**Minutes**

**Counselor Education Advisory Council Meeting**

**Thursday, December 3, 2020**

**4:00 to 5:00 pm**

1. Welcome and Introductions – Ken Delano, LaTonya McGuire, Barbara Valente, Abby Gorbatoff, Deidre Nelson, Dr. Rod Sheppard, Dr. Quinn Pearson, Dr. Amy Davis, Jeffery Brothers, Kiara Erbe
2. Review and Approval of the Minutes from the April 23, 2020 Advisory Council Meeting – Dr. Amy Davis made a motion to approve the minutes, Dr. Rod Sheppard made a second motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.
3. Enrollment increases – Dr. Pearson presented the enrollment numbers which showed the continued growth of the Clinical Mental Health program and sustained enrollment in the School counseling program. The group agreed that this was great news especially in light of the pandemic. Our total enrollment this fall is 74 students.
4. Accelerated Bachelor’s/Master’s Degree (AMP) with Department of Psychology and Sociology – Dr. Pearson informed the group that the AMP did go into effect for sociology majors this fall. Also, three new students (psychology majores) were accepted into the AMP for the spring semester. Dr. Davis mentioned this program is valuable for students to get some experience in counseling and can help determine if counseling is a field they want to pursue.
5. Hiring a fourth faculty member for Fall 2021 – Due to our increase in student to faculty ratios, the Counselor Education department received approval to hire a tenure-track faculty position. Dr. Pearson reported that we have a verbal commitment from our candidate and hope to announce our new faculty member in the spring semester.
6. Advocacy efforts with ALSDE to equate a 60-credit hour school counseling master’s degree with an Ed.S. degree for salary calculations – Dr. Davis reported that school-counseling counselor educators from several Alabama universities are engaging in advocacy efforts and will be meeting with ALSDE officials early in the spring semester. Unless school counseling graduates can receive higher pay equivalent to an Ed.S,, it may be difficult to attract students to our Track 1 school counseling program. A group discussion followed about ideas for alternative incentives and questions for Dr. Davis to bring up with the ALSDE. These efforts are ongoing, and Dr. Davis will keep us updated.

1. Developing additional practicum and internship sites – Dr. Davis talked about our need for new internship/practicum sites as a result of increased enrollment and Covid-19 restrictions. We are looking ahead for summer and fall where extra placements will be needed. Ken Delano mentioned they could possibly take on more students at Riverbend. The best contacts for information about Riverbend placements are Valerie Wesson and Liz James. Latonya McGuire suggested Limestone County schools and agencies are always looking for interns which could be an option for some students. LaTonya will send names of school and agency contacts to Dr. Davis. Jeffery Brothers brought up the possibility of telehealth sites and a discussion ensued on this matter.
2. Other business- The uncertainty regarding telehealth practices in the future was discussed further. Dr. Pearson reported that spring 2021 classes would follow the same format—in person with options for students to attend via Zoom—and COVID-19 precautions. Dr. Pearson asked Abby and LaTonya about their experiences as students this semester. They reported positive experiences as well as challenges.
3. Next meeting will be in April 2021.