July 20, 2006

Dear Cohort 7 Counseling students:

First of all, congratulations on your acceptance into the School Counseling or Community Counseling Master’s programs here at NAU-Yuma. We hope you will personally and professionally benefit from your experiences at NAU, and are about to embark on not just a degree, but a major career change that will benefit you and clients to come for years.

I’d like to provide you in this letter with some additional information about the program and upcoming courses so you can begin planning for the fall semester, and get oriented. I will be out of town a fair amount through mid-August, so I will try to anticipate the things that will need to know herein. We will have an official orientation to our program in early September, which is typically attended by the Chair of Educational Psychology, a Licensed Psychologist by the name of Dr. Ramona Mellott. She and I will provide you with a connection to Flagstaff, and, do a formal overview of all programmatic and even post-masters insights related to School or Community Counseling. We will do this as a pot-luck dinner too, so you will get a chance to show off your culinary skills at that time (but won’t be graded!).

First of all, I would like to suggest that you get a 2” or 3” 3-ring binder notebook in order to keep all of your important NAU-related documents in it as your progress through your program. Be sure to get some dividers too to keep sections separated as you wish. This ridiculously simple step will be helpful to you down the line, and to me as well, since many of your concerns are addressed in these handbooks and are easily answered just by you being organized. Whenever you get any non-class related documents, like your handbooks, ongoing program of study, etc., just put those documents in there, and, bring the notebook with you when you come to orientation and to all future advisement appointments.

Secondly, download and read a few documents at your leisure sometime before the fall semester. The first one is the “general handbook” given to all NAU graduate students in Educational Psychology – the department in which the counseling programs are housed, and is at: http://coe.nau.edu.academics/EPS/handbooks/EPSGeneralHandbook.pdf

Then, download and read the Counseling handbook, located at: http://coe.nau.edu.academics/EPS/handbooks/MACommunitySchool.pdf

This latter handbook contains specific information about the Counseling program that you have entered into, including the Programs of Study for both counseling programs. Ignore the sequence of courses listed on pages 6 and 7, as these pertain primarily to Flagstaff students. Instead, please refer to the attachment entitled “grid”, also sent in this email. This grid will help you map out your course of study over the next 2 or 3 years. One caveat though: it’s a tentative schedule, and is thus prone to some
occasional changes. That said, for the most part, once this schedule is printed and handed out, it stays pretty much the same.

In terms of advisement, I will be your sole advisor for this program. You are entitled to at least once per semester advisement throughout your degree, but calling or emailing with other advisement-related questions is of course OK at any time. Typically, we do advisement during the day and by telephone, so be sure to have your notebook with the program of study and handbooks ready. Emailing questions about particular advisement issues is totally fine too. When possible, we will do advisement face-to-face if you can come out during daytime hours. I will not being doing advisement on breaks from class or after class.

The School Counseling program is a 48-credit hour track, and is typically completed in about 21-24 months. Due to course sequencing and resource issues, it cannot be completed any faster regardless of how many credit hours you might be transferring in from another program (in the event that you are), nor how many courses you take each term. That’s because we have a logical sequence of content and skills, and one must pass theories before techniques, techniques before ethics, ethics before practicum, and practicum before internship, etc. Students usually take 2-3 courses per term, and in your case, would likely begin in fall 2006, and end in the spring of 2008. The internship is slated for your final semester (spring 2008), with practicum (which is just a fancy name for mini-internship) taking place in the semester preceding internship. Recommended courses for this fall, 2006, for the School Counseling students only:

- EPS 601, Counseling Theories
- EPS 580, Human Development
- EPS 525, Statistics

You MUST take 601 in order to graduate in the 21-24 month time frame. Not taking 601 this fall will take you from a 2-year to a 3-year plan. If you can only take 2 courses, then postpone 580 OR 525 till another semester.

The Community Counseling program is a 60-credit hour track, and is typically completed in 3 years. Students usually take 2-3 courses per term, and in your case, would likely begin in fall 2006, and end in the fall of 2008 or Spring of 2009. The internship is slated for your final semester, with practicum (which is just a fancy name for mini-internship) taking place in the semester preceding internship. Recommended courses for this fall, 2006, for the Community Counseling students only:

- EPS 601, Counseling Theories
- EPS 592, Community Counseling
- IF you took a recent (in the past 3 years) undergraduate course in statistics, you can also consider EDR 610, Educational Research, as well.
For details about the dates/times/registration for these courses, you must deal with student services directly, or, learn to navigate the LOUIE registration system online: go to http://www.nau.edu/nauyuma/, then click on “Academics” and use the drop-down menu for “class schedules”. Then simply select the term you want (fall 2006). Then just search for the EPS courses that you wish to take. To register, either call student services to register over the phone, or, even easier, go to www.nau.edu, click on “L” for Louie. Within Louie, follow the links to register for class. This is where you will need to use your free NAU email system, your “Dana” account, which is the ONLY way NAU will contact you from now on…so be sure to memorize your Dana account username and password. Otherwise, just come down to Student Services and handle registration at the counter.

By the way, if you’re taking Counseling Theories with me this fall (which should be most of you), the class meets on August 28th at 4:30 in AC 214. The class will not meet the following Monday, which is Memorial Day, but will meet on Sept. 11th. Bring a big fat notebook because I give out lots of stimulating handouts! And have the books for this course with you too – they will be at the AWC bookstore (probably are already there). All books should be in hand during the first day of class from now on. By the way, one of the suggested (but not mandatory) aspects of this class is that you get involved in personal and/or career counseling of your own, offered by counseling students who are one year ahead of you and are in their practicum (under the watchful eyes/ears of a licensed clinician down the hall via closed-circuit TV). This is an excellent way to get a sense of what clients go through, and, a way to get some free personal growth counseling of your own. Topics typically include career counseling, managing stress, relationship concerns, relationships to food/eating, self-worth, assertiveness skills, etc. Dozens of our students have taken advantage of this opportunity and have often said very good things about their outcomes. We highly suggest you take advantage of this, but cannot mandate it due to accreditation reasons. If you do get involved in this, your options would be for once a week sessions during the fall semester, one hour in length on Mondays at 7 (right after class), Tuesdays at noon, 1 or 2 pm, Tuesday nights at 5, 6 or 7pm, or Thursday nights at 5, 6 or 7 pm. Thursday nights are Spanish or English since the counselors are all fluent in both that evening, as will be the supervisor. Confidentiality is 100% respected in practicum. More will be said about this during orientation this September.

A couple of other odds and ends. You will need the following things as you progress through the program:

- Home computer, ideally with MS Word, PowerPoint, etc
- Access to web, and especially your Dana account (where your teachers will be emailing you, and which will be needed for course-related downloads from time-to-time)
- VCR, and ideally, a DVD-player on either your PC or with your TV
Please schedule a library orientation meeting with Renee Westphal, our friendly and very competent librarian assigned solely to NAU-Yuma. Renee is at 317.6435, or renee.westphal@nau.edu. Aim to have this done in late August or early September at the latest. Please don’t get with her until late August though. By the way, Renee completed the school counseling program in 2002 and has her national certification as well, so she understands not just accessing information, but counseling-related literature as well.

Suggestion: begin reviewing the counseling literature online this summer. Must have your Dana account handy. Just go to www.nau.edu/library. Under Research Resources, click on “articles”, then “Academic Search Premier”, which will connect you to “Academic Search Premier – EBSCO”. There, put in a search term you’re interested in, like “school counseling” and you will get some ‘hits’. Click on “full-text” and you will be able to download the article directly to your computer. You will need to be skilled at accessing professional literature this way via NAU’s professional databases, which usually contain only articles that are ‘peer-reviewed’ or ‘refereed’ (meaning that the article has been carefully screened by leaders in that field, and has been accepted). Otherwise, searching via Google, for instance, is very hit-or-miss, and will rarely give you professional literature. Rather, you will get anything that anyone, living anywhere, in any profession, feels like posting. Google is awesome, but we hope our medical doctors don’t use Google to learn how to prevent/treat our health problems, and thus, professional counselors should use primarily counseling-related professional literature as well.

Lastly, if you get an error message while trying to register online, please contact student services to try to address this first. If they cannot resolve this with you, then email me. Sometimes, a simple email from me to student services can get you registered for the course(s) you need without having to make a special trip down here. One final thing: if you email me about a class you’re trying to get into, yet have been prevented from, be sure to include your NAU ID# (not your social security), since this will expedite the process on our end.

That’s all I can think of for now. Again, I won’t be available in person for much of the summer, but after you’ve read this and the handbooks, you may email me with specific questions. Hope the rest of your summer is fun and relaxing.

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