The UGA School Counseling Program provides a summarized report to all program stakeholders in the fall. Data collected and reported is from the former school year. The report includes a review of data from exit interviews, alumni surveys, and employer surveys. Student learning outcomes and program objectives are further reviewed.

Review of program mission statement and objectives
Program faculty met in December of 2015 to review the current program mission statement and objectives. Program faculty discussed and agreed the mission statement and objectives should be updated to reflect the current program.

The mission statement was changed to: The mission of the program is to prepare counselors to work in elementary, middle, and secondary schools who are educational leaders and self-reflective practitioners; who serve as advocates for all students; who understand and apply principles of group work in building school and community partnerships; and who accept responsibility for improving educational practices through an active program of research and evaluation.

Program objectives were also modified: The professional counseling (school emphasis) program objectives include: (1) Develop candidates’ awareness of own cultural values and beliefs as well as understanding and respecting the values and beliefs of all individuals, (2) Develop candidates’ cultural competence and responsiveness to promote educational equity and social justice in a variety of school settings, (3) Develop candidates’ individual and group counseling skills and skills related to the development and implementation of the school counseling classroom curriculum, (4) Develop candidates’ leadership, advocacy, and collaboration skills to address systemic barriers to learning for all P-12 students, and (5) Develop candidates’ knowledge and skills for using appropriate data to design, implement, and evaluate comprehensive school counseling programs including the integration of evidence-based practices.

Review of Program of Study
Based on exit survey data, program faculty discussed feedback regarding the Research course and Internship. Program faculty decided to move the Research course to Fall of the 2nd year while students were also enrolled in Internship. Two doctoral students were assigned to the Research class to assist students in developing their data-driven interventions to be completed during Internship.

Exit Surveys of Graduates (May 2015)
Twelve students completed exit surveys one month prior to graduation in April 2015. In the survey, students were asked to comment on the core coursework. Students overwhelmingly were satisfied with the following classes and commented on the quality of instruction and relevance to the program objectives: Foundations of School Counseling, Cross Cultural Counseling, Counseling Children and Adolescents, and Group Work. Students suggested more support for the Research class (see section above) and assistance with the data-driven intervention during
Students questioned the need for the Developmental Counseling class. Feedback from this survey also discussed the importance of the mentor/mentee program, service-learning prior to Practicum, and mock interviewing that occurs during internship. The cohort model of instruction was also highlighted and students generally felt supported by cohort members and program faculty.

Alumni Surveys
Out of fourteen graduates from the previous year, ten returned alumni surveys. Students were asked to evaluate their preparation related to required coursework, school counseling areas, and program climate. Alumni scored most of the required classes as a “4” or “5.” A few individuals scored the career, appraisal, and research classes lower. Regarding the school counseling focus areas, most were satisfied with scoring those areas with a “4” or “5.” Some areas that need additional attention include: crisis intervention and suicide assessment, substance abuse, and academic counseling. Alums felt generally supported while enrolled in the program with those areas receiving all “4’s” and “5’s”. When asked to rate the school counseling program in terms of preparation for full-time work, the program received one “3”, two “5’s”, and the rest a “4.” Some comments included “Having supervision on so many levels was great because of the varied perspectives”, “I felt every course prepared me for my work as a school counselor”, “I felt very supported and thoroughly prepared after graduating from the program” and “I felt very, very prepared compared to new counselors in my county from other schools”, and “The program exceeded in helping me understand different cultures, SES, gender identities, etc. to more effectively counselor those populations”

Employer Surveys
Out of fourteen graduates from the previous year, eight employers (principals) returned surveys. These alumni were employed as elementary, middle, and high school counselors. When asked “How well did UGA’s School Counseling program prepare the counselor at your school?”, all principals rated the alumni as either meets or exceeds. When asked “Would you hire our graduate again”, seven principals stated “yes” and one principal stated “most likely.” Some comments from the principals included: “She is an absolute joy to have at our school. Truly as value-added member of our team”, “Your graduate is extremely well-prepared for the shared commitments of our counseling program”, “I could not ask for a better counseling candidate. X has been excellent in her role as counselor”, “X is a model graduate coming into her profession with outstanding skills and relationships with students, parents, and our community. We are lucky to have her.”, “X is an exceptional school counselor. It is hard to imagine that she is just starting her second year and I have very high expectations.”, and “X has been a great addition to our staff and community. Our students and staff are very lucky to have such a great counselor. She is a shooting star. Thank you.”

Please do not hesitate to contact the program faculty with any questions or follow up of this report.