

**Progress Report on the Action Recommendations of the
MS: Marriage and Family Therapy
Program Review
5-26-10**

The MS: Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) Program was reviewed in 2008. Based on feedback from an external review, action recommendations were updated May, 2010. The following summarizes progress made towards the program review recommendations.

Recommendation 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. Limited progress. Recent hires to the department of psychology are teaching 1 class per semester within the masters program. This has minimally helped with the full time – adjunct instructor ratio, but 75% of program courses are still taught by adjunct instructors. New faculty hires with time dedicated to the masters program are still needed.

Recommendation 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. Limited progress. University goals for increased admissions are in some conflict with this program goal, given limited resources. Admissions are being monitored carefully but continue to grow minimally each year, despite the absence of additional faculty resources.

Recommendation 3. Consider the admissions requirements currently in place for the MFT program and possible revision of these (i.e., increase expectations for admission). Goal accomplished and additional options for revisions under consideration. Faculty met to review program requirements and have made some adjustments. Faculty would like to see the quality of applicants continue to improve. Once this occurs, additional adjustments may be made. At this time, the qualifications of applicants continue to be mixed. A slightly greater percentage of more highly quality applicants was evident in the applicant pool for Fall 2010. Additional changes to the admissions requirements seem unwarranted at this time, but may be possible if the pool continues to improve and more qualified applicants accept acceptance offers.

Recommendation 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. In progress. The admission specialist working with the MFT programs has visited several universities, as well as regional conferences, over the past year to discuss the Masters and PsyD programs at La Verne. She, the program chair, and the fieldwork coordinator for the Masters program have also continued individual meetings with potential candidates on campus. Additional methods for recruitment should be considered including increased graduate assistantship and graduate scholarships/grants for highly qualified applicants (similar to those provided by other universities).

Recommendation 5. Given recently passed legislative changes to MFT training in the state of California, several modifications to the curriculum will be necessary. Such changes must be in place for the cohort beginning their academic work in Fall, 2012. Members of the faculty will examine the new requirements and determine what

additional coursework is need and what other changes should be adopted into current coursework to be consistent with new guidelines (recommendation updated May, 2010). In progress. Information regarding necessary changes has been obtained and two faculty from the program have attended a training program regarding required changes. The current curriculum and requirements will be reviewed and changes implemented to be consistent with the legislated deadline.

Recommendation 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. No progress. As noted previously, minimal progress has been made with acquiring additional full time faculty committed in large part to the masters program. The university has also not increased compensation for the masters program. Class sizes in the masters program, for traditional courses, continue to range between 17 and 21.

Recommendation 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. Goal accomplished. The Masters program continues to keep a fieldwork coordinator and advisor on staff for the MFT program. This resource continues to be a strength of the program.

Recommendation 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. Goal accomplished. Faculty met to discuss this learning objective. Changes to the culminating project requirements were made. Faculty agreed that instruction throughout the program should continue to focus on assisting students become good “consumers” of research data. Graduate Seminar projects in the future will not require empirical projects, but rather a comprehensive, critical literature review. Faculty further agreed that students will not be expected to become “producers” of data, although this option will be available to interested students in the form of the Masters Thesis, which will continue to require an empirical project.

Recommendation 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. Goal accomplished. The program maintains good standing with the BBS.

Recommendation 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. In progress. Additional contacts with alumni in the future are recommended.

Recommendation 11. To further strengthen and enhance the MFT program, accreditation with COAMFTE should be considered. Current program characteristics should be examined in light of accreditation demands to determine if accreditation would be likely. Exploration of any necessary resources, or program changes necessary, to pursue accreditation should be conducted. After such data are gathered, a determination of the desire to pursue such accreditation should be discussed by the faculty in light of departmental, college, and university goals (recommendation added in May, 2010). In progress. Evaluation of COAMFTE criteria and expectations will be needed to determine how this are consistent or inconsistent with the current training program. Feedback provided by the external site reviewer has provided some initial information for this process. It will need to be determined whether required changes would fit the goals and intents of the current departmental faculty and if current resources are adequate to permit accreditation. A preliminary review of these issues should be conducted, discussed by the department, and presented to the Dean for consideration.