

Alabama State University
Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling Program
Department of Rehabilitation Studies
College of Health Sciences

**Annual Report
2022-2023**

Mission:

The mission of the Master of Rehabilitation Counseling (MRC) Program is to prepare admitted students to become professional rehabilitation counselors who work in partnership with people with disabilities. The primary ongoing goals of the MRC Program include: **1.** Developing and maintaining an educational curriculum focused on effective student learning and development in rehabilitation counseling; **2.** Preparing students to become professionals who are committed to effectively partnering with people with disabilities in achieving their maximum vocational, psychological, social, and economic independence; and **3.** Creating a multicultural learning environment that embraces empowering students to become professionals who facilitate empowerment for consumers with disabilities and their communities.

The MRC program uses aggregate student assessment data, demographic and relevant student characteristics data, and systemic follow-up data to evaluate program effectiveness. More specific measures that are utilized to inform program improvements include professional development disposition ratings, student learning objectives, demographic trends, stakeholder surveys, and stakeholder forums. The Program is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The program was reaccredited fall 2022.

State of the Master of Science in Rehabilitation Counseling (MRC) Program:

During the 2022-2023 academic year, the unit served 26 full-time students and 2 part-time students. The students comprised 2 cohorts (Cohort 15 and Cohort 16). In May 2023, eight students from cohort 15 attained their master of science degree in rehabilitation counseling within the expected time frame of 18 months. All of the spring 2022 graduates are employed in a rehabilitation counseling-related field (employment rate, 100 %). One of the graduates elected to pursue her doctoral degree post graduation (Counselor Education, Auburn University).

The program is delighted to report that during AY 2022-2023, one former MRC graduate (Cohort 12) obtained her doctoral degree in Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Two other former students (Cohorts 13, Cohort 14) are currently enrolled in doctoral programs. Eight students took the national certified rehabilitation counselor (CRC) exam during AY 2022-2023. Two students passed the exam. The program continues its efforts to increase exam pass rates by offering prep materials at no cost, making relevant changes to the curriculum, and routinely reviewing its text book selection. Additionally, one faculty member is now serving on the item writing committee for the national certification exam.

The CRC exam is a very challenging assessment, with a national pass rate of 61%. The exam domains include: professional orientation and ethical practice, evidence-based practice counseling theories and techniques, group work and family dynamics, crisis and trauma counseling and interventions, psychosocial aspects of chronic illness and disability, assessment, career development and job placement, demand-side employment, community resources and partnerships, rehabilitation, disability, and

healthcare management, medical aspects of individuals with chronic illnesses and disabilities, and research, methodology, and performance management.

During this reporting period, the rehabilitation counseling program transitioned fully to a digitally delivered program, offering both synchronous and asynchronous forms of instruction. The Unit has three full-time core faculty members. Dr. Danita Stapleton is the Unit Coordinator and Clinical Coordinator. Dr. Dothel Edwards and Dr. Mary-Anne Joseph are seasoned faculty members who are instrumental in ensuring proficient program operations to include instructional design, recruitment and retention endeavors, establishing and maintaining collaborative and community relationships, and accreditation compliance. The program had two associate faculty, Dr. Angela Hall and Dr. Henry Wong, during this reporting interim. Effective fall 2022, the program increased its curriculum from 51 credit hours to 60 credit hours (adding 3 courses from the graduate program in Clinical Mental Health).

The Unit continues to benefit from formal and informal feedback from stakeholders to include current students, program alumni, employers of our students, advisory board members, and clinical placement supervisors. The MRC faculty conducts ongoing assessments of various program components as depicted in the table below. Evaluation outcomes are used for program improvement. Program improvement endeavors target student development/training and improving the overall graduate program experience.

Program Evaluation (Academic Year 2022-2023):

Evaluation Measure	Frequency	Outcomes	Subsequent Program Modifications or Substantial Program Changes	Notes
Demographic Trends	The demographics of prospective and accepted students are tracked annually.	African American students from underserved communities continue to predominately apply and be accepted for admission to the MRC program. These students are diverse as it relates to gender, ability, and life experiences. Total number of candidates (applicants) for AY 2022-2023: 18 Race/Ethnicity: 18 African Americans Students with Disability: 4 Gender: 5 Males, 13 Females.	Unit faculty and staff have increased recruitment efforts at predominately white institutions in the Southeast, while continuing to target students at HBCUs and minority serving institutions. We have also been in contact with military education offices in the Southeast.	Despite having 18 candidates for the program, only 15 students were accepted and actually started the program. Three of the students decided to delay pursuing their degree until a later time. We will continue to maintain contact with these individuals.
Professional Development and Disposition Ratings	Administered twice annually	No students were dismissed from the program due to the demonstration of improper professional		Students are rated at the conclusion of their first semester and at the conclusion of their practicum experience.

		<p>dispositions. The mean score on the professional development and disposition ratings was 3.5 on a Likert scale of 4.</p> <p>This rating is used to evaluate students in 6 areas: respect and diversity, principles and ethics, commitment to professional development, advocacy, professional practice, and interpersonal relations.</p>		
<p>Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)</p>	<p>3 learning objectives are targeted for annual assessment</p>	<p>I. RCOU 518 (Multicultural Counseling Issues) Students will demonstrate proficiency in counseling culturally and ethnically diverse populations who are outside of their own ethnicity and culture.</p> <p>Target for success 85% of students will score 80% out of a possible 100% on the multicultural presentation.</p> <p>Success target met: Yes</p> <p>II. RCOU 513 (Medical Aspects of Disability) Students will demonstrate knowledge of a disability that is not discussed in class by explaining etiology and symptoms, who is at risk, traditional and non-traditional treatment, type of medications, professionals needed to treat the condition, assistive/adaptive modalities and medical equipment, vocational and psychosocial implications, and local, state, and national resources.</p>		<p>Learning outcomes, data analyses, and plans for continued improvement were entered into the Institution's 2022-2023 Continuous Improvement Plan/Report (Educational Programs).</p>

		<p>Target for success: 85% of students will obtain 80% or higher on the disability assignment, PowerPoint, and presentation.</p> <p>Success target met: Yes</p> <p>III. RCOU 511 (Foundations of Rehabilitation Counseling)</p> <p>Students will apply APA (7th Edition) guidelines when writing a 15-page literature review on a pre-approved topic related to rehabilitation counseling.</p> <p>Target for success: 85% of students will obtain 80% or higher on the literature review.</p> <p>Success target met: Yes</p>		
Surveys of Graduates	Annually	<p>27 out of 50 graduates (alumni) responded to a qualtrix survey during this reporting interim (54% response rate). These students graduated between spring 2017 and spring 2022.</p> <p>85% or more of the graduates reported knowledge satisfaction as being “good to extremely good” in the following areas: Social and cultural diversity; Etiology and effects of disabilities and medical terminology; Human growth and development; Transferable skills, functional assessments, and work-related supports for achieving and maintaining meaningful employment;</p>	None	<p>Respondents reported being employed by the following agencies: Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Montgomery Public Schools, Department of Veteran Affairs, Alabama Institute for the Deaf & Blind, Reclamation Center of Alabama, and the Alabama Department of Human Resources.</p> <p>Respondents are employed as Directors/Supervisors , Therapists, and Case Managers/Care Coordinators.</p> <p>Recommendations for program: “...more opportunities to attend conferences...incorporate more CRC prep material in</p>

		<p>Counseling individuals with disabilities; Strategies to advocate for persons with disabilities; Engaging in ethical practice of professional counseling; Legislation and government policy; Program evaluation & research skills; Group Counseling & Group Skills; Interfacing with medical and allied health professionals; Assessment skills to include diagnostic interviews, mental status exams, symptom inventories, psycho-educational and personality assessments, biopsychosocial histories, assessments for treatment planning, and assessments for assistive technology needs.</p> <p>15% of respondents reported average preparation in the following areas: Engaging in ethical practice of professional counseling; Transferable skills, functional assessments, and work-related supports for achieving and maintaining meaningful employment; Etiology and effects of disabilities and medical terminology; Legislation and government policy; and Program evaluation & research skills.</p>		<p>coursework and more opportunities for hands-on application...break the internship into two semesters..."</p>
<p>Surveys and Engagement of Practicum & Internship Supervisors & Community Partners</p>	<p>At least two events per academic year</p>	<p>Meet & Greets, advisory board meetings, and surveys are used to solicit feedback on students' preparation and progress in internship and practicum. Feedback is also obtained on how the program can better</p>	<p>None</p>	

		<p>prepare students to meet the needs of agencies and their consumers.</p> <p>Two Meet & Greets were hosted (spring and fall semester). All practicum and internship site supervisors were invited.</p> <p>An Advisory Board meeting was held during spring semester. Representatives from the following agencies were in attendance: Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Governor’s Office on Disability, Council on Substance Abuse, Alabama Deptment of Mental Health, and Independent Rights and Resources.</p> <p>A survey was emailed to eight practicum and internship supervisors during summer 2023 (100% response rate). Supervisors were asked to rate their levels of satisfaction in the following areas:</p> <p><u>Overall supervisory experience</u> (7 were “extremely satisfied”, 1 was “somewhat satisfied”).</p> <p><u>Student preparation for conducting initial interviews or intakes</u> (7 were “extremely satisfied”, 1 was “somewhat satisfied”).</p> <p><u>Student preparation for involvement in vocational assessment and job placement/preparation activities</u> (7 were “extremely satisfied”, 1</p>		
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		<p>was “somewhat satisfied”).</p> <p><u>Student preparation for involvement in individual or group counseling/educational activities</u> (8 were “extremely satisfied”</p> <p><u>Student preparation for reviewing case documentation, reporting and rendering appropriate treatment or service decisions</u> (7 were “extremely satisfied”, 1 was “somewhat satisfied”).</p>		
<p>Surveys of employers</p>	<p>At least every 2 years</p>	<p>15 employers of our recent graduates were emailed satisfaction surveys. Eight responded (53.3% response rate). Employers were asked to rate graduates’ preparation for:</p> <p><u>Advocating on behalf of individuals with disabilities</u> (8/8 -100%-responded either “extremely well prepared”, “well prepared”, or “adequately prepared”;</p> <p><u>Engaging in initial interviews or intake interviews</u> (8/8- 100%) responded either “extremely well prepared”, “well prepared”, or “adequately prepared”;</p> <p><u>Involvement in vocational assessment or job preparation activities</u> (8/8-100%- responded either “extremely well prepared”, “well prepared”, or “adequately prepared”;</p> <p><u>Involvement in individual or group counseling</u> (8/8 -100%) responded either “extremely well prepared”, “well</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None of the respondents felt the students hired were poorly or inadequately prepared for work tasks.</p>

		<p>prepared”, or “adequately prepared. <u>Writing relevant accurate and concise case notes</u> (8/8-100%- responded either “extremely well prepared”, “well prepared”, or “adequately prepared”. <u>Reviewing case documents and rendering appropriate decisions based on these documents</u> (8/8-100%- responded either “extremely well prepared”, “well prepared”, or “adequately prepared”.</p>		
<p>Survey of Current Students</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Twenty-six students were emailed a survey about their experience in the MRC program. 14 students reported (54% response rate).</p> <p>The results are as follows:</p> <p>100% of the students reported “very much so” when asked about the following:</p> <p><u>Having opportunities to hear guest lecturers who represent the rehabilitation counseling field;</u></p> <p><u>Being given a student handbook that includes the program’s mission statement, goals and objectives, and policies; and</u></p> <p><u>Having a faculty adviser who is knowledgeable of academic policies, program curricula, and graduation requirements.</u></p>		<p>Suggestions and needs:</p> <p>“... more CRC preparation...paid internships... more opportunities to practice counseling interventions... reduce courseload...offer courses more than once yearly...all asynchronous classes...”</p>

		<p><u>The instruction that I am receiving in the MRC program is adequately familiarizing me with the relevant aspects of the rehabilitation counseling field</u></p> <p>86.7% of the students reported “very much so” when asked about the following:</p> <p><u>Faculty are accessible and reliable, consistently keeping class hours, office hours, and appointments.</u> (13.3.% of the students responded “moderately so”)</p> <p>86.7% of the students reported “very much so” when asked about the following:</p> <p><u>Communication between students, faculty, and staff is positive with students being made aware of important program announcements in a timely manner.</u> (13.3% of the student responded “moderately so”)</p>		
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The Unit held its Annual Retreat in July of 2023. The table below depicts strategic initiatives renewed and/or established for the MRC Program during the annual retreat:

Strategic Initiative	Status: Scale of 1-5 (<u>5</u> : Progress-- <u>3</u> : Some Progress-- <u>1</u> : No Progress) or N/A	Strategies or Action Plan
1.Maintain the Jasmine Marshall Foundation to afford students the opportunity to attend and present at local, state, and national conferences.	<u>3</u> : The current funds in the JMF exceeds \$5,000.	Four MRC students will attend the summer 2024 NAMRC conference; at least two of the students will present at the conference. The following expenses will be paid: registration, travel, printing and poster costs.

2. Maintain 90% retention rate of optimal student enrollment: 30 for MRC Program.	<u>5</u> : Active recruitment and retention plan.	2. Produce an annual recruitment and retention report by October 1 of each calendar year. The report will summarize recruitment and retention activities, outcomes, and growth projections.
3. Meet the application deadline for the next RSA grant which will afford students monies for books, tuition, in addition to a monthly stipend. This award will attract more students to the MRC program.	<u>1</u> : No RSA grant announced since 2020.	3. Respond to RSA award announcement within 2 weeks of receipt.
4. Continue to establish and maintain quality practicum and internship sites by staying abreast of the formation of new agencies serving people with disabilities.	<u>5</u> : Currently over 30 active clinical (placement) site contracts.	Increase number of clinical contracts for MRC students, by 3, each academic year.
5. Implement 2 graduate concentrations: Blind/Low Vision and Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing.	<u>3</u> : Syllabi are 75% complete.	Submit the complete syllabi for 2 MRC concentrations to the COHS curriculum committee for review and approval by the start of summer 2024.
7. Maintain accreditation status of the MRC program.	<u>5</u> : Program successfully reaccredited fall 2022.	CACREP standards will be part of the agenda of each monthly Unit meeting. Fall 2022 CACREP review resulted in zero deficits out of over 150 standards.

During academic year 2022-2023, the program placed students for practicum and internship at the following agencies:

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (Montgomery, Alabama)
 Career Development Training Center (Birmingham, Alabama)
 Council on Substance Abuse
 (Montgomery, Alabama)
 D.A.T.S M.O.M.
 (Montgomery, Alabama)
 Second Chance Foundation
 (Montgomery, Alabama)
 Seraaj Family Homes, Inc.
 (Montgomery, AL.)

Gulf Coast Veterans Health Care System
(Biloxi, MS)
American Red Cross
(Aviano Air Base, Italy)
Joy Center
(Aviana, Italy)

**During academic year 2022-2023, program
graduates were hired by the following agencies:**

Benefits Specialist, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (Gadsden, Alabama)

Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services
(Tuscaloosa, Alabama)

Vet Support Personnel, Vet Center- Alabama- Veterans Health Administration
(Montgomery, AL)

Therapist, Youth Villages
(Nashville, Tennessee)

Therapist, Pathways- Youth Treatment Facility
(Ozark, Alabama)

Work Life Specialist, Air Force Military & Family Readiness Center
(Aviano Air Base)

Therapist, Reclamation Center of Alabama
(Montgomery, AL)