

MASTER OF ARTS IN

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY

PLU GRADUATE PROGRAMS



PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Length: 2 years.

Format: Small cohort class of about 20 students that move through the program as a group.

Schedule: Begins each Fall.

Year one: Afternoon and late-afternoon classes twice a week.

Year two: Afternoon and late-afternoon classes once a week. Summer or beginning of academic year: clinic hours at the on-site couple and family therapy center.

Later in academic year: Ease into more clinic hours at an off-site internship.

Accreditation: PLU's MFT program is accredited by The Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE).

www.plu.edu/mft

ABOUT PLU

Pacific Lutheran University purposefully integrates the liberal arts, professional studies and civic engagement in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. With distinctive international programs and close student-faculty research opportunities, PLU helps its 3,300 students from all faiths and backgrounds discern their life's vocation through coursework, mentorship and internships at world-class Puget Sound-area businesses and institutions. Founded in 1890 by Norwegian pioneers, PLU continues the distinctive tradition of Lutheran higher education through its commitment to the advancement of knowledge, thoughtful inquiry and questioning, the preparation of citizens in service to the world and to its ongoing reform. Located in the Parkland neighborhood of Tacoma, Washington, PLU is set in a region that also offers vast opportunities for outdoor recreation, culture and sports.



WHY STUDENTS CHOOSE PLU

The Marriage and Family Therapy program at PLU aligns with a “systems-based” approach to therapy, which emphasizes examining relationships and how they affect mental health. This can involve family, partners, work, organizations—all of the “systems” where we find ourselves in relationships with others.

DIVERSITY AND VALUING DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

The relationships we build with each other as a diverse cohort of graduate students make us more culturally aware as human beings and more effective therapists in training.



100%

Passage rate of graduates on the National Marital and Family Therapy Examination.

*Based on a blended rate of all tests taken from 2010-2016.

AFTER GRADUATION, MFT STUDENTS:

- Are employed in a variety of settings, including community agencies, mental-health centers, private practices, schools, medical settings, substance-abuse centers, churches, and community colleges.
- May choose to pursue doctoral degrees.
- Serve in professional organizations and on community boards.
- Often become MFT supervisors.

“Being a part of a diverse cohort, where open and honest dialogue is encouraged, has really helped me expand my cultural lens and recognize the uniqueness of the human experience. The MFT program at PLU does a wonderful job of facilitating a safe place to deeply explore our similarities and our differences. The primary change I have personally experienced in regard to my notion of diversity is an enhanced confidence and competence in exploring differences. My fear of offending has been replaced with candor, respect, and sincere curiosity.”

— April Knight



MFT FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE

“Volunteering with Trinity Lutheran has been a wonderful experience that will inform my future work as a therapist because it has provided me the opportunity to engage with people of all ages, cultures and walks of life, and has reinforced my belief in the importance of building relationships, and staying connected with one’s larger community.”

—Jessica Holt

PLU's MFT classes combine lecture, discussion and application, all in an engaging and interactive learning environment. Discussions are open and honest and encourage each person to offer unique perspectives and worldviews, so students learn not only how to become therapists, but also about who they are. Cohorts offer a sense of community, and students support each other in and outside of the program: Rather than a competitive and cutthroat environment, MFT students and faculty offer support and encouragement.

“The on-site clinic is definitely a plus. Finding out that students start on-site and with a co-therapist made me feel more comfortable with the transition of going from a student to becoming a therapist-in-training. Looking back over the first year, I am so glad that I chose this program, and that this program chose me! I feel like this is exactly where I am supposed to be and look forward to next year!”

—Mattie Harrison



Jessica Holt volunteering at the Trinity Lutheran Community Meal.



Classes are two evenings a week during the first year.



Mattie Harrison working as a graduate fellow in the MFT on-site Couple and Family Therapy Center.

MFT SECOND-YEAR EXPERIENCE



During their second year, MFT students begin seeing clients in the Couple and Family Therapy Center, which serves individuals, couples and families from the surrounding community (but, because it is a training facility, no clients who are in crisis situations). Fellow students from the cohort act as co-therapists during the second year, forming a supportive environment for students seeing their first clients.



“Now that I’m in my second year, I have class one day a week. The faculty continue to challenge and empower students to stretch our thinking and go beyond the invisible mental and emotional boundaries to seek change.”

“We are able to see clients (individuals, couples and families) at the CFTC prior to our internships (second semester of second year), so we are able to apply our skills to working with real families in a secure environment that better prepares us to navigate situations such as crises, relational problems and mental illness.”

—Alanah Dillard



Alanah Dillard at her off-site internship at MultiCare Good Samaritan Hospital Behavioral Health.

INTERNSHIPS



OFF-CAMPUS INTERNSHIP SITES

PLU's MFT program partners with five local community health agencies and an AAMFT-approved supervisor at each site.

- Each has a long, established relationship with PLU and a successful history of working with our students.
- Students know what to expect and are often working alongside PLU alumni, allowing them to focus on developing their practice and not worrying about finding an internship placement.
- Placements are determined according to the interests of students and space availability.

MFT students may also volunteer at The Hoarding Project, a clinic that treats obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and related disorders.

LEARN MORE
WWW.PLU.EDU/MFT

Unlike many other programs that require students to find their own internship placements, the Marriage and Family Therapy program at PLU guarantees an internship placement at one of these five partnership agencies.

1. NEXUS YOUTH AND FAMILIES, AUBURN, WA

For therapists-in-training interested in working with children.

2. MULTICARE GOOD SAMARITAN HOSPITAL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, PUYALLUP, WA

Therapists-in-training work with a variety of clients in a setting that offers a unique opportunity to interact with the medical community.

3. GREATER LAKES MENTAL HEALTHCARE, LAKEWOOD WA

A large-agency experience with a special emphasis on systematic ideas. PLU interns work in Child and Family Services, where the clients are children and adolescents accompanied by other family members.

4. NAVOS, SEATTLE

Navos is one of the largest mental-health service providers in King County. Interns work primarily in the Child and Family Services Department with families from diverse cultures and ethnicities.

5. PUYALLUP TRIBAL HEALTH AUTHORITY, KWAWACHEE COUNSELING CENTER

Interns work in an environment that provides culturally rooted outpatient mental-health services utilizing a traditional holistic model of wellness.

OUR FACULTY



DAVID WARD

Program Director, Marriage and Family Therapy
Ph.D., Marriage and Family Therapy, Texas Tech University

Dr. Ward loves teaching and has presented at the national and local level on various topics, including his research on hope. His dissertation on Hope in Couples Therapy won the Dissertation of the Year Award from the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, and his work in this area is published in the April 2010 volume of the Journal of Marital and Family Therapy. He was honored in 2009 as the Educator of the Year by the Washington Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. Dr. Ward maintains a private practice, where he works with couples, families and individuals.



LINDSEY LAWSON

Assistant Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy
Ph.D., Marriage and Family Therapy, Loma Linda University

Dr. Lawson's experience includes nursing, medical family therapy and now teaching graduate students and directing PLU's Couple and Family Therapy Center. Her research interests include systemic approaches to healthcare, interdisciplinary training and collaboration, gender and power dynamics in couple relationships, and mentorship in education.



ELISABETH ESMIOL WILSON

Assistant Professor of Marriage and Family Therapy
Ph.D., Marriage and Family Therapy, Loma Linda University

Dr. Wilson's research interests include training and supervision issues, clinical interventions with families and couples, and the interaction between spirituality and relational well-being. She previously worked in the California Chino Valley School District, providing therapy to diverse children and families and with couples and families at the Behavioral Health Institute in Redlands, California. She primarily works from an experiential systemic perspective integrating larger contextual issues.

ABOUT OUR LOCATION

PLU's parklike campus is nestled in a wooded neighborhood seven miles south of downtown Tacoma. We're also right off the major Interstate 5 corridor, so the metropolitan hubs of Seattle, Tacoma and Olympia are easily accessible, along with must-see attractions such as Mount Rainier National Park; Tacoma's waterfront Point Defiance Park and Zoo; and hiking, biking and water activities.



PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

12180 Park Avenue South
Tacoma, WA 98447-0003

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253.535.8570 | gradadmission@plu.edu

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