Minimum Standards Subcommittee Report - DRAFT

The subcommittee was tasked with making recommendations for minimum standards required for counselors, including requirements regarding the level of education, internship experience, practical experience, and content of coursework required.

The subcommittee consisted of a Vice President of Student Services and two faculty counselors. All members of the subcommittee had graduate degrees from regionally accredited colleges or universities in counseling related fields and had experience providing counseling services to college students. Subcommittee members based their recommendations on current standards from the 2016 Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) and the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, Counseling Services (2019). Recommendations were provided for level of education, content of graduate level courses, practicum and internship experience. Given that CACREP graduate programs consider both practicum and internship requirements as supervised practical training, recommendations for internship and practical experience were combined into one category.

The intent of these recommendations was to provide clear minimum standards to ensure qualified counselors but with enough flexibility to allow for differences within graduate program curricula and for hiring institutions to determine additional qualifications when hiring a faculty counselor. For example, while most graduate programs in counseling or school psychology require coursework in career counseling, most graduate programs in social work do not. The subcommittee agreed that career counseling was a core component of serving community and technical college students, however to require a graduate course in career counseling could unintentionally preclude social workers from meeting minimum standards to work in the Washington State Community and Technical College System. Similarly, while the subcommittee strongly believed that faculty counselors should engage in ongoing continuing education, it was their opinion that such requirements went beyond the minimum standards set forth by this bill. Individual Community and Technical Colleges would not be prohibited from requiring continuing education or even professional licensure of their counselors.

The Subcommittee members also recommended that current Washington State Community and Technical College (CTC) faculty counselors should be exempted from the new rules, and counselors who are exempted should be allowed to carry that exemption if they move to another CTC in the state.
Based on the subcommittee's research and conversations, the Minimum Standards subcommittee recommended the following:

**Level of education**
The minimum level of education for a Washington State Community and Technical College faculty counselor should include a graduate or professional degree from a regionally accredited institution in:

- A. Counseling Psychology
- B. School Counseling
- C. Clinical Social Work, or
- D. Related Field

- AND -

**Content of Coursework**
Washington State Community and Technical College faculty counselors should have completed appropriate graduate coursework with content covering the following areas:

- A. Assessment and testing
- B. Career counseling (or commensurate training within first year of hire*)
- C. Crisis intervention and management
- D. Legal and ethical issues in counseling
- E. Lifespan development
- F. Multicultural counseling
- G. Theories of counseling
- H. Treatment planning

*Commensurate experience should include a graduate course in career counseling or additional training that includes an understanding of career development theory and the appropriate application for diverse populations, proficiency in administering and interpreting various career assessments, and an understanding of how systemic oppression impacts career access and decision making.

- And -

**Practicum/internship requirements**
Washington State Community and Technical College faculty counselors should have completed a supervised practicum and internship at the graduate level.

*Current Washington State Community and Technical College (CTC) faculty counselors shall be exempted from the new rules, and counselors who are exempted should be allowed to carry that exemption if they move to another CTC in the state.
References


Members
Sue Orchard, Lower Columbia College
Earl Martin, Everett Community College
Nicole Wilson, Highline College