

# Team Member Handbook



Council for Accreditation of Counseling and  
Related Educational Programs (CACREP)

# Team Member Handbook

## **Purpose and Use**

This handbook provides a ready reference for team members for planning, conducting, and completing an on-site evaluation. Serving as a team member requires you to understand all of the roles of the members on the team. For this reason, information about the role of the Team Chair is included. You may also want to review the Team Chair Handbook for additional information on site visits.

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## INTRODUCTION

When preparing for the on-site program evaluation, it is helpful to keep in mind the CACREP Mission and the purposes for the evaluation. CACREP is an accrediting body recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) to conduct on-site visits and use the term *Accreditation* in the determination of status. The CACREP Mission and Core Values are listed below.

### **CACREP Mission**

The mission of CACREP is to promote the professional competence of counseling and related practitioners through the development of preparation standards; the encouragement of excellence in program development; and the accreditation of professional preparation programs.

### **CACREP Core Values**

The CACREP Board of Directors believes in

- advancing the counseling profession through quality and excellence in counselor education;
- ensuring a fair, consistent, and ethical decision-making process;
- serving as a responsible leader in protecting the public;
- promoting practices that reflect openness to growth, change and collaboration; and,
- creating and strengthening standards that reflect the needs of society, respect the diversity of instructional approaches and strategies, and encourage program improvement and best practices.

The importance of the visiting team's role in CACREP's accreditation process cannot be overemphasized. The team visit is an integral part of the evaluation procedures, for it is during this phase that the validity of the program's narrative presented in the self-study is evaluated. A primary responsibility of the on-site team is the validation of the self-study and any other data submitted to CACREP for review. The validation process is carried out through such activities as interviews, visits to practicum and internship sites, classroom visits, and the review of documentation available in files.

In addition to discerning how the self-study narrative is actually put into practice, team members are asked to provide the CACREP Board of Directors with a thoughtful assessment of aspects of the program that cannot be evaluated fully from written documentation. In conducting reviews, teams should recognize that there are different ways for programs to meet the same standards. Accreditation reviews are not only a means for policy enforcement, but also constitute a process involving responsible and professional peer judgments with reference to program effectiveness.

### **The Verification Process**

The purpose for the site visit is to conduct a verification of the program's Self-Study Report. The Self-Study Report is the initial means by which the program faculty members address how they are meeting the CACREP Standards. The team visit is conducted to verify the accuracy of the

report and to assess if the standards are being met. It is stated in the mission that CACREP promotes professional counselor competence and this should be the underlying component of the verification process. The site visit is intended to be a verification of how the program is meeting the standards and not an investigation of the program. The goal of a team is to attest that the CACREP standards are met in spirit, rather than attempting to document, in a literal sense every nuance of the standards.

### **Professionalism among Team Members**

While on a site visit, the team members serve as ambassadors, not only for CACREP but for the counseling profession as well. Professionalism during visits includes:

- Dressing professionally, regardless of the standard acceptable dress at your home institution
- Functioning as a part of a team
- Keeping discussions of issues and questions confidential and among the team members
- Working for consensus among team members
- Acting ethically and judging a program on its own merits and not in comparison to other programs
- Treating everyone with whom the team interacts on campus with respect and dignity
- Ensuring that the team's overall communication with the program's representatives is channeled primarily through the Team Chair

### **Conflict of Interest Issues**

All members of a site visit team should abide by CACREP's "conflict of interest" policy. This includes considering whether any aspects of the policy are applicable before agreeing to serve of a team for a particular institution.

"A conflict of interest is defined as a circumstance in which an individual's capacity to make an impartial or unbiased accreditation decision may be affected because of prior, current, or anticipated instructional affiliation(s), other significant relationship(s) or association(s) with the faculty members or institution under review".

Some examples of situations that might trigger an unacceptable conflict of interest include:

- if you are a graduate of the institution under review;
- if you or a spouse/partner ever worked at that institution;
- if you or a spouse/partner ever applied for a position at that institution and did not receive an offer;
- if a former student with whom you have kept in contact is on the faculty;
- if you have a bias concerning the type of program delivery system the institution uses (e.g., the program is offered on-line); and/or
- if you are friends with any of the faculty or have had a professional or personal disagreement with one of the faculty.

If you have any questions or concerns about these or other issues which may bring into question

your ability to be fair, you should consult with a CACREP staff member before agreeing to be on the review team. The perception of fairness in the review is very important. Imagine for a moment an institution not meeting accreditation standards and the Dean of the College calling the CACREP office to question the validity of the review because one of the team members once applied for a position at that institution and was rejected. There should be no real or perceived bias on the part of all team members.

### **How to be an Effective On-Site Team Member**

Prior to the actual visit, the faculty at the institution have spent countless hours working to prepare the Self-Study Report that you must carefully examine, standard-by-standard, prior to your arrival at the site. The institution's faculty and administrators and your fellow team members will expect that when you arrive on site, you will be fully prepared, having thoroughly familiarized yourself with the Self-Study and the program under review, and that you will have identified any initial questions you may have.

In addition to reading (and re-reading) the Self-Study Report, you must be familiar with all pertinent correspondence (e.g., initial review letter, any addenda sent to you with the Self-Study) that occurs between the program and CACREP from the time CACREP receives the application. At times, the Board members who do the initial review of the Self-Study will ask that the on-site team look at particular issues in addition to the standard verification process. Such requests are located in the review letter(s) sent to the Program Liaison by a member of the CACREP Staff.

Your Team Chair will communicate with you prior to the visit about the schedule that she has worked out with the Program Liaison for the visit. The Team Chair will appreciate prompt responses to her calls or emails as she is responsible for planning many aspects of the visit prior to its actual occurrence. Communication about the visit prior to the visit should be conducted directly with the Team Chair. You can receive assistance with travel and other logistical considerations by contacting the CACREP office.

You should plan on meeting with your fellow team members on the first evening of the visit, prior to heading to the institution the following morning, to finalize plans, share impressions, identify questions, etc. As indicated, your fellow team members will expect that you will arrive to this meeting well prepared and familiar with the various review documents.

Always remember that accreditation is the application of professional judgment in the absence of absolute standards. Accreditation is an imperfect art. Know CACREP's limits and strive not to exceed its purposes or imperfections.

An effective team member is:

- prepared and knowledgeable
- reasonable
- judicious
- objective and consistent
- flexible

- fair
- responsive
- cooperative, and
- trustworthy

Consistency in judgment, action and evaluation is necessary, but recognition of desirable change and accommodation of this change is also vital. Those who seek accreditation from CACREP have invested heavily in both time and money. Be helpful; be prompt; be informative; and, be respectful. The knowledge that you have gained from this experience must remain confidential at all times before and after the accreditation decision is made.

- The above precepts have been paraphrased and adapted from the *Accreditation Manual* published by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP).

## **VISIT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Getting to the site visit stage in the accreditation process is only half the accreditation review process journey for an institution. The institution must now demonstrate its strengths to an on-site team that is looking at its program(s) in-depth. In order for a site visit to occur successfully, with minimal confusion and/or challenges, all of the primary parties involved must assume various roles and responsibilities. These roles and responsibilities can be broken down into three stages: before, during, and after the visit.

### **THE CACREP Staff**

Prior to the visit, the CACREP Staff will:

- Obtain team members and schedule the dates for the on-site visit. A typical on-site visit consists of a three-day review of the program(s), beginning on a Sunday night and continuing through approximately noon the following Wednesday;
- Inform the institution that the visit has been set and forward procedural details regarding the site visit to the CACREP Liaison; and
- Provide the team members with necessary instructions and materials, in addition to pertinent correspondence between the CACREP Office and the institution.

During the visit, the CACREP Staff members are available during normal office hours (Eastern time) for any questions that the team may have that need to be addressed in order to complete the visit. Such questions should be channeled through the Team Chair.

After the visit, the CACREP Staff will:

- Receive the report submitted by the site team, process it, and forward copies, without the team's accreditation recommendation, to the institution's President/CEO, Dean, Department Chair and CACREP Liaison. The cover letter sent by the CACREP President/CEO informs the institution that they have 30 days in which to respond to the report in writing; and,
- Process the team members' travel and expense forms and mail reimbursement checks.

## **THE CACREP Liaison**

Prior to the visit, the CACREP Liaison will:

- Upon receipt of the site visit letter from the CACREP office, mail a copy of the original Self-Study with any addenda, as well as any other materials for review, to each of the team members;
- Correspond with the Team Chair to coordinate the on-site visit agenda and interview schedule;
- Inform individuals on- and off-campus who will be participating in the visit and interviews of the purpose of the visit and interview;
- Arrange transportation for the team during the visit;
- Arrange for the availability of a suitable personal computer (ideally a laptop) with internet access and a printer for the team's use during the visit. The Liaison should check with the Team Chair on whether or not a computer is needed and if the team has a preference for a PC or MAC;
- Forward information to the team members regarding local restaurants, taxi services, parking, and transportation arrangements; and,
- Arrange for hotel accommodations for the team members. The hotel should be reasonably close to the institution. Sometimes institutions can get better room rates when they pay the bill directly and allow CACREP to reimburse the institution later. The CACREP Liaison should inform the Team Chair about the payment arrangements in advance. Generally the individual team members pay for the rooms and then are reimbursed by CACREP.

During the visit, the CACREP Liaison will:

- Maintain regular communication with the Team Chair, checking in periodically to ensure that the visit is running smoothly;
- Ensure the team has an adequate work space with assured privacy;
- Provide additional information and documentation as requested by the team; and,
- Make sure that housing arrangements are satisfactory and that transportation is arranged.

After the visit, the CACREP Liaison will:

- Send a written response to the on-site team report within the designated 30-day time period; and,
- Return the completed team member feedback to the CACREP Office within 30 days of the visit's completion.

## **The Team Chair**

Prior to the visit, the Team Chair will:

- Communicate with the institution's CACREP Liaison in order to arrange the tentative on-site visit agenda;
- Discuss with the CACREP Liaison who should be included in the interviews ( i.e., current students, graduates of the program, departmental faculty, faculty outside the department, administrators (e.g., Dean, CEO), and site supervisors (internships/ practica);



and,

- Communicate with the team members to discuss travel arrangements and assign duties to each visiting team member either prior to the visit or during the pre-meeting on the evening before the interviews begin. The Team Chair will also discuss preferred arrival and departure times. Generally arrival is the afternoon before the visit begins; departure is after the exit interview, usually not before noon on the last day of the visit.

During the visit, the Team Chair will:

- Lead the team in the validation of the Self-Study and other data presented to the CACREP Board. This is accomplished by gaining an understanding of those aspects of the program that could not be fully evaluated from the documentation supplied by the institution and those standards that were highlighted by the initial reviewers to be attended to during the visit;
- Serve as the primary spokesperson for the team;
- Contact the CACREP Office during the visit, if necessary, to seek clarification on the standards or any issue related to the on-site visit;
- Meet periodically with the team to exchange data and opinions and to plan for the further conduct of the visit;
- Divide the tasks of writing the final report among the team members. The final in-person meeting of the team is a time to formulate impressions, recommendations and requirements in order to prepare the final team report; and,
- Conduct the exit presentation, with the team members and appropriate university officials and faculty present, prior to departing the site. The team should provide general impressions about the visit and program, but not reveal its recommendations regarding accreditation decisions.

After the visit, the Team Chair will:

- Complete the on-site team report based on the determinations made by the team while on-site;
- Seek approval of the final report from the team members prior to submission;
- Submit the final report to the CACREP office within two (2) weeks of the completion of the visit;
- Complete the fellow team member evaluation forms and return them to the CACREP Office; and,
- Submit an expense reimbursement form to the CACREP Office.

### **Team Members**

Prior to the visit, the individual Team Members will:

- Thoroughly review the accreditation materials sent by the institution and the CACREP Office and make notes so as to be prepared for the initial team meeting and any prior team discussions;
- Inform the institution's CACREP Liaison or the CACREP Office if the review materials are not received in a timely manner;
- Make transportation arrangements to the institution's city or town, and coordinate these with the Team Chair in terms of preferred arrival and departure times. Direct billing to

- CACREP for airline fares can be arranged by utilizing the CACREP travel agency; and,
- Forward her travel schedule in advance to the CACREP Liaison and the Team Chair.

During the visit, the individual Team Members will:

- Thoroughly review all pertinent materials (e.g., curriculum items, library facilities and resources, clinical facilities, staff/office facilities, student records, assessment plan-related items, web site content);
- Conduct interviews with academic staff, administrative officers, individual faculty, clinical site supervisors, current students and alumni;
- Meet periodically together to exchange data and impressions and plan for the remainder of the visit. Team Members should not disclose any of their opinions or observations with individuals from the institution. Such opinions and observations should only be discussed within the team. Any communication from the team regarding how the visit is progressing should be communicated by the Team Chair to the institution's CACREP Liaison;
- Discuss the task of writing the final report. Time is needed to formulate impressions, write specific recommendations and cite specific requirements that still need to be met by the program in order to meet standards. Sometimes the team will complete the report prior to the Exit Presentation. The Team Chair is responsible for the final collation of the individual sections. However, all Team Members should review and approve the final report prior to the Team Chair submitting it to the CACREP office; and,
- Participate in the Exit Presentation. The Team Chair, with all Team Members present, conducts the Exit Presentation with appropriate officers and faculty of the institution, prior to departing the site. The team does not reveal during the Exit Presentation its recommendations regarding accreditation decisions.

After the visit, the individual Team Members will:

- Submit a travel and expense reimbursement form. Reimbursements will be made promptly to the Team Members following authorization by the CACREP President/CEO;
- Complete and submit to the CACREP Office the fellow team member evaluation forms.

## **LOGISTICAL INFORMATION**

### **CACREP Contact Information**

Telephone: 703.535.5990

Web site: [www.cacrep.org](http://www.cacrep.org)

Address: CACREP  
1001 North Fairfax Street, Suite 510  
Alexandria, VA 22314

E-mail: [cacrep@cacrep.org](mailto:cacrep@cacrep.org)

## **Travel Agency Contact Information**

FCM Travel Solutions            800.624.0049 Extension 3223  
Emergency #: 866.821.9634

## **Airports/Transportation to the Visit**

In most instances, Team members travel by plane to participate in on-site visits. Periodically the distances involved or regional travel considerations may permit for the use of a personal car or travel by bus or train. If alternative travel arrangements are elected due to personal preference, it is recommended that the Team Member contact the CACREP Office for clarification of applicable reimbursement considerations.

When possible, it is convenient for all Team Members to arrive at the same airport and arrive at about the same time. In most instances, the institution will have arranged for transportation to the hotel and institution for the Team Members. Information on these travel arrangements should be provided to the Team Members in advance of the visit.

The renting of cars by Team Members for transportation during the site visit should be avoided. If special circumstances exist which may warrant the rental of a car during the visit, the Team Chair must contact the CACREP Office in advance to see whether pre-approval can be obtained.

Once Team Members have made their travel arrangements, any changes to flights are at their personal expense unless there are valid extenuating circumstances. The individual Team Member should contact the CACREP Office for pre-approval prior to making any such changes for which reimbursement is desired.

## **Hotels and Meals**

The Team Chair will consult with the Program Liaison during the planning of the visit as to where the institution will reserve rooms for the Team Members. Each Team Member should be reserved a private room. Ideally the hotel will have complimentary internet so that Team Members can access the CACREP website as needed and can address personal or other professional issues during downtimes. Once again, this is something about which the Team Chair will consult with the Program Liaison during the planning of the visit

The CACREP Liaison may select a hotel that has an arrangement with the institution in terms of billing or preferred rates. In these cases, often the hotel will direct-bill the institution which will then send the charges to CACREP for processing. Otherwise, Team Members pay for hotel lodging out-of-pocket and then submit for reimbursement to CACREP following the visit. Please do not assume that the institution has arranged for payment of the hotel lodging.

Team members have a per-diem allowance for meals; receipts are not required for per-diem requests. The current per-diem rates are available on the CACREP website. Incidental expenses (e.g., mini-bar food, movies) are the responsibility of the individual Team Member.

If you have any special dietary requirements, you should notify the Team Chair prior to the visit so that these can be accommodated and the CACREP Liaison can be made aware in case there are any joint meals with institutional representatives.

### **Transportation of Team Members during the Visit**

The institution's CACREP Liaison will arrange for transportation of the Team Members to/from the airport (or other stations) and to/from the hotel, to the selected practicum and internship sites, and to multiple sites if necessary. Periodically, it may be necessary for Team Members to arrange with a hotel for a shuttle or to get a shuttle to/from the airport depending on the distances and circumstances involved. The CACREP Liaison should inform the Team Members in advance of the visit about such transportation arrangements.

## **TYPES OF REVIEWS**

There are several different types of CACREP accreditation reviews that may involve the conduct of an on-site visit. Most of these visits will be either for full reviews or reviews pertaining to programs being added during an accreditation cycle. It is possible that on-site visits may also be scheduled in relation to substantive changes being made by an institution or due to concerns raised by the CACREP Board during the course of accreditation reviews. The Team Members will be notified about the type of review when being contacted about serving on a visit. If there are ever any questions about the type of review being conducted, please contact the CACREP Office for clarification.

### **Full Reviews**

Full reviews are conducted when institutions apply for initial accreditation of the counseling programs or when reviews are being conducted for reaccreditation of counseling programs. Site teams for full reviews consist of a minimum of three Team Members. These visits generally begin on a Sunday afternoon or evening with a team meeting and continue through approximately noon the following Wednesday, concluding with the Exit Presentation.

### **Programs Being Added**

Institutions that already have counseling programs that are accredited by CACREP may choose to seek accreditation for other counseling programs during the course of an accreditation cycle. Sometimes on-site visits are waived for these accreditation reviews, based on a number of factors. At other times, either an abbreviated or a full on-site visit is required. The full visit is the same as described above. An abbreviated visit consists of a minimum of two Team Members, with one in the role of Team Chair, for approximately two days. These visits generally begin on a Sunday afternoon or evening with a team meeting and continue through the late afternoon the following Tuesday, concluding with the Exit Presentation.

## **Multiple Sites**

Institutions often use additional sites to deliver either just some courses or most or all of a program. In instances where most or all of a program is delivered at an alternative site(s), the institution should have addressed CACREP's Multiple Sites policy and review of those elements will be a component of the on-site review conducted by the team, to ensure that the different sites can be considered the provision of a single program across multiple sites. Regardless of whether all or just some of a program is offered at an alternative site(s), the on-site review should include a review of the site(s) during the visit.

## **BEFORE THE VISIT**

In addition to making travel arrangements and the necessary arrangements with her home institution for the time she will be away, there are a number of things a Team Member will need to do to effectively prepare for a site visit.

### **Initial Review Letters**

The CACREP Office sends Team Members copies of the review letter(s) that were sent to the institution prior to the approval for site visit. An institution may have received a single initial review letter, or a requesting addendum letter and subsequent addendum review letter. The purpose of the initial review process is to help ensure that additional clarification and documentation has been provided in advance of the site visit review to assist the Team Members in completing their review. Periodically, the reviewers may note particular areas of concern that will warrant particular attention during the site visit. The team should not focus solely on the issues noted in the review letters, but should note any of these areas of particular concern to ensure they are addressed during the visit. The purpose of the visit, however, is to verify the information in self-study (and addenda as applicable) in relation to all standards. Ideally, the majority of the clarification and documentation issues noted in the review letters will have been addressed through the provision of additional materials prior to the visit.

### **Reading a CACREP Self-Study**

A self-study is a comprehensive presentation by an institution of how its counseling program(s) meet the CACREP Standards and Policies. Additional information is provided in the application information and tables that should also be included on the self-study disc. The review of a CACREP self-study is a non-linear task. While the self-study is usually organized to follow the CACREP Standards in order, the information and documentation reviewed for a particular standard may lead the reviewer to revisit the information and/or documentation provided for earlier standards for clarification or to note inconsistencies across responses. Ultimately through a cycle of review and re-review, a comprehensive picture emerges of the program in relation to the CACREP Standards and the program's overall unique characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses. Review of a self-study should not be put off until the last moment prior to a visit. While helpful to do a quick refresher review just prior to the visit, a comprehensive review is a time- and focus-intensive process and adequate time should be allocated.

## **Addenda**

Most institutions, regardless of whether required or not, will develop an Addendum to the Self-Study (possibly addenda) to provide additional clarification and documentation pertaining to the issues noted in the review letter(s). Team Members should review both the original self-study and the addendum to get a comprehensive picture of the program under review.

## **Communicating with the Team Chair**

Once you receive information that the team has been set and who your fellow Team Members will be, you should reach out to the Team Chair to introduce yourself and ensure that she has the correct contact information for you. Prior to the visit, the Team Chair will be actively working with the CACREP Liaison and may need input from you and your fellow Team Member(s) about logistical and other planning considerations. Some Team Chairs also like to schedule calls or web meetings prior to going on site. If you know there are periods where you will be unavailable in the time period prior to the visit, it is helpful to let your Team Chair know this for planning purposes.

## **DURING THE VISIT**

### **Visit Schedule**

The team chair will work with the institution's CACREP Liaison to tentatively prepare an agenda for the visit. A sample site visit agenda is provided below. Please note, however, that a visit may be scheduled much differently depending on the style preferences of the team chair (e.g., scheduling or not scheduling a planning dinner with the CACREP Liaison, type of access to records and amount of records available), and such factors as multiple sites considerations, the administrative structures of the institution, curriculum delivery methods, number and type of program areas under review, issues noted by the team during the pre-visit review of materials, and the team's composition.

#### **SAMPLE SITE VISIT SCHEDULE**

##### Sunday

7:00 PM	Team Meeting with Department Chair and CACREP Liaison
8:00 PM	Team Organizational Meeting

##### Monday

7:30-8:30 AM	Breakfast (CACREP Team Members Only)
9:15-10:00 AM	Meet with Counselor Education Faculty
10:15-11:00 AM	Individual Meetings with Counselor Education Faculty
11:00-11:15 AM	Team Break

11:15-12:00 PM	Individual Meetings with Counselor Education Faculty
12:00-1:15 PM	Lunch (CACREP Team Members Only)
1:15-2:00 PM	Team Work Session (CACREP Team Members Only) Review Assessment Plan and SLOs
2:00-2:30 PM	Team Meeting with Dean of COE
2:30-3:00 PM	Team Chair Meets with Department Chair
3:00-4:00 PM	Library Tour (Team Member X) Review Practicum and Internship Files (Team Chair and Team Member X)
4:15-5:15 PM	Meet with Current Program Students
5:30-8:00 PM	Dinner/Individual Team Member Work
8:30-9:15 PM	CACREP Team Work Session

Tuesday

7:30-8:30 AM	Breakfast (CACREP Team Members Only)
8:30-9:15 AM	Review Practicum/Internship Coordination Review Assessment Plan and SLOs
9:15-12:00 PM	Practicum/Internship Site Visits  Team Chair – Brett Favre College Counseling Center Team Member X – Trisha Yearwood Middle School Team Member Y – Jerry Garcia Community Agency
12:00-1:15 PM	Lunch (CACREP Team Members Only)
1:15-2:00 PM	Team Work Session (CACREP Team Members Only)
2:00-3:00 PM	Tour of Facilities
3:15-3:45 PM	Meet with Provost/President
4:00-4:45 PM	Meet with Adjunct and Affiliate Faculty

4:45-5:30 PM	Meet with Program Alumni
5:30-8:00 PM	Dinner/Individual Team Member Work
8:00-10:00 PM	CACREP Team Work Session

### Wednesday

7:30-8:30 AM	Breakfast (CACREP Team Members Only)
9:30-10:30 AM	Exit Presentation (CACREP Team Members and CE Faculty, Dean COE? Provost?)

### **Program Areas**

The entire team is responsible for looking at the entire self-study, to include the general standards and the individual program area standards (e.g., Addiction Counseling, Clinical Mental Health Counseling, School Counseling). If the institution has applied for review of only one program area, the entire team can focus on this program area. In instances where there are multiple program areas under review, the Team Chair will generally request that each individual Team Members assume a primary focus responsibility for a specific program area based on expertise. This Team Member will conduct a detailed review of the responses provided by the institution for those particular program area standards, and have the primary responsibility during the visit for meeting with the students, faculty, and site supervisors representing that program area.

### **Use of Initial Review Letters**

As noted in the previous section, although the Team Members receive copies of the initial review letter(s) prior to the visit, the team should never regard these letters as the sole outline for what the team reviews on site. The function of the site team is validate that all of the information in the self-study (and any addenda) is accurate and to review across all the standards. There may, however, be particular items noted in the letters that will point the site team to focus in on key issues (e.g., professional identity of the program).

### **Visit Challenges**

Every site visit will be different. This point cannot be overemphasized, nor should it be overlooked. The differences come from many sources:

- The uniqueness of each institution along with the individuality of the program(s) under review;
- the changing composition of the visiting teams sent to the institutions;



- the clarity, comprehensiveness, and organization of the self-study materials (or the lack of these characteristics);
- the nature and tone of the interactions that occur between the Team Chair and the CACREP Liaison and/or other program leader(s) in preparation for conducting the site visit;
- the nature and tone of the interactions between the Team Members and all parties involved in the site visit; and
- the individual interpretations by Team Members in attempting to operationally determine when a standard is met or not met.

Experienced Team Chairs have identified the following problem areas as ones they have experienced during visits. Please make yourself aware of these problems so that you have the ability to avoid and/or correct them, should they arise.

### **Problems Related To Team Members:**

Problematic behaviors by Team Members include the Team Member being ...

#### **Socially Active**

While it is always enjoyable to be in a new and stimulating environment, Team Members should not plan to use any portion of the visit to meet with friends, relatives, or colleagues in the area. Commitments during the day belong to the institution and programs under review. Commitments during the evening belong to the team for discussing questions, making evaluations, and developing the report.

#### **Unprepared**

Team Members should not show up on site unprepared for the visit. The institution has spent money and resources and the faculty have dedicated countless hours in seeking to get their programs accredited. You owe it to the administrators, faculty and staff to show up well prepared, with a high level of familiarity with the materials submitted by the program. In addition, you are serving as an ambassador for CACREP.

The self-study and other pertinent materials are sent in advance to all Team Members for the sole purpose of a thorough reading prior to the on-site visit. Each Team Member should read all materials carefully and prepare in advance of the visit a list of his questions and concerns for review by the entire team. The Team Members can then have a productive meeting to share their ideas and delegate responsibilities the evening before they begin the actual on site review. In addition, if you have been asked by the Team Chair to focus in on a specific program area, (e.g., Career Counseling, School Counseling), you should be sure to be up-to-date on the current Standards, texts and other knowledge and skill bases for that specialty area.

#### **Off-Task**

Team Members should devote their time and discussions on site to their responsibilities as a Team Member. Team Members should refrain from using designated review times to engage in off-task behaviors such as personal conversations with faculty and staff, checking email, making personal calls, or texting.

### **Someone Who Makes Constant Comparisons**

If you hear yourself saying, "At my institution, we do it .....", or "In our Counselor Education program, students .....", then you are engaging in comparing and contrasting behaviors. Team Members should avoid comparing the program(s) under review with home-campus situations. The focus during the visit should be on the local context of the program. A central question must be "Does it Work?" in light of the program's objectives; not "How is it done elsewhere?"

### **Overly Accepting**

It is always helpful for Team Members to identify the strengths of a program. At the same time, however, it is vital that Team Members approach the review with a critical mindset that also allows for them to see problem areas or potential areas for improvement.

### **A Collector**

One of the great benefits of visiting other programs is gaining exposure to new ideas and ways of doing things. It is natural for a Team Member to want to get information and resources on these different program and education methods. The collecting of resources on a visit, however, can interfere with the team's task of self-study validation and, even more importantly, can create a false impression of the team's overall evaluation.

### **A Debater**

Team Members are on-site to verify the information in the self-study, make determinations as to whether standards are met, explore any important issues raised in the review letter(s), and objectively report their findings to the CACREP Board of Directors. At times institutional representatives may wish to draw the Team Members into discussions on the merits, or lack thereof, of a particular approach or standard. It is important that Team Members avoid engaging in such debates on these matters. As field representatives for CACREP, Team Members should be clear with institutional representatives that in their role as Team Members they can take no position on such issues as faculty loads, class sizes, etc., but will remain objective in the conduct of their review.

### **Non-Collaborative**

As in all group work, the visiting team members will each formulate their own opinions regarding program strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations. These opinions may differ slightly or dramatically; however, it is the responsibility of each team member to remember that a single group report will be submitted to the CACREP office. A consensus needs to be reached, which may mean concessions on the part of an individual team member. Try to work together, not against one another.

### **Inappropriate**

Simply stated, politically or socially inappropriate or insensitive comments/humor have no place during site visits. As indicated, institutional representatives have committed extensive, time, energy, and resources in their efforts to get their programs accredited, and the site visit is a significant and potentially tense experience for them. Regardless of how comments may be intended, it is highly probable any such comments will be viewed in a negative light. Please remember that you are an ambassador of CACREP and your behavior is a reflection of the CACREP Board of Directors.

### **Disrespectful of Confidentiality**

The CACREP accreditation process requires that Team Members keep information about a visit confidential. Team Members should not disclose to others on which visits they have served, what occurred or was discovered during the course of a visit, or what the team recommended to the CACREP Board in terms of accreditation. Even when an accreditation decision has been made public following the CACREP Board's action, specifics about all aspects of a visit should be kept confidential.

### **Late to Arrive/Early to Leave**

A late arrival or an early departure puts pressure on the remaining Team Members to cover that member's duties, including participation in the Exit Presentation. Once again, the institution has committed a great deal toward achieving accreditation and its representatives have every right to expect Team members that are well prepared and present for the entire visit. A Team Member who is not present for the entire visit may not be able to fully participate in the preparation of the team's report. If you know in advance that there may be difficulties in being available for a full visit, you should not agree to go on the visit. While unexpected events can and do occur, Team Members should only agree to go on visits for which they anticipate being available for the entire visit.

### **Problems Related to the Institution/Program**

Problems on a visit can arise from a number of institutional or programmatic sources. Ideally, many of these can be headed off through pre-visit planning, role induction, preparation and education. However, periodically challenges will persist. If encountered on a visit, the tone and professional demeanor exhibited by the site team will be key factors in effectively navigating these challenges.

Some possible sources of challenges include:

#### **Department Chairs**

As might be expected, Department Chairs have invested heavily in the accreditation process. Having heavily invested in the process, some Chairs may want to try to control the process as it unfolds at the institution. When visiting with groups of faculty members, currently enrolled students, program graduates, etc., the Department Chair should be advised in advance that the team's desire is to conduct these meetings without any program faculty or administrators present. Advance warning is a much more tactful approach than needing to ask the Chair to leave a room full of participants. As a courtesy, the team, via the Team Chair, may want to plan brief meetings with the Department Chair and CACREP Liaison at the end of each day for informational purposes and to reconfirm the next day's agenda.

Periodically, some of the findings of a team may catch a Department Chair unaware. Discussions about matters such as interfaculty relationships or rifts in the faculty about desired directions are complicated and must be handled delicately. Any information shared should be shared in a manner that stays broad-based and appropriately protects individual identities.

#### **Faculty Members**

During faculty interviews, rifts among the faculty, or between the faculty and administration,

may become evident. It is important, however, that Team Members not draw conclusions from one interview. Instead, Team Members should wait to formulate opinions until the individual faculty interviews have been completed and the team has had a chance to process its findings. The team can then work to triangulate the information with information from other sources. Be aware that unhappy faculty may use the interviews to vent their anger and frustrations. Take it in stride and, as indicated above, be circumspect in what information is shared with others, appropriately protecting the identities of those who have shared information.

### **Deans/Administrators**

Deans will have a different, more global, perspective on program functioning when compared to the perspectives of the faculty involved in the intricacies of day-to-day functions. Remember, however, that the report submitted by the visiting team should not recommend the department changes requested or prompted by individuals, faculty members or administrators, unless the team objectively concurs that the recommendations are based upon the accreditation standards being used as the evaluative criteria during the visit.

### **Review Materials**

The CACREP Office often requires applicants to provide additional information in the form of an Addendum to the Self-Study prior to approving an on-site visit. The Team Members should be provided all materials, including any Addendum, prior to the on-site visit. The CACREP Office informs the CACREP Liaison of this requirement when providing them with information about the team. However, it is a good practice for the Team Chair to reiterate this requirement to the Liaison. In the same vein, often programs that are not required to develop an Addendum to the Self-Study do so anyway. The Team Chair should ensure that if the team is provided with a voluntary addendum that the institution has similarly provided this to the CACREP Office.

### **Site Supervisors**

Typical on-site visits include tours of commonly used practicum and internship settings. Team members should plan on discussing the roles and responsibilities of the students obtaining practical experience at the site, in addition to observing the facilities. Also, site hosts and/or site supervisors should be able to provide information in the following areas: the types of clients served at the site; if, and how, supervision is performed; and, the benefits they receive by providing this valuable service to the program.

Site supervisors are often very busy individuals. Periodically, Team Members may encounter site supervisors who were not expecting the visit, do not seem to know why the visit is occurring, and/or does not understand what his role should be in relation to the visit. This types of encounters are best addressed via advance planning during the visit planning stage and, again, at the onset of the visit. The team should request that the CACREP Liaison ensure that the site supervisors who will be participating in the visits be informed ahead of time when the visit will occur be provided with information about the general nature of the accreditation process and why the Team Member(s) are coming to their sites.

### **Students**

Programs faculty are naturally going to seek to have students meet with the team that they believe are positive about the program and will represent it in a positive light. They will not

arrange for the team to meet with a group of students who are obviously disgruntled with the program. This makes perfect sense. At times, however, the preparation work a program may have done with students prior to meeting with a team may result in a group of students who seem coached to only focus on the positive attributes of the program. In these instances, it can be helpful for the team to ask them the basis of their opinions, or to ask them what they would change or what problems they perceive about the program. These types of questions do not need to challenge their perceptions on the program, but can be helpful in adding additional dimensions to the conversation beyond just the positives.

### **Program Graduates**

In a similar fashion to interacting with faculty members, the team may encounter a graduate of the program who is particularly dissatisfied with the program and wants to vent her frustrations throughout the meeting with the team. It can be helpful for the Team Members to attempt to ascertain the basis for the dissatisfaction and steer the feelings to concrete, programmatic evidence. It may be that the dissatisfaction is more personal in nature than programmatic. Perhaps the individual has been unable to find a desired job in the field or was not admitted into the program's doctoral program. It is, of course, important to hear the perspectives of this individual. However, it is equally important to hear the perspectives of the other attendees, especially to determine if these are shared perspectives or whether there are counter perspectives present. As with all group interactions, the team will need to use some group leadership skills to obtain the necessary information.

### **Interview Questions**

Interviewing the various faculty members, staff, students, supervisors and administrators should be information gathering within a stimulating environment. Using individual and group facilitation skills will assist team members in the gathering of detailed and pertinent information. Some sample questions are outlined below. Other questions can be developed to obtain answers pertaining to specific team concerns and particular issues noted during the initial review process. Additionally, the questions listed under one area can readily be modified for use in meetings with representatives from other constituent groups. Specific questions should be discussed and potentially delegated to particular meetings and/or Team Members during the team's planning times, as the visit progresses and desired information is identified.

#### **Sample Questions for Faculty**

- Describe your department's method for conducting practica (or internships) including one-to-one supervision, site selection, on-site supervision, and the classroom component.
- How do you feel about the institution's support of the department? Please explain your answer.
- How were student learning outcomes developed? How are they assessed?

- How are results of these assessments used? Give examples.
- What process does the department utilize for curriculum changes, program evaluation and/or development?
- What do you believe are the major assets of your training program? Major weaknesses?
- How does your department assess teaching effectiveness?
- Explain your department's relationship with the library and/or the computing center.
- How does your department's acquisition of resource materials compare with other departments?
- Explain how information processing resources are integrated into the department in order to accomplish its goals and objectives.
- How does the computer network system on campus affect your overall performance?
- How would you describe your familiarity with the campus/departmental information processing resources?
- For adjunct faculty: What opportunities do you have to participate in faculty in-service/professional development? How do you feel about your relationship with the full-time faculty?

### **Sample Questions for Administrators**

- What do you believe are the major strengths and weaknesses of each of the Counselor Education programs?
- How do the department's resources compare with other departments? Please explain your answer relative to staff size, budget, facilities, graduate assistants, and information processing resources.
- Standard I.D. states that "The institution provides encouragement and support for program faculty to participate in professional organizations and activities (e.g. professional travel, research, and leadership positions). How does your institution meet this Standard?
- What are the institution's contributions to the department's faculty and students regarding statistical consultation, computer assistance, and funds for data analyses?

### **Sample Questions for Students**

- Was the process of admissions into the program clearly explained in the institution's catalog and program brochures? Explain.
- Explain the department's process in disseminating materials regarding the program's objectives, courses, etc. Were the materials clearly stated?
- Explain whether you feel you receive adequate evaluation regarding your development of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to the counseling profession.
- Please describe some of the curricular experiences you have had in the program which have enhanced your personal development.
- Explain how access to the library, computer equipment, and counseling facilities affects your overall performance in the program.
- What are your perceptions regarding the helpfulness in obtaining information from departmental faculty, staff, library assistants, computer center personnel, etc.?
- Please describe your understanding of the program's retention policy and the advising process.

### **Sample Question for Doctoral Students**

- Please describe how the curricular experiences you have had at the Doctoral level have increased your knowledge and skills in academic and clinical instruction, clinical supervision, leadership, research, program evaluation and consultation.
- Please describe the opportunities within your program for developing an area of expertise.
- Please describe the opportunities within the program for developing collaborative relationships with program faculty in relation to research and scholarship.
- Please describe your doctoral practicum experience.
- What messages you received and observed in your program about counselor professional identity?
- What are your perceptions about the department's approach to preparing doctoral students to be effective researchers, teachers, supervisors, and counselors?

### **Sample Questions for Program Graduates**

- Now that you are employed as a counselor, what do you think were the major strengths and weaknesses of the program?
- Explain how the program's ongoing evaluation of your academic performance, professional development, and personal development provided insight into how you would perform in your chosen field?
- Explain what resources/support the institution provided you in your job hunt. Were they satisfactory?
- In what ways did the entry level program provide you with adequate curricular experiences in the core areas?
- Explain how advisement and curricular experiences during your doctoral program helped in the completion of your dissertation.

### **Sample Questions for Practicum/Internship Supervisors**

- What is your evaluation of the students' preparation for the practicum/internship? What strengths do you see? Weaknesses?
- Describe the communication that occurs between you and the program prior to the start of the practicum/internship.... during? and/or near the end of the clinical experience?
- What preparation have you received from the program in order to host and supervise an intern or practicum student?
- When vacancies have occurred in your organization, has your counseling center/school hired graduates of this program? If not, why not?
- Describe the program's expectations for the student's activities during the practicum/internship.
- Please indicate the number of hours of direct client service you require during the practicum and internship.
- How often do you meet with the practicum/internship student on a one-to-one supervisory basis?



### **Sample Questions for Library, Computer Center Staff**

- Explain the computer network(s) on this campus. How do the computer systems match in the library and the departments?
- How does the informational resource budget for the Counseling programs compare with other departments? How does the department utilize this money?
- How many and which acquisition committees do Counseling program faculty serve on?
- Explain the library's policies regarding accessing off-campus information.

### **The Exit Presentation**

The first three days of any on-site visit includes reviewing data, visiting clinical sites, and interviewing students, alumni, faculty and other administrative staff. During this time, the team has become involved with the program and its faculty, staff, students, and alumni. Much information has been obtained and energy has been expended. The exit presentation is conducted on the morning of the fourth day of the on-site visit and serves as a debriefing time to present the team's impressions, recommendations, and potential requirements with the program representatives and other administrative personnel present at the meeting. Deans and sometimes CEOs wish to be involved in this process as well. The team should be sure to offer to the CACREP Liaison the option of inviting the president, vice-president, provost and deans to the meeting. This may help the program avoid dealing with a surprised administrator's reaction when the team report arrives. It may also give the program added credibility when it requests funds, faculty, staff, etc. Lastly, their inclusion in the exit presentation may give the institutional group an opportunity to discuss the visit amongst themselves immediately after the exit presentation.

The exit presentation is just that; a presentation. It is not a time for additional interviewing of the participants, as all the team's questions should have been asked prior to this time. Similarly, it is a time for the institutional participants to ask a number of questions or debate with the team the findings. The institution will receive a copy of the team's report and have the opportunity to issue a formal response as a part of the accreditation process.

The key to an effective exit presentation is style; therefore, Team Members should confer with each other and plan for this important meeting. Even though the Team Members will be departing immediately at the conclusion of the presentation, professional attire is necessary. The Team Chair should serve as the spokesperson throughout the meeting. The presentation does not need to be lengthy; 30 minutes may be plenty of time to present the information.

It should not be a surprise to the host institution if the team has found any 'not-mets'; likewise, suggestions and statements of strengths should not come as a surprise. Effective communication by the team throughout the visit should help prepare the institutional representatives for the team's findings

in these regards. Please be aware that university personnel may wish to probe a little further about the team's findings before you leave their campus. If your departure is swift, you can avoid this situation

### **Preparing for the Exit Presentation**

In preparing for the exit presentation, the Team Chair should make plans with the institution's CACREP Liaison about who should attend and where the meeting should be held. Giving the CACREP Liaison a brief preview of the content of the report may help the Liaison decide who should attend the presentation. While the Team Chair will make the presentation, it is helpful for all of the Team Members to review the content prior to the actual presentation. Other items to consider in preparing for the exit presentation include selection of how the team will position themselves in the room for effective communication with the audience, and making sure the team knows in advance who will be attending.

### **Tips for the Exit Presentation**

- The Team Chair thanks everyone for their participation and help completing the review. This is a good time to remind everyone that accreditation is a voluntary process and the school requested this review.
- State that the team discussed issues during the on-site visit and that the program was given opportunities to address the issues prior to the exit.
- Preface your comments with a statement indicating that this is not a discussion session, but rather a presentation of the first attempt by the team to compile the information for a report.
- State that the program and administration will receive an official report from CACREP. They will have the opportunity to respond to the report with factual information. They should not respond based on information they perceive from the Exit Presentation.
- Explain that the information provided in the presentation will be in the report; these are the Strengths, Suggestions, and Specific Areas that are not met citing the standard both by item number and wording.
- Include preparatory statements indicating which programs were reviewed and how the information will be presented, both in the exit presentation and in the team's report to the CACREP Board of Directors, would be helpful information and set the tone for the final review.
- Apprise the audience of the team's view of both strengths and weaknesses of the program(s). These comments should be stated clearly, concisely, and with reference to specific standards. During the exit presentation it is okay to state that there are no "Specific Requirements" (standards not met); but if there are no suggestions or strengths to be stated in any area you should not make any comment about them.
- Focus comments on the components of the program(s) in general. Be certain to present these statements in a manner which distinguishes the core standards from the program area standards.
- Be honest about the problems you perceive. If the team believes that a program or a program area cannot achieve accreditation, they may want to inform the program that

they have strong reservations based on the weaknesses that they have found. This will give the faculty an opportunity to determine if it wants to continue with the process. CACREP policy states that the "application for accreditation can be withdrawn by an institution any time prior to a decision of the Board."

- Respond to "in your best judgment" requests from attendees regarding a prediction for the Board's decisions by simply informing those present that you cannot anticipate the Board's actions.
- Thank everyone again at the conclusion of the presentation.
- Remember when you return home from the on-site visit, your knowledge about the program gained from the experience must remain confidential at all times before and after the accreditation decision is made.

### **Sample Preface to Exit Presentation**

"At the Exit Presentation, the team will try to summarize its observations from the visit to the school. The exit presentation is only a summary and a first attempt to pull together and express the team's analysis of its on-site evaluation to the institution. The team will prepare a Team Report, and that Report will be sent to you from the CACREP Office in the near future. It is important that you review the report carefully and use the opportunity to respond to the report, disputing or correcting, with factual support, any of the findings. The report is the best and most complete expression of the team's on-site verification process. You should not ignore or downplay anything in the report based on the exit presentation; the report takes precedence. The CACREP Board, of course, makes the final decision about whether the school is in compliance with accreditation standards. ..."

## **AFTER THE VISIT**

### **The Team Report**

Following the conclusion of the visit, the Team Chair will develop a draft of a final report that will be submitted to the CACREP Office and, ultimately, to the institution and the CACREP Board of Directors. Before sending the report to the CACREP Office, the Team Chair will submit it to the other Team Members for review, comment, and approval. The institution will receive the final version of the report from the CACREP Office.

### **Developing the Team Report**

One of the primary purposes for making the on-site visit is to provide the CACREP Board of Directors with information that will facilitate their accreditation decisions regarding the programs. Writing a clear report helps the board members during their deliberations regarding the decision. On the third evening of the on-site visit, the team engages in final deliberations on each standard to determine if it is met or not-met. If the team report has not been completed prior to the end of the on-site visit, it is strongly advised that the team discuss prior to the exit presentation the specifics regarding the completion of the report document and plans for e-mailing a draft to each team member for review and/or additional changes. All team reports are submitted on-line. The CACREP Office sends each Team Chair templates and instructions for submitting

the report prior to the visit. Please remember, the team should submit its final report to the CACREP Office within two (2) weeks following completion of the on-site visit. The report template is divided into sections that correspond to the sections in the CACREP Standards. The team report addresses both the general and program area standards. Following each section are areas for the team to identify “specific requirements”, “suggestions”, and “strengths”. The team should include its recommendations regarding accreditation for the programs reviewed in a separate document from the actual report.

### **Report Format**

The report is completed on-line by the Team Chair. The format for the report consists of the following:

- The report begins with a listing of the University and the Counselor Education program areas the school is requesting to be evaluated by CACREP. There is also an area for providing a narrative context of the institution and program.
- The report should include a narrative/table summary of the on-site evaluation process. This includes a summary of activities and a listing of the names of the persons who were interviewed during the process.
- The essence of the report will be the listing of all the standards citing if the team determined that the standards are met or not met.
- At the end of each section of the standards is an area for the team to comment, if applicable, on any specific strengths and suggestions regarding the program or the program area.
- There is also an area labeled “specific requirements” where the visiting team will state why, if applicable, a standard is not met and include a citation of the standard. For every standard cited as not met, there must be a corresponding specific requirements statement in the report.
- The team should come to consensus on the content of the report. The Team Chair writes the final report.
- The team will make a recommendation on each program area to deny accreditation, to give two-year accreditation, or to give eight-year accreditation. The recommendation should be clearly explained.
- There is a two-week period from the end of the on-site visit to the time when the report must be submitted to CACREP.

### **Specific Requirements Section of the Report**

It is important to describe any standard that is not-met under the Specific Requirements heading that is listed after each section of the report. The description should specify which particular standard is cited, a statement of what the team observed, a statement of why the team believes the standard is not met, and what needs to be accomplished to meet the standard.

If there are no “specific requirements” for any section, indicate “None” on the report.

Examples of Specific Requirements statements are listed below:

### **Examples - Specific Requirements**

**Standard I.J** The current efforts by the Counselor Education faculty to address diversity in the student body is to identify minority candidates who may be interested in enrolling in the program; there is no formal plan in place that addresses how the program faculty makes systematic efforts to attract, enroll, and retain a diverse group of students and to create and support an inclusive learning community. A formal plan should be developed and implemented.

**Standard I.U** While the institution has established faculty diversity as a goal, the Counselor Education faculty has not developed a formal plan regarding systematic efforts to recruit, employ, and retain a diverse faculty. The faculty should develop and implement a formal plan.

### **Suggestions Section of the Report**

When making a suggestion it should be clear that this is a suggestion for improving the program. Suggestions should be stated in a way that the program faculty understands the intent and how this can improve the program. In addition, the wording of the suggestion should be clear to the CACREP Board that it is a suggestion, and not confuse the Board with a situation where a particular standard is marked as met but the information in the suggestion suggests it is, in fact, not met. For example, a suggestion such as, “the team suggests that the program faculty ensure that the practicum faculty-student supervision ratio should always be 1-6” would cause a Board member to wonder if the 1 faculty per 6 student supervision ratio standard is met. If the visiting team does not have any suggestions for any given area, omit this from the report or leave blank; please do not state that there are no suggestions. An example of a suggestion statement is listed below:

### **Example - Suggestion**

The team recognizes that the ACA Code of Ethics is the code accepted by the state licensure board. The team notes that most of the emphasis in the program is on having students learn and understand the ACA Code of Ethics. Students only receive a basic introduction to specialty codes of ethics. The team suggests that the faculty also encourage more in depth experiences with other counseling codes of ethics for the purposes of discussion and comparison.

### **Strengths Section of the Report**

When citing program strengths, the team should focus on exceptional aspects of the program. Simply stating that the program meets a standard is not an exceptional achievement unless it exceeds the expectations. If the visiting team does not have any strengths to list for any given area, omit this from the report or leave blank; please do not state that there are no strengths. Examples of strengths statements are listed below:

## **Examples - Strengths**

Administrative support for the program and accreditation is excellent. The Provost, Vice-President, and the Dean of the School all expressed pride in the program and faculty and clearly documented their support for the program.

There is an excellent system of orientation, induction and continuous support provided to the adjunct faculty. Each adjunct faculty member is given opportunities to express concerns, attend faculty meetings to allow them to collaborate with other faculty, and are provided with on-going consultation and supervision.

## **Accreditation Recommendations**

The visiting team must reach consensus on an accreditation recommendation for each program reviewed. The options correspond to those same options used by the CACREP Board when rendering accreditation decisions.

In addition to making a recommendation, the report should have a clear description of why the recommendation is being made. An example is listed below.

The options are:

- **Accredited for an Eight Year Period**  
This recommendation is made when the team determines that all standards are met in a satisfactory manner; no standard is marked not-met.
- **Accredited for a Two Year Period**  
This recommendation is made by the visiting team for any program which does not meet all of the criteria outlined in the standards; however, the team believes the program can meet the criteria within a two-year period.
- **Denial of Accreditation**  
This recommendation is made by the team when it feels that the program is not in compliance with the CACREP Standards and that the program will not be able to remedy the situation within a period of two years. The Team Chair should contact the CACREP office sometime during the visit to discuss that there is a potential that the team may recommend denial for any or all program areas.

## **Additional Considerations**

- If any standards are cited for the entry-level programs, then the team recommendation should be for a two-year accreditation.
- It is possible to recommend two years for one program area and eight for another, depending on how standards are cited for the separate program areas.

- If a core standard (i.e., Sections I-III) is cited as not met, it would be applicable to all program areas unless indicated otherwise by the site team.
- If a doctoral program is included in the review, it cannot receive an eight-year accreditation if the entry-level programs receive a two-year accreditation. If, however, one of the entry-level programs receives an eight-year recommendation, the doctoral program could, similarly, receive an eight-year recommendation.

### **Obtaining Reimbursement**

Reimbursement requests should be submitted within 30 days following the completion of the visit. Current reimbursement rates (e.g., mileage, per diem) and the reimbursement form and instructions are available on the CACREP website for Team Members. Team Members should submit original receipts for expenses other than per diem. It is recommended that the individual maintain copies of all items submitted until reimbursement has occurred. If there are any unique elements to reimbursement requests (e.g., an unexpected team expense during visit), please submit a brief explanatory note with your reimbursement request.

**SAMPLE EXCERPT FROM A CACREP SITE TEAM REPORT**

**Mystery Inc. University**

**Programs** Clinical Mental Health Counseling, School Counseling,

**Visit Dates**

April 24-27, 2015

**CACREP Liaison Contact Information**

Bluestone the Great

Vasquez Castle

**CACREP On-Site Team Members**

Dr. Velma Dinkley, Chair

University of Scooby Snacks

Dr. Norville Rogers, Team Member

Shaggy University

Dr. Scoobert Doo, Team Member

Ruh-Roh College

**Entry-Level Programs**

<b>CACREP Program Title</b>	<b>Degree Awarded</b>	<b>Program Name</b>
Clinical Mental Health Counseling	MA	Clinical Mental Health Counseling
School Counseling	MA	School Counseling



## Agenda

### SUNDAY

All team members arrived in Airport and transported to Funland Courtyard Hotel by Counseling Faculty.

4:30 – 6:10 p.m. Team met to review initial impressions of the Self-Study, discuss standards, designate the team member(s) who will attend each of the meetings scheduled for Monday, and identify questions that needed to be discussed.

6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Team met with Dr. Mr. Wickles (Provost), Dr. Black Knight (College of Education Dean), Dr. Captain Cutler (Chair), Dr. Miner Fortyniner (Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program Coordinator), and Dr. Witch Doctor , Dr. Buck Masters , and Dr. Elias Kingston (Counseling Faculty), for an Orientation Dinner with team.

8:00 p.m. Team retired for evening.

### MONDAY

7:10 – 7:30 a.m. Team met for breakfast and planned for the day's interviews.

7:30 – 8:00 a.m. The Visiting Team travels to campus by car. Upon arrival on campus, the Team was shown to the on-site work room.

8:00 – 8:15 a.m. Team oriented to workroom and attached printer.

8:15 – 9:25 a.m. Team met with faculty. Members present were: Dr. Witch Doctor, Dr. Buck Masters, Dr. Elias Kingston, and Dr. Uncle Stuart

9:25 – 10:20 a.m. Faculty interviews

Team Member Dinkley met with Dr. Witch Doctor

Team Member Rogers met with Dr. Buck Masters

Team Member Doo met with Dr. Elias Kingston and Dr. Uncle Stuart

10:40 – 11:30 a.m. Team met with Dr. Harry the Hypnotist (President) and Dr. Mr. Wickles (Provost)

11:40 – 12:00 p.m. Team toured the Counseling Program lab and teaching facilities.

12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Team met with program alumni over lunch. Present were:  
Zombie, Swamp Witch, Zeke, Zeb, “Big Bob” Oakley, Dracula, Frankenstein’s Monster, Werewolf, Henry Bascombe, Redbeard’s Ghost

1:15 – 1:50 p.m. Team met in work room to discuss observations.

1:50 – 2:00 p.m. Team met with Dr. Witch Doctor to discuss visit procedure.

2:00 – 3:10 p.m. Team met with Dr. Black Knight (College Dean).

3:10 – 3:50 p.m. Team met with Dr. Captain Cutler (Department Chair).

3:10 – 3:50 p.m. Team Member met with Dr. Witch Doctor (Liaison)

4:00 – 5:00 p.m. Team met with current students. Present were:  
Spooky Space Kook, Mummy of Anka, Ghost Clown, Evil Puppeteer, Snowghost, Mr. Greenway, Dr. Jekyll, Ghost of Mr. Hyde, Mr. Fong, Caveman, Creeper, Mr. Carswell, Penrod Stillwall

5:00 – 5:30 p.m. Team met with Dr. Witch Doctor and Dr. Captain Cutler to discuss Tuesday’s schedule and additional questions.

5:30 – 6:00 p.m. Team returned to the hotel.

6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Team met in the provided hotel room to work on the site team’s report.

8:30 – 9:45 p.m. Team met for dinner.

9:45 – 11:00 p.m. Team met in the provided hotel room to work on the site team’s report.

11:00 p.m. Team retired for evening.

## TUESDAY

7:15 – 7:30 a.m. Team met for breakfast and planned for the day’s interviews.

7:30 – 8:00 a.m. The Visiting Team travels to campus by car.

8:00 – 8:15 a.m. Team met in the work room and reviewed files and student portfolios.

8:15 – 8:25 a.m. Team Member met with Dr. Witch Doctor to discuss schedule issues.

8:25 – 9:00 a.m. Team Member met with Dr. Miner Fortyniner to follow up with several standard questions.

8:25 – 9:00 a.m. Team Member met with Dr. Elias Kingston to follow up with several standard questions.

8:25 – 9:15 a.m. Team Member met with Dr. Uncle Stuart to follow up with several standard questions.

9:00 – 10:20 a.m. Team Member visited Asa Shanks at Haunted House, a practicum and internship site.

9:15 – 11:00 a.m. Team Member visited C. L. Magnus at Ghost Ship, a practicum and internship site.

9:15 – 9:50 a.m. Team Member met with Graduate Assistants

10:00 – 10:30 a.m. Team Member met with the administrative assistant

10:45 – 11:15 a.m. Team Member met with Mr. Mano Tika Tia (Registrar).

11:00 – 11:50 a.m. Team Member met with Dr. Black Knight (Dean) and Dr. Wax Phantom (Associate Dean).

11:00 – 11:50 a.m. Team Member met with Ms. Sarah Jenkins (Library Director).

11:30 – 11:50 p.m. Team Member reviewed documents.

12:00-1:00 p.m. Team met for a working lunch with site supervisors. Those present:  
Don Knotts, Jerry Reed, Cass Elliot, Jonathan Winters, Sandy Duncan, Tim Conway, Dick Van Dyke, Sonny, Cher, Globetrotters

1:00 – 2:00 p.m. Team met in work room to discuss observations and review documents.

2:10 – 2:30 p.m. Team Member met with Dr. Vincent Van Ghoul (Adjunct Faculty).

2:10 – 2:35 p.m. Team Member met with Ms. Swamp Witch (Office of Financial Aid).

2:10 – 2:40 p.m. Team Member met with Mr. Greenway (Graduate Admissions Counselor).

2:40 – 3:00 p.m. Team Member met with Dr. Black Knight (Dean) to follow up with several issues.

2:40 – 3:00 p.m. Team Member met with Dr. Miner Fortyniner to follow up on several issues.

3:00 – 3:45 p.m. Team Member met with Dr. Zen Tuo (Director of the Counseling Center)

3:00 – 3:45 p.m. Team Member met with Dr. Meadowlark Lemon (Associate Provost) and Mr. Curly Neal (Director of Institutional Research and Assessment).

3:10 – 3:45 p.m. Team Member met with Ms. Najib (Teaching Support Center).

3:45 – 4:30 p.m. Team met with Dr. Miner Fortyniner and Dr. Black Knight to discuss additional questions.

4:30 – 5:00 p.m. Team returned to hotel.

5:45 – 6:30 p.m. Team met in the provided hotel room to work on the site team’s report.

7:30 – 8:45 p.m. Team met for dinner.

8:45 – 12:00 a.m. Team met in the provided hotel room to work on the site team’s report.

**WEDNESDAY**

8:30 – 8:45 a.m. Team met and checked out of hotel.

8:45– 9:00 a.m. Team traveled to the campus.

9:30 – 10:00 a.m. Team Chair led the Exit Interview session with faculty and administration.

10:00 a.m. The site visit was completed. Team Members were transported to departure points.

<b>SECTION I: THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: STRUCTURE AND EVALUATION</b>		<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
<b>THE INSTITUTION</b>			
Standard A:	Institutional media description of Unit and Programs	X	
Standard B:	Unit clearly identified as graduate program	X	
Standard C:	Sufficient financial support	X	
Standard D:	Faculty professional encouragement	X	
Standard E:	Resources for scholarly inquiry	X	
Standard F:	Institutional technical support to faculty	X	
Standard G:	Personal counseling services for students	X	
Standard H:	Counseling instructional environment		
1.	Individual Counseling Settings	X	
2.	Groups Counseling Settings	X	
3.	Technologies and observational capabilities	X	
4.	Procedures ensuring confidentiality	X	
<b>THE ACADEMIC UNIT</b>			
Standard I	Require 48/72, 54/81(60/90) credit hour programs	X	
Standard J	Diversity and an inclusive community	X	

<b>SECTION I: THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: STRUCTURE AND EVALUATION</b>		<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
Standard K	Admissions decisions by selection committee using:		
1.	Effective, culturally relevant relationship ability	X	
2.	Aptitude for graduate study	X	
3.	Career goals and relevance to the program	X	
Standard L	Before classes, the following should occur:		
1.	New student orientation	X	
2.	Dissemination of student handbook containing:		
a.	Mission statement	X	
b.	Information on professional associations	X	
c.	endorsement policy for credentialing/employment	X	
d.	Student retention policy	X	
e.	Academic appeal policy	X	
Standard M	Credits by noncore faculty less than core faculty	X	
Standard N	FTE students to FTE faculty less than 10:1.	X	
Standard O	Faculty advisor – plan of study within 12 mo.	X	
Standard P	Systematic assessment of student’s progress	X	
Standard Q	6 student to 1 faculty member in clinical courses	X	
Standard R	12 student maximum in clinical group supervision	X	
Standard S	Required student professional liability insurance	X	
Standard T	GA opportunities commensurate with university	X	
<b>FACULTY AND STAFF</b>			
Standard U	Efforts to recruit and maintain faculty diversity	X	
Standard V	Teaching loads consistent with university standards	X	
Standard W	Sufficient, identifiable core faculty, characterized by: (See CACREP Accreditation Process Policy #5 Requirements – Counseling Program Identity)		
1.	Minimum 3 full-time counselor educators	X	
2.	Earned doctorate in counselor education post 2013	X	
3.	Relevant preparation and experience	X	
4.	Identification with counseling profession	X	
5.	Engage in counseling-related activities		
a.	Counseling-related conferences, workshops, etc.	X	
b.	Counseling-related research and scholarly activity	X	
c.	Counseling-related service and advocacy	X	
6.	Authority to control curricula and program policy	X	
Standard X	Sufficient administrative and curricular leadership		
1.	Academic Unit Leader		
a.	Responsible for coordination of program	X	
b.	Receives inquiries	X	
c.	Provides budget recommendations	X	
d.	Provides or delegates year-round leadership	X	
e.	Has release time for administrative position	X	
2.	Faculty member assigned as Clinical Coordinator		
a.	Coordinates practicum and internship experiences	X	
b.	Receives inquiries about practicum and internship	X	
c.	Has clearly defined responsibilities	X	
Standard Y	Noncore faculty may be employed who:		
	Hold graduate degrees, preferably in counseling	X	
	Have relevant preparation and experience	X	

SECTION I: THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: STRUCTURE AND EVALUATION		Met	Not Met
	Identify with the counseling profession	X	
Standard Z	Clerical assistance is available to support unit	X	
EVALUATION			
Standard AA	Continuous systematic program evaluation includes: (See CACREP Transition Policy #5 Requirements – Assessment)		
1.	Review of program offerings and applicants	X	
2.	Follow-up evaluations of graduates	X	
3.	Site supervisor and employer evaluations	X	
4.	Student learning and performance assessment		X
5.	Evidence that findings are used to improve program	X	
6.	Official report is distributed to appropriate sources	X	
Standard BB	Regular, formal student evaluations of faculty	X	
Standard CC	Faculty given annual results of teaching evaluations	X	
Standard DD	Written faculty evaluation procedures when changed	X	

**Strengths:**

Standard I. G. During our time on campus, the visiting team was consistently impressed with the care, attention and quality of the technical support personnel supplied by the College of Education’s Information Technology Department.

Standard I. O. Faculty members are commended for their demonstrated abilities to provide strong advising. Many students and graduates of the Clinical Mental Health Counseling and School Counseling Programs emphasized the strength of their graduate preparation as having been rooted in the availability, accessibility, personal interest, commitment, and caring of the faculty. The personal investment of the faculty was cited as engendering a strong sense of support, encouragement, and trust within students (and alumni). Students indicated their advisors are readily available in person and via email. Adjunct faculty members and students praised advisors for their flexibility and attentiveness to students’ unique needs.

Standard I. T. Mystery Inc. University is commended for its demonstrated financial support of counseling graduate students. Within the program itself, there are four graduate assistantships. Additionally, students and faculty indicated that virtually every full-time student who desired a graduate assistantship has been able to secure one somewhere on campus. Counseling graduate students are actively sought out for positions in a very wide variety of on-campus locations including both student affairs and academic units.

Standard I. W. 1. Repeatedly, in meetings with students, alumni, administrators, and with the faculty themselves, interviewees cited a clear sense of professionalism, collegiality, and expertise in the current core faculty. The effective working relationships among and between those teaching in the counseling programs allow for the effective presentation of a consistent training program to all students. The faculty members function well as a team even while each person is encouraged to pursue his or her individual research and clinical interests. The visiting team commends the program for its ability to create and maintain a closely knit and healthy group of academicians.

Standard I. Z. The visiting team was impressed with the highly organized system for maintaining student records that has been created and maintained by the department’s administrative assistant, Ms. Luna Hex. Immediate access to files is clearly possible while maintaining a very high level of security regarding student information.

**Suggestions: (Not necessarily related to a specific Standard, but for program enhancement or improvement)**

Standard I. F. Although the university has updated virtually all classrooms to the latest available “smart classroom technology,” there has not been an equally dedicated effort to update technology for individual faculty members. With all of the faculty members’ computers still employing the Windows 2000 operating system, it is very possible

that major software and hardware problems could develop over the short-term future to create problems in instructional delivery. The visiting team strongly recommends that the university seek ways to replace all faculty members' computers with the most recent technology.

Standard I. H. The counseling laboratory presently meets the necessary CACREP standards. Nonetheless, the visiting team recommends that the Counseling Programs continue to seek options to upgrade this facility and to create a clinical space with updated technology. Such a facilities enhancement would greatly benefit student and faculty/supervisor opportunities for direct observation, video critiquing, and skills demonstrations (and, of course, increase learning).

Standard I. L. 1. One student reported missing the orientation. When no follow-up occurred, the student indicated some important material had not been effectively conveyed (even though it had been in the student handbook). The visiting team recommends that the faculty keep a careful track on whether new students actually attend the orientation meeting.

Standard I. M. The visiting team recognizes that the Student FTE to Faculty FTE ratio is very close to the 10:1 required by CACREP. Since by both (a) the method of calculation initially employed in the self-study and (b) the method used to create the figures in the addendum are both nearly 10:1, the Mystery Inc. University faculty members are strongly encouraged to continue a close monitoring of this ratio. This is, of course, a greater concern because the general trend has been an increasing one over the past several years.

***Specific Requirements: (Specify Standard for each requirement not met). Please note that if a program has requirements, only 2-year accreditation can be recommended. If program does not adequately address the requirements in this report, these requirements may become conditions.***

Standard I. AA. 4. A basic element of the CACREP 2009 Standards has been the need for counseling programs to define clearly an overall assessment plan for student learning outcomes. The intent is for the program "to verify that the program has the tools to determine that every student has either learned or not learned the necessary knowledge and skills to be an effective counselor." Instruments should be available with a plan clearly in place.

The visiting team's assessment is that clear and substantial progress has been made toward this goal with the counseling program's creation of a matrix for each CACREP standard indicating where each standard is addressed in the curriculum. The matrix also includes an excellent start on the identification of assessment measures for each standard. Although the measures have been indicated in general, the specificity of the criteria for successful completion of these assessments remains unclear.

For example, under Standard I. G. b. (i.e., "Studies that provide an understanding of professional roles, functions, and relationships with other human service providers, including strategies for interagency/interorganization collaboration and communications"), the self-study indicates this is covered in COU 820 and COU 824. Under the "evaluation methods" section of the matrix, the sources of evaluation include: Reading, Class Discussion, and Portfolio (COU 820) with Classroom Discussion, Lecture, In-Class Activities, Readings, Assignments, Exams 1 and 2, Class Participation, Quizzes, Shadowing Experience, and Clinic Presentation (COU 824). Although each of these sources of evaluation appears appropriate and viable, the specifics of the assessments are not readily apparent: What in class discussions lead to an acceptable performance indicating "an understanding of professional roles?" How does a reviewer determine that the student's portfolio demonstrates an acceptable level of clarity regarding "strategies for interagency/interorganization collaboration and communications?" What in-class activities and/or classroom discussions assure the instructor that the student understands "roles, functions, and relationships with other human service providers?" Do the exams and quizzes (not included in the self-study) directly assess this standard? How are shadowing experiences and the clinic presentation used to assess the student's knowledge of the information required in this standard?

Once criteria are clear, the next step in the process would be to begin to input data into the assessment system for program evaluation and improvement over time purposes. The visiting team strongly recommends that the

assessment plan be fully implemented as quickly as possible. We would also encourage careful, on-going evaluations of the effectiveness of the implementation of this plan, staying open to revisions and allowing the possibility of additional assessment tools to review each CACREP standard and the programs as a whole.



## **SAMPLE SITE TEAM RECOMMENDATION**

### **University of Coolsville**

Recommendation – The Site Team unanimously agree to recommend a 2-year accreditation for the Addiction Counseling and Marriage, Couple and Family Counseling programs at the University of Coolsville.

The program faculty have experienced several transition challenges over the past three to five years. In spite of this, they continue to work hard to run the two counseling programs at a high level of quality and with the standards in mind. A significant portion of the challenges they have faced have been due to not having enough full-time, permanent faculty resources. The program faculty and the institutional administrators acknowledged this issue and spoke to how they intend to address it in the near future. While the numbers appear adequate on paper, there are actually only three full-time, tenure track faculty available for long term planning and advising. The other three positions are a lectureship, a two year visiting faculty position, an associate dean who does not teach or participate in the development, management, delivery, and oversight of the counseling programs. The existing faculty resources are not adequate given the size of the programs and the resulting FTE student to faculty ratios, supervision ratios, advising and course delivery needs for these programs.

Despite these faculty resource issues and limitations, it was evident to the site team that the administration at the University of Coolsville has great regard for the Counseling Program. The Provost, Dean, and the Department Chair all spoke very highly of the faculty, students and the program in general. Furthermore, there seems to be a genuine interest in seeing the counseling program continues to grow and develop in the planned re-designed organizational structure of the School of Education. All levels of administration relayed that continued support by way of additional faculty and resources for program development are planned for the future.

A second significant area that needs to be addressed is the student learning outcomes for the respective program areas. While there were a number of “not mets” in terms of the curricular standards for each program area, many of them were repeats of the same problem. The team believes that this can be addressed easily during a two-year accreditation period.