been conducted. Further exploration of expanding online offerings is currently being considered, as well. The oversight of the Ed.S. School Counseling program is provided primarily by counseling faculty and in collaboration with colleagues in the department and college and the Program Advisory Committee.

List of Recommendations for Improving Program Quality

Though the program quality is strong overall, limited faculty resources, low enrollment, and needs to cover other Counseling classes have led to the cancellation of some Ed.S. classes. Additional faculty resources and program improvement plans could help to further strengthen the program and provide greater predictability regarding course offerings. Current initiatives targeting program improvement include:

- Ongoing plans to integrate LiveText as the assessment platform to assist with program reviews and strategic planning.
- Conducting a needs assessment to further explore program viability and assist in strategic planning.
- Expanding recruitment efforts to continue obtaining quality applicants.
- Continuing to strengthen admissions, orientation, exit, and other assessment processes (including staffing) to support gatekeeping procedures reflective of candidates' knowledge, skills, and dispositions.
- Ongoing collaboration with departmental colleagues (e.g., EDUL, EDUF) to continue benefits of interdisciplinary coursework.
- Revisiting the program of study and program delivery model (e.g., cohort model, online programming, changes to courses in the program of study).
- Continuing assessment of program learning outcomes and key assessments.
- Ongoing focus regarding program diversity.

List of Recommendations for Improving Program Productivity

Counseling program faculty, in collaboration with colleagues in the department/COEHP and on the Counseling Program Advisory Committee will oversee efforts to improve the curriculum, courses, and resources offered to students in the Ed.S. School Counseling program. Recommendations to improve program productivity are to:

- Further assess program viability.
- Advocate for hiring additional faculty to focus on recruitment and other administrative demands, in addition to addressing needs for faculty to cover the number of courses needing to be offered across the counseling programs, in general. The program has already received recent support with the hiring of an additional faculty member, who began working at CSU during the Fall 2012 term, but the recent addition of an online master's program in School Counseling is leading to the need for additional faculty to handle curricular and administrative demands.
- Explore increases in online offerings to potentially attract new students.

Conclusion about the Program's Viability at CSU

The quality of the Ed.S. School Counseling program is satisfactory, but the viability is a concern, given low enrollment and resources needed pertaining to the delivery of two CACREP-accredited master's programs and the very recent addition of an online master's degree in School Counseling. The program has been running on existing resources; and additional resources (i.e., faculty) provided for the Counseling programs, in general, and time for strategic planning are needed to adequately explore future viability of this program.

Program Improvement Plan

The Ed.S. School Counseling program's quality is above average or satisfactory overall, although the viability in terms of enrollment and resources is below average. The program has been able to exist on present resources since its reactivation in Spring 2009; however, if numbers are increased, then additional faculty resources are necessary to address the instructional and administrative needs of this program.

Although the program quality is above average or satisfactory, the program can continue to be strengthened primarily through refinement of the program of study and ongoing enhancement of assessment practices, if the program is deemed to be viable. However, resources have been limited to address the administrative and program delivery functions of the program. The administration supported hiring an additional counseling faculty member to join the department in Fall 2012. Since that time, a decision to add an online M.Ed. School Counseling program has been made, and this program will require significant resources to implement.

Summary Recommendation and Supporting Rationale

Recommendation: Deactivate the Program

Even though the program quality is satisfactory, and the program has been able to run on existing resources, a limited number of degrees has been conferred since program reactivation. The need for more support to address the instructional and administrative needs of other more populated counseling programs has reduced the resources available for this program.

The decision to place the M.Ed. School Counseling program fully online will continue to consume most of the counseling program's resources. It would not be wise to continue to retain a program with low enrollments and few faculty or monetary resources available while simultaneously implementing a fully online M.Ed. in School Counseling.

Note

The CSU School Counseling Ed.S. program enrollment has remained low over several years. Enrollment data show 1 student in 2009, 2 students in 2010, and 3 students in 2011. Current records show 2 students enrolled in the *Ed.S. School Counseling Program*.

Results of a survey conducted in the region served by CSU indicate limited opportunity for growth in the program.