Diversity and Inclusion

The UA MFT program embraces COAMFTE’s definition of diversity and inclusion as being inclusive of race, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, relationship status, gender identity, socioeconomic status, disability, health status, veteran/military status, religion and spiritual beliefs and/or affiliation, and/or national origin. The University Alabama Marriage and Family Therapy program adopts a posture of respect with regards to the worth and uniqueness of each individual, understanding and accepting the variability among social, religious, cultural, and other groups. Thus, we are committed to: a) include the representation of multiple groups in the student body, program clinical supervisors, program core and non-core faculty with regard to race, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, disability, health status, religious or spiritual affiliation, nation of origin or other relevant social categories; and b) ensure issues of diversity are central to all aspects of the training environment.

The UA MFT program aims to be inclusive to all students, volunteers, staff, and clients affiliated with the program and the CFTC to ensure a comfortable, safe, and respectful environment by reflecting the diverse interests of our all parties involved. Our philosophy is that all humans must be afforded dignity and respect and that the oppression of any member or group within a society occurs to the detriment of all members of that society. We believe that without intentional intervention to resolve sources of discrimination and oppression, all social systems contribute to the continuation of the oppression of underprivileged individuals and groups.

We recognize that our goal of achieving a more diverse program entails accepting that our goals will be fluid and will continue to adapt to new and ever changing ideals of equity, equality and inclusivity. Nevertheless, we value the process of seeking human dignity and we attempt this in many ways, including: 1) prioritizing program resources to recruit and maintain a diverse faculty and student body, 2) promoting an atmosphere conducive to mutual respect for individual and group differences, 3) identifying aspects of the program which promote disadvantages for marginalized groups or individuals, and 4) implementing interventions to resolve and eliminate identified problem areas.

This process involves efforts to value diversity in ways that are not always easily measured (e.g., beyond ethnic breakdown of students). For example, we try to teach and emulate respect for various viewpoints and infuse this type of instruction and content into all our classes through our language usage and our actions. However, even though it is not always adequate or measurable, we do take specific steps to help make this happen.

Our benchmarks for achieving diversity include the following:

1. We assess the composition of the faculty, supervisors, student body, and clinical populations in terms of diversity definition of the program. This is done with our annual report as well as faculty reviews during meetings and yearly retreats.

2. During recruitment we utilize measurement and outreach regarding our goals for diversity:
   a. We calculate the number of applications of diverse status, as well as the numbers accepted and enrolled in the program.
   b. We ask questions of our interviewees regarding their appreciation and comfort with diverse individuals in potential clinical settings.
   c. We attempt to connect with diverse faculty and potential students at national conferences.
3. We discuss in practicum and other classes issues of diversity, which generates an openness regarding this topic that can lead to further in- and out-of-class discussions.

4. We have a master’s class on diversity (HD 645) that focuses on knowledge and practice of working with diverse clinical populations.

5. All faculty are required to complete Employee Non-Discrimination training every year at UA.