

**By-laws**  
of the  
**Marriage and Family Therapy**  
**Program Student Advisory Council**

Adopted: September 17, 2012 (Revised: February 7, 2013, May 25, 2014)

Preamble

We, the students in the Marriage and Family Therapy Program at Valdosta State University, recognizing the need for a formal avenue through which enrolled students may actively contribute to the governance, continuance, and aspirations of the Marriage and Family Therapy Program, have established a student advisory council to ensure eminent academic and professional training for licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist.

**Article I – Name**

The name of this organization shall be Program Student Advisory Council, hereinafter referred to as PSAC.

**Article II – Program Educational Outcomes**

It is the philosophy of the Marriage and Family Therapy program at Valdosta State University, hereinafter referred to as the Program, that students' uniqueness should be respected and developed through active, engaged learning with an accessible and supportive faculty. This belief has led to the development of Program Educational Outcomes which serve to guide the creation and implementation of Program services and policies. The Program Educational Outcomes shall guide the focus of PSAC and the responsibilities with which PSAC is charged.

Program Educational Outcomes emphasize the following four (4) areas: the student/trainee, context, multiple perspectives, and diversity. Through these areas, Program faculty seek to provide students the academic and clinical training required to practice relationally informed clinical work and prepare graduates for work in a variety of mental health settings.

The services and policies of the Program directly influence the education and professional development students receive and shall be measured through the Program Educational Outcomes. Program Educational Outcomes, as outlined in Appendix A, shall be reviewed by PSAC one (1) time per year through administering a survey to the student body evaluating how well they feel they the program has met the Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's).

## **Article II – Responsibilities**

In order to provide a student-driven perspective to the Program faculty concerning issues that affect the Program graduate experience, PSAC shall assume the following responsibilities:

- A. Review and evaluate the adequacy and appropriateness of the Program Educational Outcomes one (1) time per academic year by administering a Student Learning Outcome survey with the student body;
- B. Provide a student perspective on Program services and policies;
- C. Make recommendations for new Program services and policies;
- D. Convey student's opinions, criticisms, suggestions, and responses regarding Program services and policies to the Program faculty; and
- E. Identify issues within the Program that need to be brought to attention.
- F. Act as a go-between for action to be taken that cannot be accomplished by faculty as deemed necessary and voted on by the Board, passing by a 2/3 majority.

## **Article III - Membership**

Representing those currently enrolled in the Program, members of PSAC shall consist of ten percent (10%) of the total enrolled student body; half representing the First Year students and half representing Second (or Third) Year students. Based on the varying number of members of PSAC, positions may be created, left open, combined, or adjusted to accommodate the needs of the council. Should the need to create/remove a Board position present itself, the need will be presented at a meeting, where responsibilities will be determined and assigned, and voted on by the Board. This proposition must pass by 2/3 majority vote to be enacted.

Membership in PSAC is contingent upon participation; through meeting attendance and communications between regularly scheduled meetings. A member shall be removed from the council should he or she 1) fail to attend two (2) meetings of PSAC without an excused absence and 2) fail to communicate with the Chair to explain any absences. After missing 1 meeting without an excused absence, the PSAC member will be warned in writing. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting, the member will be notified of removal from the committee in writing via E-mail. Excused absences from meetings must be reported at the time of meeting scheduling, unless deemed an emergency. Excused absences include family emergencies, plans to be out of town previous to meeting being set, client or practicum/class scheduled prior to meeting being set, and another medical/mental health appointment scheduled prior to meeting being set. It will be the responsibility of any member who fails to attend a meeting to be briefed on the items discussed.

Should any member of PSAC resign from the position to which he or she was elected, nominations from the Program students shall be accepted to fill the vacant position.

The role and responsibilities of current PSAC positions shall be as follows:

- A. The Chair; shall be a Second Year student who previously held the position of Chair-Elect, shall convene and preside at meetings of PSAC, shall manage the affairs of PSAC

between meetings in consultation with PSAC, shall oversee and offer support to all committees of PSAC but shall not chair any committee, shall act as liaison between the students and faculty of the Program, and shall facilitate elections to fill the two (2) Second (or Third) year positions on PSAC.

- B. The Chair-Elect; shall be a First Year student willing to commit to two (2) terms of membership on PSAC and shall assume the position of Chair during the second term, shall assume the duties of the PSAC Chair in the Chair's absence, shall attend the yearly Program faculty retreat, shall explain and promote the Program Student Advisory Council to incoming First Year Students during orientation, and shall facilitate elections to fill the four (4) First Year positions on PSAC.
- C. The Secretary & Webmaster; shall keep accurate records of each meeting of PSAC, shall maintain and update the PSAC website, and shall act as a liaison between students enrolled in the Program who submit electronic communication and other members of PSAC.
- D. The First Year Student Representative; shall be a First Year student who shall act as a liaison between First Year Program students and PSAC.
- E. The Second (or Third) Year Student Representative; shall be a Second (or Third) Year student who shall act as a liaison between Second and Third Year Program students and PSAC.

#### **Article IV - Election Procedures**

Members of PSAC shall be elected for a one-year term extending from September through July. Any First Year student member of the Council may be elected for a second term and any Second Year student member may be elected for a third term.

The Chair-Elect shall be a First Year student willing to commit to membership on PSAC for two (2) years. At the conclusion of the first term on PSAC, the Chair-Elect will assume the position of Chair, and a new Chair-Elect will be elected from the incoming First Year students.

There shall be no election for the position of Chair of PSAC.

Students elected to membership on PSAC shall receive a majority vote from their cohort. The Second (or Third) Year Representative and another Second (or Third) Year member of PSAC shall be elected prior to the conclusion of the current academic year. These two (2) newly elected members shall attend the final meeting of the current PSAC.

In the case that a vote results in a tie between nominees for a position on the Council:

- A. During elections of the Second Year Representative and the other Second (or third) Year position on PSAC, the Chair will cast the tie-breaking vote.

B. During elections of First Year positions, the Chair and the two Second (or third) Year members, who have already been elected, shall cast the tie-breaking votes.

If a member of PSAC is no longer able to serve in the capacity of the student's position on PSAC, a special election is held to fill the vacant position. This newly elected student shall serve on PSAC until the end of the term in which the student was elected.

#### **Article V – Meetings**

PSAC will convene one time per month. The exact days and times for PSAC meetings will be decided upon by the Chair based on availability of the current members of the Board.

In its commitment to review Program Educational Outcomes, PSAC shall join Program faculty one (1) time per academic year. This review shall occur in the Spring or Summer term, depending on administration of the Student Learning Outcome survey and availability of the faculty, during one of the faculty weekly staffing meetings. The exact day and time shall be determined by the PSAC chair and Program faculty. PSAC shall include criticisms, concerns, compliments, and suggestions for Program betterment in its review.

Additional meetings shall be convened by the Chair, as necessary.

#### **Article VI – Amendments**

Amendments or additions to this document must be presented during a meeting of PSAC. The amendment or addition is adopted by a 2/3 majority vote from the members of PSAC.

#### **Article VII – Dissolution**

PSAC may only be dissolved at the request of the Program faculty.

# Appendix A to By-laws of the Marriage and Family Therapy Program Student Advisory Council

## Program Educational Outcomes

- I. Marriage and Family Therapy Program Goals
  - A. Recruit, train, and graduate students from diverse backgrounds
  - B. The program will educate students by promoting an understanding and respect for diversity.
  - C. The program will provide education from a relational perspective that values the importance of context in making sense of human behavior.
  
- II. MFT Program Objectives
  - A. Recruit, train, and graduate students from diverse backgrounds
  - B. Train graduates who report that the program helped them develop an understanding and respect for diversity.
  - C. Graduate students who embrace a professional identity as Marriage & Family Therapists
  - D. Graduate students who obtain licensure in MFT or related mental health field.
  - E. Graduate students who work in mental health careers that help individuals, couples, and families
  
- III. MFT Program Outcomes
  - A. Recruit, train, and graduate students from diverse backgrounds
  - B. Graduates students who report that the program helped them develop an understanding and respect for diversity.
  - C. Graduate students who claim the professional identity of Marriage & Family Therapist
  - D. Demonstrate that at least 70% of graduates will be pursuing doctoral degrees or employed in a mental health field within three years of graduation
  - E. Demonstrate that at least 70% of graduates will pass the AMFTRB or become licensed as a mental health professional.
  - F. Demonstrate that at least 80% of enrolled students will graduated within the advertised length of program completion.
  
- IV. Faculty Outcomes
  - A. Recruit, train, and graduate students from diverse backgrounds
  - B. Participate in scholarly activities that contribute to the field of Marriage and Family Therapy in accordance with university, college, and departmental requirements
  - C. Establish and sustain a professional identity as an MFT as demonstrated by obtaining and maintaining licensure in the state of Georgia as a Marriage and Family Therapist or mental health provider (or associate licensure for not more than four years while working toward full licensure).

D. Establish and sustain a professional identity as an MFT as demonstrated by obtaining and sustaining status as an AAMFT Approved Supervisor or an Approved Supervisor Candidate.

E. Establish and sustain a professional identity as an MFT by regularly providing supervision that promotes and evaluates the following clinical skill areas: (1) the a relational assessment and conceptualization of client problems, (2) implement a systemic perspective, (3) develop interventions that reflect a relational understanding of human dilemmas (4) articulate a coherent therapeutic stance that is grounded in a variety of philosophical or theoretical informed frameworks, (5) discuss cases in ways that are informed by relevant contextual factors, and (6) demonstrate professionalism, including adherence to legal and ethical standards as well as follow policies and procedures relevant to each clinical setting.

V. MFT Student Learning Outcomes

A. Practice from a culturally sensitive lens.

B. Practice from a systemic lens.

C. Be prepared to obtain entry-level employment in mental health agencies.

D. Claim the professional identity of Marriage and Family Therapist