



Acadia Community Advisory Council Minutes

October 3, 2023

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm at Willett House (The Red Spruce) + Zoom

Present: Tanya Surette, Kelly Brenton, Birdie Bezanson, Ahlam Rahal, Clarence DeSchiffart, Steve Carrington, A.J. Landon, Greg McKinnon, Jean Blackler, John Hubert, Corrine Haigh, Tara Moore, George Maringapasi, Jeff MacDonald, Patricia Wentzell, Meaghan Fullerton, Wanda McDonald, Jennifer Moore, Alison Arthur, Maeghan Hill, Sabitha Masih, Ann Sylliboy, Chris Toplack

Regrets: Bryan Brooks, Erica McGill (happy birthday!!), Andrea Noylander, Erin Eaves
Janet Dyment

Minutes: Birdie Bezanson

Welcome from the Program (Tanya)

- Land Acknowledge and Welcome
- Future meetings will be in Seminary 231
- Thanked all for their enthusiasm in agreeing to be a part of the Advisory Council for the next 3 years
- Introduction of Acadia Faculty associated with the program (Corrine, Gregg, Tanya, Kelly, Birdie, & Ahlam)

Introductions of Advisors for the 2023-2026 Term

- **Clarence DeSchiffart** - Acadia adjunct faculty and instructor in the Counselling Program since '93, graduate of the program
- **Sabitha Masih** – School Counselling Consultant with NS Department of Education, graduate of the program
- **Jennifer Moore** – Clinical Therapist with Mental Health & Addictions Child & Youth Team in Digby
- **A.J. Landon** – Clinical Social Worker with Mental Health and Addictions Child & Youth Team in Kentville & Annapolis Royal
- **Steve Carrington** – School Counsellor in AVRCE, graduate of program
- **Maeghan Hill** – Clinical Therapist with Mental Health and Addictions Adult Team, private practitioner, graduate of program

- **Alison Aurther** – Clinical Supervisor and Counselling Therapist, private practitioner, graduate of the program
- **Wanda MacDonald** – Manager of Counselling and Wellness at NSCC
- **Chris Toplack** – Family physician, medical psychotherapist, also works at the Acadia Counselling Centre
- **Jean Blackler** – Counselling Therapist, private practitioner, President of NS Chapter of CCPA
- **John Hubert** – Executive Director/Registrar for NSCCT
- **Tara Moore** – Social Worker and Provincial Coordinator of SchoolsPlus at the Department of Education
- **George Maringapasi** – Clinical Therapist with NSH, private practitioner, President-Elect of the CCPA, graduate of the program
- **Jeff MacDonald** – School Counselling Consultant for HRCE, Counselling Therapist, private practice, graduate of the program
- **Meaghan Fullerton** – Counselling Therapist, private practitioner in partnerships with Sipekne'katik First Nations and other Mi'kmaw organizations, graduate of the program
- **Pat Wentzell** – Counselling Therapist, private practitioner, Past President of the NS Chapter CCPA
- **Ann Sylliboy** – from Essissoqnik (Eskasoni), Post Secondary Consultant at Mi'kmaw Kina'matneway, identified that we are meeting on Treaty Day

Overview of the program

CACEP Accredited Graduate Counselling Program

- One of six in all of Canada (all other programs are in BC)
- Only in-person graduate counselling program in NS, one of three in Atlantic Canada
- Graduates fast-tracked for certification with CCPA (CCC) and recognized with NSCCT (RCT-C)
- Graduates are employed across systems – P-12 schools, post-secondary, agency, not-for-profit sector, NSH, private practice

Two Formats – Full-Time (18 months) and Part-Time (3 years)

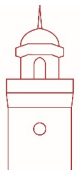
- School & Agency Streams – the only distinction is one required course
- Course, thesis, or research project route
- Cohort – 20 students capped
- 2 cohorts admitted annually – one full-time and one part-time

48 Credit Hour Degree

- 42 hours of required coursework – Theories, Skills, Ethics, Counselling for Social Justice, Research Design, Pre-Practicum, Group Counselling, Lifespan, Assessment, Crisis & Trauma, Career Counselling, and Practicum
- 6 hours of electives
- New Elective – Queer Affirmative Counselling

Students Complete 500 hours of Supervised Practicum

- Pre-practicum shifts @ Acadia Counselling and Accessible Learning



- b) Practicum 1 – 100 hour practicum (1 day/week over 16 weeks)
- c) Practicum 2 – 400 hour practicum (5 days/week over 16 weeks)
- d) New option for practicum to be a part-time practicum (6-8 months)

Overview of the Advisory Council Purpose

“The Community Advisory Council is made up of community leaders and stakeholders from the counselling profession in Nova Scotia. The Council meets bi-annually to serve in an advisory role for the M.Ed. Counselling Program at Acadia. Through their varied perspectives and experiences from across the profession, the members of the council help inform the initiatives of the Counselling program and inform the faculty of the emerging needs within Nova Scotia as new counsellors are educated to work with diverse clients and communities across a variety of settings.”

Group Discussion

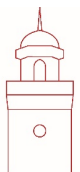
Current topics and issues in the profession relevant to the Community Advisory Council

- Youth post-COVID– homicide and suicide
- Competence in working across the lifespan
- Practicalities of school counselling working in other situations
- Skills for school counselling to respond to the needs of students
- Challenges in retention of jobs
- Lack of counsellor who speak different languages (newcomers, Mi’kmaq, French)
- Challenges that come with more access to mental health knowledge
- Understanding the effects of changes in society (COVID/Screen time)
- Ethics – changes across Canada and Nova Scotia
- Less access to counselling due to increase in the cost of living (inflation)
- Lack of trust in the system by racialized peoples (counsellors need to know how to approach these conversations)
- COVID – increase in eating disorders, decrease in housing availability
- Recruitment (diverse clinicians) especially in rural areas

Acadia’s M.Ed. Counselling Program

Admissions & Interviews

- Request for volunteers to join core faculty in admission interviews
- An invitation will be sent closer to admissions (Jan/Feb)
- Discussion of ways to attract more diverse applicants – this will be a central focus of the Spring Advisory Meeting
- Discussion around interview prompts and how applicants of diverse individuals are processed – interview prompts will be sent to the Advisory Council for review in light of ethical and inclusive language
- Members of the Advisory Council suggested meeting before admissions interviews to discuss ideas



- Thoughts were shared on how to increase diversity in the application pool – this will need to be further discussed

Updates on the Red Spruce Mental Health Centre

- Red Spruce @ The Red Door Youth Health and Support Centre opened on September 10 – offering services to the clients of the Red Door on Wednesdays
- Red Spruce @ Willett House opened on September 25 – pre-practicum students are seeing Acadia Counselling Centre clients for intake sessions
- M.Ed. Counselling Faculty moved into Red Spruce @ Willett in September for on-site supervision & support
- Get-a-Head platform approved for the Red Spruce record management, booking, and supervision
- Emails set up for obtaining referrals and corresponding with clients – redspruce@acadiau.ca & intern1.redspruce@acadiau.ca
- Waitlist has been started for early 2024

KEY PRIORITIES:

1. Media releases to spread the word
2. Seeking funding for Clinical Coordinator
3. Seeking donations for furniture
4. Developing a website
5. Setting up meetings with key individuals in
 - a) Senior Leadership
 - b) Town/County
 - c) Government – NSH

Closing

Spring 2024 Advisory Meeting Date: **Tuesday May 21, 2023 @ 6:00 pm.** - Seminary House, Room 231

