

Appendix C

FITNESS FOR THE PROFESSION OF COUNSELING AND HUMAN SERVICES

***A Policy Statement from the Faculty and Staff of the Department of Counseling and Human Services, College of Professional Studies, University of Scranton.
(Undergraduate Student Policy)***

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Entry into the profession of Counseling and Human Services is more than initiating a new career path or beginning a new job. It is similar to starting a lifelong journey. As in many other fields of endeavor, there is an intensive and rigorous training program to complete, which has academic and clinical requirements attached. However, because counseling and human services undergraduate majors will be entering a profession that deals with human living and a way of living in its own right, there are professional and personal challenges that students will encounter.

Meeting these challenges and learning to grow from them is an integral part of succeeding in the counseling and human services profession. As counselor educators, the faculty and staff of the Department of Counseling and Human Services are committed to facilitating the professional development and personal growth of the undergraduate students, and to the education, supervision and mentoring of students in all aspects of their professional counseling journey.

The education of professional human services professionals demands evaluation of one's values, beliefs, attitudes and behavior patterns. In many ways the deepest challenge students will encounter is the combined task of self-assessment, self-correction and self-direction in collaboration with others and across many areas of life: academic, clinical, professional and personal. It is our hope and expectation that each undergraduate student who joins the Department will succeed in these tasks.

To that end, we list below a number of the attributes, characteristics or behaviors that we believe are important for success in both counselor training and for the practicing professional counseling and human services.

Students in the undergraduate program will be evaluated on a continuing basis with reference to these professional and personal attributes as well as to their academic performance and growing clinical skill. The list below is not exhaustive but is meant to provide a firm basis for discussion between students and faculty. Descriptions are given to help students in evaluating their own strengths and growing edges in each domain.

An important note: The faculty hope that providing these characteristics will help undergraduate students understand what is expected of them and will stimulate self-assessment for continued growth. Ongoing professional and personal growth is an important practice, whether one is an undergraduate trainee or a human service professional. It is in this sense, then, that the faculty and staff of the Department commit themselves to fostering the development of our students as well as of one another. It is our hope to become a learning community of fellow professionals – faculty, staff and students.

For all of us, it is to be hoped that growth will build upon our uniqueness as individuals while moving us toward professional excellence. With this in mind, the following attributes are provided to aid in our ongoing development.

Professional/Personal Attributes: Counseling and Human Services

Professional/Personal Attributes	Description
<p>1. Commitment to Wellness</p>	<p><i>Wellness is a way of life oriented toward optimal health and well-being in which body, mind and spirit are integrated by the individual to live life more fully. It is particularly important as it impacts professional and clinical practice. "Commitment" includes:</i></p> <p>An understanding of, and decision to pursue, wellness as a lifestyle over the life span. Willingness to assess issues of wellness in one's lifestyle and life-environments; an ongoing choice to become the best one can be spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, socially, and vocationally.</p>
<p>2. Commitment to Learning</p>	<p>Demonstrated ability to self-assess, self-correct, and self-direct; to identify needs and sources of learning; to continually seek new knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Demonstrated academic- and life-management skills: For example, ability to prioritize and manage a variety of commitments, time and stress; critical thinking skills; problem-solving and ethical decision-making skills; quality participation in class exercises and assignments; timeliness.</p> <p>Commitment to excellence as a human service professional.</p>
<p>3. Core Academic and Clinical Competencies</p>	<p>The counseling profession, through its various accrediting and certifying agencies (e.g. CACREP, CORE; NBCC, CSHSE) has identified the knowledge-base that is essential for success in professional human services. These core areas include: Introduction to Human Adjustment, Human Services Systems, Case Management and Interviewing, Counseling Theories, Research Methods in Human Services, Multiculturalism in Human Services, Group Dynamics, Crisis Intervention, Career Seminar, and elective courses in Counseling and Human Services. Acceptable performance in these academic areas is essential.</p> <p>In addition, clinical competency and an acceptable level of functioning in internships are required and expected (see revised <i>Internship Manual</i> and specific Program Objectives elsewhere in this <i>Program Manual</i>). The ability to form effective</p>

	<p>collegial working relationships with peers and supervisors.</p> <p>It should be noted that, in a number of academic courses involving these core academic and clinical areas, students will be challenged to review their own values, attitudes, experiences, beliefs, behaviors and biases. Willingness to engage in this self-review, its challenges and potential growth, is a critical element in growing as a professional counselor.</p>
<p>4. Professional Identity</p>	<p><i>Commitment to ongoing development as an entry level human services professional and member of the “helping professions.”</i></p> <p><i>Commitment to high standards of practice as a human service professional.</i></p> <p>An understanding of one’s motivation for choosing the counseling profession. The ability to critically assess one’s own values, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors as they relate to the standards of excellence and ethics, and the best practices, of the counseling and human services profession.</p> <p>The ability to exhibit appropriate professional attitudes and conduct; ability to represent the profession ethically and effectively. Willingness to assume roles of service and advocacy.</p> <p>Ability to demonstrate theory-into-practice, that is, to translate learned values and content knowledge into professional/personal attitudes and action.</p> <p>Developing participation in the varied roles of the human services professional and participation in professional organizations through membership, service and scholarship.</p> <p>Ability to see oneself as connected to a wider whole of regional/global needs, helping systems, and resources. A commitment to advocacy on behalf of clients and larger society, as well as to the pursuit of social justice, as consistent with one’s professional identity.</p>
<p>5. Personal Maturity</p>	<p>Ability to live and function at an appropriate level of emotional, psychological, and relational well-being; freedom from significant impairments that would affect one’s ability to perform as a human service professional. The ability to tolerate ambiguity and to patiently address areas of growth. Ability to balance personal and professional self-awareness.</p>
<p>6. Responsibility</p>	<p>Demonstrated ability to fulfill professional commitments and to be accountable for actions and</p>

	<p>outcomes. Demonstration of effective work habits and attitudes (e.g. reliability), evident in classes, assistantship assignments, and other areas of student performance.</p> <p>Demonstrated ability to act and respond in a variety of situations with honesty and integrity. Knowledgeable about professional ethical standards and competent in applying those standards to concrete situations.</p>
7. Interpersonal Skills	<p>Demonstrated ability to interact effectively with clients, families, colleagues, other helping professionals, and the community and to deal effectively with multiple diversities in a pluralistic society.</p> <p>Effectiveness in establishing positive interpersonal relationships on an individual and group basis; openness to constructive criticism; tolerance and openness toward differences; ability to develop appropriate support systems.</p> <p>The ability to identify sources of and seek out appropriate feedback from faculty and peers, and to utilize and provide feedback for improving personal and professional interactions; "supervis-ability."</p> <p>Ability to be appropriately assertive and self-advocating.</p>
8. Communication Skills	<p>Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively (i.e. speaking, body language, reading, writing, listening) for varied audiences and purposes. Sensitive to diversity in one's communications.</p>
9. Problem-solving	<p>In both professional performance and personal development, the ability to recognize and define problems, analyze data from varied sources, develop and implement solutions, and evaluate outcomes. The ability to seek out resources for help, support, and insight.</p>
10. Stress Management	<p>The ability to identify sources of stress that (potentially) affect personal and professional functioning, and to develop effective coping behaviors. Existence of appropriate boundaries between personal stressors and professional performance. Obtaining appropriate supports, resources and help when needed.</p>

APPENDIX D

STUDENT RETENTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Acceptance into the undergraduate counseling and human services program does not assure graduation from it. Successful completion of the Bachelor's degree in the Department of Counseling and Human Services is based upon the continuous evaluation of students to insure (a) effective demonstration of academic competence, (b) each student's commitment to the program and the profession, and (c) his or her continued growth in personal or emotional characteristics and qualities related to successful performance in a helping profession (see above). The evaluation process serves two primary functions:

1. To provide students with direct feedback relative to their progress that will enable them to enhance their strengths and identify and remediate growing edges and weaknesses in their academic, professional and personal development.
2. To provide faculty with information about student progress which facilitates decisions in the best interest of students and the profession.

A student must have a cumulative GPA of at least a 2.5 at the end of his or her prescribed curriculum to fulfill the degree requirements. In addition, all students must maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5 to remain in good standing. If a student's GPA drops below a 2.0, he or she is placed on academic probation. If satisfactory progress is not made toward removing probationary status, the student is subject to dismissal by the Dean in consultation with the student's Program Director (see *Undergraduate School Catalogue*). Students whose GPA is below 2.0 will not be allowed to register for Internship in Counseling and Human Services [CHS 380], Internship in Rehabilitation Services [CHS 480], or Advanced Internship in Counseling and Human Services, [CHS 481].

Students are expected to adhere to the professional code of ethics of the American Counseling Association and to the national standards for Human Service professionals from the Council for Standards in Human Service Education (<http://www.cshse.org>). Copies of these codes are available through the professional organizations. Students are also expected to adhere to the Academic Code of Honesty of the University of Scranton.

The Department's annual "student review process" offers a vehicle for counseling and human services faculty to evaluate student academic, professional, and personal progress. Any faculty member may raise questions about a particular student's performance in any of the above areas at any point during the student's program. Additionally, a review will take place at least yearly with the initial review taking place following the student's first year as a Counseling and Human Services major. Written results of the review will be placed in the student's advising file, which is retained in the Department.

Students who have demonstrated satisfactory progress are given feedback by their mentor. It is the experience of the faculty and staff that the majority of students engage fully in the undergraduate program and progress in this way. In fact, many of our students excel in all areas of their development as counselors and human services trainees. However, at times, there are those students who need additional help.

Students who have not demonstrated satisfactory progress are notified to make a mandatory appointment with their mentor. This "review process" insures that each student is given feedback about academic, professional, and personal development throughout the program as they attain knowledge and skill in required and elective courses and clinical experience.

The following procedures are in place for students needing further progress:

Process 1:

Students receive feedback in an advising meeting with their mentor and college advisor. In consultation with the mentor and the College of Professional Studies (CPS) Advising Center or Dexter Hanley College (DHC) Advising Center, the student will write a plan that addresses "growing edges" in that student's development. Assuming that this plan is adhered to, the student's performance improves to a satisfactory level.

Process 2:

Students may be unwilling and/or unable to follow through with **Process 1**; there is either lack of sufficient progress in, or resistance to, **Process 1**. In this case the Department in collaboration with the CPS Advising Center will recommend to the Undergraduate School Dean that the student be placed on probation and a more formal remediation plan be developed between the mentor and student, and ratified by the Department's "retention committee." This committee is composed of (1) the student's mentor, (2) the Department Chair, and (3) one other full-time faculty member appointed by the Chair on an *ad hoc* basis or the student's college advisor from the CPS or DHC Advising Center.

A remediation plan may include but not be limited to the following:

1. Identification of the problem areas.
2. Expected behavioral and/or attitudinal changes.
3. Potential methods for achieving and demonstrating change.
4. Time line for completion.

Each student involved in this process has the option of bringing an advocate (neither a family member nor a lawyer) to meetings with the Retention Committee.

A copy of the plan will be given to the student, and one will be retained by the mentor, retention committee, the CPS or DHC Advising Centers, and the Undergraduate School Dean. Satisfactory completion of the plan and consistent demonstration of appropriate conduct should be assessed by the committee on an agreed timeline, and will result in a decision to recommend removal from probation to the Undergraduate School Dean.

Process 3:

If processes 1 & 2 fail, the entire faculty may (1) recommend voluntary termination/resignation to the student and/or (2) recommend dismissal to the Undergraduate School Dean. If dismissal from the program is recommended, the Department will forward that recommendation to the Undergraduate Dean for disposition.

Alternate Process to Address Immediate Fitness for the Profession Concerns

In rare cases the faculty may become aware of issues or behaviors that raise doubts about a student's ability to either (a) successfully complete the program, or (b) move forward as a student in the Counseling and Human Services major. When such information becomes available, the faculty has a duty to review the information fully and carefully, to notify the student of concerns and the outcome of the review, and to select a course of action that is commensurate with accepted ethical and legal procedures as well as the "best practices" of the profession.

In these instances the faculty, in consultation with the undergraduate College Dean(s), may find it necessary to forego the step-by-step procedures listed above and move directly to recommend probation and remediation or dismissal from the program.