Below are the major programmatic updates by the Counseling program faculty during the 2019-2020 academic year. They are organized under two main themes for the year: (a) climate, student mentoring, and support and (b) curricular changes.

Climate, Student Mentoring, and Support

- In fall 2019, Dr. Isawi proposed a mentoring program specifically for our students of color. Student input was gathered in late fall 2019, and the group started meeting regularly in spring 2020. As stated above, all students desired greater mentorship and connection from faculty, but students of color felt especially in need of more support from us. Currently, 23 students and 2 faculty are participating weekly in the Counselors of Color Community Connection.
- In December 2019, we hosted a social event with doctoral students off campus as a way to connect on a more personal level. Like with master’s students, we heard feedback from doctoral students who wanted more mentoring from us. The event was attended by 19 doctoral students and all faculty.
- In fall 2019, the Counseling faculty collectively chose to begin bi-weekly equity dialogues in response to increased awareness and feedback around a need for greater visibility and action around issues of diversity, social justice, and cultural competence.
- In spring 2020, Dr. Fickling proposed changing our policies and practices around hiring graduate teaching assistants (GTA) to facilitate greater distribution of teaching opportunities. The major change is that students will now teach a course no more than twice. The goals of the GTA opportunities is to provide doctoral student funding and relevant work experience, to provide a unique opportunity to master’s students, and to facilitate meaningful learning experiences for our undergraduate students. Master’s students are still eligible to teach 211: Career Planning, however more doctoral students will now be invited to teach this course. Doctoral students will typically start by teaching 211, then move to teaching 400: Introduction to the Counseling Profession in their second year, and then some doctoral students will get to teach 425: Helping Skills or 493: Crisis Intervention.

Curricular Changes

- We will be resetting summer course schedules so that all courses will be 8 weeks long. This will result in uniformity across summer, fall, and spring semesters, and is in better alignment with the university academic calendar.
- In response to feedback from colleagues in the college of education, Dr. Adam Carter created a new course titled Trauma Concepts in Educational Settings. This course is uniquely designed for educators and administrators without a background in professional counseling. This summer will be the first run of the course and will be available to undergraduates, graduate students, and students-at-large. Please recommend this course to people who might be interested.

Accomplishments

- In May 2019, we received the decision from CACREP regarding our application for renewal of accreditation. The decision was to grant us a two-year re-accreditation.
In response to our non-compliance with maximum FTE numbers, we had to reduce the number of admitted students for the 2020-2021 year. Thus, we are expecting 24 new master’s students and 7 new doctoral students.

- Also in fall 2019, our Minor in Counseling officially began accepting students. On the very first day of the semester, we had 26 students ready to declare the minor, and in the first semester of its existence, we had 8 students graduate with the minor. Currently, we have over 80 students who have declared the minor.
  - In conjunction with the new minor, we created a new course, 425: Helping Skills.
- This spring, we finalized the hiring of two new faculty members
  - Dr. Peitao Zhu
  - Dr. Jehan Hill