

# **Lewis & Clark College**

Community Counseling\*

Professional Mental Health Counseling (PMHC) and  
Professional Mental Health Counseling – Addictions (PMHC-A)  
Program\*

Comprehensive Program Evaluation Report

2013/2014

\*Program name changed in 2011: see introduction for explanation

## Introduction

The program faculty at Lewis & Clark is committed to continuous program improvement. In order to facilitate data based decision making, we collect data yearly from students in their final semester in the program and from alumni. In addition, we survey agency supervisors and employers of graduates regularly. This report summarizes data collected from 2011-2014.

The Professional Mental Health Counseling Program (PMHC) and Professional Mental Health Counseling- Addictions Program (PMHC-A) is accredited under the 2001 CACREP standards for Community Counseling programs. For students beginning the program in Summer 2011 and beyond, the program is 60 and 62 credit hours respectively. Students are now in cohort groups, with a separate cohort group for Addictions students to facilitate the additional requirements for students in this track. These changes were made to meet new standards of the Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists and to move toward meeting the 2009 CACREP standards for Clinical Mental Health Programs.

This report contains data from students in both the 50 hour Community Counseling Program and the new 60/62 hour programs. Survey data from supervisors and employers reflect evaluation of students from the 50 hour Community Counseling Program. The first group of students graduated from PMHC and PMHC-A in December 2013.

This report contains data from:

- National Counselor Exam results for students taking the exam during their program.

- Exit Surveys completed with students in the last semester in the program.

- Employer/Supervisor Survey

- Alumni Survey

## National Counselor Exam Pass Rate

Many of our students choose to take the National Counselor Exam during their final year in the program. Our students do exceedingly well on the exam, with **a 98% pass rate!**

			<i>CACREP Areas</i>									
			LC Results			National Results		CACREP Results		Non-CACREP Results		
Year	# Tested	# Passed	Items	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Mean	Std Dev	Std Dev
2014	20	20	160	122.75	14.31	95.7	19.03	115.4	16.6	112.88	17.53	
2013	38	37	160	116.71	11.07	97.1	17.21	114.77	15.53	113.64	16.49	
2012	23	22	160	118.3	14.6	93.01	16.14	111.98	16.37	11.28	16.27	
2011	12	12	160	116.25	13.32	95.72	16.73	108.45	17.37	106.41	18.14	

## Employer/Supervisor Surveys

The employer/supervisor survey was conducted in 2012. At the time of the survey, respondents were rating graduates from the 50 credit hour Community Counseling program.

We are quite pleased with our employer/supervisor perceptions of graduates, although the response rate was low. Eleven supervisors and employers responded to the survey. Only four respondents answered all of the questions asked. Given this response rate, only global questions were analyzed for this report.

Overall, 100% of respondents rated graduates of the Lewis & Clark program as Well/Acceptably prepared, and 75% of respondents rated Lewis & Clark graduates as more prepared than graduates of other institutions. In addition, 100% would likely or definitely hire a graduate from Lewis & Clark again.

This data is consistent with data collected in 2007 and 2010 (n=53). Overall, 75/78% of supervisors rated graduates as Exceptionally or Quite prepared, with 18/25% rating graduates as somewhat prepared. Overall, 100% of employers rated Lewis & Clark graduates as very well/well/acceptably prepared and 64% rated graduates as more prepared (with 36% rating graduates as equally prepared) as graduates of other institutions. As in the recent survey, 100% would definitely/likely hire a Lewis & Clark graduate again.

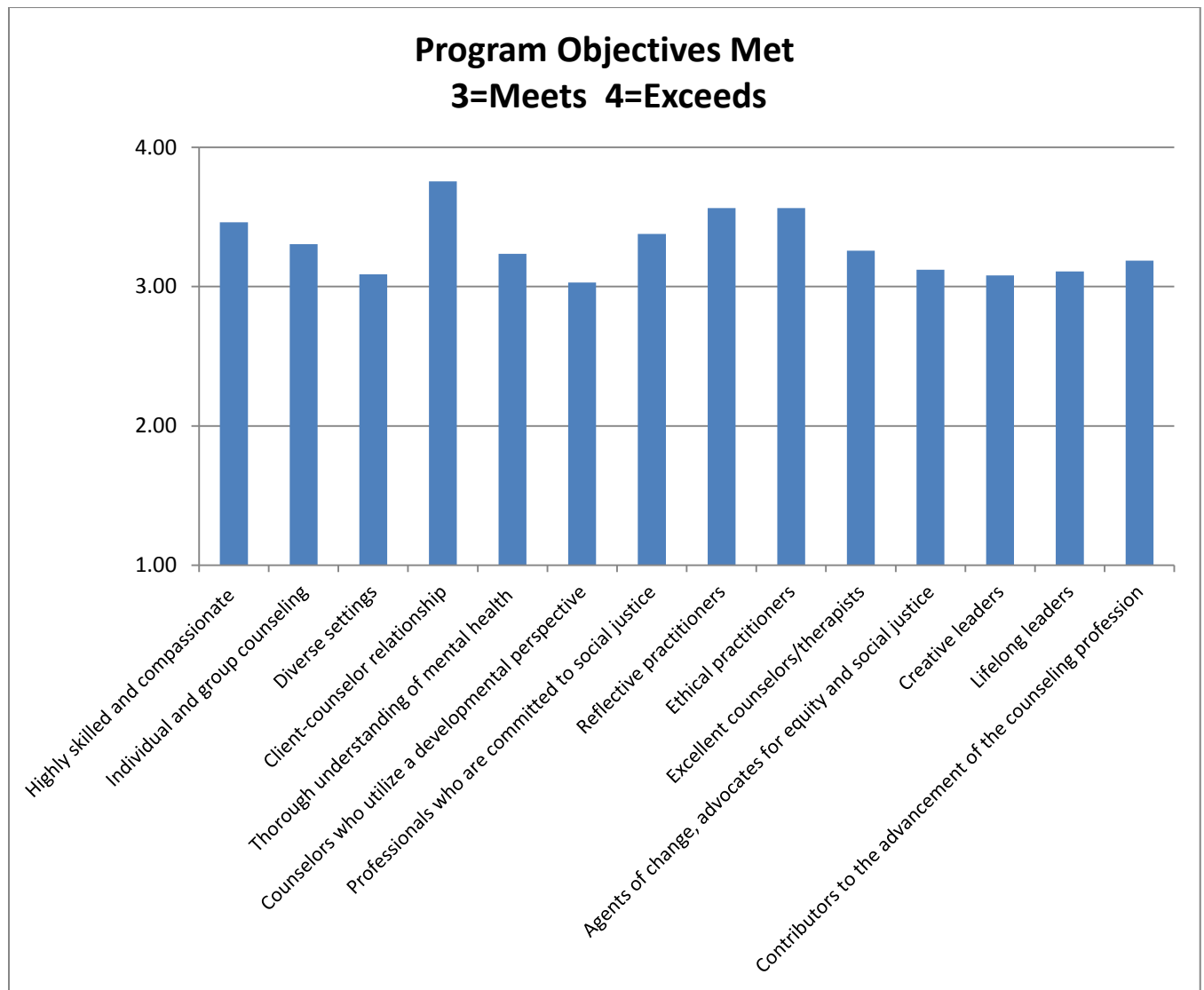
Employer/Supervisor Ratings 2012	Percentage
Lewis & Clark graduates were Well/Acceptably Prepared	100%
Lewis & Clark graduates were more prepared that graduates of other institutions	75%
Employer would definitely/likely hire a Lewis & Clark Graduate again.	100%

## Exit (Graduate) Survey Results

Exit surveys were conducted in 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014. Students complete the survey at the end of their final semester in the program. Only one graduate responded to the survey in 2011 and that data has been omitted. Graduates completing the surveys in 2012 (n=45) and May/August 2013 (n=27) graduated from our 50 credit hour Community Counseling Program. Graduates from December 2013 and May 2014 graduated from our 60 credit hour PMHC and PMHC-A programs (n=31). Data was analyzed per graduating group and aggregately. Differences when comparing the groups were generally small; therefore results for the survey are reported in aggregate below (Total n=103).

### Program Objectives

Graduates were asked to rate the extent to which program objectives were met. We are pleased to report that **the program met or exceeded 100% of objectives.**



## **Overall Rating of Programs**

Graduates provided ratings for two global items. Both received high ratings scoring in a range from 4 (Quite Well) to 5 (Very Well).

	5= Very Well 4=Quite Well
<b>Overall, how well did your program meet your expectations?</b>	4.17
<b>Overall, how well do you feel the PMHC or PMHC-A program prepared you to begin a career as a professional counselor?</b>	4.17

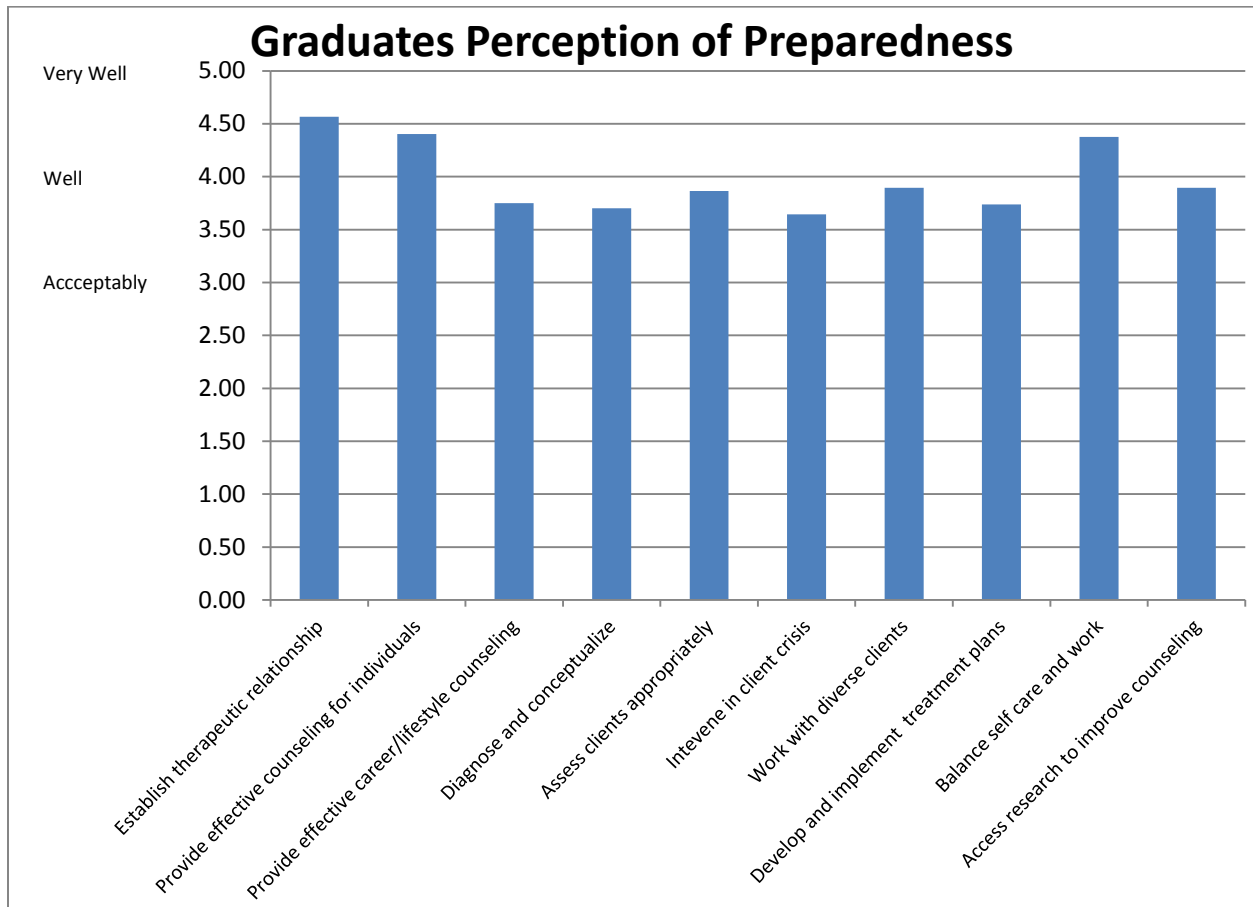
## **Quality Ratings**

Graduates rated the quality of a number of aspects of the program. All areas received high ratings scoring in a range from 4 (Quite Well) to 5 (Very Well), with the exception of one item - Advising. After our scheduled yearly reviews of exit surveys, interventions were put into place to improve advising starting with incoming classes in 2012. We now have a First Advising Meeting Form that lists a number of issues to discuss, including asking the student about advising needs and preferences. In addition, we are holding cohort meetings at key advising times (e.g. pre-internship application) to facilitate communication with students.

	5=Very Good 4=Good 3=Fair
<b>Overall graduate education experience at Lewis &amp; Clark</b>	4.34
<b>Overall quality of the faculty with whom you interacted</b>	4.20
<b>Overall caliber of the graduate students in your program</b>	4.07
<b>Overall Quality of Advising</b>	3.59
<b>Overall quality of the content in the program course work</b>	4.08
<b>Overall quality of your internship and practicum experiences</b>	4.63

## **Preparedness**

Graduates rated how well their educational experiences prepared them for a number of professional activities. Results were excellent, **100% of ratings were in the Adequately to Very Well range**. Program strengths were defined as those areas rated 4 and above (Well to Very Well) and included: establishing an effective working relationship with clients, providing effective counseling for individuals, and the importance of a balance of self-care and work.



## **Program Content Areas**

Graduates were asked to rate how well the educational experiences at Lewis & Clark increased their knowledge and understanding of 18 content areas. We are pleased to report that graduates' ratings in all areas fell in the Moderate to Substantial range.

Six (6) areas were met in the Considerable-Substantial range (Mean range 4-5)

Professional roles, counseling theories, counseling skills and techniques, group counseling, ethics and importance of self care

Twelve (12) areas were met in the Moderate-considerable range (Mean range 3-4)

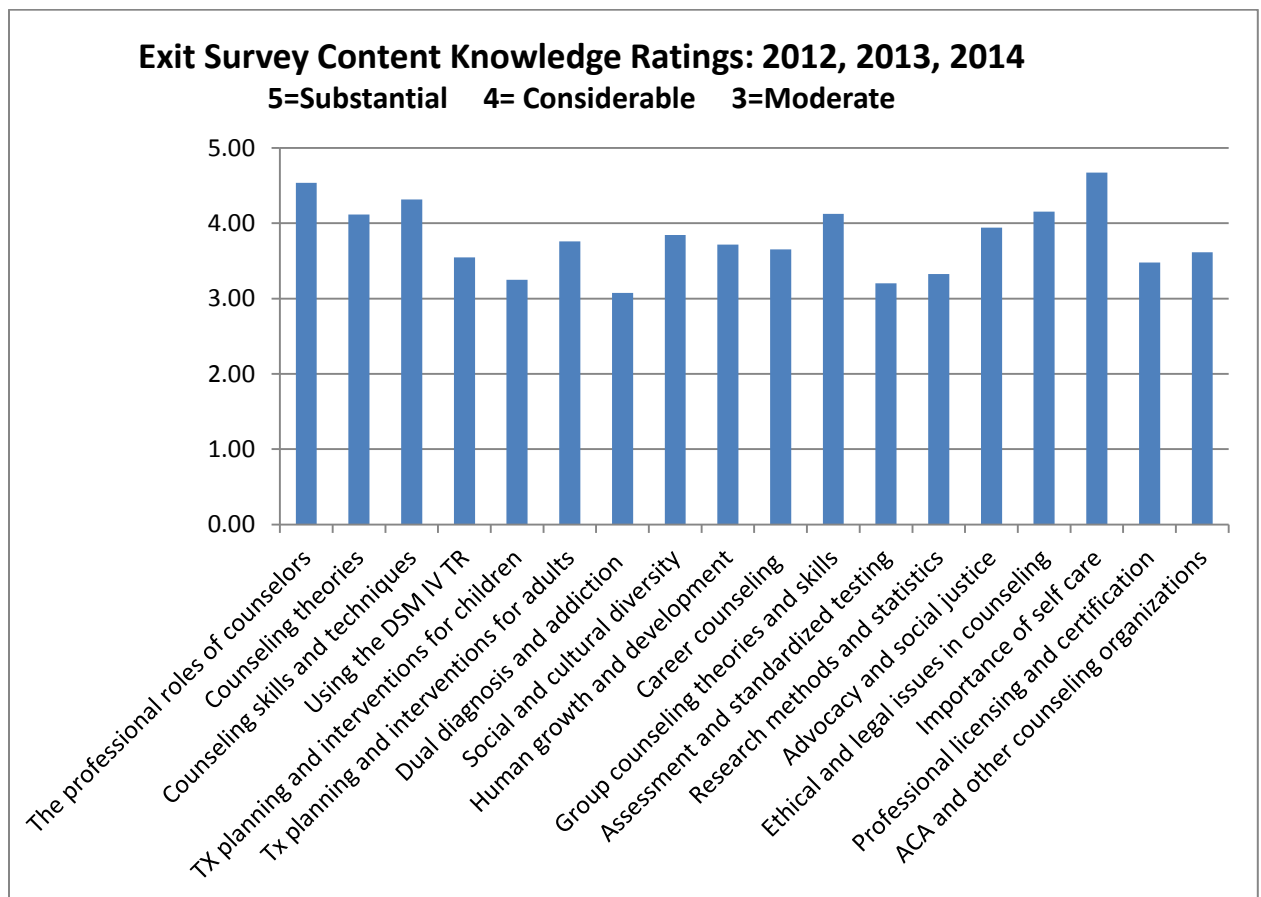
Areas rated in the 3.5 – 4 range included:

Using the DSM, treatment planning and interventions with adults, diversity, human development, career, and advocacy.

Areas rated in the 3 to 3.5 included:

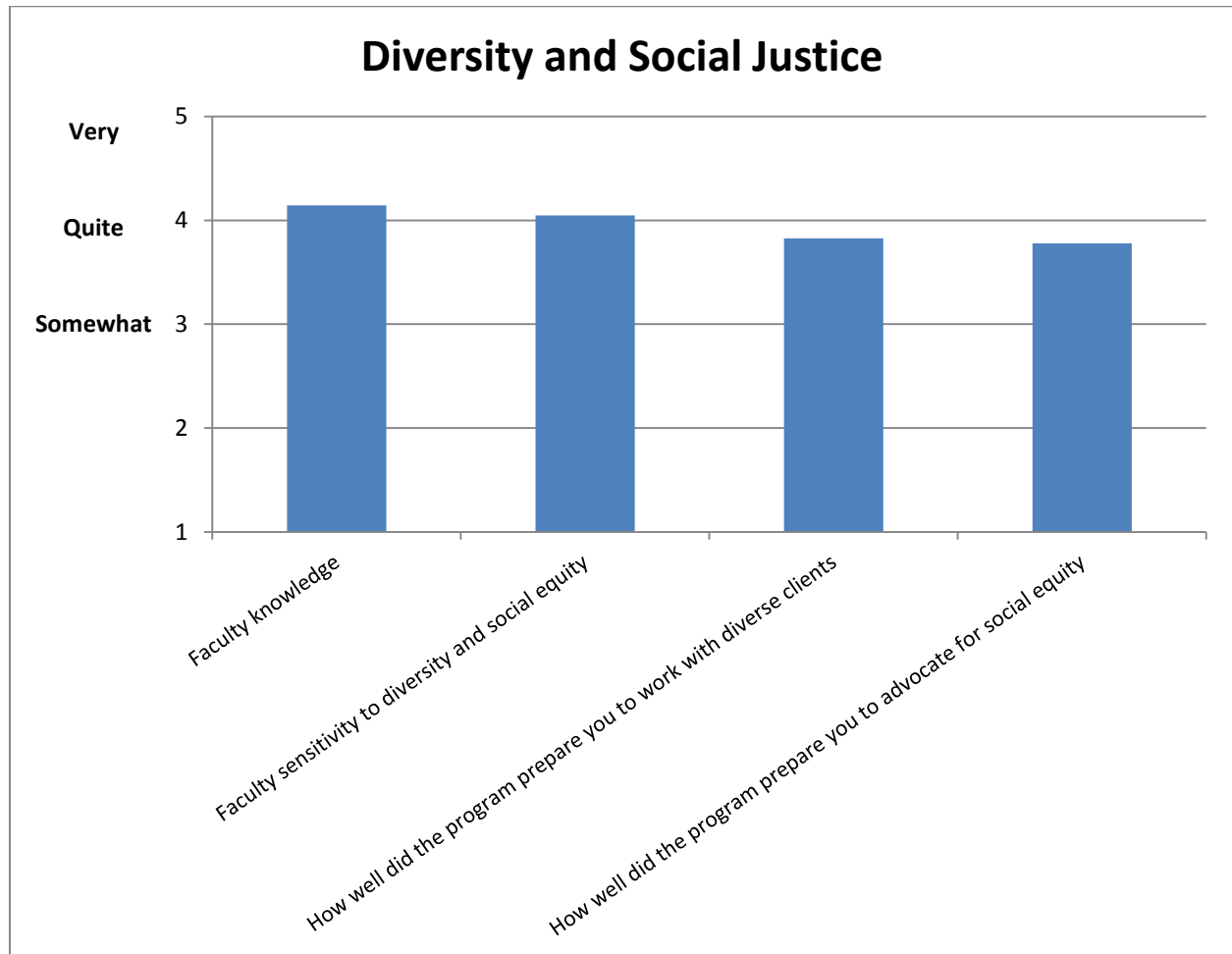
Treatment planning with children, dual diagnosis and addictions, assessment/standardized testing, research methods, understanding professional licensing and certification

Note: The lower score in dual diagnosis and addictions likely reflects Community Counseling and non-addictions program students. All students in PMHC now take a 2 credit course in addictions. Also see overall summary for further interpretation.



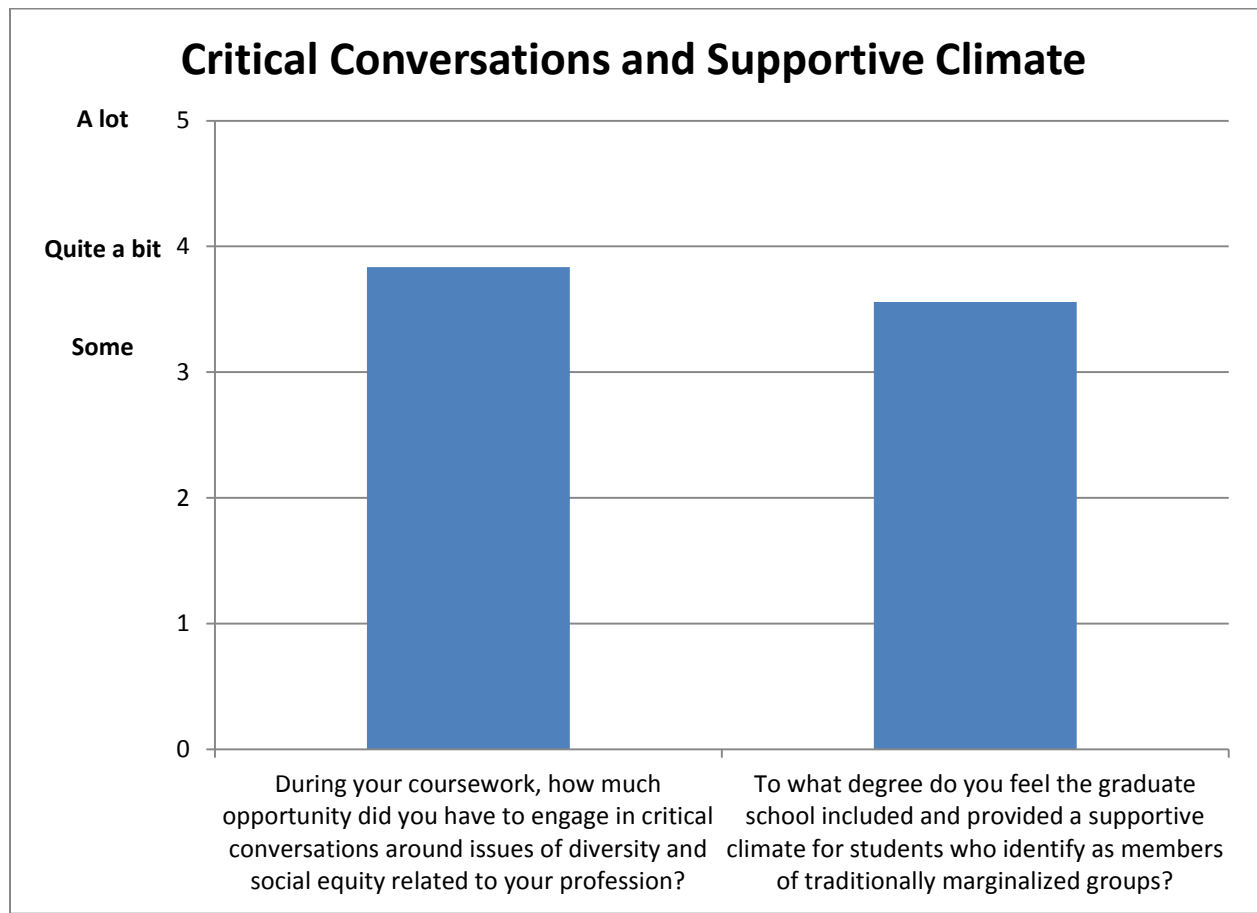
## **Diversity and Social Justice**

Graduates rated several items on training in diversity and social justice, as well as openness and climate for students. Overall, students felt that faculty were quite knowledgeable and sensitive. Ratings on their perceptions of preparedness fell slightly lower. **We feel that these ratings reflect a program focus on humility and a need for lifelong learning in these areas. Results from the National Counselor Exam indicate that overall our students tend to score higher than the average of other CACREP programs in social and cultural diversity.**





Ratings of critical conversations and support for students from traditionally marginalized groups fell in the some to quite a bit range. Diversity and social justice are a significant component of our mission, which is reflected across the curriculum. In the new 60 hour program, we have specifically targeted increasing critical conversations and support for students. **Starting in 2012, students began to obtain a basic introduction to power and privilege in their first semester and this work continues throughout the program.** We look forward to increasing ratings in these areas as students continue to move through the new program.



### Qualitative Questions

Graduates were given the opportunity to respond to open-ended questions and to explain responses on portions of the survey. This qualitative data generally confirmed quantitative responses. Furthermore, feedback often represented suggestions that were addressed in the courses added to PMHC/PMHC-A.

## Alumni Surveys

Alumni surveys were conducted in November 2011 and May 2013 with a total response rate of 27. One respondent completed only the demographic data leaving 26 total responses. Ninety-one percent (91%) of respondents are currently working in the mental health field. The majority of respondents graduated between 2006 and 2010 (n=16), with smaller numbers graduating prior to 2006 (n=5). Six (n=6) graduates from 2011 responded. Response rates for individual years were too small to facilitate analysis.

### Expectations and Choice to Enroll at Lewis & Clark

The majority of students reported that Lewis & Clark met their expectations and they would enroll in a program at Lewis & Clark again. Those who expressed uncertainty or were unlikely to enroll again tended to cite the high cost of graduate education and the low initial pay of a helping profession.

	Extremely/Quite Well/Moderately	Slightly/Not Well
<b>How well did your educational experience at Lewis &amp; Clark meet your expectations?</b>	81% N=21	9% N=2

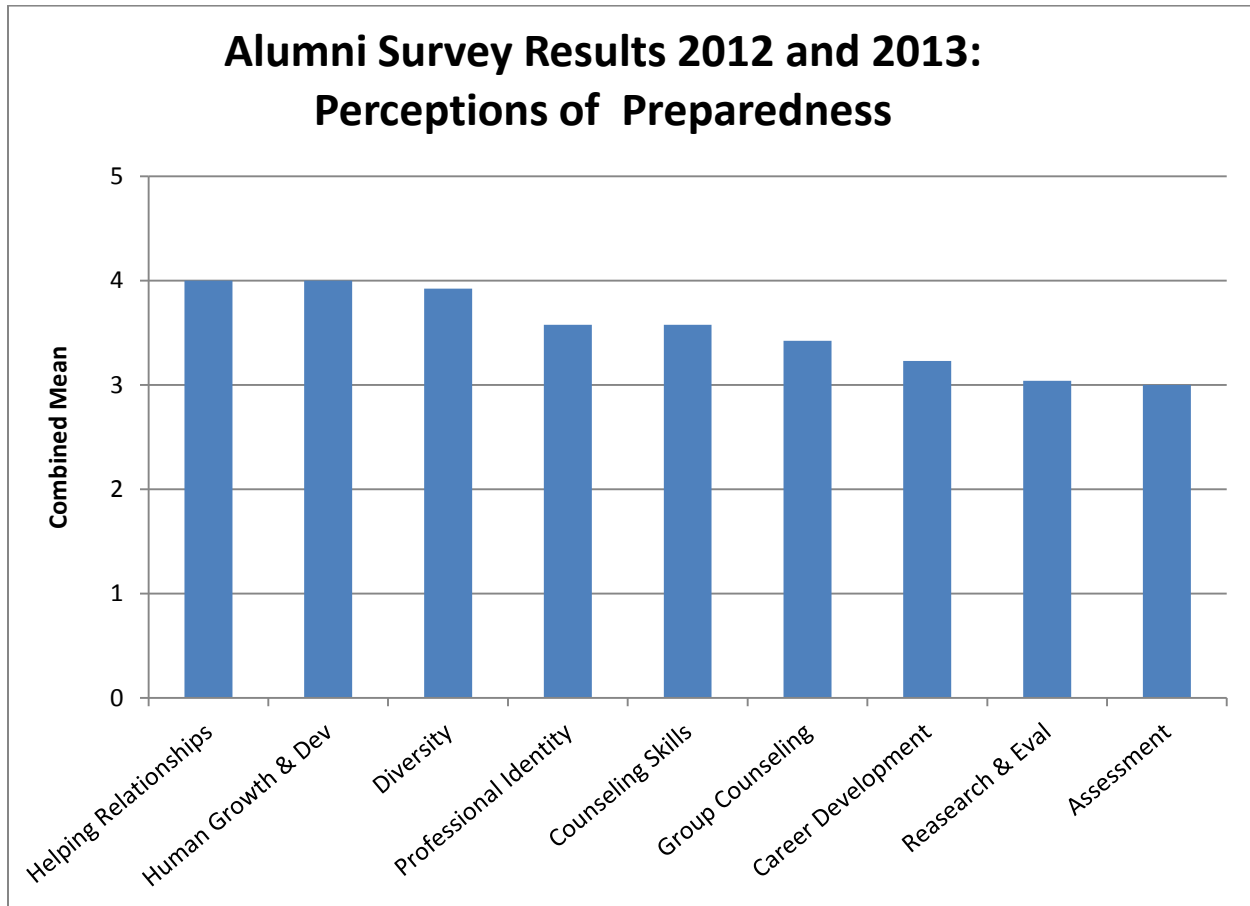
	Likely/definitely yes	Maybe/not sure	Unlikely/definitely no
<b>If you were going to enroll in a CPSY program again, would you select Lewis &amp; Clark?</b>	61% N=14	26% N=6	13% N=3

### Perceptions of Preparedness

We are pleased to report that overall, alumni report moderate to high levels of feeling prepared when they started the profession, and in comparison to colleagues who graduated from other institutions. The majority felt that the program met their expectations.

	Exceptionally /Quite/Some what	A little/not prepared	No response
<b>Overall, how well prepared did you feel when you first started in the profession?</b>	89% N=23	12% N= 3	
<b>Compared to colleagues from other institutions, how well prepared were you when you first started in the profession?</b>	88% N=22	8% N= 2	4% N=1

Alumni rated their perceptions of preparedness in nine areas on a scale from 1 (Not prepared) – 5 (Exceptionally Prepared). Overall graduates reported moderate to high levels of preparedness. Graduates felt most prepared in the counseling relationship, human growth and development, and diversity. Means fell slightly lower than quite prepared in the areas of professional identity, counseling skills, and group counseling. Graduates ratings fell in the somewhat prepared range in the areas of career development, research and evaluation, and assessment.



The alumni survey contains multiple areas for graduates to provide qualitative feedback. Questions that provided open ended responses included:

1. What are the three areas or practices in which you felt *most* prepared upon leaving your CPSY program?

Themes: Cultural diversity, the counseling relationship, counseling skills, ethics, and treatment planning.

2. What are the three areas or practices in which you felt you were *least* prepared upon leaving your CPSY program?

Themes: The main theme that emerged on this question was dealing with the reality of the community mental health environment: high caseloads, clinical documentation, the business of counseling. Group counseling, trauma, family therapy and addictions were also mentioned.

3. What experiences/content do you wish had been part of the program that were not?

Themes: Several respondents mentioned training in addictions and trauma, as well as having an on-site clinic and/or more practical experience. These are areas, including family therapy mentioned above, that were strengthened in the program revision for the new 60 hour PMHC/PMHC-A program.

Other issues in questions 1-3: Addictions was mentioned as both a strength and a weakness, which may reflect data from both the Community Counseling and Community Counseling with Addictions track.

4. Thus far in your career, including your practical and educational experience, what has made the greatest impact on developing your professional skills?

Themes: Internship training, supervision both in graduate school and beyond, and continued experience were strong themes.

5. What has surprised you about the realities of working in the field?

Themes: The challenging nature of the work. One statement summarizes the comments of others fairly well, "It is not the calm, private practice I imagined having." Case management, paperwork, and low pay were mentioned by several.

6. How would you compare the values you learned at Lewis & Clark to the values held by the organization in which you currently work? How would you rate yourself on implementing Lewis & Clark values currently in your work?

Theme: Almost every respondent stated that values were the same, only two responded that the values held in their agency did not live up to the values they learned and developed at Lewis & Clark. All but one respondent reported implementing values in the good/very good categories.

7. If you have additional comments or concerns, please let us know. We look forward to hearing from you.

Theme: No themes emerged. Only 8 graduates responded, three were positive statements thank you/ well prepared.” The others represented questions about the survey, or areas that were covered elsewhere and listed above.

## Overall Summary

**Overall results of surveys indicate a high level of satisfaction** with the Community Counseling/Professional Mental Health Counseling, and Professional Mental Health Counseling-Addictions program. The majority of graduates pass the National Counselor exam on their first attempt, and employers rate graduates highly and would hire Lewis & Clark graduates in the future.

**Strongest areas in the program tend to be Practicum and Internship experiences and training in the counseling relationship, counseling theories and skills, diversity, and self care.** Some of the weaker areas tend to be in assessment, research and statistics. These are also the areas that students express the least interest in pursuing! Generally, people who choose to be counselors and choose our program are less interested in research and assessment, and don't feel like those abilities are their strongest. This certainly impacts feelings of preparedness in these areas, but also point to our need to assist students in recognizing their abilities. **Detailed NCE results indicate that our students score equally or slightly better in the areas of Research and Assessment as the average scores of students from other CACREP programs.**

As noted in the introduction, beginning with students entering in 2011, the program added 10 credit hours and targeted improving/increasing training in the areas of crisis and trauma, addictions, case conceptualization and treatment planning, career development, and professional identity. Addition of this coursework addresses many of the concerns expressed by exiting students and alumni. In addition, we have put procedures into place to improve advising. Students are also now in cohorts, which facilitates development of professional relationships, sequencing of the curriculum, and specialized curriculum for students in the addictions specialty.

**The faculty at Lewis & Clark are pleased with student satisfaction and high ratings of competency by employers, alumni, and exiting students.** We are also always striving to improve, and give careful attention to feedback received, making additions and changes to both curriculum and program organization and procedures as needed.