

Interview with a Counselor Educator

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Interview with a Counselor Educator

This interview was conducted with Dr. Brandi Chamberlin, who is a professor, director of assessment, counselor, and CACREP liaison for a large university. She discussed that her journey into her career as a counselor educator was not traditional and was influenced by her personal life and perceptions of the evolving field of counseling. Her journey towards counselor education began when she had to go back to school due to a desire to build her skills and licensure changes; she recognized where counselor education was growing as a field.

Dr. Chamberlin's teaching philosophy is based on Nelson Mandela's belief that "education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". She takes a constructivist, student-based approach to assist students in building on what they know and supporting in their goals. Dr. Chamberlin recognizes a responsibility for gatekeeping and remediation and uses a CARE team to support students who are not struggling but are also not highly successful. This also includes a way for faculty to communicate regarding student needs and assist with overall monitoring of student development. Her university has implemented mentorship across all five competency areas in the 2024 CACREP standards and provide practical experience through internship in each competency, connecting students to mentors during admission. She hopes to be a part of bridging the gap between counselor education and practice, and hopes that programs can begin including certifications through the Master's curriculum.

Multiculturalism is incorporated in each of the courses, addressing ethics and cultural components of all courses. Although the program is rooted in a faith-based institution, she works to maintain an open environment to allow diverse perspectives in order to create a safe and inclusive environment. This inclusion is something she is passionate and hopes that inclusivity

and acceptance of diverse beliefs will be a part of the future of counselor education. Dr.

Chamberlin also discussed the hopes for the use of ethical AI in the profession, to enhance practice but not replace the essential human element of counseling.

Reflection

This interview provided me with a new perspective of counselor education, and I greatly appreciate the individual taking the time to meet with me. Hearing about her experience at Liberty as well as at her new university provided me with a unique perspective on how faith-based universities may incorporate CACREP standards in different ways.

I was intrigued by the differences in how the program was setup, particularly related to internships. The idea of having five different internships feels slightly overwhelming, but also I like how students could have the opportunity to learn each of the competency areas in this way. I know that Liberty has been implementing a mentorship program with the PhD students, but this interview made me think more about the possibility of doctoral students mentoring master's students. I know Liberty has a large program, so this may be less feasible than a smaller university. However, I think it could be an interesting opportunity to research and potentially advocate for this in the CACREP programs.

I resonated a lot with her discussion on multiculturalism and the integration of faith within curriculum. Attending a faith-based institution has provided a unique perspective of both how students of non- and other-religious backgrounds feel in the program, as well as how religious students are being prepared to work with non-religious clients. I had not considered the differences between the field of psychology and the field of counseling and took time to reflect on her perspective that psychology is generally more welcoming of faith as a form of resiliency than counseling.

As a professor, I want to foster an environment that is welcoming, allowing students to feel safe, accepted, and included no matter their background. I want to foster discussion that allows space for diverse perspectives and encourage respectful dialogue within the classroom. I believe it is important for students to be prepared to have difficult conversations, and one way can be encouraging discussions on addressing multiculturalism in the field.

Biblical Integration

I know the experience is unique at Liberty and how we are able to integrate faith into curriculum. Although I am unsure the university I will be hired to, I know that I am able to integrate my faith implicitly through my kindness towards students and generally how I present myself as an educator. I recognize that students are made in the image of God, and that they should be provided basic rights and decency as such. God has equipped each of them with what they need to be successful in their careers, and it is my role to help them recognize and further develop their talents. We must be good stewards of what we are given by the Lord, and I believe that one of my gifts is encouragement and mentorship. I think this also aligns with a comment that the professor made, linking her experiences to the movie *Ratatouille* – “Not everyone can become a great artist; but a great artist can come from “anywhere”. Although we are all given talents, specific talents provide individuals with the skills they specifically need to be successful. Ephesians 2:10 states, “For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (New International Version), again highlighting the ability for God to use anyone for his purpose and glory.

Conclusion

This experience provided me with valuable information, just as many of my interactions with counselor educators. As I learn more about what it means to be in such an important role, I

plan to continue reflecting on the things I have learned and how I can stay mindful of the responsibilities I have for future clients, future counselors, and the future of the profession.

Appendix A

Sunday, November 17, 2024 at 10:33:17 Eastern Standard Time

Subject: Re: [External] RE: Interview
Date: Saturday, November 16, 2024 at 11:20:49 AM Eastern Standard Time
From: Brandi Chamberlin
To: Taylor, Nicole Maupin
Attachments: image001.png, image002.png

Yes, it looks good. Thanks!

Brandi Chamberlin, PhD, LPC (VA), NCC
Director of Assessment
CACREP Liaison
Professor
University of the Cumberlands

From: Taylor, Nicole Maupin <NTaylor7@liberty.edu>
Sent: Saturday, November 16, 2024 6:27:20 AM
To: Brandi Chamberlin <brandi.chamberlin@ucumberlands.edu>
Subject: Re: [External] RE: Interview

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Okay, perfect! Does the information I included look accurate to what you shared with me?

Nikki

From: Brandi Chamberlin <brandi.chamberlin@ucumberlands.edu>
Date: Wednesday, November 13, 2024 at 8:42 AM
To: Taylor, Nicole Maupin <NTaylor7@liberty.edu>
Subject: RE: [External] RE: Interview

Thank you so much, I am fine with either way. Whichever you prefer. 😊

Brandi Chamberlin, PhD, LPC (VA), NCC
Professor, Director of Assessment
University of the Cumberlands

From: Taylor, Nicole Maupin <NTaylor7@liberty.edu>
Sent: Thursday, November 7, 2024 9:35 AM
To: Brandi Chamberlin <brandi.chamberlin@ucumberlands.edu>
Subject: Re: [External] RE: Interview

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Appendix B

1. What prompted you to enter counselor education?
2. What is your role as a counselor educator?
3. What do you feel your responsibilities are as a counselor educator?
4. What is your philosophy on teaching and learning?
5. How do you use gatekeeping and remediation in your program?
 - a. How does it begin at admission and occur throughout the student's journey in the program?
 - b. What is an example of a gatekeeping/remediation plan you have used for a student?
6. How do you use mentoring in your program?
7. How do you implement multiculturalism in curriculum development?
8. What are your present and future concerns with the field of counselor education?