

**New York Institute of Technology
M.S. in School Counseling
Annual Report
AY 2020-21**

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Summary

The M.S. in School Counseling program continues to evolve to meet the needs of our students and ever-changing standards in the field. This academic year, 23 students (of 25 candidates) completed the program and graduated in May or will graduate in August. This represents a 92% completion rate. Both the New York City (9 students) and Long Island campuses (14 students) were represented. Additionally, we have already accepted 15 new candidates for the M.S. in School Counseling program and 4 new candidates for the M.S. with Bilingual Extension. We are hopeful that we will meet our target goal of 30 students in our incoming cohort.

We continue to use evaluation data to inform programmatic modifications. Our key performance indicators, the Keystone assignments for each course, provide us with valuable information about our students' knowledge and skills. From the attached *Custom Performance Report* you will see that the average score for the majority of the standards covered by all Keystones in the Fall '20 and Spring '21 semester were in the *Target* (2.5-3.0) range. Furthermore, all average scores for all standards covered in these semesters were in the *Acceptable* (2.0-2.5) or *Target* range. This indicates that our students are obtaining the necessary knowledge and skills measured by these key performance indicators.

There are certainly areas in which we could strengthen our curriculum and instruction as indicated by these scores. The use of data (e.g. to evaluate school counseling programs) continues to be a challenging topic. We are lucky to have Dr. Kim teaching *EDCO 810: Research, Assessment, Technology* and we are confident that she has already strengthened that course. Also, post-pandemic we believe that one of the most important skills for school counselors will be in the addressing crises and trauma. Dr. Hazel revised and improved our *EDCO 703: Trauma and Crisis Counseling: Intervention, Practice and Theory* course last year and we will continue to offer this course moving forward. We are confident that these changes will bolster our curriculum.

Challenges

On March 9th, 2020 New York Institute of Technology canceled the first class due to the outbreak of COVID-19. The pandemic hit the New York area quickly and the first confirmed on-campus case was March 18th. Soon afterwards, both our New York City and Long Island campuses were closed, all of our face-to-face and blended classes were converted to fully online or Zoom, and our students' practicum and internship placements were suspended or converted to fully remote. Our focus over the past year has been (a) adapting to the new guidelines and restrictions placed on us due to the COVID-19 pandemic, (b) providing our students with the same level of quality education while ensuring that they meet all the requirements for graduation and certification in the state of New York, and (c) caring for the health and wellness of our faculty, staff, and especially our students. Fall '20 and Spring '21 were complicated, as all of our classes have been held online or via Hybrid Remote Instruction via Zoom. New York schools



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have re-opened, been forced back to remote instruction, and re-opened again, leaving our interns struggling to adapt to new rules and means of gaining hours. The faculty have worked harder than ever before to find placements for all our practicum and internship students, communicate with site supervisors and reassure our students that they will be able to gain their hours and complete the requirements for graduation. Thankfully, all of our students were able to complete their required fieldwork and all graduates completed their requirements for graduation in their anticipated timeframes.

Program Modifications

Over the past year, we made some minor modifications to existing courses and revived several dormant courses. We also created a new course. These changes included:

- eliminating the pre-requisites for *EDCO 620: Group Counseling*
- reviving and improving *EDCO 703: Trauma and Crisis Counseling: Intervention, Practice and Theory*
- reviving and improving *EDCO 710: Multicultural Issues in Counseling*
- creating a new course, *EDCO 603: Foundations of Bilingual Education & Counseling*, which is required for students in the Bilingual Extension program and takes the place of *EDBL 603: Foundations I: Principles and Practice of Bilingual Education/ESL*

Substantial Changes to the Program

Effective February 2nd, 2023 the New York State Education Department requirements for certification as a school counselor will change pursuant to Commissioner's Regulations Part 52.21(d). Also effective that year, the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), will require 60-credits for all counseling master's degree programs. The existing 48-credit M.S. in School Counseling will no longer be sufficient for certification and accreditation at that time.

In preparation for these changes, the program will move from 48 to 60 credits beginning in May 2021. Students entering the program in Summer '21 and after are required to complete 60 credits and will be eligible for both Initial and Professional Certification in New York State upon graduating. New York Institute of Technology and NYSED have already approved these changes.

Next, we are approved to begin our M.S. in Mental Health Counseling program, which will be followed, by a 12-15 credit "bridge" program to Mental Health licensure next year. This will allow us to offer more elective options to our M.S. in School Counseling students, especially for those who are interested in mental health licensure in addition to their school counseling certification. Here is a list of courses we have revived and will be offering in the coming years:

- *MHCO 631: Addictions Counseling Treatment and Prevention*
- *MHCO 701: Theories of Counseling & Psychotherapy*



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- *MHCO 715: Marriage & Family Counseling*
- *MHCO 775: Psychopharmacology*
- *MHCO 780: Counseling & Human Sexuality*

The anticipated ETA for the Mental Health “Bridge” program is Fall 2022.

Lastly, one positive outcome from having to adapt to the pandemic is that we learned that (a) our students enjoy our remote classes and appreciate not having to travel to campus as much as they did previously and (b) there are some courses that lend themselves to remote learning more than others. As a result, we will offer more remote and fully online options in the future, especially when we move from 48 to 60 credits. The M.S. in Mental Health Counseling is a fully online program and any MHCO courses will be offered in that format.