I would like to thank my faculty, students, and administration for the incredible work they did during a major global pandemic that resulted in modified campus operations without warning. Despite this incredible upheaval, we maintained the integrity of our program and helped train up and mentor another wonderful group of burgeoning professionals. Below are the updates on our department for the 2019-20 year, including major personnel changes and additions to our department.

**Personnel Changes in the Department of Counselor Education**

Drs. Alan Forrest and Keith Davis served an interim chair while I served as the Interim Associate Dean of the College of Education and Human Development. Dr. Davis led the department through the arduous and laborious CACREP reaccreditation process with aplomb and success. His leadership was so valued during this transitory time. I returned to the department in Spring 2020. I thoroughly enjoyed being in the Associate Dean role, and working alongside our Dean, Dr. Tamara Wallace has changed me and my career in exponential ways. But, I am also thrilled to be back with Counselor Education, as I missed our faculty and my content area!

We also had the honor of welcoming two new faculty members to our department, Drs. Dodson and Lanier. Dr. Tom Dodson, who is an Assistant professor in the Department of Counselor Education. He is a National Certified Counselor (NCC) and National Certified School Counselor (NCSC). Prior to service as a counselor educator, Dr. Dodson was a public school counselor in North Carolina. He also served as a therapeutic wilderness camp counselor, youth home counselor, and as a counselor in a psychiatric hospital's child/adolescent unit and dual diagnosis adult unit. His research interests include school counselor certification and vocational development across the lifespan.

Dr. Bethany Lanier who is a Licensed Professional Counselor and National Certified Counselor. Her master’s degree is from Radford University and her doctoral studies were completed at Auburn University. She has a range of clinical experiences that include counseling inmates, child and family counseling, substance abuse counseling, and career counseling in higher education settings over the last 7 years. Dr. Lanier has presented research related to areas of counselor development and preparation, vicarious trauma and subthreshold PTSD among counselors, recidivism rates among incarcerated individuals, best practices in counseling, and ethical considerations in substance abuse counseling.
We are thrilled that Drs. Dodson and Lanier joined us this year. They complement and round out our departmental expertise and have been amiably adjusting to a new department and campus during a pandemic.

**CACREP Reaccreditation**

Perhaps the greatest accomplishment of 2019-20 besides training our students was our successful reaccreditation for the next 8 years. We are thrilled with this outcome. The entire faculty worked on this process. Special mention should be given to Drs. Davis, the chair during the process, and Dr. Lauren Ermann, the coordinator of assessment and accreditation. We are accredited through March 31, 2028.

**Abingdon Cohort Begins**

The Department of Counselor Education was awarded a Virginia Tobacco Commission Grant to expand our program offerings to the Southwest Higher Education Center in Abingdon, VA. We are indebted to Dr. Theresa Burris and Ms. Amanda Estep-Baldwin for their hard work recruiting and organizing our Abingdon cohort. We also are thrilled Drs. Dodson and Lanier were hired to assist with this cohort. Even with these new hires, all faculty will teach in Abingdon to allow students access to their entire faculty. As a department, we feel strongly that training counselors in Southwest Virginia is critical.

**Productivity of the Department of Counselor Education**

Our program is viable and productive. We invest heavily in our students while they are under our supervision. We care deeply about their counselor development and will continue to offer high quality training experiences that result in marketable and knowledgable students. Our enrollment is currently 88 students (54 CMHC and 34 SC), which is a robust number for our department.

95% of our graduating students secure a job in the counseling field. Those that do not seek counseling employment typically chose to change their career paths.

**Summary of Assessment Results for 2019-20**

Utilizing the Student Learning Outcome rubrics which are compiled every semester, the COED program is able to efficiently evaluate and measure students’ successful attainment of CACREP standards. In each course, the department records the percentage of students who meet each standard assigned to that course, and indicates the method of evaluating that standard. Among these standards, there are two Key Point Indicators (KPI’s) assigned to 10 classes for a total of 20.

The majority of students successfully met every CACREP standard, and in all cases, each standard was met by at least 80% of the students (and in most cases over 90%). Based on the results of the Student Learning Outcome rubrics, our department feels confident
that our students are successfully meeting the learning objectives of CACREP standards and our KPI’s through our diverse curriculum and instruction. An advisory board meeting was initially scheduled for spring, but moved to this academic year due to Covid-19.

**Initiatives in Counselor Education**

We continue to develop and strengthen our connections, collaborations, and partnerships with other Radford University (RU) programs. We currently have a partnership with the Music Therapy master’s program, and their students take our three counseling courses for their degree. We routinely support the School of Social Work and Psychology departments each semester as we also have students from those departments who take our courses. We work closely with the Career Services office in support of our COED 260 undergraduate course, titled “Seminar in Career Development.”

We also continue our long standing partnerships with agencies and organizations in the community, including Radford City Schools, Montgomery County Schools, Pulaski County schools, Integrated Behavioral Health programs, and New River Community Services Board. We are finishing a four-year federal Behavioral Health Workforce Enhancement Training Grant, where two to four Counselor Education students are awarded paid internships and additional training in substance use disorder treatment. We have also been awarded a three-year Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth grant, which will allow students opportunities to work in the community to enhance the health and wellness of children and families.

**Covid-19 “Pivot”**

What a year! Over our spring break, we received the notice that our campus was going to be virtual until April 19. I am so proud of our faculty for their level-headed planning that allowed us to keep our students on track to graduation. As most counseling departments discovered, the most difficult areas to keep on track were the clinical courses. We had to make many adjustments and often it felt like we were building the plane as we were flying. Below is a summary of how we made those adjustments:

**Practica courses:** We moved towards a telehealth model as much as possible. In cases where clients refused telehealth services, we created a fairly intricate system to allow students to gain extra hours with real peer clients. We were able to get most of students to completion with practicum hours in our two semester practicum experiences. Those that did not reach the full 40 direct hours will need to complete those hours at their internship site prior to counting hours for internship.

**Internship courses:** Again, the quick thinking and problem solving was paramount to our students completing their hours and demonstrating competencies. Students that were unable to complete the full 600-hour internship, were given incompletes and enrolled in a free course extension to finish their internship in the next semester. I am very grateful
to our Dean who made that free extension happen. It was important to our department that our students completed the full clinical requirements of a CACREP program to ensure career success throughout their entire career trajectories. We also didn’t want to burden our students with the financial implications of not graduating on time. The free course extension was one way to mitigate the financial consequences.

**Curriculum Changes for 2020-21**
We do not have major curriculum changes planned for 2020-21. We are moving full speed ahead on increasing our school counseling program to the full 60 hours by 2022-23. The bulk of faculty curriculum work will be spent reorganizing the school counseling program to balance the standards in a variety of courses, ensuring that students are receiving the best possible instruction.

We are exploring ways to provide a deeper examination of multicultural issues for our department, as we often train students who are new to examining their privilege and position in society. To that end, we are adding additional information related to multicultural issues to our courses throughout the curriculum.

**Looking Ahead to 2020-21**
We are looking forward to an exciting new year, as we implement the Abingdon cohort, continue to work on our initiatives, and most importantly, train a new group of future counselors. Our strengths lie in our teaching, supervision, and clinical practice. We continue to be strong stewards of our profession, and students continue to learn the practice of counseling effectively. We also continue to work on providing opportunities for our department to explore issues of social justice and diversity in our field. Finally we actively make use of our assessment processes to inform and improve our program.