

COUC860—Discussion Board #3—Due February 2, 2025

Discussion Thread: Leadership in Counselor Education Programs

As noted in Chapter 10 and 12 of your **Read** item, counselor educators are responsible to ensure that leadership and advocacy is promoted in Counselor Education programs. As a side note, one of the issues created by a non-cohesive professional identity (plus the lack of an undergraduate major) is a misunderstanding or confusion over the term: Counselor Education. Counselor Education is an academic discipline responsible for the professional training of counselors at the master's level in several program areas (CMHC, MAFC, School, Addiction, etc.) and doctoral level. It is not just specific to doctoral CES or master's CMHC. Therefore, while programs may have a variety of specializations, they all fall under Counselor Education. Therefore, leadership and advocacy must be integrated throughout all programs offered by your department

In this discussion, you will discuss creative ways that you as faculty can promote a culture of leadership among students. You will take the perspective that you faculty members in a program that is in the process of seeking CACREP accreditation. During a faculty meeting, the CACREP liaison noted that the program does not focus enough on the development of leadership and advocacy. Your group has been tasked with developing some creative ways that can be implemented to help create a culture of leadership in the department. Your department has a master's (CMHC) and a doctoral (CES) program.

Please discuss the following:

- What are some potential creative ways to promote this?
- What are potential problems or barriers with these?
- What would be longer term and shorter term action items?

You do not have to present a comprehensive plan explaining every detail of the plan. Rather, you are bringing ideas to the table that you have considered in a thoughtful manner, providing enough detail so your group is aware of the basic aspects that would need to be considered in order to make an initial recommendation as to the viability of the idea. This is not evaluative as to whether you had a "good" initial idea. Rather, you are engaging in a process where you will benefit from the feedback and experiences from other.

Initial Post—February 5, 2025

First, I will say the admonition in chapter 10 for a counselor having a selflessness about them sounds to be a principle of the Christian faith taken and applied to counseling (Matthew 7:12—"In everything, treat others as you would want them to treat you, for this fulfills the law

and the prophets.”). It would be nice if more Christian principles were more distinctively a part of the counseling profession. Having a leadership and advocacy training is indeed necessary to have a well-rounded profession. If were King of the counseling world, I would implement the Christian principles and the standard. However, as great as I believe this would be, God does not force us to abide by His way and so I should not expect this either. The reality is, I will likely be a professor at a Christian university. Just as there are strong advocate groups against my personal value system, there also needs to be people who are also advocating for my worldview. Having advocates leaders from all perspective should allow for a well-balanced perspective that does not lean too far in any direction.

All this is to state the importance which is a key to what I would use as a key to get students to consider ways they can be involved. I would like to get some leaders and advocates from the local boards, ACA, CACREP, etc. to speak to the students about what leadership does and what their roles can affect and how advocacy can affect the profession and the clients the students will be seeing in the future. A potential problem is being at a Christian school and having someone wanting to advocate for a position that goes against the school’s code of conduct and moral integrity. Another is having someone who is generally ignorant but believes they have it all figure out and decides to jump into areas they are not well equipped for and end up looking absurd (bad enough for them as an individual, but doubly bad for an institutions reputation so guidance is a necessity). A long-term plan would be what I have already mentioned above along with implementing instruction in these areas to help students not only desire to participate actively but to be prepared. Short-term thoughts would be to add some general statements to

recruitment literature and to immediately bring light to the topic in existing courses to help current student at least get introduced to the idea.

First Response

Posted By: Bryana Caviness January 23, 2025 11:45 am

Promoting a culture of leadership and advocacy in Counselor Education, particularly within a department seeking CACREP accreditation, involves creative strategies to integrate these concepts into both master's and doctoral programs. One effective approach is to organize workshops and seminars focused on leadership skills, such as developing leadership in clinical settings for master's students and advocacy at the systemic or policy level for doctoral students. Additionally, service-learning projects allow students to engage in real-world advocacy, fostering leadership while benefiting communities. Establishing mentorship programs that pair doctoral students or faculty with master's students can further support leadership development. Another key initiative is integrating leadership and advocacy directly into the curriculum, either through dedicated courses or by infusing these topics into core classes like ethics or counseling techniques.

However, there are several potential barriers to these initiatives. Faculty and students may resist adding leadership and advocacy elements if they perceive them as diverting focus from clinical competencies. Resource limitations could also pose challenges, particularly when it comes to organizing workshops or mentorship programs. The diversity of students' experience levels in the master's and doctoral programs may also require tailored approaches to leadership development.

In the short term, immediate actions could include incorporating leadership topics into existing courses, organizing a faculty meeting to discuss the integration of leadership, and hosting a one-day leadership workshop for both programs. For the long term, more substantial changes could include creating a dedicated leadership track within the curriculum for both master's and doctoral students and developing faculty development programs that focus on leadership and advocacy. Establishing formal partnerships with professional organizations and regularly revising the curriculum to ensure continued leadership integration would also support the department's commitment to fostering leadership.

Bryana

Your comments are very well thought out and far superior to my comments! I think the idea of a workshop or seminar would be a great way to get the information before the students to help bolster a sense of duty to participate and become more familiar with leadership and advocacy opportunities. Service opportunities and mentoring in combination would certainly help to reinforce the importance and to see these in action. By implementing these into the curriculum, would indeed be the long-term solution. I agree with your assessment that implementing these could be perceived as taking away from clinical skill, however, that would be part of the educational aspect to help student to see that this is another key aspect of the counseling profession. All your comments are concepts that could be immediately put into any counselor training program to increase the effectiveness of helping students to see the need and be well equipped for service in the areas of leadership and advocacy.

Thanks

Jeremy Gillentine 334-657-6366

Second Response

Submitted by: Erica Gray—January 24, 2025, 5:07 pm

I think that incorporating leadership and advocacy into other classes would help to promote this in a counseling program. Even pointing out ways that counselors are already doing this and having professors focus on it more throughout the program would be beneficial. In practicum and internship courses, leadership can be promoted by having students facilitate discussions about ways counselors either already advocate for their clients or students or ways that they would like to do so. While every counseling course can likely include some component of leadership and advocacy, I think career counseling is a class in which students could consider various ways for college students and other people looking for work to have more access to career counseling. Even classes like quantitative and qualitative research that do not seem to lend themselves as much to leadership and advocacy can incorporate discussions of leaders in these areas and can advocate for new ways to conduct the various types of research.

Erica

It seems like a good idea to promote leadership and advocacy by including it throughout the program in multiple ways to demonstrate what is being done and what is needed currently and potentially in the future. There are certainly many areas where these principles of service can improve access (e.g., career counseling). I think on one hand it may be a stretch to include these in quantitative and qualitative research classes, while on the other hand, it would be interesting to see the outcomes of various groups with one group being left to normal practice as usual (control group) and then to have the other group attend seminars and be mentored to be involved in leadership and advocacy service efforts and to see if it were apparent what differences (if any) were made as compared to the control groups work. Sounds interesting but something that would take considerable time to flesh out fully.

Jeremy Gillentine

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