

MFT NEWSLETTER

2025-2026

As part of its commitment to continuous improvement and adherence to COAMFTE accreditation standards, the Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) Program conducts an annual needs-assessment of our Outcome-Based Educational plan (OBE) to determine whether the plan needs to undergo further evaluation and re-structuring. A thorough evaluation of the OBE may be necessary when core competencies or accreditation requirements change, when new state licensure regulations effect the program's licensure policies, when the MFT Program mission or institutional structure changes, or there are shifts in program delivery modality or college reorganization. Following a review by MFT faculty, the Program has determined that no modifications to the existing OBE framework are currently warranted. The current structure and organization continue to align with COAMFTE's standards and core competencies and effectively support the program's mission and student learning outcomes.

We invite you to review the [MFT Program's current OBE](#). Feedback and recommendations are welcome and encouraged. Your thoughts may be submitted via [our contact us page](#), as we remain committed to maintaining excellence through transparency, responsiveness, and collaborative reflection.

Note: We are in the process of seeking re-accreditation, so you may notice that our OBE is currently under construction! Stay tuned for the final version!

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MARRIAGE &
FAMILY THERAPY

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

FALL 2025 STUDENT COHORT



IN FALL 2025, THE MFT PROGRAM PROUDLY WELCOMED A REMARKABLE COHORT OF STUDENTS FROM ACROSS THE UNITED STATES—including GEORGIA, FLORIDA, AND ALABAMA, AS WELL AS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FROM VIETNAM! VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THEM.

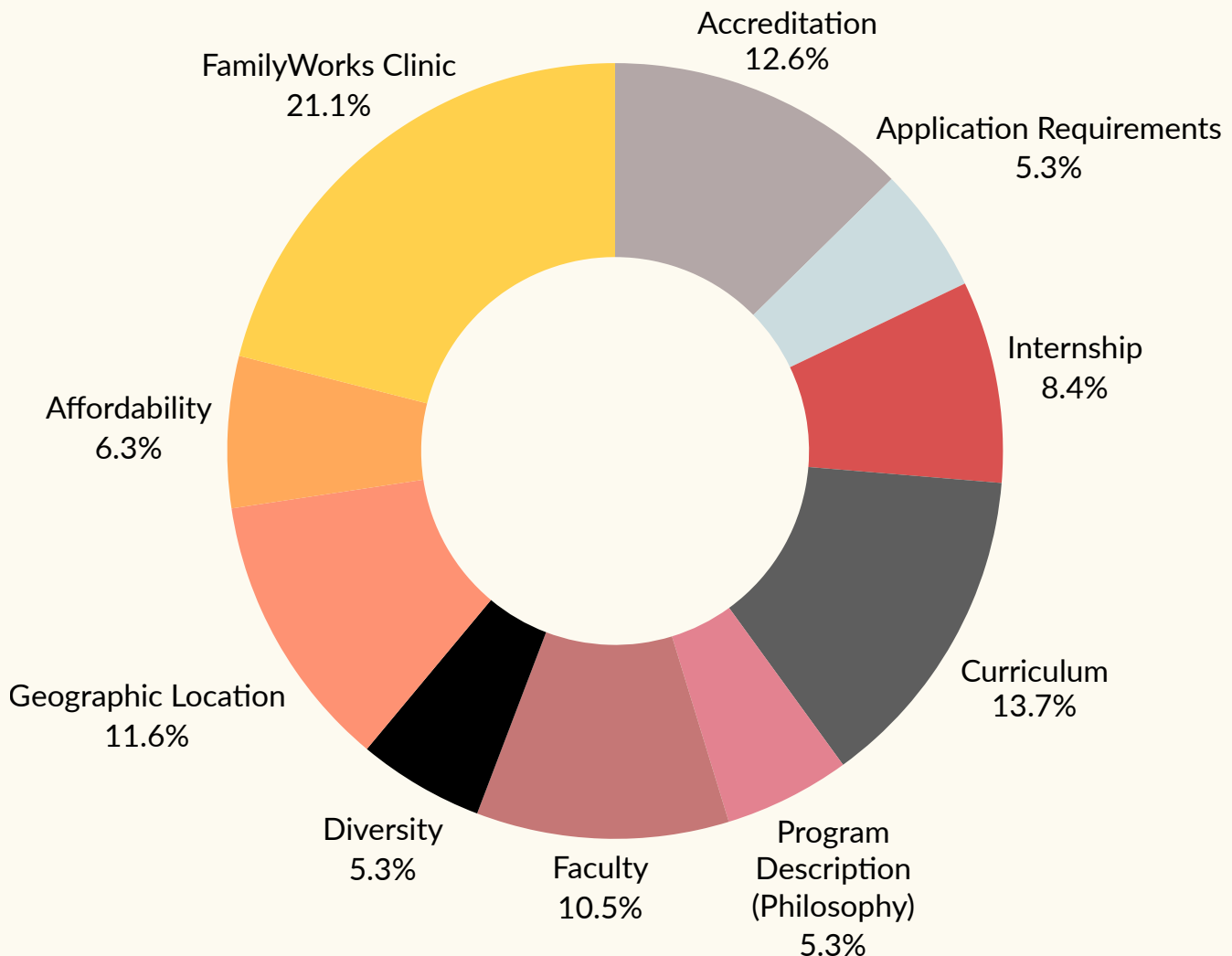


WE'RE NOW INTERVIEWING FOR OUR FALL 2026 MFT COHORT! IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW WOULD BE A GREAT FIT FOR THE PROGRAM, CONNECT WITH OUR CLINICAL COORDINATOR, JESSICA MILLICAN, AT JHMILLICAN@VALDOSTA.EDU

FALL 2025 STUDENT COHORT

THE FALL 2025 MFT COHORT SHARED WITH US THAT THE FOLLOWING FACTORS SHAPED THEIR DECISION TO CHOOSE THE VSU MFT PROGRAM!

2025 WhyVSU Survey



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



**NIKKI RAY,
MFT INTERN**

Nikki presented at the 2025 Systemic Family Therapy Conference. Her presentation was on "Advocating for MFT Students: From Surviving to Thriving - Advocacy, Research, and Support for MFT Students."



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHTS

CINDY URRUTIA, LMFT

CINDY HAS BEEN PROMOTED TO CLINICAL DIRECTOR AT FAMILY AND FRIENDS COUNSELING IN DALTON, GA.

A BILINGUAL THERAPIST, CINDY HAS EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH THE MIGRANT FARMWORKER COMMUNITY IN SOUTH GEORGIA AND THE LATINO COMMUNITY, DEMONSTRATING A STRONG COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE MENTAL HEALTH CARE.



NOLAN KING, LAMFT

NOLAN WAS FEATURED IN THE SPRING 2025 NATIONAL COUNCIL ON FAMILY RELATIONS (NCFR) REPORT ALONGSIDE DR. HOA AND DR. DOWNING! THEIR ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS HOW CARING FOR BABIES CAN TRANSFORM FATHERS' BRAINS JUST AS MUCH AS IT DOES FOR MOTHERS. MAKE SURE TO READ THE [ARTICLE HERE!](#)



BRODY LATHEM, LMFT

BRODY WAS RECENTLY PROMOTED TO DIRECTOR OF THE MENTAL HEALTH UNIT AT TURNING POINT CARE CENTER IN MOULTRIE, GA. HE IS DEDICATED TO MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT IN HIS CLIENTS' LIVES BY HELPING INDIVIDUALS NAVIGATE THE UNIQUE CHALLENGES CONTRIBUTING TO THEIR HOSPITALIZATION.



FACULTY SPOTLIGHTS



MARTHA LAUGHLIN, PHD, LMFT

MARTHA RECEIVED THE DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN FAMILY THERAPY ACADEMY (AFTA) AWARD. THIS HONOR CELEBRATES HER 25+ YEARS OF ADVANCING SYSTEMIC THINKING, CHAMPIONING FAMILY-CENTERED CARE, AND INSPIRING GENERATIONS OF THERAPISTS THROUGH HER MENTORSHIP AND LEADERSHIP.



HOA NGUYEN, PHD, LMFT

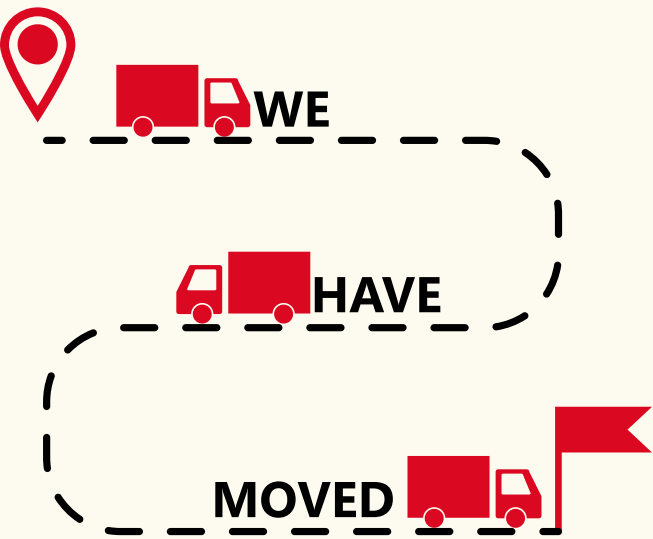
JENNIFER AND HOA PRESENTED ALONGSIDE OTHER INCREDIBLE PRESENTERS ON “EFFECTIVE AND MEANINGFUL RELATIONAL THERAPY WITH OLDER ADULT CLIENTS” FOR AN AAMFT SYSTEMIC THERAPY CERTIFICATE PROGRAM.



JENNIFER LAMBERT-SHUTE, PHD, LMFT

THEIR MODULE FOCUSED ON UNDERSTANDING AGING THROUGH SYSTEMIC CONTEXTS AND NAVIGATING SEX, INTIMACY, AND HEALTH IN LATER LIFE.

FAMILYWORKS CLINIC UPDATES



**NOW LOCATED ON VSU
MAIN CAMPUS!**

**FARBAR HALL
1800 N. OAK STREET
VALDOSTA, GA 31602**

**In response to
program Exit
Survey data,
the MFT faculty
is now
incorporating
Telehealth
Services!**



**NOW OFFERING
TELEHEALTH
SERVICES**



FAMILYWORKS CLINIC UPDATES

Data gathered from our client scheduling book and client satisfaction survey indicates that:



**4223 sessions
scheduled in 2025.**



**98% of clients found their
therapist very helpful.**

FAMILYWORKS WALK-IN CLINIC

AS OF SEPTEMBER, OUR CLINIC HAS BEGUN TO OFFER A NON-EMERGENCY WALK-IN CLINIC PROVIDING FREE, CONFIDENTIAL, SINGLE-SESSION THERAPY, WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE SERVICES WITH ONE OF OUR GREAT THERAPIST INTERNS.

IN FALL 2025, 18 CLIENTS VISITED THE FAMILYWORKS WALK IN CLINIC!

WALK-IN CLINIC

Single-session therapy available every Monday + Wednesday from 1:00PM-5:00PM



Call FamilyWorks Clinic at (229) 219-1281 for more information

STUDENT OUTREACH

CHILDREN FROM ACROSS SOUTH GEORGIA AND NORTH FLORIDA CAME TOGETHER AT **CAMP LEAN ON ME** TO HONOR AND REMEMBER THEIR LOVED ONES. THROUGHOUT THE TWO-DAY CAMP, THEY TOOK PART IN ARTS AND CRAFTS, GROUP COUNSELING SESSIONS, AND FUN RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES THAT FILLED THE DAY WITH LAUGHTER AND SMILES.



THINK YOUR BUSINESS, ORGANIZATION, EVENT, ETC. WOULD BENEFIT FROM LEARNING ABOUT OUR SERVICES? FILL OUT AN OUTREACH REQUEST BY **VISITING THIS WEBPAGE!**

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



THE **EMORY FARMWORKER PROJECT** IS A COLLABORATIVE SERVICE-LEARNING INITIATIVE LED BY THE EMORY PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT PROGRAM. EACH YEAR, STUDENTS FROM PA, PT, MFT, AND OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONS, ALONG WITH VOLUNTEERS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS, TRAVEL THROUGHOUT SOUTH GEORGIA TO PROVIDE FREE OUTPATIENT CARE TO MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED MIGRANT FARMWORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

IN 2025, **200+** HEALTH PROFESSIONS VOLUNTEERED AND PROVIDED **700+** PATIENTS WITH MEDICAL, DENTAL, AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE!



PROGRAM DATA

MANY OF YOU HAVE LIKELY HEARD THE TERM SLO, WHICH STANDS FOR STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME. THROUGHOUT THEIR TIME IN THE PROGRAM, STUDENTS ARE ASSESSED ON THESE OUTCOMES THROUGH ASSESSMENT MEASURES SUCH AS ASSIGNMENTS, PAPERS, AND PROJECTS.

THE PROGRAM COLLECTS AND AGGREGATES THIS DATA TO DETERMINE WHETHER STUDENTS ARE MEETING ESTABLISHED TARGETS. WHEN STUDENTS MEET THESE TARGETS, IT INDICATES THAT THEY HAVE SUCCESSFULLY DEMONSTRATED PROGRESS TOWARD THE IDENTIFIED SLOS AND THAT THE PROGRAM IS MEETING THE GOALS OUTLINED IN THE OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION (OBE) PLAN DESCRIBED EARLIER IN THIS NEWSLETTER.

[WE ARE PLEASED TO SHARE FIVE YEARS OF SLO DATA WITH YOU.](#) AS YOU WILL SEE, THE PROGRAM CONTINUES TO DEMONSTRATE STRONG RESULTS. WE INVITE YOU TO REVIEW THIS DATA. FEEDBACK AND RECOMMENDATIONS ARE WELCOME AND ENCOURAGED. YOUR THOUGHTS MAY BE SUBMITTED THROUGH OUR [CONTACT US PAGE](#), AS WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO MAINTAINING EXCELLENCE THROUGH TRANSPARENCY, RESPONSIVENESS, AND COLLABORATIVE REFLECTION.

Faculty Effectiveness

Since 2023, the program has been advocating for a new tenure-track faculty line to replace a previous line held by a full-time lecturer. In Fall 2025, we received approval to hire for this position, with the new faculty member expected to join in Fall 2026. More information about our new hire will be shared soon. In the meantime, we are pleased to share updated faculty effectiveness results that reflect this addition.

The Valdosta State University MFT Program operates most effectively when staffed with four full-time, tenure-track, PhD-level, state-licensed, and AAMFT Approved Supervisor credentialed faculty members. This new faculty line is an important step toward maintaining both faculty sufficiency and effectiveness.

Faculty Effectiveness Chart					
Fall 2025					
Faculty Member	Annual AFARAP (Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory)	Tenure (Granted/Not Granted)	Associate Professor (Granted/Not Granted)	Full Professor (Granted/Not Granted)	Post Tenure (Granted/Not Granted)
Jennifer Lambert-Shute	2025 (Satisfactory)	granted 2007	granted 2007	granted 2012	granted 2023, next action 2027
Martha Laughlin	2025 (Satisfactory)	granted 2004	granted 2004	granted 2010	granted 2025, next action 2030
Hoa Nguyen	2025 (Satisfactory)	granted 2022	granted 2022	not yet eligible, next action 2027	not yet eligible
Samira Garcia (non-tenure track instructor)	resigned 2023	NA	NA	NA	NA
Natalie Rothman, hired end of 2025, begins July 2026	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

RESPONSE TO FEEDBACK FROM COIS

The program considers both current students and alumni as communities of interest (COI), or stakeholders of the program, and we value your feedback. As you probably already know, one of the ways the program solicits your feedback is through surveys. Several times throughout the year, the program sends out a number of surveys to you, our COI, asking for your feedback regarding different topics. Below are some actions taken in response to the feedback you've given us. Thank you for helping the program grow!

IN RESPONSE TO DATA FROM THE EXIT SURVEY, WHICH ASKS SOON-TO-BE GRADUATES TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK ON THE PROGRAM, WE HAVE INCORPORATED TELEHEALTH INTO THE MFT PROGRAM, INCLUDING IN-DEPTH TRAINING AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF TELEHEALTH CLIENTS AT THE FAMILYWORKS CLINIC.

IN RESPONSE TO THE 2024 STUDENT CURRICULUM REVIEW COMMITTEE FINDINGS, WE ARE INTRODUCING SEVERAL NEW SPECIAL TOPICS AND ADVANCED THEORIES COURSES, INCLUDING ONE FOCUSED ON TRAUMA AND ANOTHER ADDRESSING HOW TO WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH CLIENTS' RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.

2025 STUDENT CURRICULUM REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Student Curriculum Review Committee is a student-led initiative designed to gather meaningful feedback on the program curriculum. The purpose of this committee is to elevate student perspectives and better understand how the curriculum is experienced by those actively engaged in it. Through this process, the committee explores whether the curriculum is effectively supporting student learning and professional development, and where opportunities for growth may exist.

Findings and recommendations from the Student Curriculum Review Committee will be shared here: [2025 Student Curriculum Committee Findings](#)

We also welcome input from our broader communities of interest, including alumni. Your feedback is valuable in helping us ensure the curriculum remains relevant, rigorous, and responsive to the needs of the field. Your thoughts may be submitted via [our contact us page](#)

CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2025!

