

**External Review of the Marriage and Family Therapy Program in the Department of Applied and Professional Studies at Texas Tech University**

**Submitted: February 2009, Marsha T. Carolan, Ph.D.**

Program Overview and Vision

The Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) Program is well poised to meet many of the strategic goals of the department. The faculty is productive, the students are well provided for, and the program has a strong national presence. There are partnerships both on campus and off campus at the local, state and national levels. The partnership with the Center for the Study of Addiction and Recovery (CSAR) clearly enhances and contributes to the mission of the program.

At this point in their history, the MFT program has undergone a number of transitions both in the move to this new unit and in the changes in faculty. There is a small cohort of Masters students and a large cohort of doctoral students. It appears that a number of the doctoral students have not finished their degrees in a timely manner. This appears to be due to the major shifts in faculty.

There are plans to expand the admissions to the Masters program to a number that is four times that of the current population. The Masters curriculum has been altered to incorporate a heavier emphasis on substance abuse. The rationale for this plan is that there is a group of faculty in the Center for the study of Addiction and Recovery who are well prepared and capable of contributing to the Masters curriculum and graduate student advising. This should produce MFTs that would be more competitive in the field.

The shifts in faculty have resulted in a five-member faculty with a current search process for another tenure line. The current five faculty consists of two senior and three junior faculty with the new hire at the assistant level. The Program Director is at the assistant level as well.

It is a challenge to meet the mission of the department and mentor doctoral students with so many junior level faculty. The program would benefit from the tenuring of the Program Director, Dr. Jason Whiting, to better serve the current population of students, and to maintain national stature. The new hire would also have been more useful to the program as a senior level faculty.

In addition, the current faculty does not meet the objectives of diversity in the strategic plan of the department and university. There is one tenure stream female faculty out of the five current faculty. There is no faculty of color. In a field that is primarily female, the issue of gender equity is a concern.

#### Faculty Productivity

Despite the concerns raised above, all current faculty appear to be highly productive. There is ample research funding and presentations and publications are ongoing and scholarly. Faculty teaching load appears to be normative and the faculty workload appears to be a bit above the norm for the university.

#### Graduate Student Profile

The program is able to provide ample research and teaching assistantships for their doctoral students. The students have multiple opportunities to conduct research and gain experience in teaching. Several graduate students have teaching fellowships.

The issue of student attrition raised above is most likely due to the shift in faculty that took place in the last two years. It was also reported that doctoral students are offered positions at their internship sites that may lead to the forestalling of dissertation work.

Graduate placement and career success is evident from the profiles of the graduates presented in the review document. Students are placed in competitive positions in universities in addition to clinical positions.

The concern about lack of diversity also applies to the graduate student population.

### Advising and Mentoring

There is a carefully planned cohort approach to small group mentoring and advising assignments. Students appear to be quite satisfied with the quality of advising.

### Curriculum

The doctoral program is a COAMFTE accredited program and as such, is in line with rigorous standards for education. The masters program is not accredited but is designed to provide rigorous preparation for licensure and to work in the area of substance abuse. Qualifying exams and curriculum are compatible with similar programs in peer institutions.

### Facilities and Resources

The program has adequate facilities in terms of the Family Therapy clinic. There may be some problems in the future with regards to this space with increases in Masters student numbers. There is a full time Clinic Director that does not have tenure stream responsibilities and a business assistant for the program. Both appear to be excellent resources for the program.

Dedicated graduate student space appears to be limited and lacking in privacy. There also does not seem to be adequate early orientation and preparation for teaching and in the areas of instructional technologies.

### Overall evaluation

The department and program have strong leadership, are well organized and managed, with visions for the future. The unit is a unique one in many ways, bringing together areas that do not generally co-reside. The program has a productive faculty and a strong record of career success for its graduates.

My overall evaluation of this program is good to excellent. The only factors detracting from excellence are stated above; issues of diversity, in faculty and students, and the issue of many junior faculty.