A SELF-STUDY TO MOVE FROM PROVISIONAL TO ESTABLISHED STATUS

1. IS THE PROGRAM ORGANIZED TO MEET ITS OBJECTIVES?

Program Description:

The Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology program is administered by the Department of Psychology in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo. It is a 60 semester hour program designed to provide multicultural, student-centered training in counseling psychology and meets the curricular requirements for licensure as Mental Health Counselors in Hawai‘i.

The program currently is the only one in the University of Hawai‘i system that trains mental health counselors at the master’s degree level. The program admitted its first cohort of students in the Fall semester of 2005 and produced its first graduates (8 students) in May of 2007.

Counseling psychology as a psychological specialty aims at facilitating personal and interpersonal functioning across the life span with a focus on emotional, social, vocational, educational, health-related, developmental, and organizational concerns. Through the integration of theory, research, and practice, and with sensitivity to multicultural issues, this specialty encompasses a broad range of practices that help people improve their well-being, alleviate distress and maladjustment, resolve crises, and increase their ability to live more highly functioning lives. Counseling psychology is unique in its attention both to normal developmental issues and to problems associated with physical, emotional, and mental disorders. (Society of Counseling Psychology, Division 17 of the American Psychological Association, http://www.div17.org/)

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Master of Arts program in counseling psychology is to provide multicultural, student-centered, graduate training in counseling psychology. The program is designed to train students to become knowledgeable, skillful, ethical counselors who will be able to help people in need of professional counseling services. For students who may wish to pursue a doctoral degree in psychology later, the program provides training in advanced statistics and research methodology. It also offers opportunities for students to gain research experience by participating in ongoing projects and/or by initiating their own research projects or by completing a master’s thesis project. The program assigns a high priority to meeting the educational and personal needs of its students and is based on a scientist-practitioner model, with an emphasis on empirical research and evidence-based practices.
Program Goals:

The goals of the program are:

1. to provide students with the knowledge and skills to counsel clients from different ethnic, socio-economic, and educational backgrounds;
2. to provide students with a broad understanding of general counseling theory and practice, within a scientist-practitioner framework;
3. to provide students with the knowledge of the social, psychological, health, and economic problems that residents of Hawai‘i face, along with the professional skills to help people cope with and manage these problems in the future;
4. to offer research training opportunities to students who are interested in pursuing a doctoral degree in counseling psychology or a related field.

Prospects for Graduates:

Graduates of the program will be able to seek employment as professional counselors. Employment prospects for professional counselors are currently good in Hawai‘i and in many other areas of the United States. Employment opportunities in this field are expected to grow at a faster than average rate over the coming years. Professional counselors may find employment in a wide variety of settings, including the following:

- Community mental health clinics
- Public and private elementary and secondary schools
- Colleges and universities
- Correctional facilities
- Vocational rehabilitation centers
- Job training and career counseling centers
- Residential care facilities
- Drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs and agencies
- Private practice settings
- Mental hospitals and psychiatric wards
- General medical hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare facilities
- Employee Assistance Programs
- Child welfare and other family assistance agencies
- Military settings

Licensure

The program curriculum meets the educational requirements for licensure as a Mental Health Counselor in the state of Hawai‘i. Additional information can be obtained from the Hawai‘i Department of Commerce and Consumer Affairs (http://hawaii.gov/dcca/areas/pvl/programs/mental/)

Admission Requirements:
To be eligible for admission to the Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology program, students must meet the following minimum requirements:

1. A baccalaureate degree from a regionally-accredited institution;
2. A cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale;
3. A strong background in psychology or a closely related field, with a minimum of 15 semester hours of course work in psychology, strongly recommended are an introductory or survey of psychology, statistical techniques, research methods, and at least two 300-level or higher psychology courses. For these 15 semester hours, similar courses in closely related fields of study may also be acceptable;
4. At least one 3-credit course in statistics and one 3-credit course in research methods from any discipline;
5. A score of 550 on the TOEFL (required of applicants for whom English is not their native language and whose undergraduate degree was earned in a non-English speaking country).

Meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee admission. Eligible applications are reviewed by the Psychology Graduate Admissions Committee which uses multiple criteria for the assessment of applicants. Admission is selective. Priority is given to students applying for full-time enrollment. Depending on program needs, a few outstanding applicants for part-time enrollment may be admitted.

Application Procedure:

The priority application deadline for Fall admission is February 1. Applications received in the UH Hilo Graduate Office of Admissions after the deadline are considered on a space available basis. Students who submit applications after the February 1 deadline may be ineligible for certain types of financial aid.

Complete applications that meet the minimum admission requirements are forwarded to the Department of Psychology’s Graduate Admissions Committee, which reviews each application. Admission decisions are made by this committee and forwarded to the UH Hilo Graduate Office of Admissions.

The UH Hilo Graduate Office of Admissions receives applications and supporting documents and maintains the applications through final notification. In general, for applications received by the priority deadline, the Graduate Office of Admissions notifies each applicant of acceptance or rejection by March 1. Applicants must submit all of the following items:

1. UH Hilo Graduate application form;
2. Application fee;
3. Official transcripts from all colleges or universities attended (must be received directly from the institution or in a sealed envelope if submitted with your application);
4. Personal statement (see the program website);
5. Resume;
6. Three professional recommendation letters, which may use the special recommendation forms (not required, however) included with the application materials. The recommendations should be sent directly to the UH Hilo Graduate Office of Admissions by the referees;
7. GRE general test scores (sent to UH Hilo directly by the testing service).

In addition, international applicants must submit the following items:

- Supplementary Information Form for Foreign Students (http://www.uhh.hawaii.edu/forms/index.php);
- TOEFL scores (if English is not the applicant’s native language);
- Official college transcripts in the original language accompanied by official translations into English.

Applications are considered only when all of the above documents have been received. For more detailed information and to download application forms, students may use the program website. Application forms also may be obtained from the UH Hilo Graduate Office of Admissions.

Transfer of Credits:

Requests for transfer of credits must be made during the first semester in which the student is enrolled in the program. Students need to obtain departmental approval for all credit transfers. Only credit hours with a grade of B or better from accredited universities are transferable. Credit hours for practicum and internship courses are not transferable. Transfer credit hours must have been completed within five years prior to admission.

Course Substitutions:

Up to two 400-level courses can be used to substitute 600-level courses.

Program Curriculum (Mental Health Counseling track):

Total semester hours required: 60

Required courses (50 semester hours):

- PSY 601 (4) Applied Multivariate Statistics
- PSY 602 (3) Research Methodology and Program Evaluation
- PSY 603 (3) Psychological Assessment
- PSY 604 (3) Professional Identity, Ethics, and Legal Issues
- PSY 611 (3) Lifespan Human Development
- PSY 612 (3) Career Development
- PSY 613 (3) Psychopathology over the Lifespan
- PSY 620 (3) Counseling Theory
- PSY 622 (4) Group Work and Counseling
- PSY 623 (3) Social and Cultural Foundations
- PSY 624 (3) Counseling Skills
- PSY 640 (6) Counseling Practicum
- PSY 659 (9) Internship

Electives (10 semester hours required):
- PSY 614 (3) Family System
- PSY 641 (3) School Behavior, Adjustment, and Problems
- PSY 642 (3) Educational and Vocational Assessment
- PSY 643 (3) School and Career Guidance and Consultation
- PSY 651 (3) Theories of Family Counseling
- PSY 652 (3) Couple Counseling
- PSY 656 (3) Child Maltreatment
- PSY 694 (3) Advanced Topics
- PSY 699 (3) Directed Studies
- PSY 700 (3) Thesis Research (repeatable)
2. IS THE PROGRAM MEETING ITS LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR STUDENTS?

The primary goal of the program is to train students to become knowledgeable, skillful, ethical counselors who will be able to help people in need of professional counseling services. To assess whether this goal was being met with the students, 14 members of the first two cohorts who graduated in either May of 2007 or May of 2008 were surveyed. The survey consisted of two parts. Part One asked for the graduate’s cumulative grade point average (GPA) at the end of their tenure in the program. Part Two asked students to rate the degree to which they believe the program accomplished its four stated objectives and two additional items regarding the quality of the instructors and overall satisfaction with the program. All 14 graduates completed the survey.

For Part One, the graduates reported cumulative GPAs ranging from 3.80 to 4.00, with a mean of 3.91, on a 4-point scale. Results of Part Two are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Survey of Graduates (N = 14):

Respondents were asked to rate the following items in terms of their agreement with the statement regarding the Counseling Psychology Program at UHH.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Rating Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Program provided me with the knowledge and skills to counsel clients from different ethnic, socio-economic, and educational backgrounds.</td>
<td>64.3% (9)</td>
<td>35.7% (5)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>4.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Program provided me with a broad understanding of general counseling theory and practice, within a scientist-practitioner framework.</td>
<td>85.7% (12)</td>
<td>14.3% (2)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>4.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Program provided me with the knowledge of the social, psychological, health, and economic problems that residents of Hawai‘i face, along with the professional skills to help people cope with and manage these problems in the future.</td>
<td>28.6% (4)</td>
<td>57.1% (8)</td>
<td>14.3% (2)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Program offered research training opportunities to</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
students who are interested in pursuing a doctoral degree in counseling psychology or a related field.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.07</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I am satisfied with the quality of the instructors in the Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.7%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.43</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, I am satisfied with what I gained from the Program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>0.0%</td>
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<td>0.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>4.43</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

These results indicate that the graduates have successfully completed their courses with good grades and for the most part believed that the program objectives have been met. Most of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the four objectives were met (79% to 100% endorsement across the objectives) and that they were satisfied with the instructors (93% endorsement) and the program overall (93% endorsement). Based on these results, it can be concluded that the program is meeting its learning objectives for students.

However, attention also needs to be paid to the area that received less favorable ratings. Two respondents reported being unsure about whether the third objective was met and three respondents reported being either unsure or disagreed that the fourth objective was met. In addition, one respondent disagreed about the quality of the instructors and one respondent was unsure about being satisfied with the program overall. While the program can be satisfied with the positive ratings from most of the graduates, these uncertain and negative ratings also need to be addressed. As the program moves forward with hiring two more permanent faculty to become fully staffed (and as a result become less dependent on outside lecturers), it will maintain a high level of vigilance to ensure that all four objectives are being met and that the students are satisfied with the instructors and the program as a whole.
3. **ARE PROGRAM RESOURCES ADEQUATE?**

When the program began in 2005, the department hired an interim director and a tenure-track assistant professor. In 2006, a permanent director was hired at the rank of a full professor in addition to another faculty member at the rank of an associate professor. Currently, the program has three core faculty members but one of these persons is currently on leave from the program and department. To meet all of the teaching needs of the program during the last three years, other department faculty members and outside lecturers have participated in the program’s curriculum.

In terms of professional backgrounds of the three core faculty members, two of them identify as counseling psychologists and one identifies as a clinical psychologist. In addition, two of the faculty members are licensed psychologists and one is a licensed a mental health counselor (additional information about the areas of expertise of these three faculty members are presented under #5, Evidence of Program Quality).

The program is currently in the process of hiring two tenure-track assistant professors whose core instructional responsibilities will be with the program. Once these hires are made, the combination of the new faculty and the existing core faculty, in addition to the support of other departmental faculty, should lead to a more stable program in terms of meeting the program’s instructional needs and increasing the number of students that are admitted.

Despite these personnel assets however, the program continues to be in need of a Program Coordinator, a position that was originally assigned to the program when it began. It was envisioned that the duties of this position would include, but would not be limited to, (1) coordinating community practicum and internship placements; (2) managing the admission process; (3) assisting with accreditation/certification processes; (4) preparing and processing fiscal documents; and (5) program marketing. Although a permission to search for this position was not granted this year, it is hoped that the position will be allowed to fill next year.

In terms of financial support, the program is supported by general funds of the College of Arts and Sciences. With respect to other needs, the program, as well as the department in general, continues to be challenged by the lack of research and teaching space.
4. **IS THE PROGRAM EFFICIENT?**

Data were obtained from UH Hilo’s Office of Institutional Research for the purpose of completing the assessment of productivity and cost/benefit considerations. Presented in Attachment 1 are the results of this analysis, which shows that the program seems to be operating in an efficient manner. For example, although the first two years of the program experienced a higher operating costs than revenue, the third year of the program yielded a lower operating cost than revenue. In addition, when compared to the other MA program at UH Hilo, namely the China-U.S. Relations Program, the counseling psychology MA program appeared to be operating at greater efficiency.

Another indicator of program efficiency is the program’s graduation rate. In the first year of the program in Fall of 2005, 10 applicants were admitted into the program. Eight of these students graduated in May of 2007 and one student will be graduating in May of 2009. In Fall of 2006, 10 applicants were admitted into the program. Six of these students graduated in 2008 and two more will be graduating in May of 2009. In Fall of 2007, 11 applicants were admitted into the program. Ten of these students are currently on track to graduate in May of 2009 and the remaining student should finish in May of 2010. Most recently in Fall 2008, 8 students entered the program and they are on track to finish in May of 2010.
5. EVIDENCE OF PROGRAM QUALITY

Program’s Students:

Evidence of program quality can be explored through several indices and one of these indices is the quality of the program’s students. Below is a list of the students’ scholarly accomplishments in the form of master’s theses.

Completed Master’s Theses:

Tiffany Freitas: “Child Maltreatment in Hawai‘i: Cultural Issues in Assessment and Treatment” (2007)
Olga Archambeau: “Interpersonal Violence and Mental Health Outcomes among College Students in Rural Hawai‘i” (2008)
Tamia McKeague: “Problematic relationships, depression and anxiety during the transition to adulthood” (2008)
Lovina H. Moevao: “Alternative Education with At Risk Adolescents in Hawai‘i: A Follow-up Study on Lanakila Learning Center Students” (2008)

Master’s Theses in Progress:

Aimee Deliramich: “Effects of Childhood Physical and Sexual Violence and Adult Mental Health Outcomes among College Students in Rural Hawai‘i”
Clarissa Fernandes: “Acculturation, Internalization of Western Appearance Norms, and the Development of Eating Disorders among College Students in Rural Hawai‘i”
Edward Johns: “Drag Families In Hawai‘i: Exploration of Mahuwahine Social Support Systems”

Also, below is a list of awards and honors received by the students.

Tiffany Freitas: “Outstanding Graduate Student 2007,” UH Hilo, Department of Psychology
Darissa Kekuawela: Imi Na‘auao scholarship from Kamehameha Schools ($12,000 each academic year from 2006-08)
Tamia McKeague: Student Representative, Graduate Council (elected position, 2006-07)
Lovina Moevao: Imi Na‘auao scholarship from Kamehameha Schools ($12,000 each academic year from 2006-08), Alu Like ($788), Liko A’e ($1000) (2006-2008)
Aulii Canencia: Association for the Development of the Person-Centered Approach conference travel award ($250) (2008)
Kahealani Wright: Imi Na‘auao scholarship from Kamehameha Schools for the past academic year ($12,000), Liko A’e Scholarship ($8,000), Ho‘omaka Hou ($3,000), Rosemary and Nellie Ebbie Fund ($1,000) (2007-08)
Furthermore in terms of academic achievements, the survey of program’s graduates that was described above showed that they had cumulative GPAs ranging from 3.80 to 4.00, with a mean of 3.91, on a 4-point scale.

Core Program Faculty

In addition to student achievement in these various forms, evidence of program quality can also be obtained by examining faculty achievements. Below are descriptions of the three core faculty members’ backgrounds and their accomplishments.

Dr. B. Christopher Frueh joined our faculty in August 2006 as full professor and program director; he is currently on leave from the department. Dr. Frueh received his Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Florida in 1992. Since graduation, he has been conducting mental health services research at the Medical University of South Carolina, South Carolina Department of Mental Health, and VA Medical Center, Charleston, SC. In Charleston, he was Director of the Division of Public Psychiatry and of the VA PTSD Clinical Team, and a tenured Professor of Psychiatry. He has been an independently funded investigator on 12 federally grants as PI from National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), Agency for Healthcare Quality and Research (AHRQ), Veterans Affairs (VA), and Department of Defense (DOD) since 1999. In August of 2006 he was awarded an NIMH Mid-Career Development (K24-MH074468) grant titled Mentoring/Career Development in PTSD Services Research—to expand knowledge of community violence in rural areas, improve services, and examine the impact of traumatic exposure on a range of relevant mental health, health and economic variables. He has authored over 150 original peer-reviewed scientific reports and book chapters. He reviews regularly for several different federally funding agencies and about 15 different scientific journals, serves on the editorial board of five of these (the American Psychological Association’s new services journal Psychological Services, Journal of Personality Assessment, Journal of Anxiety Disorders, Clinical Psychology Review, and Journal of Trauma and Practice), and is an Associate Editor of the Journal of Traumatic Stress.

Dr. Steve Herman joined our faculty in August 2005. He received his Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from Stanford University in 1998 and is licensed to practice as a psychologist in Hawai‘i. His areas of clinical and research interest include the study of professional judgments about the validity of allegations of child sexual abuse evaluations, juror decision making in criminal trials, behavioral medicine (especially psychosocial interventions for cancer and heart disease patients), mitigating the impact of financial catastrophes such as foreclosure and bankruptcy on mental health, career counseling, group counseling, the use of the computers and the Internet to facilitate psychological research and interventions, and positive psychology. He has two major current research projects focusing on a) mental health professionals' judgments about the validity of child sexual abuse allegations and b) the accuracy of jury verdicts in criminal trials. At UH Hilo, Dr. Herman teaches courses on ethics, counseling theories and skills, career counseling, group counseling, child maltreatment, and psychological assessment. He also supervises our master's students' practicum and internship experiences. In August 2008, Dr. Herman organized and co-presented a one-day continuing education workshop entitled "Forensic Child Sexual Abuse Evaluations: Research and Practice" at the annual
Dr. Bryan S. K. Kim joined the program in August 2006 as an associate professor and was promoted to full professor with tenure in 2008. Also in 2008, he was appointed as the Director of MA Program in Counseling Psychology. Dr. Kim received the Ph.D. in Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology with an emphasis in Counseling Psychology from the University of California, Santa Barbara in June of 2000. He has a Master of Education in School Counseling (1995) and a Bachelor of Education in Secondary Science Education (1992), both from the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. Dr. Kim also is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in Hawai‘i. Prior to arriving at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo in 2006, Dr. Kim was an associate professor with tenure in the Department of Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology at the UCSB. Between 2000 and 2002, he was an Assistant Professor of Counseling Psychology in the Department of Psychology at the University of Maryland, College Park. Dr. Kim currently has 60 publications and has received over $440,000 in extramural research funding. His research focuses on multicultural counseling process and outcome, measurement of cultural constructs, counselor education and supervision, and immigrant experiences. His current research examines the effects of culture-specific counseling interventions and client enculturation/acculturation (e.g., cultural values) on counseling process and outcome. Dr. Kim is currently an Associate Editor of *The Counseling Psychologist* and *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, and serves on the editorial boards of the *Journal of Counseling Psychology, Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development, Psychotherapy Theory, Research, Practice, and Training*, and *Educational Researcher*. In 2003, Dr. Kim received the “Early Career Award for Distinguished Contributions” from the Asian American Psychological Associations. In 2005, he received the “ACA Research Award” from the American Counseling Association and “The MECD [Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development] Editor's Award” from the Association for Assessment in Counseling and Development. In 2006, Dr. Kim received the “Fritz and Linn Kuder Early Career Scientist/Practitioner Award” from the Society of Counseling Psychology (Division 17 of the American Psychological Association). Most recently in 2008, Dr. Kim received the “Emerging Professional Award” from the Society of the Psychological Study of Ethnic Minority Issues (Division 45 of APA) and was awarded Fellow status by the American Psychological Association.

For more information about each of these faculty members, their curriculum vitae can be accessed at the following website: [http://counseling.uhh.hawaii.edu/faculty.htm](http://counseling.uhh.hawaii.edu/faculty.htm). In addition to these faculty members, several high quality Ph.D.-level instructors from within the department and in the community have taught courses for the program.

Furthermore in terms of quality of instruction, the survey of graduates as noted above showed the following average ratings (5 = strong agree; 1 = strongly disagree).

“I am satisfied with the quality of the instructors in the Program.” – 4.43  
“Overall, I am satisfied with what I gained from the Program.” – 4.43

These ratings further attest to the overall quality of the instructors and the program as a whole.
6. ARE PROGRAM OUTCOMES COMPATIBLE WITH THE OBJECTIVES?

An important way to assess whether the program outcomes are compatible with the objectives is to examine the marketability of the graduates of the program. Thirteen of the 14 graduates in our survey provided the name of their current employers; one graduate did not provide this information. As can be seen below, the results revealed that the graduates are employed with mental health or closely related agencies. The results also suggest that the graduates of the program are readily able to find positions that match well with their training and suggest that the program outcomes are compatible with its objectives.

- Child and Family Services (Hilo) – Sexual Abuse Treatment Services Therapist (2 graduates)
- Child and Family Service (Waimea) – Sexual Abuse Treatment Services Therapist
- The Institute for Family Enrichment (TIFFE) in Hilo - Functional Family Therapist (2 graduates)
- CARE Hawaii (Hilo) – Case Manager for Severely Mentally Ill Clients (2 graduates)
- Hawai‘i Department of Education – Lanakila Learning Center
- Hawai‘i Department of Education – School-based Behavioral Health Specialist/Educational Aid
- Kanu o ka `Aina New Century Public Charter School – School-based Behavioral Health Specialist
- Kua O Ka La Public Charter School – School Counselor
- Kamehameha Schools, Community Based Early Childhood Education
- Kamehameha Schools Extension Education Services Division - East Hawai‘i Program Coordinator/Counselor for Kamehameha Scholars
7. ARE PROGRAM OBJECTIVES STILL APPROPRIATE FUNCTIONS OF THE COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY?

When the MA Program in Counseling Psychology was initiated, it was based on the premise that it would help to meet the significant mental health service needs on the Big Island, as well as the rest of the State and the nation. The need for mental health service providers has been documented recently in several ways. In terms of the needs in the State of Hawai‘i, a status report on the behavioral health workforce in Hawai‘i that was prepared by the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) Mental Health Program in January 2008 stated:

In largely rural states, such as Hawai‘i, there have been historical difficulties in recruiting and retaining an effective behavioral health workforce. Additionally, the recent report of the President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health described in detail the significant problems facing mental or behavioral health systems throughout the country, particularly in rural areas. These include critical gaps in accessibility to services, critical shortages in the availability of providers and programs, impaired acceptability of care due to urban-based models and strategies, and establishing mental health policy without consideration of its rural impact.

The national, regional, and state efforts currently underway indicate significant momentum behind behavioral health workforce development, particularly in rural areas. Specifically, the creation of a national behavioral health workforce development strategy is being spearheaded by the Annapolis Coalition on Behavioral Health Workforce. Rural workforce development is a major component of this effort. Regionally, western states such as Alaska, Arizona, Nevada, and North Dakota have undertaken their own state-level workforce initiatives with the help of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) Mental Health Program. These activities provide a context in which the State of Hawai‘i is now undertaking its own workforce development project. (p. 2)

This report noted that “[v]irtually the entire state is designed as a federal Mental Health Shortage Area” and called for, among other things, collaboration between the State government and the University of Hawai‘i System to increase the workforce in professional mental health service. The initiation and development of the MA Program in Counseling Psychology at the UH Hilo through the support and funding by the UH System and the State legislature can be viewed as a very promising outcome of this collaboration.

At the national level, the needs for mental health counselors are similar to those described for the State of Hawai‘i. According to the Occupational Outlook Handbook (2008-09 Edition) from the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor,

Employment of mental health counselors is expected to grow by 30 percent [through 2016], which is much faster than the average or all occupations. Mental health counselors will be needed to staff statewide networks that are being
established to improve services for children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbances and for their families. Under managed care systems, insurance companies are increasingly providing for reimbursement of counselors as a less costly alternative to psychiatrists and psychologists. (http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos067.htm#outlook)

Based on these data, the MA Program in Counseling Psychology at UH Hilo can play a significant role in meeting the mental health needs of the State and nation. As mentioned above, the recent closing of the Department of Counselor Education at UH Manoa has left the program as the only one in the UH System that trains mental health counselors at the master’s degree level. Also, the program’s specialization on training multiculturally competent mental health counselors could become an attractive role model for other training programs across the nation and in other countries. For all of these reasons, moving the MA program from provisional to established status would be a critical key in the efforts to boost mental health service providers in the State of Hawai‘i and the nation.