

National counseling accreditation group accredits University's mental health, school counseling graduate programs

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Alfred University's (AU) campus-based graduate programs in clinical mental health counseling and school counseling have been accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), a specialized accrediting body recognized by the American Counseling Association and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

CACREP is dedicated to promoting advancement in the field of professional counseling and provides recognition that the quality of a program has been evaluated and meets standards set by the profession.

AU's campus-based counseling program is a student-centered, 60-credit-hour program leading to the master of science in education degree and certificate of advanced study. The program offers specializations in clinical mental health counseling and school counseling. Students in both specialties gain applied experiences through various mental health agencies and schools in the surrounding region. In addition, students provide supervised counseling services at AU's Child and Family Services Center, which is both a training clinic and outpatient facility using state-of-the-art digital recording/observation capabilities.

"The graduate counseling programs at Alfred have a long-standing reputation of offering top-notch professional education," said Dr. Nancy J. Evangelista, associate provost and dean of the College of Professional Studies, which houses the two programs. "We have the facilities, the relationships with community agencies and schools, and the expertise of our faculty and field supervisors to provide this stellar training experience.

"CACREP accreditation recognizes the excellence of our counseling programs and will provide an additional credential for our campus-based graduates as they move into professional practice settings," added Evangelista.

Carol L. Bobby, president and CEO of CACREP, noted the accreditation decision is based "on an extensive review of the self-study documents, the site team's report, and the institution's response to the site team's report." Bobby goes on to say "the faculty deserve to be congratulated for the time, energy, and commitment that they have given throughout the accreditation process."

"The faculty has certainly worked hard in developing a rigorous and quality program in accordance with the CACREP standards," said Dr. Kevin A. Curtin, counseling program director and assistant professor of counseling.

"Additionally, we are truly appreciative of the support provided by our current and former students we would not be where we are today without their feedback and ideas."

The clinical mental health counseling track consists of 60 credit hours of coursework, supervised practica, and internship experiences. The program is registered as a Licensure Qualified Program in New York State and satisfies all the educational requirements for students to become Licensed Mental Health Counselors (LMHC).

The school counseling track consists of 60 credit hours of coursework, supervised practica, and internship experiences. Upon completion of the program, students receive provisional certification as a kindergarten-12th grade school counselor in New York State and have completed all coursework for permanent certification requirements. In addition, the track prepares students to pursue school counseling opportunities throughout the country, as New York has reciprocity with most other states.

Graduates of counseling programs are in high demand. In fact, the Department of Labor's Occupational Outlook Handbook states that there will be more counseling jobs than graduates from college counseling programs. Employment of school and career counselors is projected to grow 12 percent from 2012 to 2022, while employment of mental health counselors is projected to grow 29 percent from 2012 to 2022, much faster than the average for all

other occupations.

Alfred's counseling graduates currently work in public and private schools, college counseling centers, student affairs positions, mental health agencies, substance abuse clinics, among many other settings.

AU's campus-based program can be completed with two years of full-time study without any summer commitments. All full-time counseling students are offered graduate assistantships which reduces tuition by 50 percent. Select part-time students may qualify for athletic graduate assistantships which offer up to 100 percent tuition assistance and allow students to complete their degree on a part-time basis over the course of three years.