

Letter to the Editor

Dear NAADAC,

I am the Lead Faculty and Program Director for Counseling at Ottawa University and am writing to share why Ottawa's addictions counseling programs choose to pursue National Addiction Studies Accreditation Commission (NASAC) accreditation.

In 1999, I worked as a lead therapist for an intensive outpatient substance use disorder program for adolescents. My employer persuaded me to apply for certification as a substance use disorder counselor by offering to pay for the application and exam. Back then, my Master's Degree in clinical psychology satisfied the educational requirements and my practicum at the Intensive Outpatient Treatment satisfied the experiential component. Without formal education in addictions, I applied for and was granted certification. Times have changed.

Today, many states have licensure for an addictions category and others have certification. This is evidence of our growth as a profession; the realization of our own professional identity. This is just in time as the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, projects that the need for substance abuse counselors will increase by 22% by 2020 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016).

In an effort to meet the need for highly qualified addiction professionals in the United States, Ottawa University offers top tier, programmatic accredited, undergraduate and graduate programs in addictions counseling. Ottawa is a regionally accredited, non-profit, Christian university with a rich heritage spanning over 150 years. While our residential campus is

located in Ottawa, Kansas, we also have campuses in Arizona, Indiana, Wisconsin, and online. Our addiction programs are accredited by NASAC.

Why NASAC? Simple—community, consistency, and professional identity. NASAC's educational standards incorporate academics and professional practice. NASAC outlines standards for all levels of our profession and educational programming. Lastly, NASAC standards reinforce professional identity, allowing for a common language from the classroom to the field.

I am exceptionally proud of our NASAC accredited addictions programs and have been privileged to witness the quality of our students as a clinical supervisor. Ottawa University is helping to meet the need for addictions professionals by producing high quality graduates ready for licensure or certification and ready to help those suffering from addictions. With NASAC's help, we are readying for tomorrow!

Sincerely,

Trish Hernandez, PsyD

Director of Graduate Programs in Counseling
Ottawa University

REFERENCES

Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, *Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2016-17 Edition*, Substance Abuse and Behavioral Disorder Counselors. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/substance-abuse-and-behavioral-disorder-counselors.htm> (visited January 18, 2016).



2016 Nebraska Annual Behavioral Health Conference
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This conference will examine the evolving landscape by turning to those with first-hand experience, redefining the behavioral healthcare field.

Presenters at this conference will include some of the nation's leading consultants and trainers who have synthesized stories of hope and creative inspiration to successfully cultivate innovation and translate it into **Success, Resiliency, and Recovery**.

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Who Should Attend?

- Adult peer support specialists, family peer support specialists, providers, clinicians, care managers, health and behavioral health managed care organizations,
- Adults, family members, youth, and young adults who utilize behavioral health services,
- Individuals from child and adult-serving agencies, such as substance use and mental health, child welfare, justice, education, primary care, early care and education, and systems for transition-age youth and young adults,
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- Educators, technical assistance providers, and evaluators, and
- Medical and legal professionals.

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To register and for information about support or exhibit opportunities, please visit
www.naadac.org/2016NEBehavioralHealthConference

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NAADAC is now accepting submissions for the William L. White Student Scholarship Award

This award was created to promote student addiction studies research and develop the importance of student research projects in NASAC accredited programs, NAADAC approved programs in higher education, or an accredited addiction studies higher education program acknowledged by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) that provides research or education to the addiction profession. It is awarded annually to one graduate NAADAC Student Member and one undergraduate NAADAC Student member with the best student addiction research paper on the assigned yearly topic.

Award benefits: one undergraduate student will receive \$1,000; one graduate student will receive \$2,000 (award monies are submitted in the students' names to their educational debtor), and each will be recognition at the 2016 NAADAC Annual Conference, October 7–11 in Minneapolis, MN.

Application submission: The completed application form, academic transcript, letters of reference, and the research paper must be submitted together electronically to NAADAC at naadac@naadac.org, Attention: William L. White Student Scholarship.

Submission Deadline: May 31, 2016

For complete information, including the 2016 research paper topic, eligibility and application requirements, please visit:

www.naadac.org/white-scholarship-award