



Graduate Studies in Counseling at Heidelberg University Comprehensive Assessment Report, January 2016

The Graduate Studies in Counseling programs (Clinical Mental Health and School) at Heidelberg University are nationally accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). To maintain accreditation, CACREP requires that programs undergo continuous evaluation by multiple means. Also, accreditation standards require a report that documents the outcomes of a comprehensive program evaluation, with descriptions of any program modifications to students in the program, program faculty, institutional administrators, personnel in cooperating agencies, and the public. This report includes findings from a formal comprehensive evaluation and program modifications made as a result of these findings.

Exit Interview (Graduating Students)

Surveys are sent to graduating students during the last week in his/her last semester of the program. The majority of survey questions were developed from the program goals for the core area courses and each program concentration area. The exit interview results are reported from the last two years 2014-2015. Other questions were also asked to provide additional assessment information. Graduating students responded to each evaluation using a Likert scale of 1-6: 1-very dissatisfied, and 6 very satisfied. Out of 22 surveys emailed, 20 (90.9%) were completed and returned from graduating students. Of the surveys returned, 88 (90%) were women, and 2 (10%) were men. Of the surveys returned, 88 (90%) were Caucasian American, and 2 (10%) African American. Two students did not respond to the race/ethnicity question. On average, the respondents rated the program a 5.0 on a scale of (very dissatisfied) to six (very satisfied) when asked about their overall satisfaction with the program. Respondents were also asked questions in the following areas: 1), 2) Professional Preparation, School Counseling Program, and 4) Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program. The results from each section are summarized below.

Services, Support, and Facilities

Graduating student ratings indicated a mean score of 5.1 on all Services, Support, and Facilities questions. The area that was rated the highest was the helpfulness of the MAC Program administrative assistant (5.7). Areas that were rated the lowest included: Advisor's helpfulness in planning program and meeting goals (4.7) and Classrooms that were conducive to the learning experience (4.9). The summary of responses can be found in Table 1 in Appendix A. The results may highlight a need for better advising and course planning.

Professional Preparation

Graduating student ratings indicated a mean score of 5.0 on all Professional Preparation questions. The areas that were rated the highest included: Understanding of the field of counseling (5.5), Ability to use counseling techniques (5.5), Ability to facilitate counseling groups (5.3), and the Valuableness of the MAC Program Student Handbook. Areas that were rated the lowest included: the Heidelberg Bookstore (3.1), Ability to assess clients' career and vocational concerns (4.6), and the Heidelberg computing sites (4.7). The summary of responses can be found in Table 2 in Appendix A.

School Counseling Program

Graduating student ratings indicated a mean score of 5.4 on all School Counseling Program questions. The areas that were rated the highest included: Practicum/Internship site supervisor(s) (5.7), Internship site (5.7), and Practicum Site (5.6). Areas that were rated the lowest included: Valuableness of the MAC Program Student Handbook (5.0), Ability to work effectively as a school counselor (5.1), and Preparation for one's first position as a Professional School Counselor (5.1). The summary of responses can be found in Table 3 in Appendix A.

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program

Graduating student ratings indicated a mean score of 5.2 on all Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program questions. The areas that were rated the highest included: Understanding of clinical mental health system (5.5), Ability to work effectively as a mental health counselor (5.4), Understanding of mental and emotional disorders and how to treat them effectively (5.4), Ability to Diagnose mental and emotional disorders effectively (5.4), Internship site (5.4), and Practicum/Internship site supervisors (5.4). Areas that were rated the lowest included: Ability to provide and work with psychological evaluations, Valuableness of the MAC Program Student Handbook (5.1), and Practicum experience. The summary of responses can be found in Table 4 in Appendix A.

Alumni Survey

Surveys were sent to program graduates from 2012- 2015. The survey was conducted in Fall of 2015. The majority of survey questions were developed from the program goals for the core area courses and each program concentration area. Other questions to provide additional assessment information were also included. Graduates responded to each evaluation using a Likert scale of 1-4: 1-very unsatisfied, 2- unsatisfied, 3- satisfied, and 4-very satisfied.

Out of 63 surveys emailed, 22 (34.9%) were completed and returned from program alumni. Of the surveys returned, 29 (86.4%) were women, and 3 (13.6%) were men. The respondents consisted of 4.5% African American students, 4.5% Asian/Pacific Islander students, and 4.5% Hispanic American students and 86.4% White students. Ten (47.6%) respondents completed the clinical program, eight respondents (38.1) completed the school program, and 3 (14.3%) of respondents completed both the clinical and school programs. On average, the respondents rated the program a 3.2, between satisfied and very satisfied, on a scale of one to four when asked how they would rate the quality of the education and training they received.

Graduates ratings indicated a mean score of 3.3 on all satisfaction questions. The areas that were rated the highest include: Course content (3.65), Skills developed as a result of taking classes (3.53), Internship experience (3.47), Preparation for the job market (3.41), and Mentoring by faculty. Areas that were rated the lowest include: Physical Facilities (3.00), Quality of Courses (3.25) Overall Preparation for Counseling Licensure and Exams (3.28). Despite the fact that these areas were rated the lowest, respondents rated all areas, except physical facilities between satisfied and very satisfied. The summary of responses can be found in Appendix B.

Respondents were also asked about areas of strengths in the program.

Areas of strengths in the graduates' preparation in **core knowledge and skills** included: strong emphasis on professional identity and ethics, understanding of theories, use of lab to learn counseling skills, emphasis on skill and knowledge development, practice using the ethical decision making model, personal reflection.

Areas of strengths regarding the counseling program in general included: strong field experience course and supervision, development of peer relationships, preparation for the job search, extremely high expectations, supportive faculty, and challenging and consistent feedback.

Areas of strength in graduates' preparation in **Clinical Mental Health Counseling** included: discussion of cases and case conceptualization, ethical issues related to clinical mental health, and use of research to inform treatment.

Areas of strength in graduates' preparation in **School Counseling** included: ethical issues, preparation for school counseling jobs, and hands on experience.

Site Supervisor Evaluation of Program

The MAC program began having site supervisors to evaluate the program at the end of each semester in the spring semester of 2015. The program evaluation results from site supervisors are reported from the last year in spring, summer, and fall semester. Surveys were sent to site supervisors and returned via the counselor trainees. There were 14 respondents to the program evaluation survey. Respondents answered five questions on a scale from 1 to 5 (1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree, 5- Strongly Agree). Site supervisors were also asked to leave written comments.

Site supervisor ratings indicated a mean score of 4.63 on a scale of one to five on the Program Evaluation Survey. The areas that were rated the highest included: Preparation of students to follow ethical counseling practices (4.79) and Preparation of students to carry out the daily functions of a professional counselor in an agency or school setting (4.64). Areas that were rated the lowest include: Preparation of students to provide counseling services appropriate to the needs of the clients served (4.57), Preparation of students to carry out the daily functions of a professional counselor, and preparation of counseling students to complete notes and records in accordance with the guidelines/procedures of the agency or school (4.57). It should be noted that all responses fell between Agree and Strongly Agree, but were closer to Strongly Agree.

Annual site visits are also conducted with site supervisors. During these visits site supervisors are asked for their perceptions and evaluations of the major aspects of the counseling programs. Site supervisors are also asked about their perceptions and evaluations of the major aspects of the counseling programs during the annual supervisor training. The most common theme that came up was

the need for students to get a better understanding of documentation of case notes. The summary of responses can be found in Appendix C.

Comprehensive Exam Results

Graduating students also take a 200 question multiple-choice exam designed to evaluate their accrued knowledge covering the eight core CACREP areas. Students receive 25 questions in each core CACREP area. Graduating students are not considered for graduation until they have passed the comprehensive examination with a minimum score of 70% for each core area.

Students received a mean score of 19.4 in each of the core areas. The areas that were rated the highest include: Theory and Practice of Counseling (20.7), Group Counseling (20.6), Assessment (19.7), and Professional Issues and Ethics. Areas that were rated the lowest include: Career and Vocational Counseling (17.5), Human Development (18.5), and Multicultural Issues in Counseling (19.2). The summary of scores can be found in Appendix D.

Program Assessment Summary

The aggregation of all the reported data suggests that the Graduate Counseling Program at Heidelberg University have a variety of strengths. These strengths include:

- Overall satisfaction with faculty and their desire to support and challenge students.
- Strong understanding of professional identity.
- In-depth understanding of counseling theories.
- Strong understanding and application of ethical standards.
- Strong case conceptualization skills.
- Strong diagnosis and assessment skills.

The reported data also led to some areas for needed improvement in the Graduate Counseling Program at Heidelberg University. The areas of growth include:

- Providing additional opportunities to practice counseling skills after the first technique course and before Practicum.
- Develop an option for more advanced techniques for counseling.
- More discussions specific to school issues and a chance to talk to more current practicing school counselors.
- A need for better advising to help students map out a clear plan of study.
- Need for better understanding and integration of career counseling skills.
- Need for a better understanding of documentation for clinical students.

Changes in Counseling Program

We have used the above data, discussions in faculty meeting, and assessment of students in each class to lead to the following changes in the program.

- Based on the need for more opportunities to practice counseling skills and more advanced techniques, the program has submitted a New Course Proposal to the Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) at Heidelberg University to add the course *Counseling Theories and Advanced Techniques*. This course will replace the current *Theories of Counseling* Course and will add one credit hour devoted to the practice of advanced techniques.
- Based on the need for more opportunities to practice counseling skills and more advanced techniques, counseling skills practice was added to the assessment courses.
- In the response for the need for more discussions specific to school issues and a chance to talk to more current practicing school counselors, the MAC Program hired a new full-time faculty member who is a former school counselor and specializes in school counseling. Additionally, an adjunct faculty member was added who is a current school counselor.
- In response to the need for better advising, the MAC Program is currently developing a curriculum map for students who begin courses in the Fall or Spring. This will show students exactly how to order classes and will be a resource for advisers. This will also help with the scheduling and organization of course offerings. The Curriculum Map will be made available to students in the Fall semester of 2016.
- Developing appropriate documentation is a module that has been added to the course, *Community Mental Health and Agency Counseling*. This is required for all clinical students and will focus on ethical and professional documentation.

Appendix A: Table with Average Responses from Exit Survey

Table 1: Average Responses for Services, Support, and Facilities

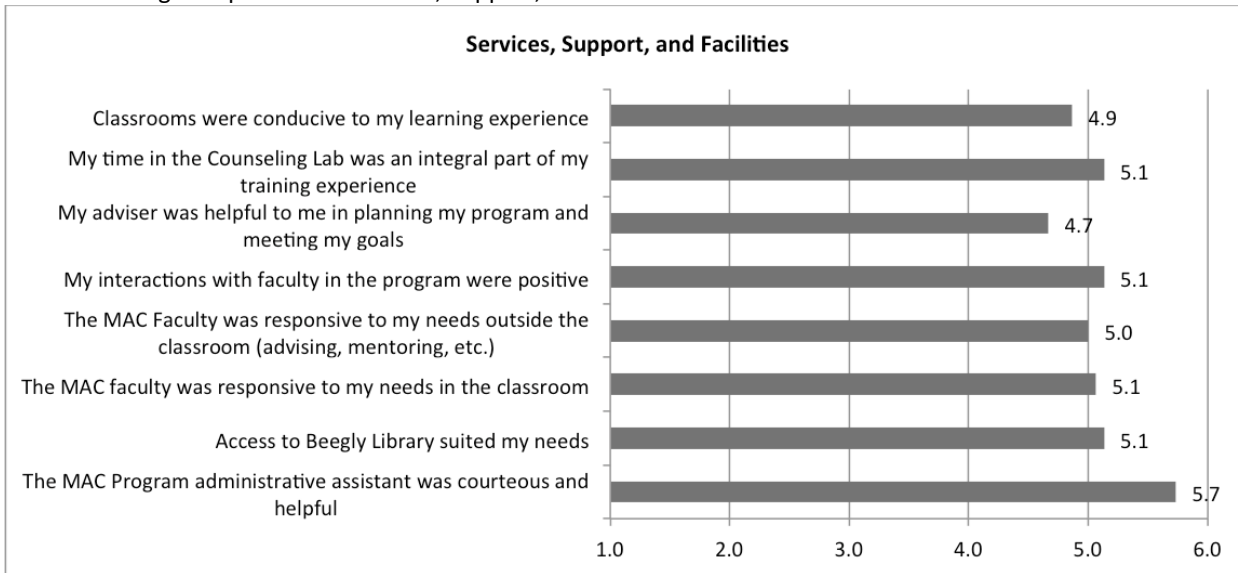


Table 2: Average Responses for Professional Preparation

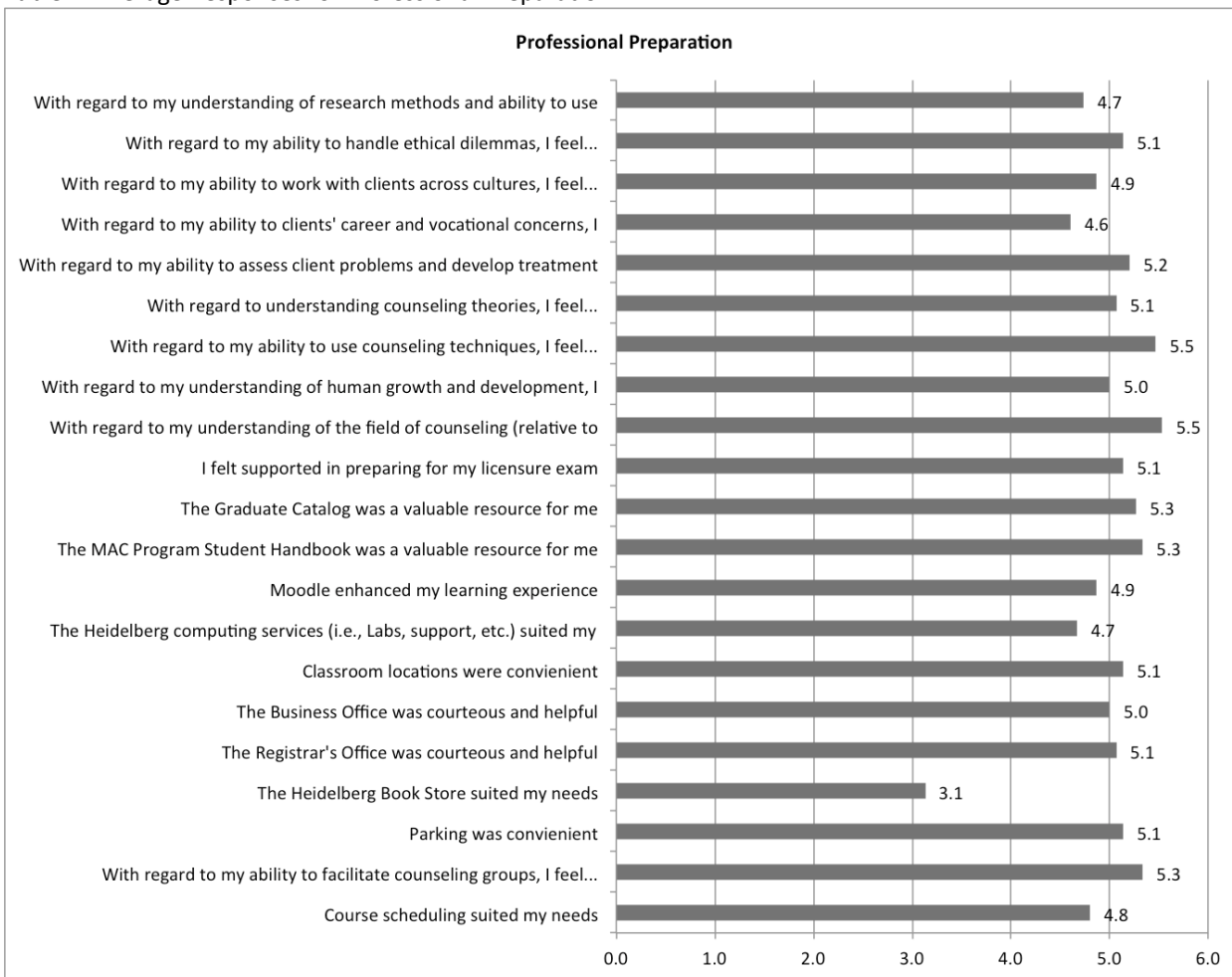


Table 3: Average Responses for School Counseling Program

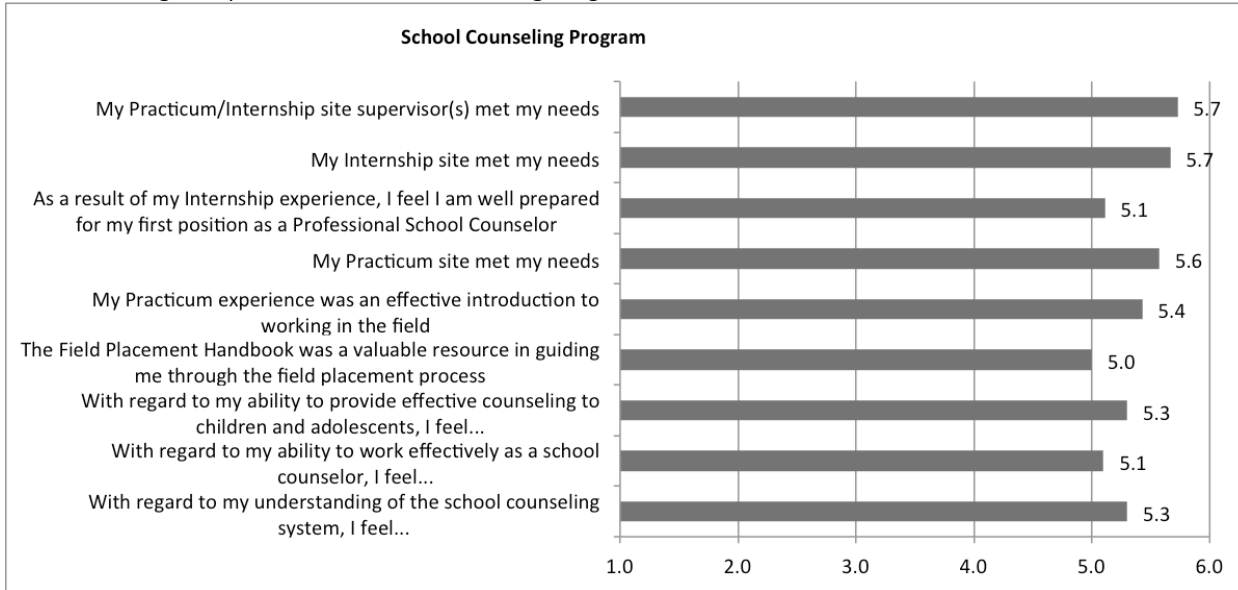
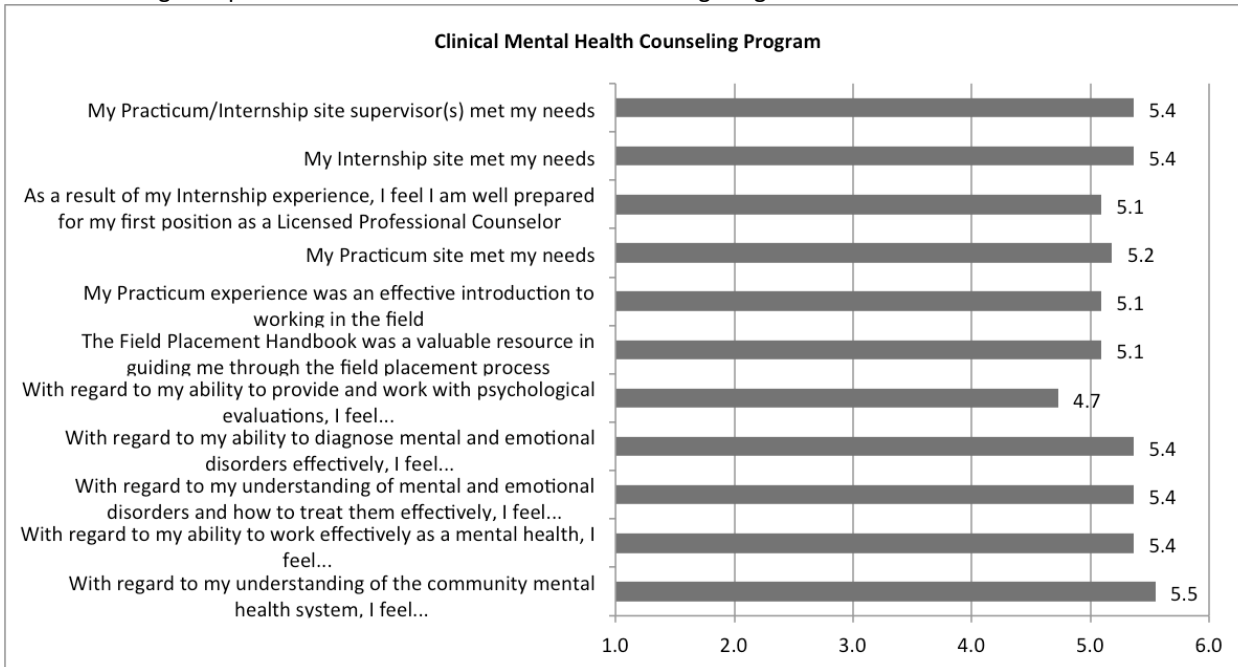
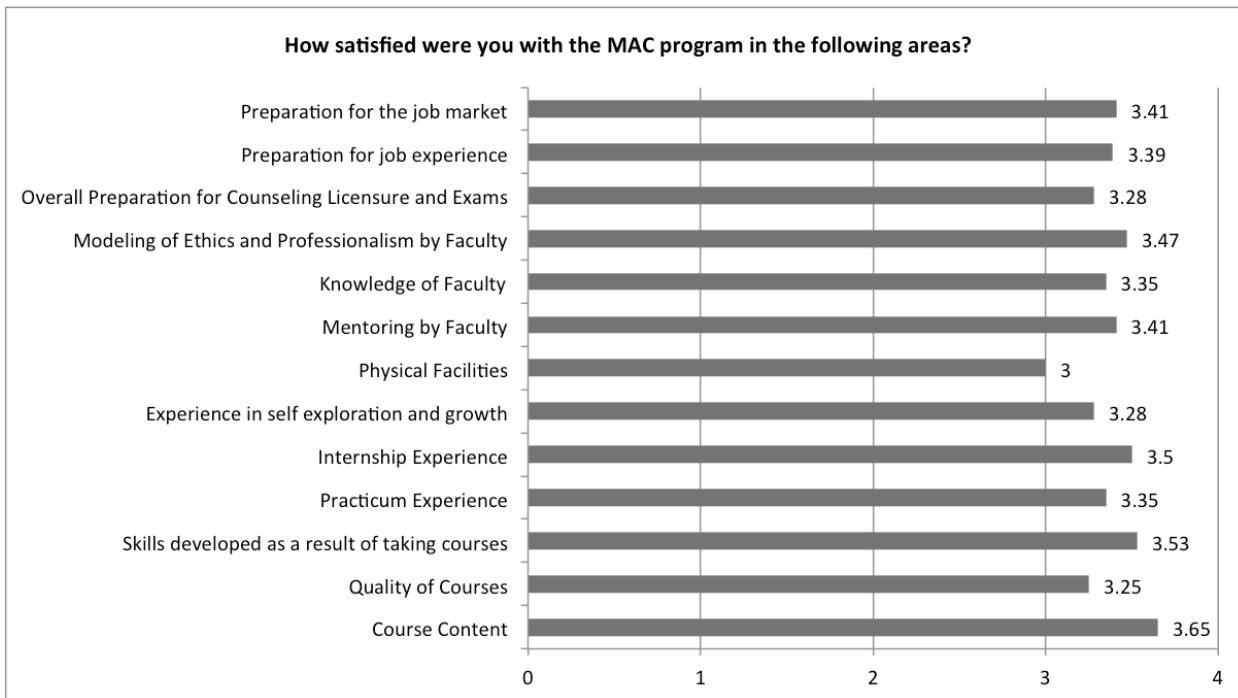


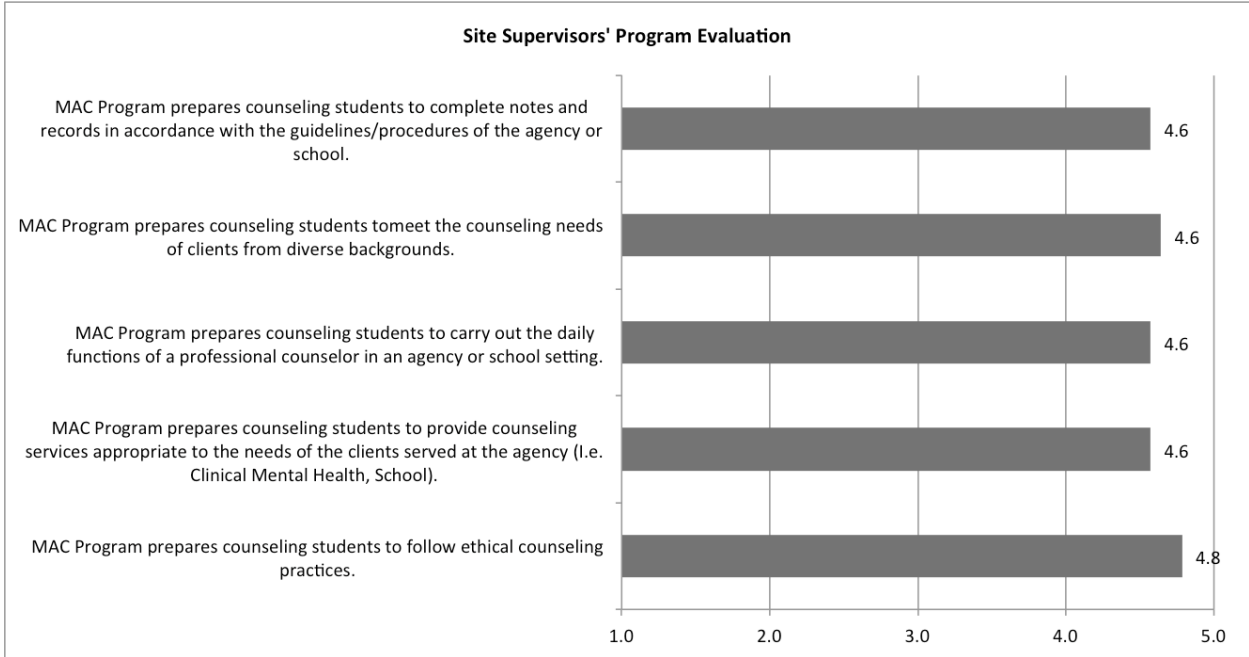
Table 4: Average Responses for Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program



Appendix B: Table with Average Responses from Alumni Survey



Appendix C: Table with Average Responses from Site Supervisors' Program Evaluation



Appendix D: Table with Average Scores on Eight CACREP Areas on Comprehensive Examination

