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The Class of 2019: Academic Employment Prospects for Counselor Education Doctoral Graduates

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to estimate the percentage of counselor education doctoral (CED) program graduates who attained faculty positions within 2 years of graduation and to compare the number of these graduates to the number of advertised faculty positions during this same timeframe. To do so, we used archival, publicly available data for graduates of CACREP-accredited CED programs during the 2018–2019 academic cycle ($N = 314$). Approximately two-fifths of these graduates had faculty positions. Graduation from a public university increased the odds of having any faculty post, whereas graduation from a public university and the Carnegie Classification of the degree granting institution increased the odds of having an assistant professor position in an CACREP-accredited counseling program. Overall, there were 1.5 graduates for every faculty position, a ratio that varied based on the position's nature and geographical location. Implications for faculty career development in counselor education are presented.

Significance to the Public

This study provides a snapshot of academic job prospects for graduates of counselor education doctoral programs. Despite rapid and continued growth within the field of counselor education, the study found intense competition for full-time positions as counselor educators and offers factors that may inform students' pursuit of careers within the field.

Keywords: counselor education, faculty positions, employment, doctoral study, CACREP

As evidenced by the blossoming of accredited counseling programs, the field of counselor education (CE) continues to demonstrate exponential growth. According to the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), fewer than 50 institutions held CACREP accreditation status in 1985 (CACREP, 2013). In 2001, roughly 150 institutions were CACREP-accredited, a count that grew to 262 in 2012 (CACREP, 2013). Between 2012 and 2018, that number rose 49%, to 405 institutions (CACREP, 2013, 2019). Similarly, between 2011 and 2015, the Master's in Psychology and Counseling Accreditation Council (MPCAC; 2016) accredited 14 programs. As of 2022, that number rose 321% to 59 programs (MPCAC, 2022). As expected, the growth coincided with an

elevated number of master's-level counseling students. According to CACREP (2013), 36,977 individuals pursued master's degrees in 2012. During the 6 years that followed, enrollment increased to 49,444 students, a jump of 35% (CACREP, 2019). Overall enrollment data was not available for MPCAC-accredited institutions.

Concomitant with these expansions was a rise in the number of CE faculty, albeit with a twist at CACREP-accredited programs. The 2009 revision of the CACREP standards introduced what is known as “the 2013 standard” (Barrio Minton et al., 2012, p. 2). CACREP (2009) Standard 1.W.2 mandated core faculty must “have earned doctoral degrees in counselor education and supervision, preferably from a CACREP-accredited program, or

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have been employed as full-time faculty members in a counselor education program for a minimum of one full academic year before July 1, 2013” (p. 5). The “2013 standard,” combined with CACREP requirements pertaining to the student-to-core-faculty ratio, led some researchers to speculate about a possible shortage of qualified counselor educators (Barrio Minton et al., 2012; Isaacs & Sabella, 2013).

While a direct causal relationship cannot be established, in the years after the release of the 2013 standard, CACREP (2013, 2019) reported a 42% increase in its number of accredited counselor education doctoral (CED) programs. That rate of expansion corresponded with the overall growth of CACREP programs during the same period (CACREP, 2013, 2019). However, enrollment in accredited CED programs expanded to an extent that exceeded the growth in master’s-level programs. Whereas master’s program enrollment rose 35% between 2012 and 2018, enrollment in doctoral programs climbed 44% over the same span, from 2,028 students to 2,917 students (CACREP, 2013, 2019). That contributed to a 48% increase in CED graduates, from 323 in 2012 to 479 in 2018 (CACREP, 2013, 2019).

In addition to careers as counselor educators, there are a variety of additional job opportunities for CED graduates outside academia, such as positions in clinical practice, administration, and leadership (Bernard, 2006; Curtis & Sherlock, 2006; Schweiger et al., 2012; Zimpfer, 1996). However, the minimal research available indicates faculty positions are the top choice of CED students. For example, in a sample of 132 CED students, Woo et al. (2017) found 80% reported a strong interest in becoming counselor educators. These career interests are consistent with the major training outcome of CES programs. As explained by Snow and Field (2020), the focus of doctoral CES training has always been training future counselor educators.

Though a faculty position in counselor education is an explicit outcome of CED training (CACREP, 2016; Snow & Field, 2020) and an occupational outcome desired by many doctoral students (Woo et al., 2017), it is unclear how many program

graduates attain CE faculty positions. Existing research indicates most of these graduates do not (e.g., Schweiger et al., 2012; Zimpfer, 1996). Those findings, now dated, have been derived from survey research with relatively low response rates. An Internet search strategy might provide a more effective estimation method because it requires no effort from program graduates. Graduates of CED programs typically index their dissertations in *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global*; thus, this database could be used to identify program graduates during a particular timeframe. Likewise, an Internet search process could be used to identify whether a graduate currently has a counselor education faculty position.

Using such a strategy, the first objective of our study was to attain a more accurate assessment of the percentage of recent CACREP-accredited CED graduates employed in faculty positions. Accreditation factored into the strategy for several reasons. First, recent literature on CED programs focuses on CACREP-accredited institutions, a probable byproduct of the 2013 standard. Second, unlike at the master’s level, where MPCAC offers an alternative to CACREP accreditation and furnishes a list of its programs (MPCAC, 2022), no repository of non-CACREP-accredited CED programs exists. As such, we estimated the percentage of CACREP-accredited CED program graduates who graduated in the 2018–2019 academic cycle who attained faculty positions within 2 years of their graduations. We also evaluated how well two characteristics of these graduates’ doctoral programs — funding source (public, private) and Carnegie Classification — predicted the odds of attaining a faculty position.

When CACREP first began accrediting CED programs, nearly all were housed in public universities. According to the CACREP directory (<https://www.cacrep.org/directory/>), 96% of accredited CED programs were housed in public universities in the year 2000. However, at the time of this writing, the percentage of accredited doctoral programs housed in public universities has declined to 71%. Furthermore, 78% of online CED programs are housed in private universities. CED students at

private universities, especially those that offer fully online degree programs, may not have as many opportunities for research mentoring, coteaching experiences, or teaching assistantships compared to doctoral students at more traditional public universities.

Likewise, the odds of attaining a faculty position might also be associated with the Carnegie Classification of the university from which one graduates. Researchers have found that counselor educators at universities with higher Carnegie Classifications produce more peer-reviewed scholarship than counselor educators at universities with lower rankings (Hatchett et al., 2020; Lambie et al., 2014; Newhart et al., 2020; Ramsey et al., 2002). As a result, doctoral students at universities with higher Carnegie Classifications likely have more opportunities for research than those at universities with lower rankings. Given the potential importance of previous research experience in securing a CE faculty position (e.g., Bodenhorn et al., 2014; Warnke et al., 1999), graduates from more research-intensive universities may have an advantage in the job search process. Even in the absence of this advantage, it seems likely that individuals who pursue doctoral degrees at more research-intensive universities have stronger interests in faculty positions upon graduation than those who attend less-intensive research universities.

Attaining a CE faculty position program does not occur in a vacuum. An important contextual factor impacting this occupational outcome is the nature and availability of faculty openings at the time one seeks a position. Several researchers have evaluated advertised faculty openings in counselor education (e.g., Bernard, 2006; Bodenhorn et al., 2014; Maples & Macari, 1998; Rogers et al., 1998). However, the academic job market is highly volatile, and these studies — even the most recent one by Bodenhorn et al. (2014) — may not accurately describe the faculty positions encountered by the cohort of program graduates covered in our study. Therefore, the second objective of our study was to describe the number and characteristics (e.g., specialization, geographic

locations) of faculty positions advertised through *CESNET* with a start date of either the summer or fall of 2019. In addition to summarizing these position announcements, we also created ratios that compared the number and types of advertised positions to the number of program graduates in our study.



Method

Participants and Procedures

Prior to collecting any data, we confirmed with our university's institutional review board (IRB) that this research was exempt from IRB oversight. Data collection and study procedures complied with the *Code of Ethics* of the American Counseling Association (American Counseling Association, 2014). During the fall 2020 semester, the authors sought to identify individuals who graduated from CACREP-accredited CED programs between August 31, 2018 through August 31, 2019. As a first step, we used the online CACREP directory to identify accredited CED programs; through this process, we identified 84 such programs. Next, we used *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global* to identify the names of program graduates. Using the database's advanced search features, we included *counseling* as the subject search term (all subjects & indexing – SU) and the name of the CACREP-accredited university as the second search term (university/institution – school), limiting the searches by the years 2018 and 2019. (To be included in our sample, a CED graduate must have had a dissertation dated between August 31, 2018 and August 31, 2019.) For each dissertation identified, we further investigated each to confirm the dissertation was part of a CE program and not a program in a related discipline (e.g., counseling psychology). This involved a review of the dissertation committee members, the authors' autobiographical statements, and other contextual information.

Two problems arose. First, one online university had an unusually large number ($n = 77$) of referenced dissertations during this time period. The

institution offers a PhD program in CES accredited by CACREP, as well as a PhD in human services. From the information available in *ProQuest*, it was not feasible to separate dissertations completed as part of the CE program from those in their human services program. Requests to the university for assistance went unanswered, so all 77 graduates were subsequently excluded from our sample. Second, two of the CACREP-accredited universities did not archive their dissertations in *ProQuest*. In these cases, the electronic libraries of their universities were searched to identify CE dissertations by using both the date restrictions (2018–2019) and *counseling* as the subject search term.

After acquiring the names of the CED graduates, we searched Google and LinkedIn to identify those employed in faculty positions. Because of the timing of our research, these CED graduates had the opportunity to participate in two traditional academic hiring cycles — those with a start date of fall 2019 and a start date of fall 2020 — as well as positions with start dates between these parameters. For the Google searches, each counselor educator's name was entered in the search box followed by *AND counseling faculty OR counselor education*. In LinkedIn, the names of the 2019 CED graduates were inserted in the search box. For those graduates for whom a number of similar names were returned, we restricted the search process adding AND to the CED graduates' names followed by *counseling*.

During the fall 2020 semester, we also searched the *CESNET* archives to identify full-time faculty position advertisements with a start date in the summer or fall of 2019. We selected only faculty positions for which new counselor educators would be appropriate and competitive. Thus, we included faculty positions advertised for assistant professors, assistant/associate professors, assistant/associate/full professors, visiting professors, clinical faculty, instructors/lecturers, core faculty, and entry-level program directors. We excluded positions advertised only at the associate or full professor level, those advertised for department chairs or deans, or nonfaculty positions,

such as those for a director of a university counseling center.

Results

Characteristics of the CED Graduates

Through the described search process, we eventually identified 314 CED graduates who completed their degrees between August 31, 2018 and August 31, 2019. These graduates represented 70 accredited CED programs. The doctoral programs had a median of 4 CED graduates during this time frame ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 4.30$).

CED Graduates With Faculty Positions

As revealed in Table 1, 41.4% of the CED graduates were employed in full-time faculty positions (as of October 2020). Table 1 also details the specific positions held by these CED graduates. With regard to the Carnegie Classification system, 21 (16.2%) of these graduates had faculty positions at R1 (Doctoral Universities—Very High Research Activity), 25 (19.2%) at R2 (Doctoral Universities—High Research Activity), 14 (10.8%) at D/PU (Doctoral/Professional Universities), 34 (26.2%) at M1 (Master's—Larger Programs), 17 (13.1%) at M2 (Master's—Medium Programs), 5 (3.8%) at M3 (Master's—Smaller Programs), 6 (4.6%) at Special Focus Institutions, 4 (3.1%) at Baccalaureate Colleges, and 2 (1.5%) at Community Colleges. Two (1.5%) of these CES graduates were employed as faculty at international universities.

The next set of analyses evaluated whether the attainment of a faculty position could be predicted from two characteristics of this cohort: the Carnegie Classification (M3 – R1) of these graduates' degree-granting universities, and whether their universities were public or private. Prior to running these analyses, we confirmed the assumptions of logistic regression — independent observations, linearity of independent variables and log odds, and minimal multicollinearity — had been met. First, we ran a binary logistic regression to evaluate how well *any* faculty appointment could be predicted

Table 1*2019 CED Cohort in Academic Positions by the Middle of the Fall Semester of 2020*

Type of Faculty Appointment	<i>n</i>	%
Any Faculty Position	130	41.4
Assistant Professor in a CACREP Counseling Program	75	23.9
Assistant Professor in Non-CACREP Counseling Program	19	6.1
Instructor/Lecturer in a CACREP Counseling Program	11	3.5
Visiting Professor in a CACREP Counseling Program	5	1.6
Clinical Professor in a CACREP Counseling Program	5	1.6
Assistant Professor in an Undergraduate Program	5	1.6
Clinical Professor in a Non-CACREP Counseling Program	3	1.0
Assistant Professor in a Medical School	3	1.0
Instructor/Lecture in a Non-CACREP Counseling Program	2	1.0
Clinical Professor in an Undergraduate Program	1	< 0.0
Tutor in an International University	1	<0.0

from these two variables. Compared to a constant-only model, the model with the two predictor variables was statistically significant: $\chi^2 (2) = 13.84$, $p < .001$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .06$. Based on the Wald criterion, only one predictor variable, funding source, reached statistical significance. Graduating from a public university was associated with an increase in the odds of being employed in any faculty position by a factor of 2.05 (95% *CI*: 1.14, 3.72, Wald $\chi^2 = 5.68$, $p = .02$) compared to those who graduated from private universities. Carnegie Classifications of the degree granting university (95% *CI*: .93, 1.59; Wald $\chi^2 = 2.04$, $p = .15$) did not make a unique contribution. We ran a second binary logistic regression to evaluate how well a position as an assistant professor in a CACREP program could be predicted from the same two predictor variables. Compared to a constant-only model, the model with these predictor variables was statistically significant: $\chi^2 (2) = 19.09$, $p < .001$, Nagelkerke $R^2 = .09$. In this analysis, both predictor variables made unique contributions. Graduating from a public university was associated with an increase in the odds of being employed as an assistant professor in a CACREP program by a factor of 2.24 [95% *CI*: 1.03, 4.88; Wald $\chi^2 = 4.14$, $p = .04$] compared to graduates of private universities. Also, the odds of attaining an assistant professor in a CACREP program increased by a

factor of 1.53 [95% *CI*: 1.09, 2.15 Wald $\chi^2 = 5.94$, $p = .02$] with each one-unit increase in the Carnegie Classification rankings of participants' doctoral-granting universities. We also evaluated whether the Carnegie Classifications exhibited curvilinear relationships with the probability of attaining either any faculty position or a faculty position as an assistant professor in a CACREP program. Curvilinear effects were evaluated using Box-Tidwell transformations (Box & Tidwell, 1962); the transformation of Carnegie Classifications using this procedure failed to detect any nonlinear relationships.

Characteristics of the Position Advertisements

We identified a total of 212 full-time faculty positions appropriate for the 2019 CED graduates. Table 2 details the positions, disaggregated by the percentage of these positions in CACREP-accredited programs, and the locations of these positions in the ACES regional organizational system. We also disaggregated these faculty positions based on the advertised counseling specialty, if any; the advertising universities' Carnegie classifications; and the institutional status (i.e., public vs. private) of the advertising

Table 2

2019 CESNET Position Advertisements Organized by Position Titles, CACREP-Accreditation Status of the Advertised Programs, and Locations of the Positions in the ACES Regional Map

Position Title	CACREP Accreditation		ACES Region				
	Yes	No	SACES	NCACES	NARACES	WACES	RMACES
Assistant Professor (<i>n</i> = 88)	69 (78%)	19 (22%)	32 (36%)	25 (28%)	21 (24%)	9 (10%)	1 (1%)
Assistant/Associate (<i>n</i> = 38)	31 (82%)	7 (18%)	18 (47%)	10 (26%)	3 (8%)	3 (8%)	4 (11%)
Open Rank (<i>n</i> = 22)	17 (77%)	5 (23%)	9 (41%)	6 (27%)	4 (18%)	2 (9%)	1 (5%)
Clinical Faculty (<i>n</i> = 21)	15 (71%)	6 (29%)	10 (48%)	4 (19%)	0 (0%)	6 (29%)	1 (5%)
Lecturer/Instructor (<i>n</i> = 16)	6 (38%)	10 (62%)	4 (25%)	8 (50%)	4 (25%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Visiting Professor (<i>n</i> = 12)	12 (100%)	0 (0%)	6 (50%)	2 (17%)	4 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Core Faculty (<i>n</i> = 8)	8 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (75%)	1 (13%)	1 (13%)	0 (0%)
Program Director (<i>n</i> = 5)	2 (40%)	3 (60%)	0 (0%)	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

Table 3

*Ratios of Advertised Positions to the Number of 2019 CED Graduates (*N* = 314)*

Position Title	Positions:Graduates
Any Faculty Position	1:1.48
Assistant Professor Positions	1:3.57
Assistant Professor Positions in CACREP Programs	1:4.55
SACES Region	1:10.83
NCACES Region	1:16.53
NARACES Region	1:24.15
WACES Region	1:44.86
RMACES Region	1:314
Assistant Professor Positions in CACREP Programs with CES Degrees	1:13.65
SACES Region	1:20.93
NCACES Region	1:104.67
NARACES Region	1:157
WACES Region	1:157
RMACES Region	1:314
Lecturer/Core/Clinical Positions	1:6.98
Assistant/Associate Professor Positions	1:8.26
Open Rank Positions	1:14.27

universities. While many positions did not identify a counseling specialization ($n = 82$, 27.3%), school counseling was mentioned most frequently ($n = 50$, 16.7%), followed by clinical mental health counseling ($n = 43$, 14.3%), couples and family counseling ($n = 6$, 2.0%), rehabilitation counseling ($n = 5$, 1.7%), and addictions counseling ($n = 2$, 0.7%). The remaining 24 (11.3%) positions identified specializations in more than one area or proved indiscernible because of broken web links.

Most advertisements stated a CACREP-accredited CED degree was required ($n = 101$, 47.6%) or preferred ($n = 66$, 31.1%). These positions were housed in universities with the following Carnegie Classifications: 37 (12.3%) R1 (Doctoral Universities—Very High Research Activity), 45 (15.0%) R2 (Doctoral Universities—High Research Activity), 28 (9.3%) D/PU (Doctoral/Professional Universities), 55 (18.3%) M1 (Master's—Larger Programs), 24 (8.0%) in M2 (Master's—Medium Programs), 6 (2.0%) M3 (Master's—Smaller Programs), 11 (3.7%) Special Focus Institutions, and 6 (2.0) Baccalaureate Colleges. The majority ($n = 129$, 60.8%) of the positions were advertised at public universities, compared to 83 (39.2%) at private institutions.

The final set of analyses involved constructing ratios between the number of advertised faculty positions compared to the number of CED graduates. Overall, the analysis indicated the presence of one general faculty position for every 1.48 graduates. As revealed in Table 3, these ratios varied a great deal based on the nature of the position as well as the positions' geographical locations in the ACES regional map.

Discussion

The first objective of this study was to identify the percentage of graduates from CACREP-accredited CED programs (2018–2019 academic cycle) who attained faculty positions within 2 years of graduation. Altogether, we identified 314 graduates from 70 different programs, all of whom earned degrees within a 12-month span ending August 31,

2019. Less than half ($n = 130$, 41.4%) found full-time employment in CE programs, with less than a quarter ($n = 75$, 23.9%) attaining positions as assistant professors in CACREP-accredited programs. Though direct comparisons are problematic, the percentages are higher than those previously reported by Schweiger et al. (2012) and Zimpfer (1996). Those authors used surveys to estimate the percentage of program graduates who had faculty positions, whereas we used an Internet search process to answer the same question. Though we may have missed some graduates and faculty positions because of flaws inherent in Internet searches, our methodology likely provided more accurate estimates of the percentage of graduates with faculty positions than could be accomplished with a survey of recent graduates. In addition to methodological differences, the higher percentage of faculty found in our research may represent a cohort effect. As detailed earlier (CACREP, 2013, 2019), there has been tremendous growth in CE programs, and perhaps more graduates are finding faculty positions compared to just several years ago.

Related to the first objective, we evaluated how well funding source (public, private) and Carnegie Classification of these graduates' doctoral programs predicted the odds of having a faculty position. We found receiving a doctoral degree from a public university doubled the odds of both having any faculty position in higher education and an assistant professor position in a CACREP-accredited counseling program. The odds of having an assistant professor position in a CE program increased by a factor of 1.53 for each one-unit increase in the Carnegie Classification (e.g., from R2 to R1) of a graduate's doctoral granting university. These results cannot be integrated into the counselor education literature because of their novelty; simply, there are no prior studies to which these results can be compared. In making sense of these findings, it is important to remember these findings only represent *associations*; one should not assume that graduation from a public university with a higher Carnegie Classification will *lead* to the attainment of a faculty position. It is plausible — though not directly tested in this study — that individuals who desire faculty positions are more

likely to pursue (i.e., self-select) doctoral training programs in public universities with higher Carnegie Classifications.

To provide context for these occupational outcomes, our second objective was to describe the number and characteristics (e.g., specialization, geographic locations) of faculty positions available to these program applicants with a start date of either the summer or fall of 2019. We also created ratios that compared the number and types of advertised positions to the number of program graduates in our study. Altogether, we identified a total of 212 full-time faculty positions deemed appropriate. Assistant and assistant/associate positions accounted for more than half of those postings ($n = 126$), with 100 of those at CACREP-accredited institutions. We found that, in the 2018–2019 hiring cycle, one general faculty position existed for every 1.48 graduates. As could be expected, the ratio widened with addition of specifying characteristics. Case in point: Whereas one assistant professor position (general) was posted for every 3.57 CED graduates, one assistant professor position (master's-only CACREP program) existed for every 4.55 grads, as did one assistant professor position (master's- and doctoral-level CACREP program) for every 13.65 graduates. Adding a specific Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) region to the job criteria further decreased the odds of or increased the competition for employment. Prospects within the Southern ACES (SACES) region proved most favorable for graduates, with one master's-level CACREP assistant professor position available for every 10.83 graduates, and a single master's- and doctoral-level CACREP assistant professor position for every 20.93 graduates. The ratio table represents a snapshot of one particular hiring cycle, and — as such — should not be generalized, but the data within offers heretofore unseen insights into the academic employment opportunities for counselor education doctoral graduates.

Limitations

The major limitation was our use of archival, publicly available data to answer the research questions. While the methodology likely produced a more accurate estimate of the percentage of CE graduates with faculty positions than could be attained with a low-response survey, it did not allow us to answer more detailed questions about the graduates in our sample. For example, we were unable to collect any data about their qualifications (e.g., publications, teaching experience) when they applied for faculty positions or their current level of job satisfaction. Likewise, we could not collect data on demographic characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, gender, race) that could impact hiring decisions. Just as important, we did not have data on the 184 (59.6% of the sample) program graduates who were currently not employed as faculty members. Because of the nature of our methodology, we do not know how many of these graduates desired, but were unable to attain, faculty positions in counselor education.

Another limitation concerns potential errors in collecting archival data. Some CED graduates may have been missed because their dissertations were either indexed under an alternate surname in *ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global* or not indexed at all. Similarly, not all employment positions may have been posted to or discovered on the CESNET listserv, and in some cases, the posted advertisements involved broken links. Likewise, the websites of some of the CE programs may not have been updated with a listing of all current faculty members, so it is possible hirings within the Class of 2019 were not reflected on programs' pages. Similarly, graduates may not have updated their LinkedIn profiles, and may have changed their names in the span separating graduation and assumption of a faculty position.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted the study. Though the majority of counselor education job postings customarily appear during the fall semester, the pandemic's emergence in the spring of 2020 had a major effect on institutions of higher education, with many colleges and universities announcing hiring freezes

(Flaherty, 2020). The 2-year timeframe of the study may ameliorate the ramifications somewhat, but changes to university hiring cycles could have impacted employment outcomes for the Class of 2019.

Implications for the Counselor Education Job Market

This study provides the counselor education community with needed data on the occupational outcomes of a recent cohort of CED graduates and identifies important ratios between the number of CED graduates during the timeframe of this study and the number of available positions posted in *CESNET*. The results of this study could be one data point to inform counselor educators and counseling students about the market for counselor education positions and factors that predict the likelihood of attaining a faculty position as a counselor educator. For example, counselor educators could use this information in mentoring students about typical occupational outcomes for CED graduates and the probability of attaining a faculty position as a counselor educator after attaining a doctoral degree in CES. The results of this study might also facilitate discussions in the counselor education community about the current number of CES programs and CED students. For example, does the number of CED students who desire faculty positions exceed the availability of such positions in the higher education marketplace? Do counselor education programs need to do more to assist CED students in attaining faculty positions, such as offering more mentoring or postdoctorate positions in which recent CED graduates can refine their skills in teaching, research, and supervision?

Geography Matters

This study found considerable disparities between the availability of counselor education jobs per CED graduate within designated ACES regions. For instance, in the southern, north central, and western regions, one assistant professor position in a CACREP program existed for every 10.83 graduates, 16.53 graduates, and 44.86 graduates,

respectively. The competition further intensified in doctoral-level CACREP programs, with one position opening for every 20.93 (SACES), 104.67 (NCACES), and 157 graduates (WACES). While much of this can be attributed to the unequal distribution of CACREP-accredited institutions within those regions (Field et al., 2020), location, proximity to family, and geographic features play important parts in doctoral graduates' preferences for faculty positions (Magnuson et al., 2001), just as they do for the selection of doctoral graduate institutions (Poock & Love, 2001). CED faculty advisors could use this study's geographical ratio data to inform conversations with their doctoral students about prospective employment opportunities.

Selecting a Doctoral Program

In our study, we found that attending a public university with a higher Carnegie Classification substantially increased the odds of attaining an assistant professor position in a CACREP-accredited counseling program. Though, as mentioned earlier, this does not demonstrate a cause-and-effect relationship, these associations might be useful to individuals who are considering pursuing a doctoral degree in CES to become counselor educators. At the very least, our study demonstrated CES graduates from varied universities did not have the same odds of attaining a position in higher education in general or as a counselor educator in particular. At the very least, we encourage prospective CED students to investigate the typical occupational outcomes attained by CED graduates across several potential universities. Prospective students who desire faculty positions as counselor educators should select CES programs that have successfully assisted graduates in securing faculty positions.

Recommendations for Future Research

As little literature examines the employment opportunities for graduates of counselor education doctoral (CED) programs, an array of opportunities for follow-up studies exists. One involves

heightening the field's understanding of the career aspirations of CED students, a labor that could aid in the refinement of CED curricula. For example, to what extent are the research skills and teaching strategies consistent with doctoral-level counseling training being put to use? To what extent do CED degrees aid in graduates' roles outside of counselor education? Another recommendation, though challenging, would be to study CED graduates who were unsuccessful in pursuing a faculty career. Such inquiry might evaluate the extent to which this difficulty was related to professional factors (e.g., credentials at the time of application). It may also examine the impact of personal factors, such as ethnicity, gender, race, limited geographical mobility, or other factors.

Conclusion

Completing a CED program requires a tremendous expenditure of time, effort, and money. In an academic environment increasingly driven by concepts like return on investment, it is critical for fields to remain informed on the outcomes — specifically, the employment outcomes — of their graduates. This study examined one particular employment possibility, that is, obtaining a full-time faculty position, for CED graduates within a given hiring cycle. Despite the rapid and continued growth within the field, it found intense competition for counselor education jobs. And while the snapshot provided by the data cannot be generalized, it opens the metaphorical door for further CED-focused research, including employment analysis. It also sounds a clarion call for researchers to investigate the specific impacts of widespread changes in academia (e.g., the shift toward clinical faculty) on counselor education as a whole, as well as on the opportunities available for graduates of counselor education doctoral programs.

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