

Revision of CACREP Standards under way

In July 2011, the CACREP Standards Revision Committee (SRC) convened to begin its nearly four-year process of developing the CACREP Standards to be implemented in 2016. Our work is guided by the charges given to us by the CACREP Board. Specifically, we were asked to examine all aspects of the CACREP Standards, seek feedback on all drafts from a broadly defined constituency (including programs, faculty, students, practitioners, counseling consumers, state counseling boards and higher education administrators) and examine the following areas:

- a) Professional identity of programs and faculty
- b) Process for implementing Student Learning Outcomes for all types of program delivery
- c) The utility of some of the program areas
- d) The relevance of the standards for use in future years and for future program delivery methodologies
- e) The prescriptiveness of the standards
- f) Doctoral-level standards, as well as standards for any specializations

In addition to focusing on these areas, the SRC is committed to developing standards that help to promote a unified counselor identity while also recognizing the uniqueness of the specialty areas. We anticipate being able to do this by focusing on simplifying, clarifying and consolidating the existing CACREP Standards. We started our revision process with great respect for the significant amount of time, effort and work that is already represented in the current standards. The 2009 SRC made great strides in moving us forward in many areas, especially regarding more fully articulating professional identity and introducing rigorous, outcome-based assessment. These changes have helped to move the assessment of counselor education programs parallel with those of other professions and more in line with Council for Higher Education Accreditation requirements. As we

move forward with the 2016 CACREP Standards, we are confident that the 2009 Standards will serve as a foundation for the further development of both professional identity and outcome-based assessment standards.

Our approach

Consistent with the charge we were given, our plan for the standards revision process is to engage in focused, solution-oriented discussions about how to enhance and refine the CACREP Standards. We also are approaching this standards revision process with an eye toward the future. As a profession, we need to be forward-thinking, and we hope to hear from you regarding how we can ensure that the CACREP Standards are aligned with current as well as anticipated future needs of the counseling profession in an ever-changing global society.

Perhaps the most important question we are asking is: Where do we want to be 20 years from now, and how will the 2016 CACREP Standards help us get there? Other questions we will be asking are: Which standards are working well? Which standards need to be refined or clarified? Which standards are or will be outdated? What content is missing in the standards? How might the organization of the standards be improved?

Our main goal is to engage in dialogue about developing time- and context-sensitive standards for the future.

Our work

Our intent is to solicit feedback from as many constituents as possible in as many ways as possible. To complement that feedback, we will generate ideas for revision based on our examination of the accreditation standards and processes of related professions (education, psychology and so on) and by examining national trends related to outcomes assessment.

To date we have gathered initial feedback through a roundtable session conducted at the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision

Conference this past October in Nashville, and we have examined feedback provided directly to CACREP by accredited programs as part of their annual report processes.

We will be working on writing an initial draft of the CACREP Standards throughout the spring and summer. Our plan is to disseminate this first draft sometime in late summer and to solicit feedback both online and in person (at regional ACES conferences, for example) throughout the fall. Our work from that point on will involve a combination of disseminating written materials such as drafts and gathering feedback through electronic/online surveys, at conference sessions (such as at the American Counseling Association and ACES conferences) and at board meetings (for example, at the American Association of State Counseling Boards). We anticipate going through two cycles of draft preparation and feedback solicitation, and our final draft is due to the CACREP Board by its January 2015 meeting.

Final comments

The 2016 SRC is committed to making our standards revision process as open and transparent as possible. Avenues for both hard copy and electronic feedback will be provided. Updates will be shared in CACREP's biannual newsletter and via the CACREP website. The members of the 2016 SRC are committed to a comprehensive and thorough review process that will develop standards that reflect the excellence of counselor education and provide a professional consensus for many years to come. ♦

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