



**University of La Verne
Psychology Department**

**MS: Marriage and Family Therapy
Program Review
2007-2008 Academic Year**

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Executive Summary

The Masters of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) program is part of the Masters Counseling Program, housed within the Department of Psychology. The Department of Psychology, in addition to awarding the MFT degree also awards a masters degree in Counseling with a specialization in College Counseling and Student Services, an undergraduate bachelors of science degree, and a doctoral degree (PsyD) in Clinical-Community Psychology. The MFT degree awarded by the University of La Verne meets California's educational requirements related to MFT licensure and is listed among approved programs in the state.

The MFT degree is a 55 unit program of study which includes basic coursework in counseling theories and techniques, advanced coursework related to marriage and family therapy, an applied fieldwork component, and an empirical culminating project. At any point in time, approximately 80-90 students are part of the MFT program. New enrollments into the MFT program are high and are increasing. Students in the program are diverse along many dimensions. Approximately half complete the program as full-time students while the remainders have other life commitments which require them to proceed through the program on a part-time basis.

The majority of courses offered as part of the MFT program are taught by part-time adjunct instructors (approximately 75%). Class sizes are large for a graduate program and show a trend toward growing. Advising for the program is shared between the Program Chair and one additional advisor; this additional individual also advises and coordinates the fieldwork component of the degree program.

The learning outcomes for the MFT program include: a foundation in the principles and theories of psychology; a foundation in diagnostic skills and the ability to apply these; a foundation in ethical and legal issues and professional development and the ability to apply these; a foundation in general counseling and intervention skills and the ability to apply these; an awareness of diversity issues in the field of psychology and the ability to apply these; skills in consuming scientific information and applying the scientific method in the study of human behavior; and training that prepares students for licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist within the state of California.

The assessment procedures included a survey of MFT faculty, a survey of MFT alumni, a survey of current MFT students, official statistics regarding state licensure exam results, evaluations of graduate seminar (culminating) projects, fieldwork evaluations, competency exam results, and a review of the curriculum and its relationship to the learning objectives.

The program review findings suggest the following:

1. With the growth of the MFT program, faculty resources have been spread thin. Current full-time tenure-track faculty resources are weak to inadequate.

2. Students within the program are diverse and growing in number. These students' preparation for masters level work is not always excellent, however.
3. With limited faculty availability and large numbers of students, class sizes are large. Faculty, alumni, and students report that small class sizes are important to them.
4. Students rate the quality of advisement and fieldwork coordination that they are receiving in the program as high.
5. Students are acquiring a foundation in the principles and theories of psychology.
6. Students are acquiring a foundation in diagnostic skills and the ability to apply these.
7. Students are acquiring a foundation in ethical and legal issues and professional development and the ability to apply these. This in fact is a strength of the program.
8. Students are acquiring a foundation in general counseling and intervention skills and the ability to apply these.
9. Students are acquiring an awareness of diversity issues in the field of psychology and the ability to apply this knowledge. This is another area of strength for the program.
10. Students are acquiring skills in consuming scientific information and applying the scientific method in the study of human behavior. Former and current students, as well as fieldwork supervisors, perceive this training as stronger than current faculty do, however.
11. Students are receiving training that prepares them for licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist within the state of California.

Recommendations for action include:

1. Increase the number of full-time tenure-track faculty contributing to the MFT program, ideally through the inclusion of new faculty hires with time dedicated to the masters program. A high faculty to student ratio is one of the assets of the MFT program and must be maintained for successful recruitment of students.
2. Insure that resources are appropriate for the number of students within the MFT program and admitted each cycle. This may require that admissions be frozen or even reduced if additional resources are not available.

3. Consider the admissions requirements currently in place for the MFT program and possible revision of these (i.e., increase expectations for admission).
4. Maintain and further develop plans to recruit highly qualified, highly prepared, applicants to the MFT program through on campus one-on-one meetings with interested applicants and through off-campus outreach.
5. Continue to monitor legislative activities in the state of California that may modify the curricular program for MFT licensure. If such changes are passed in the future, develop plans to modify the degree program to conform to new state standards.
6. As possible, limit class sizes (10-15 students) to insure that this strength of the program is maintained. Appropriate faculty resources will be needed to allow such an action. This could take the form of increased full-time tenure-track faculty commitment to the masters program or increased compensation for adjunct faculty which would allow for recruitment of additional qualified instructors.
7. Maintain appropriate fieldwork coordination and advising for MFT students. Coordination with outside agencies for fieldwork placements and recruitment of new sites is a time consuming activity. This coordination, as well as general advising, is currently seen as a strength by students.
8. Consider the relative importance of the learning objective “Students will acquire skills in consuming scientific information and applying the scientific method in the study of human behavior.” While students report satisfaction with the skills received and objective measures indicate that these skills are acquired, faculty members report less satisfaction with this area. Review of the curriculum also indicates that focus within the area of the scientific method is not core to the program. This is not unexpected for an applied psychology program, such as the Marriage and Family Therapy masters degree. Faculty should consider if this is acceptable, or whether the focus on the scientific process should be further integrated into the program. Corresponding changes to the Graduate Seminar project could be considered.
9. Continue to maintain training standards necessary for University of La Verne’s MFT program to remain on the Board of Behavioral Science’s list of approved programs for licensure consideration.
10. Further investigate alumni perceptions of their training experiences, especially in regards to their beliefs that they learned all skills necessary for work in a variety of placements following graduation. While site supervisors and faculty see the students as having acquired the skills necessary, alumni may feel that certain topics were not covered to enhance their work as an MFT. Such topics could be added to elective coursework.

I. Program Mission

The mission of the Masters of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) program is to prepare graduate students for their academic, professional, and personal futures by providing them with a well-balanced graduate education in psychology covering theory, research, and practice. The Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2008-2009 Edition, lists Masters level Marriage and Family Counselors and Mental Health Counselors as two of the five fastest growing occupations (<http://www.bls.gov/oco/print/ocotjt1.htm>). The MFT program offered by the University of La Verne prepares students for such careers.

II. Program Goals and Learning Objectives

MFT students will:

- a. Acquire a foundation in the principles and theories of psychology
- b. Acquire a foundation in diagnostic skills and the ability to apply these
- c. Acquire a foundation in ethical and legal issues and professional development and the ability to apply these
- d. Acquire a foundation in general counseling and intervention skills and the ability to apply these
- e. Acquire an awareness of diversity issues in the field of psychology and the ability to apply these
- f. Acquire skills in consuming scientific information and applying the scientific method in the study of human behavior
- g. Acquire training that prepares them for licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist within the state of California

III. Program Description

A. Organization

The Masters of Science in Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) program is part of the Masters Counseling Program, housed within the Department of Psychology. The Masters Counseling Program currently admits students into two graduate programs: the MFT program and a program in College Counseling and Student Services. Two additional degree programs have been discontinued but students are completing these degrees at this time (Higher Education and General Counseling). The Department of Psychology, in addition to awarding the masters degrees described above, also includes a large undergraduate program (with over 250 majors) and a doctoral program (PsyD) in Clinical-Community Psychology (with over 80 students). Each of the three programs (undergraduate, masters counseling, doctoral) has a program chair who reports to the Department Chair. The Department Chair reports to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

B. Faculty

During the 2007-2008 academic year, the Department of Psychology included 10 full-time faculty members, the majority of whom teach in more than one of the three programs.

Full-time faculty availability to the masters counseling programs is a primary concern. While the number of full-time faculty teaching within the masters program varies from semester to semester, it is typically low. Teaching responsibilities for the program, therefore, are shared with a large group of part-time adjunct instructors.

A full list of faculty contributing to the MFT program as of the 2007-2008 academic year, including full-time tenure track and part-time adjunct faculty, is included in Appendix A.

An examination of the number of classes taught by full-time tenure track faculty over the past three academic year shows some variability. Nevertheless, rates are low overall (ranging from 3 to 7 over the past three academic years; see Appendix B). Only between 15% and 43% of masters classes have been taught by full time faculty over that three year period. Over the past three academic years, between 85% and 57% of masters classes were taught by adjunct instructors. This is significantly higher than that seen across the College of Arts and Sciences as a whole (approximately 1/3rd, and the undergraduate psychology program (reported as 46% in the last program review).

A recent **survey of faculty** (see description of SWOT survey of MFT faculty below) indicates that faculty resources are a concern. The majority of faculty surveyed indicated that they believed that faculty resources are somewhat inadequate or adequate (66.6%) (see survey instrument and results in Appendix C). Faculty further indicated that they believe that having full-time tenure-track faculty participating in the program is very important (average rating = 1.78 on a 1 to 5 scale where lower scores indicate greater importance).

C. Students

Appendix D summarizes the number of students enrolled in coursework in the program over the past three academic years and the number of new students admitted to the MFT program over the past five academic years.

At any given point in time, approximately 80-90 students are part of the MFT program. Inspection of the number over the past several years shows that between 69-80 students are enrolled in coursework each semester. A number of additional students may be active in the program, but either not taking classes that semester or completing the culminating project or fieldwork requirements (i.e., finishing up an in progress grade from a previous class).

New enrollments into the MFT program have remained high and are increasing. Over the past five academic years, between 25 and 36 new MFT students have begun the program

each year. During the 2007-2008 academic year, 30 MFT students began their study in the MFT program. Given current faculty resources and class size limits, the capacity for growth within the MFT program has been reached.

Students within the MFT program are quite diverse. Of the current 89 students in the program, 45 (50.7%) self-identify as Latino, 21 (23.6%) as White or Caucasian, 10 (11.2%) as African American, 6 (6.7%) as multiracial, 4 (4.5%) as Asian or Asian American, 2 (2.2%) as Middle Eastern, and 1 (1.1%) as Indian (international student). This racial composition is consistent with the Hispanic Serving Institution designation that the University holds and is consistent with the program's goals regarding diversity.

While the exact age range of the student body is not known, results of the student survey provide an indicant of the composition of the group and appear representative. Students completing the survey ranged in age from 22 to 54 years of age. Students in the program include both recent college graduates and individuals who have returned for additional education after many years of employment, often in the field of mental health. Of the 89 students in the program, 89.9% ($n = 80$) are female whereas 10.1% ($n = 9$) are male. This representation by gender is consistent with that found nationally in the mental health field.

Admissions requirements for the MFT program include a preferred minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0, six undergraduate psychology prerequisites, and a preference for both prior clinical and research experience. A recent **survey of faculty** (see description of SWOT survey of MFT faculty below) indicates that faculty members perceive incoming students as having mixed levels of preparedness for graduate work (see survey instrument and results in Appendix C). The average rating of items assessing appropriateness of prior training ranged between 2.33 to 3.44 on a 1 to 5 scale (where higher scores reflect lower levels of agreement that student training is appropriate). Faculty are mixed with regards to whether admissions requirements are too high or too low, but some responses to open-ended questions suggested admissions requirements should be raised.

D. Course Offerings, Enrollment, and Scheduling

The MFT degree program currently requires completion of 55 semester units, including completion of an empirical culminating project and a 2-semester fieldwork placement. Please see Appendix E for a full listing of required coursework, as typically taken by either a full-time or part-time student, and Appendix F for a chart reflecting how various learning outcomes are tied to the specific coursework in the curriculum.

In addition to addressing learning objectives identified by program faculty, the identified curriculum must also meet certain requirements dictated by the Board of Behavioral Sciences (the licensing agency of the State of California). As can be seen in Appendix F, a number of classes within the MFT curriculum are necessary to fulfill the state's minimum expectations. The program is successful accomplishing this at this time. It should be noted, however, that legislation has been under consideration with would

modify these requirements and would necessitate curricular changes. This legislation passed both the California Senate and Assembly during the most recent session, but was vetoed by the Governor. Continued monitoring of future legislation and changes is necessary.

To accommodate working adults, all MFT courses are offered on a one-night-per week basis and are scheduled from either 4-7pm or 7-10pm. A substantial portion of our students are enrolled part-time in the program (completing approximately 2 3-unit courses per semester); the remaining full-time students typically complete 3 3-unit courses per semester. Full-time students typically complete the MFT program within 2 ½ years whereas part-time students typically require 4 years to complete the program; the university allows each student a maximum of 5 years for degree completion.

The majority of the MFT courses are offered at least twice annually to accommodate student needs. Course sequencing issues, as well as student enrollment numbers, have been considered in developing a regular schedule of course offerings. To accommodate student needs, multiple sections of some courses have been offered in a given semester, when instructors have been available.

With the large numbers of MFT students and the limited number of appropriately trained faculty available to teach courses (especially full-time faculty), the size of classes has grown over the past several years. Class sizes, by type of class (fundamental, basic psychology, advanced, fieldwork, or graduate seminar), over the past several academic semesters can be seen in the class size chart in Appendix G. Fieldwork, a very intensive, interactive class has grown from a low enrollment of 10-11 students to a current average of 20-21 students. Graduate seminar, the course in which students conduct their culminating project – another work intensive course – has fluctuated tremendously over time. Enrollments increased to as many as 17 students in one section until multiple sections were offered each semester. Similar patterns are seen in other types of courses. While some larger courses did occur in the past, smaller classes were normative. Now, larger class sizes are normative with it being rare that a student will find him or herself in a small class.

A recent **survey of faculty** (see description of SWOT survey of MFT faculty below) indicates that 88.9% of respondent believe that small class size is very to somewhat important for the MFT program (see survey instrument and results in Appendix C).

Recent **surveys of alumni** (see description of SWOT survey of alumni below) **and current students** (see description of SWOT survey of current students below) indicate that the majority of current and past students do believe the program is doing “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing small class sizes (see Appendix H & I for surveys and results). However, length of time in the program does appear to be related to those satisfaction ratings (a correlation of -.31 between year began program and satisfaction) indicating that more recently admitted students are less satisfied with class sizes. This corresponds to changes seen over time in class sizes, with more recent students experiencing much larger sections.

Given small class size and frequent interaction with faculty are important factors to students, and given these potential indicators that satisfaction may be decreasing with increasing class size, it is clear that growing class sizes are problematic.

Enrollments in the vast majority/all of the MFT courses exceed the minimum enrollment set by the Executive Vice President's Office (a minimum of 7 students in a graduate class in order to meet both direct and indirect costs for the class).

As noted previously, participation by full-time faculty in courses is somewhat limited given other demands on Psychology faculty (e.g., teaching demands in both the undergraduate and doctoral program). Dedicated commitment by additional full-time tenure-track faculty to the MFT program would be beneficial in increasing the quality of MFT students' experiences. The ability to recruit well qualified adjuncts in order to offer additional, smaller classes is also needed (e.g., in the form of appropriate compensation).

A recent **survey of faculty** (see description of SWOT survey of MFT faculty below) indicates that physical space and classroom availability are a concern. The majority of faculty surveyed indicated that they believed that such resources are somewhat inadequate or adequate (66.6%) (see survey instrument and results in Appendix C).

Further, results of the **survey of faculty** indicates that faculty members perceive providing small class sizes as very important, average item rating of 1.89 on a 1 to 5 scale (where lower scores reflect greater importance). Faculty do not believe that the program is doing well in insuring small class sizes at this time, however (average rating = 2.22 on a 1 to 5 scale where lower scores mean more success at the given task).

E. Advising

All 90+ MFT students receive academic advising from either the Program Chair, Trish Long, Ph.D., or from Dorie Richards, MS, MFT, a Departmental Associate hired to assist with advising.

A recent **survey of alumni** (see description of SWOT survey of alumni below) indicates that the majority of alumni surveyed believed that the program did "very well" or "somewhat well" in providing good advising to students; average rating = 2.13 on a 1 to 5 scale with lower scores reflecting a job better done (see Appendix H for alumni survey and results).

A recent **survey of current students** (see description of SWOT survey of current students below) indicates that the majority of current students surveyed (82.7%) believed that the program is doing "very well" or "somewhat well" in providing good advising to students; average rating = 1.86 on a 1 to 5 scale with lower scores reflecting a job better done (see Appendix I for current student survey and results).

F. Fieldwork Experience

As part of the MFT degree, students are required to complete a 2-semester long traineeship. Students enroll in class work in both the fall and spring term of a given academic year and in addition complete at least 150 hours of face-to-face psychotherapy with clients in agency (these include community based mental health facilities, non profits, and schools for example). Students are prepared for this process in the spring semester proceeding their year of enrollment. Departmental Associate Dorie Richards, MS, MFT, has been hired to serve as Fieldwork Coordinator. Ms. Richards assists the Program Chair in identifying possible fieldwork sites for MFT students, serving as the liaison between the sites and the program, and coordinating the paperwork associated with the experience. In a typically year, between 20 and 28 students may complete the fieldwork requirement.

A recent **survey of alumni** (see description of SWOT survey of alumni below) indicates that the majority of alumni (66.6%) surveyed believed that the program did “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing good traineeships (fieldwork experiences) to students; average rating = 2.40 on a 1 to 5 scale with lower scores reflecting a job better done (see Appendix H for alumni survey and results).

A recent **survey of current students** (see description of SWOT survey of current students below) indicates that the majority of respondents (81.0%) believe that the program is doing “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing good traineeships to students; average rating = 1.48 on a 1 to 5 scale with lower scores reflecting a job better done (see Appendix I for current student survey and results).

IV. Assessment Procedures

A. SWOT Survey of MFT Faculty

Faculty, both full- and part-time, associated with the MFT program were contacted by email and asked to participate in a faculty survey. A total of 21 faculty members were sent emails about the online web-based survey, and 9 individuals (half full-time tenure-track and half part-time adjunct instructors) participated. A copy of the survey and a summary analysis of responses appear in Appendix C.

B. Alumni Survey

Alumni who graduated from the MFT program during the past several academic years were contacted by email and asked to participate in an alumni survey. A total of 54 students were sent emails about the online web-based survey, and 15 students (13 female, 2 male) participated. Participants began the MFT program between 1998 and 2006 and graduated between 2000 and 2008. A copy of the survey and a summary analysis of responses appear in Appendix H.

C. SWOT Survey of Current MFT Students

Current students in the MFT program were contacted by email and asked to participate in a student survey. A total of 89 students were sent emails about the online web-based survey, and 29 students (22 females and 6 males) participated. Respondents ranged in age from 22 to 54 years of age (median = 30 years) and began the MFT program between 2004 and 2008. Of the respondents, 17 (58.6%) indicated they were full-time students whereas 12 (41.1%) indicated they were part-time students (please note that information collected as part of this survey was examined by status in program – full or part time – and did not differ). Nineteen of the respondents (65.5%) had taken the competency exam required by the MFT program prior to participating in the survey – a half way mark for most students, whereas only 11 (37.9%) had enrolled in the two semesters of fieldwork required by the program – suggesting the student is nearing the end of their degree requirements. Seven respondents (24.1%) had enrolled in the culminating project – suggesting the student was in their last, or next to last, semester of the program. A copy of the survey and a summary analysis of responses appear in Appendix I. Interestingly, examination of the relationship between time in the program and satisfaction ratings suggest that students newer to the program are generally more satisfied with the program (see correlations in Appendix I). One explanation for this finding is that changes were made to the program curriculum in Fall 2006 and to the program leadership in Fall 2005. Changes made in those years may be associated with greater satisfaction among more recently admitted students.

D. Licensure Exam Results

On an annual basis, the Board of Behavioral Sciences publishes statistics on the pass/fail rates of students from individual universities taking the state exam required by applicants for licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist. Results from the 2007-2008 year were obtained and appear in Appendix J.

E. Evaluations of Graduate Seminar (culminating) Projects

As a final requirement of the Graduate Seminar Project (which 99% of MFT students complete as their culminating project for the masters degree), students must present an overview of their project in a public venue. A rubric for evaluation of the presentation and project has been developed by the program. Evaluations of projects completed over the past year ($n = 25$) were collected. A copy of the evaluation rubric and a summary analysis of responses appear in Appendix K.

F. Fieldwork Evaluations

As a final requirement of the Fieldwork Experience (Psy 580, 581; required of all MFTs), all students must have their site supervisors complete and return an evaluation of their performance during the traineeship. Evaluations collected over the past three years ($n = 73$) were collected and examined. A copy of the evaluation form and a summary analysis of responses appear in Appendix L.

G. Competency Exam Results

As a required part of the MFT program, all students must satisfactorily complete a competency exam. Students have two opportunities to pass the four components of the essay-formatted exam: Diagnostic Hypotheses, Case Conceptualization, Skills and Techniques, and Ethics. Those students who do not demonstrate competency on each domain of the exam are subject to dismissal from the program. Information on the pass rate of those students who passed the exam over the past two academic years was examined. A copy of the competency exam and a summary analysis appear in Appendix M.

H. Curriculum

A copy of the required curriculum for MFT students appears in Appendix E. The contents of this curriculum were examined to insure that it meets the requirements of the BBS for licensure for MFT graduates. Appendix F includes general learning objectives of the program as well as an indication of coursework required by the BBS for licensure eligibility.

V. Findings

A. Learning Outcome: Students will acquire a foundation in the principles and theories of psychology

A review of the **MFT curriculum** indicates that the core principles and theories of psychology are woven into the program in an integrated way. In fact, as can be seen in the chart in Appendix F, all courses in the MFT program integrate exposure to psychological theories and principles. The initial exposure to theories occurs in the first year of the program for full-time students with a two-course sequence in the basic theories of counseling. Students also receive basic grounding in the process and principles of psychology in coursework such as Developmental Psychology, Multicultural Psychology, and Psychopathology. As the student moves through the program, more advanced theories are introduced in such classes as Family Therapy, Couples Therapy, Child Therapy, and Group Therapy.

Results of the **Competency Exam** taken by students as part of the MFT program also suggest that the students are acquiring a strong foundation in basic theories and conceptualization skills (see Appendix M). Over two years of exams, at least 80% of all test-takers demonstrated competency in basic psychological theories and case conceptualization within two testing attempts (80% in 2008, 95% in 2007).

Oral presentation **evaluations of Graduate Seminar projects** (the way the vast majority of students complete their culminating project for the masters degree) also indicate that students have acquired a foundation in the principles and theories of psychology and the ability to apply these (see Appendix K). Specifically, students are evaluated along at least 5 dimensions during these evaluations: Set problem into context [of past research

and psychological theories], Referred to relevant theory, Presented relevant research, Related findings to theory, and Related finding to prior research and/or the literature. Examination of scores on these dimensions indicate good performance, with the majority of students earning ratings of “very true” or “somewhat true” on each dimension. All items related to setting the issue into the context of research and theory had average ratings above 3.36 on a 1 to 4 scale (with higher scores reflecting better performance); both items regarding the ability to relate findings back to the larger body of literature and theory had average ratings above 2.57.

Fieldwork supervisor ratings also indicate that students have acquired a foundation in the principles and theories of psychology and the ability to apply these (see Appendix L). Specifically, students are evaluated along at least one dimension that explicitly evaluates the student’s ability to integrate theory and diagnosis in their counseling work. Examination of scores on this dimension indicates good performance, with the vast majority of students rated as having “excellent” to “good grasp” of this concept, with an average rating of 3.35 on a 1 to 5 scale (with higher ratings reflecting better performance).

Results of the **faculty survey** also indicate that faculty members believe that students are acquiring a good foundation in the principles and theories of psychology and the ability to apply these (see Appendix C). Specifically, 88.8% of faculty members surveyed indicated that they believed the program did “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing students with exposure to basic theories; average rating = 1.78 on a 1 to 5 scale (where lower scores mean better performance). Further, 77.8% of faculty members surveyed indicated that they believed the program did “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing students with the opportunity to integrate theory, research, and applied skills in the program; average rating = 2.22 on the 1 to 5 scale.

The **survey of alumni** also indicates that the program is successful with regards to exposing students to psychological theories (see Appendix H). The vast majority of alumni surveyed (93.3%) believed that the program did “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing students with exposure to basic theories; average rating = 1.67 on a 1 to 5 scale with lower scores reflecting a job better done. The majority (66.7%) also believed the program did “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing students with opportunities to integrate theory, research, and applied skills; average rating = 2.07.

The **survey of current students** also indicates that the program is successful with regards to exposing students to psychological theories (see Appendix I). The vast majority of alumni surveyed (96.1%) believe that the program is doing “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing students with exposure to basic theories; average rating = 1.17 on a 1 to 5 scale with lower scores reflecting a job better done. The majority (82.1%) also believed the program is doing “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing students with opportunities to integrate theory, research, and applied skills; average rating = 1.72.

In summary, the curriculum and culture of the MFT program provides a clear foundation in the core principles and theories of psychology and also provides students with the

opportunity to learn the application of such principles. Results of the curriculum review, competency exam, graduate seminar oral presentation evaluations, fieldwork evaluations, and surveys of the faculty, alumni, and current students all indicate that students are acquiring a foundation in core principles and theories of psychology and the ability to apply these.

B. Learning Outcome: Students will acquire a foundation in diagnostic skills and the ability to apply these

A review of the **MFT curriculum** indicates that the review of information regarding diagnostic skills and the ability to apply these are woven into the program in an integrated way. In fact, as can be seen in the chart in Appendix F, at least 11 courses in the MFT program integrate exposure to such materials. The initial exposure to diagnostic skills occurs in the first year of the program for full-time students with the Psychopathology course. This provides students with an in-depth overview of diagnostic issues and allows them to practice the application of these skills. Students gain additional grounding in diagnostic issues through specialization classes such as Substance Abuse Counseling, Family Therapy, Couples Therapy, Human Sexuality, Child Therapy, and Counseling the Older Adult. More integrated practice of these skills occurs also in Psychological Testing and in the Fieldwork sequence (Psy 580 and 581).

Results of the **Competency Exam** taken by students as part of the MFT program also suggest that the students are acquiring a strong foundation in diagnostic skills and the ability to apply these (see Appendix M). Over two years of exams, at least 94% of all test-takers demonstrated competency in diagnostic hypotheses within two testing attempts (94% in 2008, 100% in 2007).

Fieldwork supervisor ratings also indicate that students have acquired a strong foundation in diagnostic skills and the ability to apply these (see Appendix L). Specifically, students are evaluated along 7 dimensions that explicitly evaluate the student's observation/diagnostic skills. Examination of scores on these dimensions indicates good performance, with the vast majority of students rated as having "excellent" to "good grasp" of these concepts; all average ratings exceeded 3.35 on a 1 to 5 scale (higher scores reflecting better performance).

In summary, the curriculum and culture of the MFT program provides a foundation in diagnostic skills and also provides students with the opportunity to learn the application of such principles. Results of the curriculum review, competency exam, and fieldwork evaluations all indicate that students are acquiring a foundation in diagnostic skills and the ability to apply these.

C. Learning Outcome: Students will acquire a foundation in ethical and legal issues and professional development and the ability to apply these

A review of the **MFT curriculum** indicates that information regarding ethical and legal issues, as well as professional development, and the ability to apply these are woven into

the program in an integrated way. In fact, as can be seen in the chart in Appendix F, the vast majority of courses in the MFT program integrate exposure to such materials. The initial exposure to ethical, legal, and professional development topics occurs in the first year of the program for full-time students with the Ethics course (Psy 527). This provides students with an in-depth overview of diagnostic issues and allows them to consider how these issues may come to pass in actual practice. Students gain additional exposure to ethics, and consider how ethical issues may impact specific counseling related work, through many additional counseling and research related classes in the program. More integrated practice of these skills occurs also in the Fieldwork sequence (Psy 580 and 581).

Results of the **Competency Exam** taken by students as part of the MFT program also suggest that the students are acquiring a strong foundation in ethical and legal skills (see Appendix M). Over two years of exams, at least 82% of all test-takers demonstrated competency in diagnostic hypotheses within two testing attempts (100% in 2008, 82% in 2007).

Oral presentation **evaluations of Graduate Seminar projects** (the way the vast majority of students complete their culminating project for the masters degree) also indicate that students have acquired a foundation in legal, ethical, and professional principles of psychology and the ability to apply these (see Appendix K). Specifically, students are evaluated along at least 7 dimensions regarding their effectiveness at presenting material (a professional development issue) and 1 dimension regarding their ability to acknowledge limitations to their work (also a professional development and ethical issue). Examination of scores on these dimensions indicates good performance, with the vast majority of students earning ratings of “very true” on each dimension. All items had average ratings above 3.44 on a 1 to 4 scale (with higher scores reflecting better performance).

Fieldwork supervisor ratings also indicate that students have acquired a foundation in legal, ethical, and professional principles of psychology and the ability to apply these (see Appendix J). Specifically, students are evaluated along 6 dimensions involving the professional skills of case management and 7 dimensions involving the professional skills of utilizing supervision effectively. Examination of scores on these dimensions indicates good performance, with the vast majority of students rated as having “excellent” to “good grasp” of these concepts – no more than 4.2% of students received scores below “good grasp” on any question. Average ratings on all items exceeded 3.92 on a 1 to 5 scale (with higher scores reflecting better performance). It is noteworthy that the single item that most clearly reflects this learning objective, “Professional ethics” received an average rating of 4.23 with 40.8% of students receiving an “excellent” rating and an additional 30.1% receiving a “well developed” rating. No students were rated as “needs improvement” or “beginning grasp” on this item.

In summary, the curriculum and culture of the MFT program provides a clear foundation in the core ethical and legal principles of psychology and in professional development. The program also provides students with the opportunity to learn the application of such

principles. Results of the curriculum review, competency exam, graduate seminar oral presentation evaluations, and fieldwork evaluations indicate that students are acquiring a foundation in ethics, legal issues, and professional development, and the ability to apply these. In fact, results suggest that this is a strength of the program.

D. Learning Outcome: Students will acquire a foundation in general counseling and intervention skills and the ability to apply these

A review of the **MFT curriculum** indicates that the students receive considerable grounding in general counseling and intervention skills and in the ability to apply these; such skills are woven into the program in an integrated way. In fact, as can be seen in the chart in Appendix F, the vast majority of courses in the MFT program integrate exposure to such materials. The initial exposure to counseling skills and interventions occurs in the two-course Theories and Skills sequence during first year of the program for full-time students (Psy 516 and 517). This provides students with an in-depth overview of general counseling skills and introduces them to the specific skills associated with various theoretical perspectives. These two classes also provide the initial opportunity for students to practice the application of these skills. Students gain additional grounding in counseling skills and interventions through specialization classes such as Substance Abuse Counseling, Family Therapy, Couples Therapy, Human Sexuality, Child Therapy, and Counseling the Older Adult. More integrated practice of these skills occurs also in the Fieldwork sequence (Psy 580 and 581).

Results of the **Competency Exam** taken by students as part of the MFT program also suggest that the students are acquiring a strong foundation in diagnostic skills (see Appendix M). Over two years of exams, at least 87% of all test-takers demonstrated competency in diagnostic hypotheses within two testing attempts (87% in 2008, 91% in 2007).

Oral presentation **evaluations of Graduate Seminar projects** (the way the vast majority of students complete their culminating project for the masters degree) also indicate that students have acquired a foundation in general counseling and intervention skills and the ability to apply these (see Appendix K). Specifically, students are evaluated along one dimension which requires them to identify relevant implication of findings [to counselors and researchers]. Examination of scores on these dimensions indicates good performance, with the majority of students earning ratings of “very true” or “somewhat true” on each dimension. This item had an average rating of 3.09 on a 1 to 4 scale, with higher scores reflecting better performance.

Fieldwork supervisor ratings also indicate that students have acquired a foundation in general counseling and intervention skills and the ability to apply these (see Appendix L). Specifically, students are evaluated along 8 dimensions involving the counseling skills of engagement, 4 dimensions involving the ability to plan and execute interventions, and 2 dimensions involving termination and referral skills. Examination of scores on these dimensions indicates good performance, with the vast majority of students rated as having “excellent” to “good grasp” of these concepts. Average ratings on all items

related to engagement skills exceeded 3.81 on a 1 to 5 scale (with higher scores reflecting better performance); all items related to interventions and termination exceeded 3.57 on the 1 to 5 scale.

Results of the **faculty survey** also indicate that faculty members believe that the program is providing students with good opportunities to apply their skills and to integrate theory, research, and applied skills (see Appendix C). Specifically, 88.9% of faculty members surveyed indicated that they believed the program did “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing students with opportunities to apply their skills; average rating = 1.78 on a 1 to 5 scale (where lower scores mean better job done). Further, 77.8% of faculty members surveyed indicated that they believed the program did “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing students with the opportunity to integrate theory, research, and applied skills in the program; average rating = 2.22 on the 1 to 5 scale.

The **survey of alumni** also indicates that the program is successful with regards to providing students with opportunities to apply their skills (see Appendix H). The majority of alumni surveyed (80.0%) believed that the program did “very well” or “somewhat well” in this area; average rating = 2.07 on a 1 to 5 scale with lower scores reflecting a job better done. The majority (66.7%) also believed the program did “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing students with opportunities to integrate theory, research, and applied skills; average rating = 2.07.

The **survey of current students** also indicates that the program is successful with regards to providing students with opportunities to apply their skills (see Appendix I). The majority of students surveyed (82.8%) believed that the program is doing “very well” or “somewhat well” in this area; average rating = 1.76 on a 1 to 5 scale with lower scores reflecting a job better done. The majority (82.2%) also believed the program is doing “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing students with opportunities to integrate theory, research, and applied skills; average rating = 1.72.

In summary, the curriculum and culture of the MFT program provides a clear foundation in the core counseling and intervention principles and also provides students with the opportunity to learn the application of such principles. Results of the curriculum review, competency exam, graduate seminar oral presentation evaluations, fieldwork evaluations, and surveys of the faculty, alumni, and current students all indicate that students are acquiring a grounding in general counseling and intervention skills and in the ability to apply these.

E. Learning Outcome: Students will acquire an awareness of diversity issues in the field of psychology and the ability to apply these

A review of the **MFT curriculum** indicates that issues of diversity and multiculturalism are both dealt with in an in-depth focused course (Psy 523) and integrated throughout the curriculum. In fact, as can be seen in the chart in Appendix F, every course in the MFT program integrates exposure to such materials. The Multicultural Counseling course introduces students to relevant concepts in the first year of the program for full-time

students. Students gain additional grounding in diversity issues and learn to apply this information in various counseling related situations through a number of specialization classes such as Substance Abuse Counseling, Family Therapy, Couples Therapy, Human Sexuality, Child Therapy, and Counseling the Older Adult. Diversity issues are also integrated with discussion of the scientific process in Research Methods and in the Culminating Project. More integrated practice of these skills occurs also in the Fieldwork sequence (Psy 580 and 581).

While diversity related issues are not a separately graded part of the **Competency Exam** taken by students as part of the MFT program, integration of diversity and/or multicultural topics is required for a passable answer in each content area tested (e.g., students must be able to integrate multicultural considerations into their diagnostic hypotheses and into their case conceptualization). Therefore, pass rates across all four sections of the Competency Exam are relevant when assessing student accomplishments in this area (see Appendix M). Clearly the fact that, over the past two years, no fewer than 80% of all test-takers demonstrated competency in each tested area within two testing attempts suggests that students are acquiring diversity-related knowledge and the ability to apply it.

Fieldwork supervisor ratings also indicate that students have acquired an awareness of diversity issues, especially as they play out in the counseling setting (see Appendix L). Specifically, students are evaluated along at least 3 dimensions that explicitly involve this skill: Appreciates diversity, Follows client's process without imposing own agenda, and Ability to match interventions to client's needs. Examination of scores on these dimensions indicates good performance, with the vast majority of students rated as having "excellent" to "good grasp" of these concepts; no more than 5.7% of students received a rating below "good grasp" on these items. Average ratings on all items exceeded 3.63 on a 1 to 5 scale with higher scores reflecting better performance.

Results of the **faculty survey** also indicate that faculty members believe that the program is providing students with good exposure to multicultural and diversity related topics (see Appendix C). Specifically, 100% of faculty members surveyed indicated that they believed the program did "very well" or "somewhat well" in providing students with exposure to basic theories; average rating = 1.67 on a 1 to 5 scale (where lower scores reflect a better job done).

The **survey of alumni** also indicates that the program is successful with regards to providing students with exposure to multicultural and diversity related topics (see Appendix H). The vast majority of alumni surveyed (93.3%) believed that the program did "very well" or "somewhat well" in providing students with exposure to this material; average rating = 1.53 on a 1 to 5-point scale with lower scores reflecting a job better done.

The **survey of current students** also indicates that the program is successful with regards to providing students with exposure to multicultural and diversity related topics (see Appendix I). The vast majority of current students surveyed (96.6%) believed that

the program is doing “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing students with exposure to this material; average rating = 1.45 on a 1 to 5 scale with lower scores reflecting a job better done.

In summary, the curriculum and culture of the MFT program provides a clear foundation in multicultural and diversity principles and also provides students with the opportunity to learn the application of such principles. Results of the curriculum review, competency exam, fieldwork evaluations, and surveys of the faculty, alumni, and current students all indicate that students are acquiring a foundation in diversity and multiculturalism and the ability to apply these. In fact, results suggest that this is a strength of the program.

F. Learning Outcome: Students will acquire skills in consuming scientific information and applying the scientific method in the study of human behavior

A review of the **MFT curriculum** indicates that information regarding the consumption of scientific information and the application of the scientific method is sufficiently integrated into the program. As can be seen in the chart in Appendix F, at least 3 courses explicitly discuss such course content. Students are exposed to the professional and ethical issues that arise in conducting research in their first year of the program as part of Ethics and Professional Development. Next, students complete a Research Methods course. In this class, the process of designing research and the fundamental principles of evaluating and conducting research are explored. Students begin to apply this knowledge in the Methods course as well. Throughout the curriculum, students are exposed to scientific information and instructors encourage consideration of the empirical basis of facts held as truths in the discipline. As a culminating project, students complete either a Masters Thesis or Graduate Seminar project. As part of this empirical project, students must apply the skills they have learned through the program in developing and conducting their own research project. Successful completion of the culminating project indicates successful implementation of the scientific process and is required for degree completion.

Oral presentation **evaluations of Graduate Seminar projects** (the way the vast majority of students complete their culminating project for the masters degree) indicate that students have acquired a foundation in consuming scientific information and in applying the scientific method (see Appendix K). Specifically, students are evaluated along 17 dimensions regarding their effectiveness at presenting material and their ability to integrate theory, research, and application of materials. Examination of scores on these dimensions indicates good performance, with the majority of students earning ratings of “very true” or “somewhat true” on each dimension. With one exception, all items had average ratings above 3.0 on a 1 to 4 scale where higher scores reflect better performance.

Fieldwork supervisor ratings also indicate that students have acquired a foundation in consuming scientific information and in applying the scientific method (see Appendix L). Specifically, students are evaluated along at least 1 dimension that explicitly involves this skill: Ability to evaluate outcome of sessions. Examination of scores on this dimension

indicates good performance, with the vast majority of students rated as having “excellent” to “good grasp” of these concepts; the average rating on this item was 3.59 on a 1 to 5 scale where higher scores reflect better performance.

Interestingly, results of the **faculty survey** indicate that the majority of faculty members believe that the program is doing only “somewhat well” or “neither well nor not well” in providing students with exposure to current research (see Appendix C). Specifically, 66.6% of faculty members provided one of these two responses, with an additional 33.3% indicating that the program is doing “not very well”; average rating = 2.89 on a 1 to 5 scale (where lower scores mean better success with the factor studied).

On the other hand, results of the **survey of alumni** indicate that the program is successful with regards to exposing students to current research (see Appendix H). The majority of alumni surveyed (73.3%) believed that the program did “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing students with exposure to current research; average rating = 2.00 on a 1 to 5 scale with lower scores reflecting a job better done. The majority (66.7%) also believed the program did “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing students with opportunities to integrate theory, research, and applied skills; average rating = 2.07.

The **survey of current students** also indicates that the program is successful with regards to exposing students to current research (see Appendix I). The majority of current students surveyed (93.1%) believed that the program is doing “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing students with exposure to current research; average rating = 1.59 on a 1 to 5 scale with lower scores reflecting a job better done. The majority (82.1%) also believed the program is doing “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing students with opportunities to integrate theory, research, and applied skills; average rating = 1.72.

In summary, the curriculum and culture of the MFT program appears to be doing an adequate job in insuring students can accurately consume scientific information and apply the scientific method. Results of the curriculum review, graduate seminar oral presentation evaluations, and a survey of the faculty indicate that, while research preparation is not a strength of the current program, the program is allowing students to acquire and apply these skills. Results of the fieldwork evaluations and surveys of the alumni and current students all indicate that students themselves, and others in the counseling profession, believe our students are acquiring a good grounding in general counseling and intervention skills and in the ability to apply these.

G. Learning Outcome: Students will acquire training that prepares them for licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist within the state of California

Licensure in the state of California for marriage and family therapists is regulated by the Board of Behavioral Sciences. ULV’s Marriage and Family Therapy program is recognized by this Board as meeting the necessary education requirements in preparation for licensure as an MFT.

A review of the **MFT curriculum** indicates that information both preparing students for licensure and practice as a marriage and family therapist, as well as required by the BBS, is integrated throughout the program. As can be seen in the chart in Appendix F, 12 of the required MFT courses are also required by BBS requirements. These classes meet BBS requirements for coursework in therapy for families and couples (e.g., Family Therapy, Couples Therapy, Child Therapy), in multicultural issues (e.g., Multicultural Counseling), in substance use (Substance Abuse Counseling), and in Diagnosis (Psychopathology), and include at least 2 semesters of fieldwork placement in which students must accumulate a minimum of 150 hours of face-to-face client contact (Supervised Fieldwork I and II).

Results of additional aspects of the program review further suggest that the goal of preparing students for licensure is shared not only by the faculty but also with the current and past students. Results of the **current student survey** indicate that 100% of respondents intend to become licensed as an MFT after completion of their degree (see Appendix I).

Results of the **alumni survey** suggest that the program is successfully preparing students for licensure (see Appendix H). Fourteen (93.3%) of respondents indicated that they intend to become licensed as an MFT or are already licensed; two (13.3%) of respondents indicated that they have completed the licensure process. Thirteen (92.9%) have registered for an intern number with the Board of Behavioral Sciences, the first step in the licensure process.

Successful completion of a licensure exam is an additional step in the licensure process. Results of the **alumni survey** suggest that 1 (7.7%) of the respondents has passed the exam, 1 (7.7%) has taken the exam once but has not yet passed, whereas 11 (84.6%) have not yet taken the exam. Given the recent graduation date for most respondents, such a finding is not surprising.

Further, results of the **alumni survey** suggest that 13 (86.7%) of the respondents indicated they are currently employed in a marriage and family therapy related position. Such employment likely suggests that employers perceived these graduates as licensure eligible.

Fieldwork supervisor ratings also indicate that students have acquired the training necessary for licensure as an MFT in California (see Appendix L). Specifically, students are evaluated along 34 dimensions that reflect skills that an MFT licensure candidate must have. Examination of scores on these dimensions indicates good performance, with the vast majority of students rated as having “excellent” to “good grasp” of these concepts. Average ratings on all items exceeded 3.35 on a 1 to 5 scale where higher scores reflect better performance.

Official statistics concerning the written MFT licensure exam, published by the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS), also suggests that the program is well preparing students for licensure (see Appendix J). Data available for the 7-1-07 to 12-31-07 time frame

indicate that 60% ($n = 6$) of ULV graduates who took the exam passed (this is in comparison to an overall pass rate across universities of 62%). BBS also publishes data separately for those applicants taking the test for the first time (as it is generally accepted that students who have previously failed an exam are less likely to pass on the second attempt than are first time test takers). Inspection of these data show that 100% of first time test takers from ULV ($n = 6$) passed the exam during the time frame. This compares to only 77% of first time test takers across all universities.

Results of the **faculty survey** also indicate that faculty members believe that students will be successful as MFTs after the program (see Appendix C). Specifically, 66.6% of faculty members surveyed indicated that they “strongly agreed” or “somewhat agreed” that students would be successful after graduation; average rating = 2.11 on a 1 to 5 scale where lower scores mean more agreement with the factor studied. Further, 88.98% of faculty members surveyed indicated that they believed the program did “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing students with the skills to work in a variety of placements following graduation; average rating = 1.78 on a 1 to 5 scale where lower scores reflect a better job done.

The **survey of alumni** also indicates that the program is successful with regards to providing experiences that will prepare students for licensure (see Appendix H). The majority of alumni surveyed (53.3%) believed that the program did “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing students with skills to work in a variety of placements following graduation; average rating = 2.67 on a 1 to 5 scale with lower scores reflecting a job better done. The majority (73.3%) also believed the program did “excellent”, “very well”, or “good” in preparing them for employment within the MFT area; average rating = 2.93 on a 1 to 5 scale with lower scores reflecting a better job done. While these ratings are certainly acceptable, it appears that a portion of alumni believe that there are additional skills that they did not obtain in their training. This may be an area for further investigation.

The **survey of current students** also indicates that the program is successful with regards to providing experiences that will prepare students for licensure (see Appendix I). The majority of current students surveyed (85.2%) believed that the program is doing “very well” or “somewhat well” in providing students with skills to work in a variety of placements following graduation; average rating = 1.55 on a 1 to 5 scale with lower scores reflecting a job better done. The majority (96.6%) also believed the program is doing “excellent”, “very well”, or “good” in preparing them for employment within the MFT area; average rating = 1.90 on a 1 to 5 scale with lower scores reflecting a better job done).

In summary, the curriculum and culture of the MFT program successfully provides training that prepares students for licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist within the state of California. Results of the curriculum review, fieldwork evaluations, official statistics from the Board of Behavioral Sciences, and surveys of the faculty, alumni, and current students all indicate that students are successfully acquiring the coursework and

skills necessary for licensure and are in fact passing the state's licensure exams successfully and progressing onto to licensure.

VI. Action Recommendations

1. Increase the number of full-time tenure-track faculty contributing to the MFT program, ideally through the inclusion of new faculty hires with time dedicated to the masters program. A high faculty to student ratio is one of the assets of the MFT program and must be maintained for successful recruitment of students.
2. Insure that resources are appropriate for the number of students within the MFT program and admitted each cycle. This may require that admissions be frozen or even reduced if additional resources are not available.
3. Consider the admissions requirements currently in place for the MFT program and possible revision of these (i.e., increase expectations for admission).
4. Maintain and further develop plans to recruit highly qualified, highly prepared, applicants to the MFT program though on campus one-on-one meetings with interested applicants and through off-campus outreach.
5. Continue to monitor legislative activities in the state of California that may modify the curricular program for MFT licensure. If such changes are passed in the future, develop plans to modify the degree program to conform to new state standards.
6. As possible, limit class sizes (10-15 students) to insure that this strength of the program is maintained. Appropriate faculty resources will be needed to allow such an action. This could take the form of increased full-time tenure-track faculty commitment to the masters program or increased compensation for adjunct faculty which would allow for recruitment of additional qualified instructors.
7. Maintain appropriate fieldwork coordination and advising for MFT students. Coordination with outside agencies for fieldwork placements and recruitment of new sites is a time consuming activity. This coordination, as well as general advising, is currently seen as a strength by students.
8. Consider the relative importance of the learning objective "Students will acquire skills in consuming scientific information and applying the scientific method in the study of human behavior." While students report satisfaction with the skills received and objective measures indicate that these skills are acquired, faculty members report less satisfaction with this area. Review of the curriculum also indicates that focus within the area of the scientific method is not core to the program. This is not unexpected for an applied psychology program, such as the

Marriage and Family Therapy masters degree. Faculty should consider if this is acceptable, or whether the focus on the scientific process should be further integrated into the program. Corresponding changes to the Graduate Seminar project could be considered.

9. Continue to maintain training standards necessary for University of La Verne's MFT program to remain on the Board of Behavioral Science's list of approved programs for licensure consideration.
10. Further investigate alumni perceptions of their training experiences, especially in regards to their beliefs that they learned all skills necessary for work in a variety of placements following graduation. While site supervisors and faculty see the students as having acquired the skills necessary, alumni may feel that certain topics were not covered to enhance their work as an MFT. Such topics could be added to elective coursework.