

Submission date: February 10, 2020

Program/s in this review: Master of Science in Clinical Psychology

Specialized accrediting agency (if applicable): None

Campuses where the program is delivered: UAA

Members of the program review committee:

- Gloria Eldridge, Ph.D., Professor, Coordinator of MS in Clinical Psychology
- Eric Murphy, Ph.D., Professor, Director of Department of Psychology

1. Centrality of Program Mission and Supporting Role (700 words or less)

- **Relevancy of the program/s;**

UAA is the flagship institution in the UA system for education and training in the science and practice of psychology. The Department of Psychology has two aims: (1) to prepare students for advanced study in the social, behavioral, and health sciences and (2) to prepare students to become members of the behavioral health workforce. **The Master of Science in Clinical Psychology (MSCP) is designed to train graduates to enter the Alaska behavioral health workforce and meet master's licensing requirements.** Since 1971, the MSCP has met workforce demands and master's level licensing requirements, including the Licensed Psychological Associate (LPA), Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), and Licensed Behavior Analyst (LBA). As noted by one of largest community mental health agencies in the state "We hire and employ more graduates from the Master of Science in Clinical Psychology Program at UAA than from any other graduate program inside or outside Alaska. Our experience has been that the program provides a solid educational foundation and excellent clinical training, to future master's level practitioners."

- **Any role the program plays in supporting other academic programs;**

Because of the integration of programs in Psychology, the MSCP supports the Psychology BA/BS and the PhD in Clinical/Community Psychology. From 2012 to 2019, 52% of MSCP students were UAA graduates, providing a pipeline to graduate training as behavioral health clinicians in Alaska. The MSCP was the foundation for the PhD and since the PhD moved to UAA, the MSCP and PhD have become increasingly integrated, sharing courses, practicum training in the Psychological Services Center (PSC), and faculty. PhD students receive the MSCP degree during the PhD program. Sixteen students from the MSCP have gone on to the UAA PhD.

- **Partnerships with outside agencies, businesses, or organizations;**

During the review period, MSCP students completed community training internships in the following agencies:

- Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC)
- Alaska Psychiatric Institute
- Anchorage School District Behavioral Team
- Anchorage Community Mental Health Services
- Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center
- Alaska Regional Hospital
- Birchwood Behavioral Health Alaska,
- Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation, Behavioral Health, Dillingham
- Catholic Social Services - Immigrant/Refugee services
- Chris Kyle Patriots Center
- Clitheroe Center Addiction Treatment
- Coastal Wellness and Counseling

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- Cook Inlet Tribal Council
- Cornerstone Counseling Services
- Denali Family Services
- Department of Corrections (DOC) Highland Mountain Correctional Center
- DOC Palmer Correctional Center
- DOC Sex Offender Treatment (supervision by Dr. Roger Graves)
- JBER/DoD Behavioral Health Clinic
- Hope Community Resources
- Mat/Su Recovery Center (Wasilla)
- Mat/Su Treatment Center (Palmer)
- Providence Alaska CARES
- Providence Behavioral Medicine Group
- Providence Breakthrough
- Providence Family Medicine Center
- Southcentral Foundation
- UAA Student Health and Counseling Center
- Veterans Administration Domiciliary

Other recent collaborative partnerships include Cook Inlet Native Head Start, the Alaska Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health, the Governor’s Council for Early Intervention Committee, and Thread Alaska, Inc. MSCP faculty sit on Boards of community agencies and update course content to meet workforce demand. As noted by one of the largest community mental health agencies in the state: “We also have partnered with the program to provide clinical practicum/internship placements for graduate students enrolled in the program. Our experience has been that the faculty of the program are excellent partners and we share common goals, to educate and train practitioners to provide the highest quality care in Alaska. Faculty from the program also have served on our Advisory Councils, have collaborated with us on training activities, and work with us to educate, train and mentor future practitioners and leaders in the mental health field. The program is an essential partner for us, and a critical resource to our community and State.”

The PSC training clinic for MSCP and PhD students is one of two sliding fee scale clinics providing behavioral health services in the Anchorage area. The current load of approximately 100 clients is split evenly between community members and UAA students.

- **Specific workforce development and employment opportunities relevant to the program;**

MSCP graduates work throughout Alaska in agencies providing behavioral health and related services (in positions ranging from direct care to training and supervision to program development and administration) and in private practice.

- **Sources of extramural support and funding for the program;**

The program does not receive funding from other sources. MSCP faculty seek out research and service grants to provide support for students.

- **Any high demand job designation for the program;**

Workforce reports from the State of Alaska identify the **behavioral health workforce as an area of high demand and limited supply.**

2. Program Demand (including service to other programs), Efficiency, and Productivity (7 year trend; 1400 words or less)

Analyze the 2020 Program Review data provided in the attached data sheet. Provide clarifications or explanations for any positive or negative trends indicated by the data. Include the extent to which tuition, fees, extramural funding, and other external sources cover the cost of the faculty.

The MSCP graduated 87 students during the review period, including students who obtained the MS through the MSCP and students who obtained the MS through the PhD program. The dramatic reduction in the number of awards beginning in 2018 is a consequence of **reduced admissions to the MSCP resulting directly from the near complete termination of Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTAs) for MSCP students.** Previously, the MSCP admitted 12 to 14 students per year and funded approximately 10 first year GTAs. The program made funding offers at the time of admission offers, which made the program highly competitive with other MS in Clinical Psychology programs in the Lower 48 and ensured that a large proportion of our top ranked candidates (from Alaska and from the Lower 48) accepted admission. After funding was reduced and we were no longer informed about available funding at the time of admissions offers, our acceptance rate declined as top ranked students from Alaska and elsewhere elected to go to other programs that provided funding. We have addressed this problem three ways. **First**, faculty actively seek research and service learning grants to support students in lieu of GTA funding. We maintain active relationships with ISER, CBHRS, and ICHS and take advantage of all opportunities for graduate student support offered by other institutes and programs at UAA. In AY 19-20, faculty projects and contacts with other institutes ensured that all MSCP students who were able to accept graduate student funding were funded. However, because of vagaries in obtaining external funding, this requires enormous effort from faculty and does not provide consistent funding for student support. **Second**, we have worked with students and with our course schedule to make our program more attractive to students who maintain employment in the community during their graduate training. Students have elected to “stretch” their program from its usual five to six terms so that they can work while continuing their graduate training; this has negatively affected time to graduation. **Third**, we have increased our outreach to potential students to encourage them to consider the MSCP at UAA. It appears from the number of requests for information about the program in this admissions cycle that the decline in admissions may have stabilized. Approval for the BCBA track (see below on future directions) for which there is great demand will result in increased admissions.

The Credits per Degree data contain some errors. Students cannot graduate with fewer than 48 credit hours. The MSCP is designed so that students graduate with 48 credit hours (including one term of practicum and two terms of internship that each require 20 hours per week of supervised clinical practice) within five to six terms over two years of year-round enrollment. Additional years to graduate are a consequence of: (1) students seeking an additional 12 credit hours prior to graduation for the 60 credit hours required by the LPC license; (2) students stretching their programs to allow them to seek part-time work to compensate for the lack of student funding; and (3) differences in course sequencing for students who earn the MS on their way to the PhD.

As shown in the program enrollment trend data, enrollment has remained relatively consistent (ranging from 21 to 33 students each year) during the review period, reflecting the number of active students each year. Each year shows first and second year students and students who have extended their program into a third year. During the review period, three students withdrew for personal reasons, two did not complete the program due to course failures, one did not return from a leave of absence, and three students extended their programs beyond three years for personal reasons (work and family responsibilities, health problems) or the need to repeat failed courses.

Because the MS is a professional degree preparing graduates to meet LPA and LPC licensure requirements in Alaska, the number of credit hours and courses does not vary – students enter in a cohort each year and progress through the same courses and training experiences on the way to graduation. Data on student credit hours (SCH) per full time faculty equivalent show the impact of the decline in enrollment following the loss of GTA funding. Overall, each faculty member produces approximately 200 SCH per year. Recall that the MS is a graduate program designed to train students to enter the behavioral health workforce in Alaska as licensed mental health practitioners. **The training required to produce those highly skilled practitioners requires close mentoring and clinical supervision by faculty members and high impact teaching practices including clinical simulations, small group exercises, and skills practice.** Class sizes are smaller in comparison to undergraduate courses or other master’s courses that are not professional training courses. Traditionally, MSCP course caps have been set at 10 to 15, which is consistent with course sizes for other master’s programs in clinical psychology. Practicum and internship courses are smaller because of the need for time-intensive one-on-one clinical supervision.

The mean number of students per faculty member has declined only slightly over the review period, despite the reduction in admissions after the loss of GTA funding. The decline in students has been offset by a decline in faculty devoted to the program. The program has lost three faculty members who have not been replaced. This has placed an additional burden on faculty to deliver the program and has required accommodations, for example, faculty members who shifted from tripartite to bipartite contracts and the strategic decision to share courses with the PhD program.

The MS program in psychology is **efficient**. Since Spring 2015 (the earliest data we could gather that were not corrupted in the IR dashboard), the MS program averaged \$233,606 in revenue per academic year versus \$176,684 in **total** MS faculty pay. In addition, in the period from Spring 2015 to Spring 2019, the MS program's mean efficiency (assuming 100% tuition) was 1.32 and the 80% tuition efficiency (the amount that supports CAS) was 1.06. In that period, the mean efficiency for spring term was 1.01, for summer term was .58, and for fall term was 1.31. Because of the nature of the program, more academic courses are offered in spring and fall terms, and summer term is generally limited to one elective (much of that cost is supported by the Certificate in Child Mental Health) plus practicum and community internship. Hence, the lower efficiency in summer is due to the fact that the relative higher cost of intensive supervision courses (e.g., practicum and internship) is not offset by larger sections of academic offerings as is the case in spring and fall. It is necessary to continue offering practicum and internship courses in the summer to maintain viability for the PSC as a community referral clinic, to maintain continuity for community internship sites, and to ensure that students can graduate within five semesters. Of particular note is the greater mean efficiency in fall courses, which is directly related to a strategic decision by the MS and PhD faculty to combine introductory level courses (e.g., Intervention I, Ethics and Professional Practice, Multicultural Psychopathology, and Human Development in a Multicultural Context) to enlarge class size and increase efficiency. Despite the declining enrollment due to loss of GTA funding, the MS program remains efficient overall and is continually working with the PhD program and the BA/BS faculty to increase efficiency. Without question, professional programs such as the MS that rely heavily on high impact teaching practices and close mentoring and supervision of students to prepare them for entering the Alaska behavioral health workforce on graduation are more costly than undergraduate courses or graduate programs that do not lead to professional licensure. However, that must be balanced against the value to the state of Alaska and to the behavioral health workforce. The MS program is part of a highly integrated Psychology department and a small amount of revenue from the highly efficient undergraduate program is used to support the MS program and the PhD program. The MS provides value to the department in that it is a desirable option for graduate training and professional workforce development for students graduating with the BA/BS degrees. Recall that 52% of students admitted to the MS during the review period were UAA graduates and over the course of the PhD program, 16 students from the MS program were admitted into the PhD. Both the MS and PhD are critical to behavioral/mental health workforce development in the state and are not designed to be SCH generators. The Department of Psychology is **integrated** across all three major programs (i.e., BA/BS, MS, & PhD). Most faculty teach and mentor students in two or more programs. Even with two expensive graduate programs, the entire Department of Psychology generated \$2.9 million in revenue versus \$1.9 million in total UGF faculty pay in AY 18-19.

3. Program Quality, Improvement and Student Success (1500 words or less)

Comment on the program's quality, referring back to the data in question #2 when applicable. Consider:

- **Specialized accreditation process and status;**

There is currently no national accreditation for Master's programs in Clinical Psychology. CACREP accredits master's level counseling programs but not clinical psychology programs. In March 2018, the American Psychological Association (APA) approved a resolution for accreditation of master's level programs in areas already accredited by APA at the doctoral level. An APA workgroup has produced standards for accreditation which will be published in 2020. **Our intent is to immediately seek APA accreditation.** The PhD program is already accredited by APA, and, given the integration of the MSCP and the PhD, the MSCP is well-positioned to seek APA accreditation, making the MSCP the only APA-accredited master's program in clinical psychology in Alaska. APA made the decision to begin accrediting master's level clinical psychology programs to certify training standards for clinical psychology programs that were not eligible for CACREP accreditation of counseling programs. **Having APA accreditation will significantly and positively affect enrollment in the**

MSCP. Students will benefit from graduating from an APA accredited program, which will provide licensing benefits across the US.

- **Currency of the curriculum;**

The curriculum is current in terms of licensing requirements for the LPA and LPC licenses in Alaska. Over the past year, we have been working to update all CCGs and that will be completed by the end of spring term 2020.

- **Innovative program design;**

It may sound paradoxical in the days of online education to say that one of the most desirable and innovative aspects of the MSCP is that it is the only master's level program in mental health in the UA system that is delivered face-to-face. All other programs are distance delivered. Distance delivery of programs is important for students in rural or remote areas; **however, having a residential program in the largest population center in the state provides an important option for students who find that in-person training enhances their ability to acquire interpersonal clinical skills.** The MSCP offers unique training opportunities for students to acquire clinical skills. The MSCP uses the Clinical Simulation Lab in Health Sciences for training foundational clinical skills with standardized clients and for interprofessional simulation exercises to provide experience in collaborating with health practitioners from a variety of disciplines, including medicine, nursing, allied health professions, and social work. The initial supervised clinical experience is conducted in a state-of-the-art community clinic located in SSB where students deliver behavioral health services to the community under the supervision of licensed faculty and gain experience with the use of electronic medical records prior to being assigned to community internship sites. The initial clinical experience at the PSC provides a unique opportunity for students to begin their supervised clinical experience that combines a community population with state-of-the-art technology and the supervision of licensed clinicians.

- **Availability and indications of quality of distance offerings (e.g., Quality Matters, C-RAC standards, etc.);**

The program is not distance delivered. While distance delivery is important for students in rural and remote areas, it is important that students in the largest population center in the state have the option for in-person delivery of training. **Students often report that they chose the UAA MSCP because it offers in-person clinical training.**

- **Program Student Learning Outcomes assessment: Describe your key findings, actions taken to improve student learning, and evidence that these actions are working.**

The Program Outcome Assessment for the MSCP is analyzed by core program faculty every year and modifications are made to the program based on the outcome assessment. Our outcome assessment, focusing on clinical skills, fund of relevant knowledge, and use of data, reflects the readiness and competence of MS graduates to enter the workforce, compete for jobs, and prepare for licensing. A sample of recent adjustments includes: (1) adding more opportunities for students to prepare for licensing examinations by introducing practice licensing exams in courses and in the Clinical Portfolio; (2) revising the Clinical Portfolio to more clearly reflect specific clinical competencies and provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate their skills in assessment, case conceptualization, diagnosis, and treatment planning; and (3) ensuring that students retain evidence of their program content (e.g., syllabi and supervision records) for submission to licensing boards and employers. The current outcomes assessment plan consists of Oral and Written Exit Exams, review of research activity, an exit survey for graduating students, and a tri-annual survey of alumni. Continued contact and communication with Alumni is maintained through an MS program Facebook page. One example of the use of that page is **sharing communications about job and training opportunities for graduates.** For example, in the past month, MSCP faculty have been approached by several agencies in Alaska to post information about employment possibilities on our FB and our department website.

- **How well the program is doing on Student Success and what it is doing to facilitate it.**
 - **Student engagement in high impact practices featured by the program, such as service learning, research experiences or scholarly collaboration with faculty members, common intellectual**

- experiences, internships, practicum or clinical experiences, field courses, study abroad, capstone experiences, etc. (See [AAC&U High-Impact Practices site](#));
- Student support (e.g. How does your program handle academic advising?);
- Other?

The MSCP capitalizes on opportunities for high impact teaching in addition to clinical practice and community internships. Several courses (e.g., Interventions 1 and 2, Addictions series) use the Clinical Simulation laboratory in Health Sciences for practicing clinical skills with standardized clients and participate in the Interprofessional Simulation exercises with students from medicine, nursing, social work, and other allied health disciplines. Students are required to complete three terms of supervised clinical practice, one in the PSC and two in community placements. **Community placements often turn into job opportunities for graduates.**

Many MSCP students complete the **Child Mental Health Certificate** (see separate report), an occupational endorsement indicating expertise in child mental health assessment and treatment during their time in the program. The Child Mental Health Certificate has been expanded to offer opportunities and training in infant mental health and assessment, a growing area of demand for graduates in Alaska. In addition, during the review period, five MSCP students completed the **LEND scholar program**. The Alaska LEND (Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disabilities) program offered by the Center for Human Development at UAA provides “graduate level interdisciplinary leadership training for individuals with a commitment to providing family-centered coordinated systems of health care and related services to improve the health of infants, children, and adolescents who have, or are at risk for developing, autism and other developmental disabilities” and offers students extraordinary training and networking opportunities during their MS degree.

Students have the opportunity to complete an empirical thesis during the program. About one-quarter of students elect to complete a thesis. In the review period, two students published their theses and two have manuscripts in preparation for publication. **This attests to the quality of the research conducted by MSCP students and the research training that they receive.**

Incoming students select an academic advisor who is responsible for working with the student to ensure timely progress through the program. That advisor plans the student’s program and meets regularly with the student to ensure that the student is progressing toward graduation.

- **Student accomplishments such as successful institutional honors, exit exam pass rates and subsequent enrollment (Up to 10 specific examples)**

With only six exceptions in the review period, students graduate successfully from the program and go in one of two directions: (1) employment and licensure as a master’s level mental health clinician in Alaska and in other states, or (2) additional graduate training in PhD or PsyD programs in Alaska and outside the state. The vast majority of students go on to master’s level employment and licensure, contributing greatly to the behavioral health workforce in Alaska. A survey of graduates during the review period indicates that **all graduates who have gone into the behavioral health workforce have met or are meeting requirements for the LPA or LPC license** in Alaska or in other states. Sixteen students from the MSCP have gone on to the UAA PhD program; two MSCP graduates applied to the UAA PhD in spring 2020 and both have been selected for interviews and consideration for admission. Four MSCP graduates have completed the PsyD (Doctorate in Professional Psychology) at Alaska Pacific University and are licensed psychologists in the State of Alaska. Two graduates applied for and were accepted to PhD programs outside the state.

4. Program Duplication / Distinctiveness (300 words or less)

Identify and address program duplication resulting from the existence of a similar program or programs elsewhere in the University of Alaska statewide system. Is duplication justified, and if so why? Or do you have ideas for addressing duplication (course sharing, merging programs, etc.)?

The MSCP is the only master's program in Clinical Psychology in Alaska and is closely integrated with the PhD in Clinical/Community Psychology at UAA. This close integration has provided a valuable second opportunity for students who do not complete the PhD program; students who meet the requirements for the MSCP maintain the opportunity for licensure as master's mental health clinicians even when they are unable for personal or other reasons to complete the PhD degree.

UAF has a distance delivered M.Ed. in Mental Health Counseling in the School of Education, however, that program is not sufficient to meet demand for master's level behavioral health practitioners in the state. UAA has a distance-delivered MSW; however, that program does not train students for LPA or LPC licensure. The MSCP is the only residential training program for master's level licensed behavioral health clinicians in the UA system. As noted by one of the largest providers of mental health services in the state: "Unfortunately, Alaska's mental health and substance abuse treatment needs are acute, and we know that we must expand our services to meet the need in our primary locations (Anchorage and Fairbanks) and throughout the State." **The MSCP does not overlap with other behavioral health training programs in the UA system and maintains a unique position as the only residential program providing face-to-face delivery of training.**

5. Summary Analysis (500 words or less)

The MSCP has a longstanding reputation in Alaska for excellence in workforce development, producing a large proportion of the state's master's level behavioral health workforce since its inception in 1971. The program has been responsive to changing licensure, training, and professional needs in the state. Graduates from the MS are employed in all regions of the state, in all agencies that provide behavioral health and addictions treatment services, in state departments devoted to funding and public policy, and in private practice. Over the years, program faculty have anticipated changing training and workforce needs and have attempted to address those needs. For example, in response to documented need for distance delivery of behavioral health training programs, the MS program developed a distance delivery track for the MS, which was not approved due to resource and funding limitations (see Program Prioritization report for details). There is still no distance delivered master's program in clinical psychology in the state.

At this time, the MS program has the opportunity to pursue two very important changes to address critical workforce needs in Alaska and greatly expand enrollment in the MSCP. The first is **APA accreditation**; in 2020, APA is publishing its accreditation standards for master's level training programs. The MS program is in an opportune position to seek APA accreditation, because it is closely integrated with the PhD program, which was recently reaccredited by APA for 10 years (the longest period of accreditation that can be granted). APA accreditation will greatly increase interest in and admissions to the MSCP.

The second is gaining approval from the CAS Dean and UAA provost for a track in the MS program to train **Board Certified Applied Behavior Analysts who will be eligible for national BCBA certification and for LBA licensure in Alaska.** The LBA license was approved by the State of Alaska in 2016 in recognition of the rapid growth in and demand for master's level Applied Behavior Analysts in Alaska. There are no in-state training programs for Applied Behavior Analysts in Alaska and practitioners must be brought in from out of state or local students must seek training out of state or through online programs in the Lower 48 that do not address critical practice needs in Alaska. The new track in Applied Behavior Analysis capitalizes on the BCBA credentials of existing Psychology faculty, will share courses with the existing MSCP and PhD programs, and will include already approved graduate courses being offered in Psychology. This is a time limited opportunity to address an urgent workforce need in Alaska, substantially increase enrollment in the MSCP at a time of declining student support, and provide opportunities for UAA psychology undergraduates with a major or minor in Applied Behavior Analysis to pursue graduate training in Alaska. **UAA has the opportunity to become the only program in Alaska to train Licensed Behavior Analysts for the unique demands of practice in urban and rural Alaska.** The proposed new MSCP track is complete and only awaits UAA approval to begin admitting students from the long list of potential students who are waiting for the track to be approved.