Program Level Outcome (PLO) Assessment Report Summary

Program Level Outcomes for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling: (PLO-1)

Upon successful completion of the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counseling program, a student should be able to:

1. demonstrate proficiency in each of the core functions and performance domains of substance abuse counselors
2. function as ethical and competent entry-level substance abuse counselors, with an understanding of and sensitivity to the diverse populations which they will serve

What we looked at:

PLO-1 is supported by a variety of course-level SLOs throughout the AOD curriculum. We viewed results from the following course assessments:
- AOD-1, SLO #1 and 4
- AOD-2, SLO #2
- AOD-8, SLO #1 and 2
- AOD-9, SLO #3

What we found:

- From AOD-1, students obtain a foundation of knowledge upon which other courses build. The instructor was able to track an increase in proficiency from 63% to 71% in students’ ability to identify and distinguish the various theoretical models that discuss the etiology of alcoholism and substance abuse. Students improved on the ability to consider behavioral, psychological, physical and social effects of psychoactive substances on the individual, the family, and significant others as part of an integrated approach to assessment and treatment of chemical dependency from 72% (midterm scores) to 83% (final exam scores). These topics receive emphasis and students demonstrate a good level of competency in these areas.

- From AOD-2, all students were able to explain short term and chronic effects of substance abuse from a neurobiological and pharmacological perspective.

- From AOD-8, students learn the theoretical foundations and practice applications of family and group counseling. Students learn to distinguish among such theorists as Minuchin, Bowen, Haley and how to apply their approaches to the family context. By the 8th week of the course, students were able to articulate the theory and techniques during class discussions, multiple choice exams, and essay questions. By the end of the semester all students demonstrated correct behavioral skill sets in role play scenarios.

- From AOD-9, students must consider treatment approaches for patients with substance abuse issues and co-occurring mental health disorders, considering how to prioritize and integrate treatment approaches. The instructor measured student outcomes via objective exam questions (t/f questions) and essay type responses. When all the scores of identified items were averaged together, the overall criterion of 70% was met. Writing in-
class essays if often reported as challenging by many students because of the time constraints and lack of writing skills (i.e. organized, coherent responses) and may not measure subject knowledge accurately.

- **SUMMARY:** Course level assessments from each of the above courses suggest that students are acquiring the skills, abilities, and knowledge needed to demonstrate proficiency in each of the core functions and performance domains of substance abuse counselors.

**What our next steps are:**

- For AOD-1, rather than basing a measure on item analysis, the instructor plans to incorporate more writing into her pedagogy.
- For AOD-2, the instructor will continue to use a combination of measures including case vignettes and group exercises, supplemented by objective exam items.
- For AOD-8, the instructor will add more vignette practice before attempting role play components of leading a family therapy session.
- For AOD-9, the instructor will consider adding more out-of-class or non-timed writing assignments and compare results with essay responses during exams.
- **SUMMARY:** Pedagogical changes rather than content changes are contemplated to further support student's learning.