

# Ohio's Child Welfare University Partnership Program

## 2024-25 Evaluation Report

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ohio Child Welfare University Partnership Program (UPP) was established in 2002 to provide Ohio's Public Children Services Agencies (PCSAs) with educated, trained, and experienced child welfare caseworkers. It is a unique and beneficial partnership among the Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY), twelve of Ohio's public and private university schools of social work, Ohio's University Consortium for Child and Adult Services (OUCCAS), the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO), and Ohio's 85 Public Children Service Agencies (PCSAs). OUCCAS's evaluation team used a mixed-methods research approach to understand the reach and impact of UPP in the 2024-2025 academic year.

During the 2024-25 school year, UPP enrolled 68 new students and graduated 56 students across the state. As of June 2025, the program has placed student interns in 75 (85.2%) different counties, and 69 (78.4%) different counties have hired UPP graduates, resulting in a combined impact in 80 (90.9%) counties.

Consistent with the past several years, supervisors rated recent UPP employees as more competent on a 5-point scale than recent non-UPP employees in the areas of 1) Entering data into Ohio SACWIS (3.9 vs. 2.5); 2) Thinking critically (3.9 vs. 2.7); 3) Ability to handle stress (3.7 vs. 2.7); 4) Conducting a safety assessment (3.3 vs. 2.3); 5) Conducting a family assessment (3.3 vs. 2.3); 6) Maintaining confidentiality (4.2 vs. 3.3); 7) Conducting a family case plan (3.2 vs. 2.3); 8) Conducting a safety plan (3.1 vs. 2.2); and 9) Engaging clients (3.7 vs. 3.1).

Most current students responded that they were "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" with UPP in eight areas: 1) Campus Coordinator (96.0%); 2) Field Experience (94.0%); 3) Coursework (92.0%); 4) Recruitment (88.0%); 5) Student Incentive (86.0%); 6) Seminar (82.0%); 7) Required Readings (82.0%); and 8) Employment Assistance (74.0%).

Campus coordinators reported high overall job satisfaction, with all eleven respondents (100.0%) agreeing with the statement, "I feel satisfied in my role as a campus coordinator."

This year, the UPP State Coordinator took a significant step forward by launching the UPP Advisory Board. This dynamic group is composed of UPP campus coordinators and knowledgeable county administrators. The Advisory Board is designed to serve as a vital link between the UPP program and the counties, fostering an environment of open dialogue and collaboration.

Several UPP universities began using course curricula based on the new Caseworker Core 2.0 training curriculum during the 2024-25 academic year. Those that did achieved exceptionally high fidelity to Core 2.0 across all three benchmarks: Core content equivalency (100.0%), independent learning (99.3%), and course assignments (95.0%).

Looking forward, opportunities for program improvement include: 1) Leveraging the UPP Advisory Board to Increase Program Reach and Access, 2) Aligning UPP Expansion with State Workforce Needs, 3) Continuing Advancement in Data Collection and Management, 4) Ensuring Completed Transition to Core 2.0 Curricula and Maintaining High Fidelity, 5) Increasing Marketing and Communication with Students, 6) Monitoring the Impact of the Experiential Learning Reimbursement, and 7) Considering Requiring Participation in Survey Data Collection.

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The University Partnership Program (UPP) is part of Ohio's commitment to improving outcomes for children and families by strengthening its child welfare workforce. It is a unique and beneficial partnership among the Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY), twelve of Ohio's public and private university schools of social work, Ohio's University Consortium for Child and Adult Services (OUCCAS), the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO), and Ohio's 85 Public Children Service Agencies (PCSAs).

The partnership has three primary purposes:

1. To identify future child welfare professionals and prepare them for entry-level positions in PCSAs.
2. To help professionalize the field of Child Welfare.
3. To reduce the time newly hired caseworkers spend on on-the-job training.

## Mission and Objectives

UPP provides PCSAs with a workforce of newly graduated individuals who have fieldwork experience and are trained in Ohio's mandated Core training. The program aims to positively impact the recruitment and retention of high-quality staff while reducing the time and expense associated with training new workers. The Partnership Committee agreed on the following mission statement to guide its work:

*The mission of the University Partnership Program is to develop creative child welfare leaders, policymakers, managers, and direct service practitioners who have the capacity for critical thinking, and to promote best practices and the highest quality service to children, families, and communities. The program accomplishes this through the coordinated and integrated provision of quality social work education and training.*

The program's objectives include four ways in which the program supports the public child welfare system:

1. Ensuring, in accordance with Section 5153.112 of the Ohio Revised Code, that all newly employed caseworkers without a waiver would have or achieve, within five years of employment, a degree in a job-related human services field.
2. Reducing staff turnover in public child welfare agencies.
3. Maximizing the use of resources for in-service training.
4. Creating career ladders and ongoing professional development.

The program was piloted starting in July 2002, with two universities participating. Over the next seven years, the number of participating universities grew to eight. Then, in 2022-23, four more universities began participating, bringing the total to 12 that currently have programs.

## **Program Structure and Roles**

All participating universities must offer two child welfare courses with the same content as the mandatory Caseworker Core training that is provided to all new child welfare caseworkers in Ohio. The child welfare courses are taught by instructors at each university. Course instructors may be the UPP campus coordinator or a professor in the university's social work department. UPP graduates who complete the child welfare coursework are eligible for a waiver for most of the Caseworker Core training courses, at the discretion of the PCSA director. This reduces training and onboarding time for UPP graduates hired at PCSAs.

Each university employs a dedicated campus coordinator. The campus coordinator is responsible for program management at the university, the education and training of students, the coordination of agencies and field instruction for the field placement experience, and employment coaching of students prior to graduation and hire. The position requires a master's degree in social work (MSW), a minimum licensure of Licensed Social

Worker (LSW) in Ohio, and at least five years of experience in child welfare or working with children and families. The responsibilities of UPP Program Management include:

- Recruitment, screening, and assessment of students' learning needs and professional interests in public child welfare.
- Selection and orientation of students to the University Partnership Program.
- Supportive/advising services to UPP students to evaluate individual education and job skill needs.
- Establishment and promotion of UPP partnerships with PCSAs.
- Participation in the Ohio Child Welfare Training Program (OCWTP) State University Partnership Program work teams.
- Compiling aggregate information on students' learning needs to enhance curriculum development, field-based education, and other program elements.
- Manage, monitor, track, report, and evaluate UPP activities as prescribed by DCY.
- Enter accurate and timely UPP student data into the learning management system for tracking and reporting purposes.

The responsibilities of Education and Training of Students include:

- Development of an individualized learning plan that identifies learning competencies.
- Establishment of an evaluation plan to determine each student's progress and success in mastering competencies.
- Providing instruction on the equivalent OCWTP Caseworker Core training within the delivery of two standardized child welfare (UPP) university courses.
- Offering a UPP seminar for UPP students to provide a transfer of learning between the classroom and field placement activities.
- Conducting regularly scheduled PCSA field placement site visits with students and field instructors each semester to evaluate students' progress, curriculum, field experiences, activities, and evaluation.

The responsibilities of Agencies and Field Instruction coordination include:

- Orienting and training PCSA field instructors to ensure high-quality university field education experiences.

- Coordinating field activities with classroom learning through consultation with PCSA field instructors.
- Providing consultation to PCSAs to ensure they are ready to successfully receive and prioritize students into employment in a direct client service or supervisory capacity upon graduation.
- Evaluating UPP students' progress and conducting individual meetings/conferences once per semester to discuss progress, experiences, positives/negatives, and concerns.
- Leading one regularly scheduled meeting per semester with field instructors to evaluate instructor experience, curriculum, field experiences, and activities.

Employment coaching responsibilities include:

- Supervising resume development, the employment application process, and providing hiring recommendations.
- Assisting UPP students with job preparation and job placement at graduation.
- Monitoring commitment to employment.

UPP students are placed at PCSAs for their university field placement. Bachelor of Science in Social Work (BSSW) students are required to participate in a field placement for 16 hours per week, while Master of Social Work (MSW) students are required to participate in a field placement for 24 hours per week. Each PCSA is responsible for providing an orientation to their agency and ensuring an appropriate workspace is available. Each student must be supervised by a social worker of a matched degree, i.e., BSSW student = BSSW degreed supervisor, MSW student = MSW degreed supervisor. The supervisor must complete the university field placement orientation, provide one hour of dedicated supervision per week, utilize the university-required learning agreement, arrange learning activities, meet with the campus coordinator once each semester, and attend university field placement instructor meetings once each semester.

Students are assigned to field instructors who provide guidance during their field placement experience and provide feedback to campus coordinators about their students' performance. These field instructors are typically supervisors at the county agency with the required degree.

Students in the program are required to complete two child welfare courses as part of their education, participate in a field placement at one of Ohio's PCSAs, gain employment at one

of Ohio's PCSAs within six months of graduation, and complete one or two years of employment at the PCSA (depending on the length of program commitment). Students receive a one-time incentive of \$5,000 upon hire in exchange for their commitment to the program. Students who complete a 2-year program (Junior/BSSW or BSSW/Master's) are instead eligible for a one-time incentive of \$10,000 upon hire. If a student fails to complete the required time commitment for employment at a PCSA, they must repay some or all of the incentive to UPP.

## **Transition to Core 2.0**

Per OUCCAS's contract deliverable to enhance and modernize statewide Caseworker Core training, the curricula were updated to Caseworker Core 2.0 (Core 2.0) in September 2023. During the 2024-25 school year, UPP began transitioning its course content to match the Core 2.0 curriculum. Five universities had completely updated their syllabi to reflect Core 2.0 content, while four universities continued to use course materials entirely based on Caseworker Core 1.0 (Core 1.0) as they continue to align their curricula with the revised training content. Two universities used a combination of Core 2.0 and Core 1.0 in their curricula. Three of the universities using Core 1.0 curricula had their UPP students complete the Core 2.0 self-directed trainings during their field placements. The remaining university had no active UPP students and therefore did not submit a syllabus.

# **METHODOLOGY, SAMPLES, AND DATA SOURCES**

Independent evaluators Kellana Hindert and Associates, LLC (KHA) conducted a mixed-methods evaluation, collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data.

## **Surveys**

From March through April 2025, KHA administered electronic surveys to currently enrolled UPP students, supervisors at county agencies, and campus coordinators. For this report, field instructors refer to the individuals who directly supervise UPP students during their field experience. In contrast, supervisors are employees at county agencies who manage caseworkers who are former UPP students. All stakeholders were emailed communications containing a survey link and received three reminders to complete the survey. KHA also sent bi-weekly status reports of survey completion, which the UPP Director used to encourage

participation from campus coordinators and students. KHA also attended select campus coordinator meetings to discuss the value of survey data collection and urged full participation. Supervisors were compensated with a \$25 Target electronic gift card for participating. Supervisors were identified by consulting campus coordinators, who sent survey links directly to all of their students on behalf of KHA. Stakeholders were surveyed on various topics, including their experiences with the program and the performance of new caseworkers in their jobs.

## CAPS LMS

The Child and Adult Protective Services Learning Management System (CAPS LMS) is a source of UPP student data spanning from a student's initial engagement with the program through their employment at an Ohio PCSA. The database contains various descriptive data, event data, and contact information. In 2023, UPP student data that had been stored in the UPP Database was transferred to CAPS LMS, and the UPP database was phased out. In 2024 and 2025, additional data fields were added to CAPS LMS to expand the types of data collected regarding UPP students and enable more robust future evaluations.

# CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

## Prior Year Recommendations and Program Actions

Each year, the evaluation team includes recommendations in its report for the program's consideration based on findings from that year's evaluation. The program, in response, creates a strategic plan to address some or all of the recommendations. (Table 1)

Table 1. FY24 Recommendations and FY25 Program Actions

Recommendations from the 2023-24 UPP Evaluation Report	Actions Taken by the Program during FY 2025
<b>Recommendation 1:</b> <b>Expansion of the University Partnership Program.</b> Child welfare workforce shortages and instability have been	Expansion of the University Partnership Program is on hold. The Department of Children and Youth is evaluating the need for expansion and will make decisions about expansion in the coming year.

<p>documented nationwide, and there continue to be severe shortages in caseworkers throughout the state. Expanding the program by recruiting additional universities would increase the pipeline of well-prepared, pre-trained, quality candidates for these positions.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b> <b>Strengthen and Streamline the Data-Entry Process.</b> As UPP data has transitioned from being recorded in the UPP Database to being recorded in CAPS LMS, technical difficulties in the data transfer process between Ohio SACWIS and CAPS LMS have produced errors and deletions, resulting in inconsistent data. Increased fidelity between Ohio SACWIS and CAPS LMS, along with adding key data fields in CAPS LMS, would improve data quality.</p>	<p>UPP has transitioned from the UPP Database to the CAPS LMS Database. Data fields have been added to collect more information on students' first- and second-year participation in the program that will enable expanded evaluation options in the future. Legacy data has been transferred and is currently being reviewed and cleaned. Ohio SACWIS reconciliation with CAPS LMS continues to create issues with duplicate records and inactive profiles. Inconsistent data continues, but efforts to review and correct issues are ongoing.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3: Monitor Similar Programs and</b></p>	<p>A review of similar programs has been ongoing. UPP recruitment dipped for the 2023-24 school year, partly due to</p>

<p><b>Consider Enhancements to UPP.</b> Given the similarities between UPP, The Ohio Child Protective Services Fellowship Program (OCPSFP), and the Great Minds Fellowship, UPP may benefit from comparing its own approaches and outcomes to those of the other programs once they release evaluation data. These comparisons may be used to reaffirm or modify UPP's strategies, including the incentive structure.</p>	<p>students opting to enroll in similar programs that include paid internship placements.</p> <p>In response, UPP has introduced an experiential learning reimbursement that is similar to paid placements. Beginning August 2025, UPP Bachelor students will receive a reimbursement of up to \$6,000, and UPP MSW students will receive up to \$12,000 for participating in UPP for one year. Increased recruitment is expected as a result. However, the limited funding for experiential learning reimbursement may constrain any increases in recruitment, as each school lacks sufficient funding to achieve its allotted number of students at the current reimbursement rate.</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 4: Consider Collaborating with Similar Programs.</b> Although the programs have different target demographics, the alignment between UPP's and the Ohio Child Protective Services Fellowship Program's goals suggests that these programs may benefit from coordinating their efforts and resources. Based on Campus Coordinator feedback, this may help ease the confusion and the atmosphere of competition around these programs as well</p>	<p>UPP has decided not to pursue collaboration with similar programs due to differences in target demographics and program experiences. UPP will use transparent marketing materials to help clarify program eligibility.</p>

as allow each of them to operate more efficiently, such as by assisting one another with recruitment.

## REACH AND ACCESS

This year, UPP enrolled 68 new students and graduated 56 students across eleven universities. Within that graduation cohort, 31 graduates (55.4%) were already employed at an Ohio PCSA, 23 (41.1%) were seeking employment or pursuing higher education, and two (3.6%) had exited the program as of June 13, 2025 (Table 2). One additional student who graduated from Ohio University in a previous cohort received an extension to their deadline to seek employment at a PCSA. They were still eligible to seek employment at a PCSA and receive their UPP incentive.

Table 2. UPP Student Enrollments and Graduates 2024-25\*

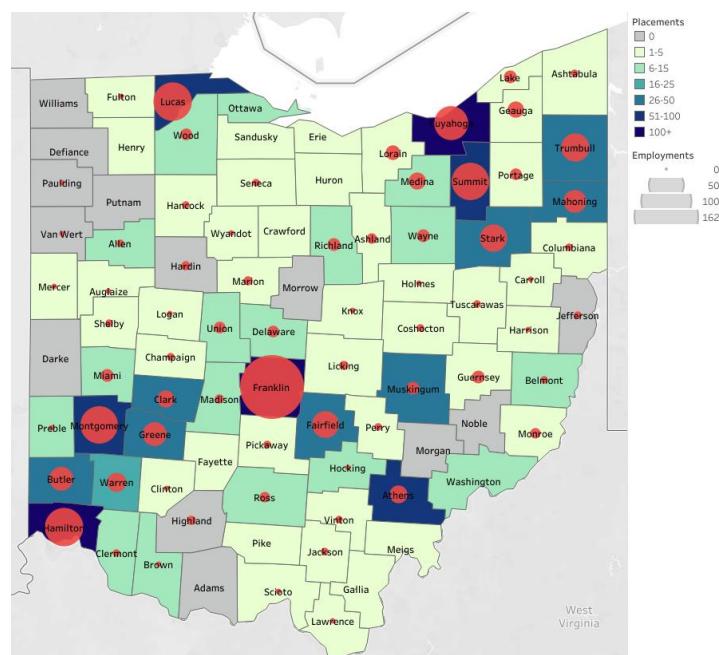
University Name	Number of New Students Enrolled	Number of Students Who Graduated	Number of Graduates Employed n (%)	Number of Graduates Seeking Employment or Pursuing Higher Education n (%)	Number of Graduates Who Exited UPP n (%)
<b>Bowling Green State University</b>	4	4	3 (75.0%)	1 (25.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Cleveland State</b>	8	3	1 (33.3%)	2 (66.7%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Miami University</b>	5	4	0 (0.0%)	4 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Ohio University</b>	10	9	5 (55.6%)	4 (44.4%)	0 (0.0%)

<b>The Ohio State University</b>	12	10	5 (50.0%)	5 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>University of Akron</b>	5	5	4 (80.0%)	1 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>University of Cincinnati</b>	11	7	3 (42.9%)	2 (28.6%)	2 (28.6%)
<b>University of Rio Grande</b>	2	0	0	0	0
<b>University of Toledo</b>	8	8	4 (50.0%)	4 (50.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Wright State University</b>	1	4	4 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Youngstown State University</b>	2	2	2 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
<b>Totals</b>	68	56	31 (55.4%)	23 (41.1%)	2 (3.6%)

\*Based on data reported in CAPS LMS as of June 13, 2025

Since 2004, UPP has reached 75 (85.2%) counties through student participation in internships and 69 (78.4%) counties through student employment at Ohio agencies (Figure 1, Table 3, and [Appendix A](#)) for a combined impact in 80 (90.9%) of Ohio's 88 counties.

Figure 1. UPP Placements and Employments by Ohio County since 2004\*



\* Based on data reported in CAPS LMS as of June 13, 2025

Table 3. UPP Placements and Employments by County since 2004\*

County	Placements	Employments
<b>Adams</b>	0	0
<b>Allen</b>	8	2
<b>Ashland</b>	3	4
<b>Ashtabula</b>	4	2
<b>Athens</b>	63	12
<b>Auglaize</b>	1	1
<b>Belmont</b>	11	2
<b>Brown</b>	6	1
<b>Butler</b>	45	22
<b>Carroll</b>	1	1
<b>Champaign</b>	4	2
<b>Clark</b>	26	11
<b>Clermont</b>	6	2
<b>Clinton</b>	1	1
<b>Columbiana</b>	2	2
<b>Coshocton</b>	2	2
<b>Crawford</b>	1	0
<b>Cuyahoga</b>	116	45
<b>Darke</b>	0	0
<b>Defiance</b>	0	0
<b>Delaware</b>	13	5
<b>Erie</b>	1	0
<b>Fairfield</b>	26	28
<b>Fayette</b>	2	0
<b>Franklin</b>	208	162
<b>Fulton</b>	2	1
<b>Gallia</b>	3	0
<b>Geauga</b>	2	10
<b>Greene</b>	29	22
<b>Guernsey</b>	4	6

<b>Hamilton</b>	101	60
<b>Hancock</b>	3	2
<b>Hardin</b>	0	3
<b>Harrison</b>	1	1
<b>Henry</b>	1	0
<b>Highland</b>	0	3
<b>Hocking</b>	10	1
<b>Holmes</b>	1	1
<b>Huron</b>	1	0
<b>Jackson</b>	2	2
<b>Jefferson</b>	0	2
<b>Knox</b>	2	1
<b>Lake</b>	5	6
<b>Lawrence<sup>†</sup></b>	2	1
<b>Licking</b>	2	3
<b>Logan</b>	2	1
<b>Lorain</b>	3	8
<b>Lucas</b>	97	58
<b>Madison</b>	6	3
<b>Mahoning</b>	40	20
<b>Marion</b>	4	3
<b>Medina</b>	13	11
<b>Meigs<sup>††</sup></b>	1	0
<b>Mercer</b>	1	1
<b>Miami</b>	10	6
<b>Monroe</b>	4	4
<b>Montgomery</b>	72	55
<b>Morgan</b>	0	0
<b>Morrow</b>	0	0
<b>Muskingum</b>	28	6
<b>Noble</b>	0	0
<b>Ottawa</b>	7	0

<b>Paulding</b>	0	1
<b>Perry</b>	4	2
<b>Pickaway<sup>††</sup></b>	1	2
<b>Pike</b>	1	0
<b>Portage</b>	5	5
<b>Preble</b>	6	1
<b>Putnam</b>	0	0
<b>Richland</b>	14	6
<b>Ross</b>	9	4
<b>Sandusky</b>	2	0
<b>Scioto</b>	5	1
<b>Seneca</b>	2	2
<b>Shelby</b>	5	2
<b>Stark</b>	36	29
<b>Summit</b>	74	55
<b>Trumbull</b>	36	31
<b>Tuscarawas</b>	1	2
<b>Union</b>	6	5
<b>Van Wert</b>	0	1
<b>Vinton</b>	5	2
<b>Warren</b>	21	14
<b>Washington</b>	10	0
<b>Wayne</b>	12	6
<b>Williams</b>	0	0
<b>Wood</b>	10	5
<b>Wyandot</b>	2	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	1276	785

\* Based on data reported in CAPS LMS as of June 13, 2025

<sup>†</sup>2024-25 was the first year that Lawrence County had a UPP employment.

<sup>††</sup>2024-25 was the first year that Meigs County and Pickaway County had a UPP placement

Table 4 displays county size categories taken from the 2022 Child Protection Oversight & Evaluation (CPOE) report (source: Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS)). Consistent with previous years, larger counties are more likely to have both hosted a UPP

student intern and hired a UPP graduate, while small counties lag behind in both categories. Although all (100.0%) large, metro, and major metro counties have hosted at least one student intern, and almost all medium (90.9%) and medium-small (92.9%) counties have done so, only 60.0% of small counties have had a UPP student placement. Similarly, only 52.0% of small counties have hired a UPP graduate, while rates are higher for medium-small counties (85.7%), medium counties (77.3%), and large, metro, and major metro counties (100%).

Table 4. Number and percentages of counties with at least one placement or employment by 2022 CPOE size

County Size	Total # of Counties in Ohio	# of Counties with at Least 1 Placement	% of Counties with at Least 1 Placement	# of Counties with at Least 1 Employment	% of Counties with at Least 1 Employment
<b>Small</b>	25	15	60.0%	13	52.0%
<b>Medium-Small</b>	14	13	92.9%	12	85.7%
<b>Medium</b>	22	20	90.9%	17	77.3%
<b>Large</b>	12	12	100.0%	12	100.0%
<b>Metro</b>	12	12	100.0%	12	100.0%
<b>Major Metro</b>	3	3	100.0%	3	100.0%
<b>All Counties</b>	88	75	85.2%	69	78.4%

## UPP GRADUATE ON-THE-JOB PERFORMANCE

The impact of UPP on the skills and competency of new employees is a critical measure of success with respect to the program's ability to prepare workers for entry-level positions. To assess these skills, the evaluation team sent surveys to 44 county agency supervisors (supervisors) ([Appendix B](#)), of whom 22 responded (50.0%). Supervisors who responded tended to be from larger counties, with half (50.0%) working in a major metro county and only two (9.1%) working in a medium-sized county or smaller (Table 5). Supervisors received a \$25 electronic Target gift card for their participation in the survey.

Table 5. County Supervisors by CPOE County Size

County Size	# of Supervisors
<b>Small</b>	0
<b>Medium-Small</b>	1
<b>Medium</b>	1
<b>Large</b>	6
<b>Metro</b>	3
<b>Major Metro</b>	11
<b>All Counties</b>	22

## Supervisor Skill Ratings

Supervisors provided skill ratings for the most recently hired employee who graduated from UPP (UPP employee) and for the most recently hired employee who had a 4-year degree but did not participate in UPP (non-UPP employee). Supervisors rated the skills competency of each employee on the following Likert scale:

- 1 - Poor, no evidence of skill; Not competent*
- 2 - Fair, lacks clear evidence of skill; Limited Competence*
- 3 - Good, some evidence of skill; Emerging Competence*
- 4 - Very Good, clear evidence of skill; Competent*
- 5 - Excellent, ample evidence of skill; Very Competent*

UPP employees were rated higher than non-UPP employees across all nine skills of interest (Table 6): 1) Entering data into Ohio SACWIS (3.9 vs. 2.5); 2) Thinking critically (3.9 vs. 2.7); 3) Ability to handle stress (3.7 vs. 2.7); 4) Conducting a safety assessment (3.3 vs. 2.3); 5) Conducting a family assessment (3.3 vs. 2.3); 6) Maintaining confidentiality (4.2 vs. 3.3); 7) Conducting a family case plan (3.2 vs. 2.3); 8) Conducting a safety plan (3.1 vs. 2.2); and 9) Engaging clients (3.7 vs. 3.1).

Supervisors consistently rated UPP employees as more competent than their non-UPP counterparts by a substantial margin, with each skill having an average rating differential of at least 0.6. Independent samples t-tests determined that these differences were statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) for all skills (see [Appendix C](#) for additional details on t-test results). The differences were greatest for “entering data into Ohio SACWIS” and “thinking critically”.

These results are consistent with previous years' evaluations, which have repeatedly demonstrated the benefits of UPP in terms of new employees' skills.

Table 6. Supervisor Ratings of UPP Employee and Non-UPP Employee Skills

Skill	UPP Employee Average Rating (n = 22)	Non-UPP Employee Average Rating (n = 18)	Average Rating Differential
<b>Entering data into Ohio SACWIS</b>	3.9	2.5	1.4*
<b>Thinking critically</b>	3.9	2.7	1.2*
<b>Ability to handle stress</b>	3.7	2.7	1.0*
<b>Conducting/Completing a Safety Assessment</b>	3.3	2.3	1.0*
<b>Conducting/Completing a Family Assessment</b>	3.3	2.3	1.0*
<b>Maintaining confidentiality</b>	4.2	3.3	0.9*
<b>Conducting/Completing a Family Case Plan</b>	3.2	2.3	0.9**
<b>Conducting/Completing a Safety Plan</b>	3.1	2.2	0.9*
<b>Engaging clients</b>	3.7	3.1	0.6*
<b>Average</b>	3.6	2.6	1.0*

\*p < 0.01, \*\*p < 0.05

## Other Supervisor Feedback on UPP and UPP Employees

When asked what else they would like to share about their role or the program, supervisors (n = 6) generally provided very positive feedback, with only a couple of constructive comments. Three supervisors highlighted the high quality of UPP students, describing them as impressive, independent, and enjoyable to have. One supervisor emphasized that their field liaison is especially helpful and supportive. Another called UPP as a whole "wonderful" because it allows students to complete Core and begin acquiring field experience before being hired. However, this person also noted that students are not considered "fully proficient" as caseworkers when they are hired, due to the limited hours of the internship.

Another supervisor said that students do not tend to get enough opportunities for learning when they are placed in a foster care/adoption unit.

## CURRENT UPP STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

The evaluation team sent a survey ([Appendix D](#)) to all current UPP students in order to gather their feedback on their overall experiences in UPP, their campus coordinators, and their plans for post-graduation. KHA received responses from 53 of 82\* students (64.6%), representing a mix of Bachelor's (73.6%) and Master's (26.4%) students (Table 7).

Table 7. UPP Student Survey Respondent Student Status

Student Status	n (%)
Senior	30 (56.6)
Master's	14 (26.4)
Junior	9 (17.0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>53 (100.0)</b>

\* Based on data reported in CAPS LMS as of June 13, 2025

### Overall UPP Experience

UPP students reported being generally very satisfied with their UPP experiences (Table 8). When asked to rate their satisfaction with each of eight program elements, most students responded that they were “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” in all eight areas: 1) Campus Coordinator (96.0%); 2) Field Experience (94.0%); 3) Coursework (92.0%); 4) Recruitment (88.0%); 5) Student Incentive (86.0%); 6) Seminar (82.0%); 7) Required Readings (82.0%); 8) Employment Assistance (74.0%).

Table 8. Current Student Satisfaction by Program Area

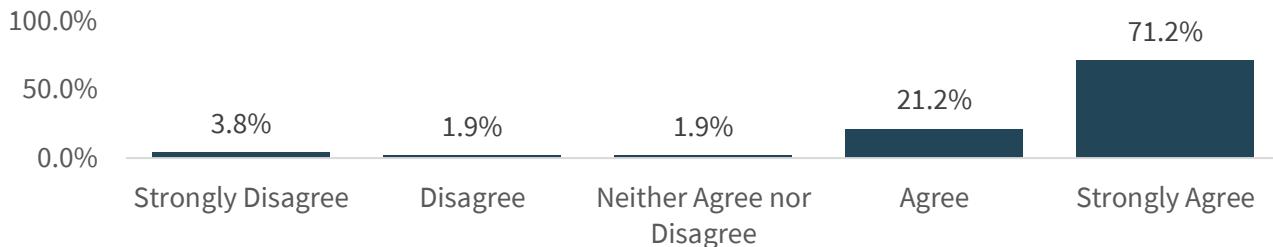
Program Area (n = 50)	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
<i>n (%)</i>					
<b>Campus Coordinator</b>	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)	1 (2.0)	17 (34.0)	31 (62.0)
<b>Field Experience</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (6.0)	20 (40.0)	27 (54.0)
<b>Coursework</b>	0 (0.0)	1 (2.0)	3 (6.0)	23 (46.0)	23 (46.0)
<b>Recruitment</b>	0 (0.0)	2 (4.0)	4 (8.0)	24 (48.0)	20 (40.0)
<b>Student Incentive</b>	1 (2.0)	3 (6.0)	3 (6.0)	20 (40.0)	23 (46.0)
<b>Seminar</b>	0 (0.0)	3 (6.0)	6 (12.0)	19 (38.0)	22 (44.0)
<b>Required Readings</b>	1 (2.0)	1 (2.0)	7 (14.0)	21 (42.0)	20 (40.0)
<b>Employment Assistance</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (26.0)	16 (32.0)	21 (42.0)

## Feedback on Campus Coordinators

Campus coordinators received exceptionally positive feedback from students. Almost all UPP students (92.4%) reported receiving adequate support from their campus coordinator, with only 5.8% responding that they did not (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Current Student Perception of Campus Coordinator Support (n = 52)

Please rate your agreement with the following statement: “I receive adequate support from my Campus Coordinator.”



The comments of thirty students about their campus coordinators closely mirrored the feedback above. Only two students made critical comments about their campus coordinator,

stating that they were unsure who their coordinator was, that their coordinator was unfriendly, and that they did not provide any proactive communication or support. Meanwhile, 28 students offered positive, often glowing, comments about their campus coordinators, calling them “phenomenal,” “great to work with,” and “passionate.” Twenty-one students described their coordinators as especially supportive or helpful, and 18 highlighted their knowledgeability and responsiveness to questions.

*“I receive an immense amount of help, and any questions I have are always answered clearly.” – UPP student*

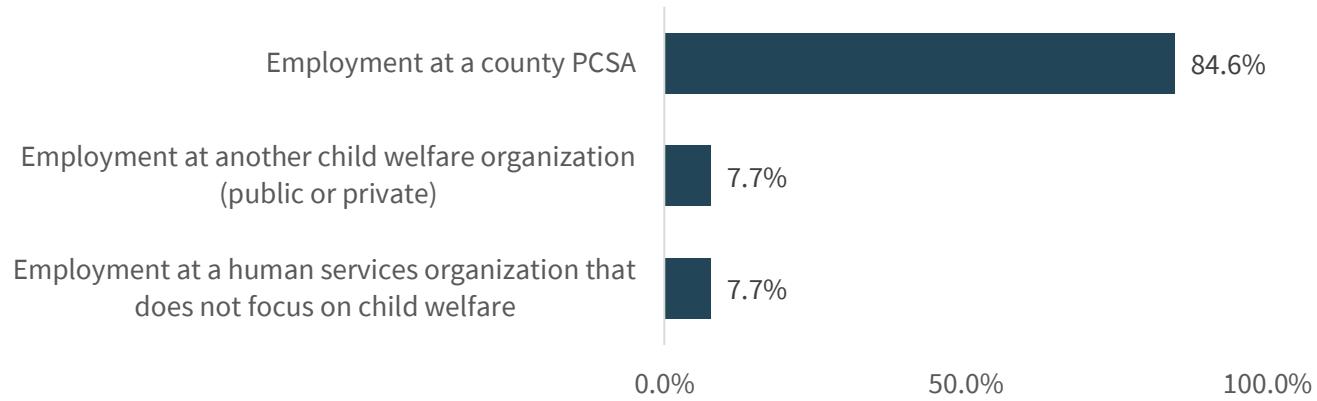
## Post-Graduation Plans

Thirty-one student respondents (62.0%; n = 50) reported that they would be graduating at the end of the Spring semester in 2025. As of data collection in March and April of 2025, 13 (41.9%) of those students had already accepted a job offer, while 18 (58.1%) had not.

Most of the students who had accepted a job offer (11; 84.6%) accepted it at a county PCSA (Figure 3). However, one of those students clarified that they were already employed there and intended to continue after graduation. Only two of the students who had accepted job offers (15.4%) did so at another type of child welfare or human services organization.

Figure 3. UPP Student Job Plans (n = 13)

Which of the following best describes the type of job you got?

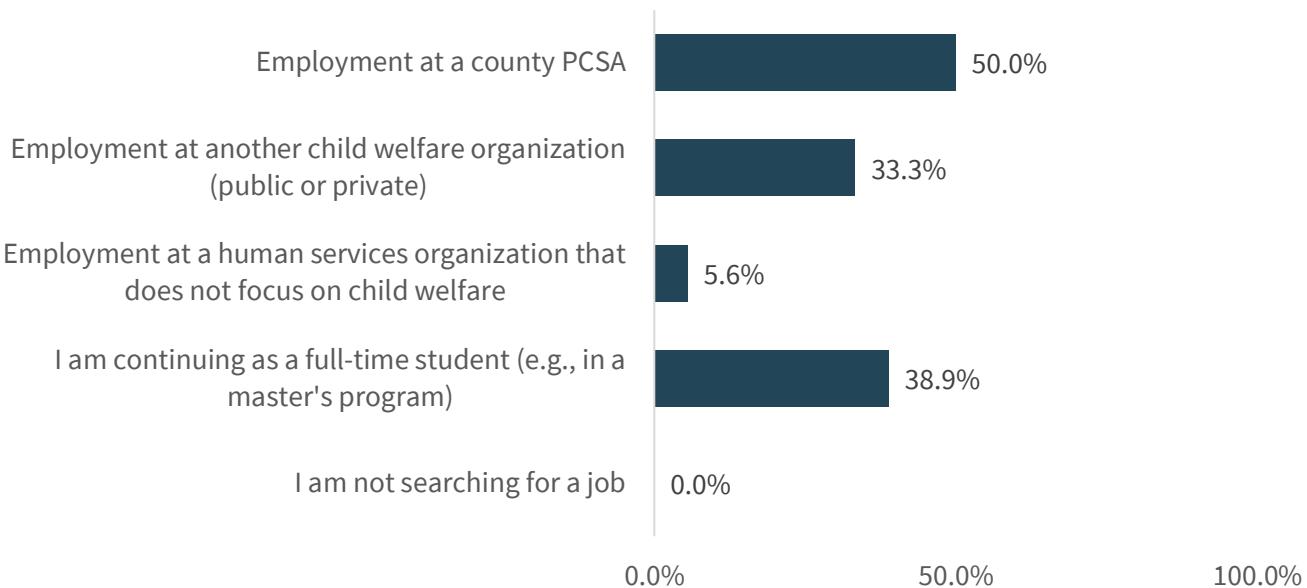


Intentions were more mixed among students who had not yet accepted a job offer (Figure 4). Only half (50.0%) of these students reported that they were pursuing a job at a county PCSA, while a third (33.3%) indicated that they are seeking employment at another child welfare organization. A substantial portion (38.9%) also said that they will be continuing as full-time students. Respondents were given the option to select multiple relevant answers,

but only five respondents did so. Notably, of those five students, four included “I am continuing as a full-time student” as one of their two responses, leaving only one student who was actively pursuing employment at two different types of organizations. The comparatively lower portion of students seeking employment at a PCSA (50.0%) compared to those who have already accepted a job at one (84.6%) could be a result of the fact that students who wish to stay at their internship site are disproportionately likely to have early, pre-graduation job offers and/or an expedited hiring process compared to students who must go through a traditional job search and hiring process.

Figure 4. UPP Student Post-Graduation Job Intentions (n = 18)

Which of the following best describes the type(s) of jobs you are looking for/applying for? (select all that apply)



It is difficult to draw firm conclusions given the number of students who had not yet finalized their post-graduation plans; however, these data suggest that UPP converts a substantial percentage of its graduating students into new employees at PCSAs, and an even higher percentage into child welfare workers more broadly.

## Other Feedback

Of the 18 students who responded to a request for miscellaneous feedback about UPP, ten provided generic praise for the program, saying it was “wonderful,” “worth it,” and enjoyable.

*“I really value and appreciate the UPP program as it will allow me to continue my career in child welfare.” – UPP student*

The remaining respondents provided both positive and constructive feedback on a diverse range of topics. Three students expressed gratitude for being able to participate in the program, and another three noted that the program prepared them well for a job in child welfare. One highlighted the utility of their internship, saying that it allowed them to “jump right into working at my internship site, following graduation.”

Two students made comments related to the financial impacts of UPP participation, explaining that they experienced substantial, unexpected expenses for gas, parking, and wear and tear on their cars during their internships. The students explained that these expenses, in addition to the lack of pay for the internship, caused significant financial strain.

*“If I had known the number of miles I would be driving in my own personal car and the countless parking fees paid out of pocket, I would not have participated in this program.” – UPP student*

Three students reported challenges related to their internship experiences. One noted that completing the internship before their senior year caused difficulties with getting hired upon graduation. Another said they were not provided with the necessary equipment or space at their internship site, despite being expected to take on the same responsibilities as a caseworker. The third student explained that the learning agreement that students must complete during their field placement does not align well with work in the child welfare field due to its focus on clinical social work.

Finally, two students expressed difficulty with getting information about UPP. One person said that the program's requirements were not made completely clear. The other suggested that the program should be advertised to potential applicants sooner. They described their own experience scrambling to apply after learning about the program in their junior year with an advisor who lacked sufficient knowledge about the program to answer their questions.

## CAMPUS COORDINATOR PROGRAM PERSPECTIVES

KHA surveyed UPP's campus coordinators ([Appendix E](#)) regarding their job satisfaction, student retention and recruitment, and general program feedback. Eleven of the twelve campus coordinators (91.7%) responded.

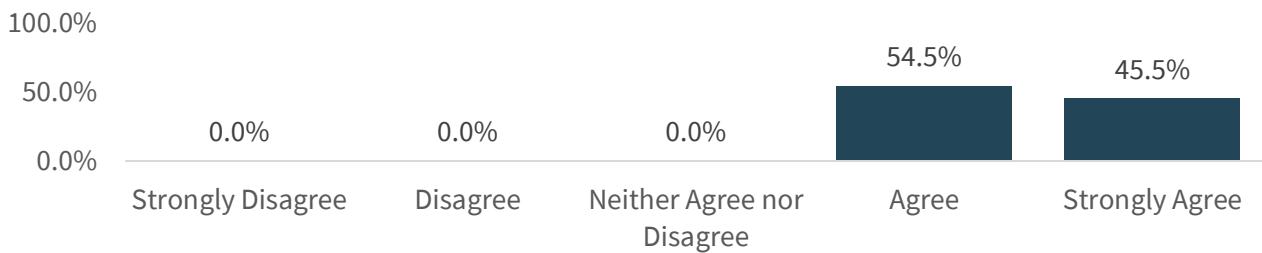
UPP welcomed four new universities to the program in 2022, and the campus coordinators for those universities began recruiting students in 2023. For the 2024-25 school year, all but one of the new universities had students active in the program.

## Job Satisfaction

Overall, campus coordinators reported high job satisfaction, with all eleven respondents (100.0%) agreeing with the statement, “I feel satisfied in my role as a campus coordinator” (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Satisfaction with Campus Coordinator Role ( $n = 11$ )

Please rate your agreement with the following statement: “I feel satisfied in my role as a campus coordinator.”



## Challenges

When asked what would help improve their job satisfaction and what other thoughts they have about UPP, six campus coordinators described facing challenges that make their jobs more difficult. Two campus coordinators addressed their salaries, with one stating that an increase would improve job satisfaction, and the other arguing that salary consistency across coordinators would achieve the same result. Another campus coordinator described having significant difficulty with recruitment, partly due to having a small pool of eligible students, students not having transportation, and students not wanting to commit to a two-semester internship. Another reported challenges with adapting the Core 2.0 learning materials to a college class stating that there were “a lot of discrepancies” in the materials. One campus coordinator also noted that CAPS LMS should be more organized. Finally, one campus coordinator said that more buy-in and support from the university and the local PCSAs would be helpful.

## Strengths

When asked about what would improve their job satisfaction and about what other thoughts they have about UPP, seven campus coordinators described program strengths. Five coordinators responded that they have received excellent support in their role, with three

specifically highlighting the support of the State Director of UPP, Linda Helm, two calling attention to their fellow campus coordinators, and one appreciating the support of the university. Four campus coordinators stated that they enjoy their work, particularly working with students. Two coordinators also highlighted the good work that the program does, calling it “essential” and something they “fully believe in.”

## **Student Retention and Recruitment**

Campus coordinators described several barriers to recruiting and retaining UPP students. The most common barrier, described by six campus coordinators, was insufficient monetary incentives, especially when compared to other programs. Coordinators noted that this has been an issue that has caused students to divert away from UPP during recruitment, after applications had been submitted, and after students had already begun UPP. Two campus coordinators also said they have had students leave because they realized the program was not a good fit. Two more said that the culture at the PCSA has been a deterrent. Another two have also seen students leave UPP because they dropped out of school entirely or had academic challenges. One reported that they have had students defer until after they get an MSW and never return to the program. Finally, one campus coordinator added that “the biggest issue [at their university] is the perceived or actual emotional toll on the student in the child welfare arena.”

## **UPP ADVISORY BOARD**

This year, the UPP State Coordinator took a significant step forward by launching the UPP Advisory Board. The Advisory Board is designed to serve as a vital link between the UPP program and the counties, fostering an environment of open dialogue and collaboration. This group is composed of UPP campus coordinators and knowledgeable county administrators, each bringing unique insights and expertise to the table.

The Board's overarching mission is to facilitate seamless communication, share critical information, and enhance county involvement, all while reinforcing the program's foundations and objectives. Convening on a quarterly basis, Board members engage in comprehensive discussions focused on pressing topics. Recent conversations have centered on strategies to better support field instructors, including developing targeted training and resources, as well as implementing initiatives to reduce barriers that prevent counties from hosting student interns, such as providing logistical assistance and funding opportunities. Additionally, the

Board is exploring best practices to improve hiring processes for UPP graduates, ensuring they transition smoothly into fulfilling careers. Additionally, the Board is committed to increasing outreach efforts to engage more counties in the UPP.

These collaborative efforts underscore a shared commitment to enriching the educational and professional experiences for both students and the families they serve.

## **CASEWORKER CORE 1.0 AND 2.0 CONTENT FIDELITY**

UPP leadership desired to understand the degree to which there is fidelity across UPP universities' child welfare courses to the OCWTP Caseworker Core.

### **UPP Transition to Core 2.0**

In September 2023, the Caseworker Core training curricula were updated to Caseworker Core 2.0, in accordance with OUCCAS's contract deliverables to enhance and modernize the training series. Since then, UPP has been working to align its course curricula with Core 2.0.

During the 2024-25 school year, five universities began using fully updated syllabi that reflect the transition to Core 2.0. Four universities are still working to implement the transition and continued to use curricula based on Core 1.0 during this school year. Two universities employed a combination of Core 2.0 and Core 1.0 curricula for their child welfare courses. One of those universities had updated only its CWI syllabus, and the other had updated only its CWII syllabus. The remaining university had no active UPP students and therefore did not submit any syllabi.

Due to the substantial differences between Core 1.0 and 2.0, KHA assessed each syllabus for its fidelity to the Core curriculum it intended to follow.

### **Master Syllabi**

The State Director of UPP develops and distributes master syllabi for CWI and CWII courses, which serve as a guide for universities participating in UPP. The State Director of UPP provided the evaluation team with four master syllabi for this evaluation: CWI and CWII for both Core 1.0 and 2.0. These are the standards against which the fidelity of each university's syllabus was assessed. However, it should be noted that the Core 2.0 master

syllabi omitted one of the self-directed training courses, titled Ethical Practice in Child Protection. Nonetheless, it was listed as part of a weekly topic in the master syllabus, and two of the seven universities' syllabi explicitly included this training anyway.

## Universities Using Core 1.0

Six UPP universities continued to use a curriculum based on Core 1.0 for at least one child welfare course during the 2024-'25 school year. Five universities used a syllabus based on Core 1.0 for CWI and five used it for CWII, with four universities using it for both courses. One university submitted separate BSSW and MSW syllabi. However, they contained no substantive differences relative to the assessment criteria, so the university was assessed only once, with the score reflecting the fidelity of both versions of the syllabus. Additionally, according to the State Director of UPP, three of these universities also had students complete the self-directed training courses from Core 2.0 on CAPS LMS during their field placement.

### Methodology

The evaluation team received CWI and/or CWII syllabi from the six universities using a Core 1.0 curriculum to assess their fidelity to Core 1.0. KHA evaluated fidelity by comparing universities' syllabi to the master syllabi with respect to the following dimensions, as identified by the Institute for Human Service (IHS)<sup>1</sup>, ODJFS, and UPP Coordinators in 2018<sup>2</sup>: Core content equivalency, reading assignments, and course assignments.

Core content equivalency was measured by examining the extent to which the weekly learning objectives from the master syllabus were included in each university syllabus. The same process was used for reading assignments and course assignments. Universities were given credit for including content even if a learning objective was presented during a different week or course, or if an objective was phrased slightly differently but ultimately represented the same information. The due dates and grade weights of course assignments were not taken into consideration.

### Benchmarks

The target benchmarks for Core 1.0 and universities' aggregate compliance with each benchmark are shown in Table 9 below. Overall compliance was calculated using the mean

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<sup>1</sup> IHS was the vendor for OCWTP prior to OUCCAS. The transition took place in 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Note: Previous fidelity evaluations also included assessment of the time spent on content. That assessment was not included this year due to a change in statute that removed the requirement for Core training to last a prescribed number of hours.

of the nine or ten total compliance scores for each benchmark across CWI and CWII syllabi. One CWII syllabus did not list the required readings for the course and was omitted from the compliance calculation for that benchmark. Across all benchmarks, there was an overall 78.9% fidelity to Caseworker Core 1.0 for universities that continued to base their curricula on it.

Table 9. Compliance with Core 1.0 Master Syllabus

Metric	Benchmarks	Child Welfare I Compliance	Child Welfare II Compliance	Overall Compliance
<b>Core Content Equivalency</b>	90.0%	86.7%	94.8%	90.8%
<b>Reading Assignments</b>	75.0%	64.9%	59.4%	62.5%
<b>Course Assignments</b>	75.0%	80.0%	86.7%	83.4%

### Core Content

The Core 1.0 master syllabi listed 146 weekly objectives (57 in CWI and 89 in CWII). UPP universities adhering to a Core 1.0 curriculum narrowly met the 90.0% benchmark for compliance with Core content equivalency benchmark in 2024-25, with an overall compliance score of 90.8% across CWI and CWII syllabi across all six universities. Weekly objectives that one or more universities excluded are listed below.

#### CWI

The weekly objectives excluded from CWI syllabi by one or more universities were:

1. Define child maltreatment
2. Outline the role of child welfare
3. Examine the intersection of social work and child welfare values
4. Learn about the University Partnership program
5. Identify child welfare resources
6. Define Evidence Based Practices (EBP) and the reasons we require evidence for intervention selection
7. Identify the resources that assist social workers in determining EBP
8. Define culture

9. Identify the intersection of cultural competence and disproportionality in the child welfare system
10. Define the legal definition of child maltreatment
11. Explain mandated reporting laws
12. Define neglect
13. Define emotional maltreatment
14. Define mandated reporting requirements and describe the responsibilities of social workers in this function
15. Analyze the use of screening guidelines in the interpretation of the Ohio Child Maltreatment Law
16. Define the investigation process of a child maltreatment referral
17. Analyze the use of silence in your work with clients
18. Analyze the skills required to complete an assessment
19. Define case planning
20. Discuss engaging families in the case planning process
21. Review the technology of case planning
22. Analyze reassessment and case review
23. Describe the caseworker's role and the casework relationship
24. Explain action planning

## CWII

The weekly objectives excluded from CWII syllabi by one or more universities were:

1. What is Social Work & Child Welfare?
2. Describe the concepts and principles of "normal" child development
3. Caseworker responsibilities to promote the healthy development of maltreated children
4. Clarify child maltreatment effects on brain development and attachment disorders
5. Learn strategies for promoting effective parenting
6. Learn the correlation between child maltreatment and developmental disabilities
7. Identify the prevalent types of developmental disabilities (focusing on those seen most frequently in child welfare practice, i.e., mental retardation, cerebral palsy, & epilepsy).  
Special problems: Fetal alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and (FAE) Effects; Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome; Failure to Thrive (FTT); Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

8. Define and describe a case plan
9. Write a Case Plan
10. Write behavior change statements as they would be written in Case Plans/Family Service Plans
11. Define Kinship care
12. Define Placement types
13. Define Post-placement plans
14. Define the issues related to reuniting families
15. Learn how to create and use Life Books for children in placement

### **Reading Assignments**

The Core 1.0 master syllabi required 206 reading assignments (103 in CWI and 106 in CWII). Universities' compliance with reading assignments (62.5%) fell short of the 75.0% benchmark by 12.5 percentage points. The lowest reading assignment compliance for any university was 31.1% for CWI and 26.4% for CWII. Two universities had 100.0% compliance for reading assignments.

### **Course Assignments**

The Core 1.0 master syllabi assigned 13 course assignments (7 in CWI and 6 in CWII). Universities using a Core 1.0 curriculum achieved fidelity to course assignments with a compliance score of 83.4%, easily surpassing the benchmark of 75.0%.

Three of the five universities (60.0%) assigned all seven CWI course assignments, and three of the five (60.0%) assigned all six CWII assignments. Two universities skipped some or all of the CWI quizzes, and one skipped the class discussion assignment. Three included additional CWI assignments. Two universities skipped one or two of the four quizzes in CWII, and three universities had additional CWII assignments.

### **Universities Using Core 2.0**

Seven universities began using updated curricula that reflect the transition to Core 2.0 during the 2024-25 school year. One of these universities used a Core 2.0 curriculum exclusively for CWI, and another used a Core 2.0 curriculum exclusively for CWII. All of these universities integrated the SDT from Core 2.0 into their schools' learning management systems rather than having students use CAPS LMS. Additionally, one university submitted separate BSSW and MSW syllabi. However, they contained no substantive differences

relative to the assessment criteria, so the university was assessed only once, with the score reflecting the fidelity of both versions of the syllabus.

### Methodology

The evaluation team requested CWI and CWII syllabi from the seven universities that used an updated Core 2.0 curriculum to assess their fidelity to Core 2.0. KHA evaluated fidelity by comparing universities' syllabi to the master syllabi with respect to the following dimensions<sup>3</sup>: Core content equivalency, independent learning, and course assignments. These dimensions were adapted from those identified by IHS, ODJFS, and UPP coordinators in 2018 for use in the Core 1.0 evaluation. This was done to account for changes to the structure and content of Core 2.0, including the shift to using SDTs. SDTs and the one remaining reading assignment were combined into the category of "independent learning."

Core content equivalency was measured by the number of ILTs from the master syllabus that were included in the university syllabus, as well as the number of weeks dedicated to each ILT. The dimension of independent learning reflects the combined percentage of the SDTs and reading assignments from the master syllabus that were assigned as homework in the university syllabus. The same process was used for course assignments. The due dates and grade weights of course assignments were not considered.

### Benchmarks

The target benchmarks for Core 2.0 and universities' aggregate compliance with each benchmark are shown in Table 10 below. Overall compliance was calculated by averaging the compliance score for CWI and CWII for each benchmark. Across all benchmarks, there was an overall 98.1% fidelity to Core 2.0 for universities that updated their curricula to mirror it.

Table 10. Compliance with Core 2.0 Master Syllabus

Metric	Benchmarks	Child Welfare I Compliance	Child Welfare II Compliance	Overall Compliance
<b>Core Content Equivalency</b>	90.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
<b>Independent Learning</b>	90.0%	98.5%	100.0%	99.3%

<sup>3</sup> Note: Previous fidelity evaluations also included assessment of the time spent on content. That assessment was not included this year due to a change in statute that removed the requirement for Core training to last a prescribed number of hours.

<b>Course Assignments</b>	75.0%	94.0%	96.0%	95.0%
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### **Core Content**

In the Core 2.0 master syllabi, 13 ILTs were taught over 26 weeks, with no more than one ILT per week (6 ILTs over 12 weeks in CWI and 7 ILTs over 14 weeks in CWII).

Universities using a Core 2.0-based curriculum aligned perfectly with the master syllabus regarding ILTs for CWI and CWII, giving them a 100.0% compliance score for the Core content equivalency benchmark.

### **Independent Learning**

The Core 2.0 master syllabi included only one reading assignment (1 in CWI and 0 in CWII). They also included 38 SDTs (27 in CWI and 11 in CWII). One university's syllabus did not list the SDTs required for its CWII course and was omitted from the calculation for this benchmark.

Universities were in near-perfect compliance with this benchmark, earning an overall compliance score of 99.3%. None of the syllabi excluded any SDTs from the master syllabus, and only two excluded the singular reading assignment.

### **Course Assignments**

The Core 2.0 master syllabi assigned seven course assignments (3 in CWI and 4 in CWII).

Universities achieved 95.0% compliance with the course assignments in the master syllabi based on Core 2.0. Only one university omitted any assignments, as it did not assign a grade for completing the SDTs in CWI or CWII. Instead, that university included grades for three quizzes. Another university included attendance as an additional assignment.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

These recommendations are influenced by feedback from students, campus coordinators, and supervisors. Key learnings from the evaluation support the following opportunities for action:

### **1. Leverage the UPP Advisory Board to Increase Program Reach and Access**

The Board may enhance its impact by developing specialized task forces within the group, each focusing on critical areas such as support for field instructors, innovative internship opportunities, better curriculum alignment with county employment needs,

and ensuring quality student experiences in their field placements. This approach will address existing challenges and ensure the program remains responsive and relevant. Additionally, the Board can raise awareness about the benefits of hosting interns and collaborating with UPP by organizing county-specific workshops and informational sessions, ultimately facilitating full statewide reach and access.

## **2. Align UPP Expansion with State Workforce Needs**

The program, in collaboration with DCY, should implement a strategic and targeted approach to significantly enhance both the reach and accessibility of UPP. By actively focusing on recruiting additional universities and expanding the annual recruitment allotment in counties facing the highest shortages of caseworkers, the program can effectively respond to and alleviate the pressing employment needs throughout the state. This dedicated effort will not only improve staffing levels but will also ensure that communities receive the critical support they require.

## **3. Continue Advancements in Data Collection and Management**

Through a cooperative effort, the program and the state have achieved notable advancements in data management this year. Nevertheless, there remain valuable opportunities for further enhancement that could significantly mitigate campus coordinators' reporting and data entry requirements, such as reducing the number of technical errors after data is entered. Such improvements would not only ensure the integrity and accuracy of the data but also facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of program outcomes, encompassing vital metrics like retention and promotion rates. By fine-tuning these processes, the program can foster more insightful and transparent reporting that benefits all stakeholders.

## **4. Ensure Completed Transition to Core 2.0 Curricula and Maintain High Fidelity**

The universities that have transitioned their curricula to align with Core 2.0 have done so with remarkably high fidelity to the master syllabi. Ensuring the remaining universities complete this transition will allow all UPP students to enter the workforce with the same foundational knowledge as other caseworkers. The program should continue working with these universities to ensure they maintain the same high degree of fidelity as universities already using Core 2.0. Additionally, the program should establish regular communication with OUCCAS's Family and Protective Services team to ensure UPP syllabi and other materials remain current with any

future updates to Core 2.0. Finally, the program should verify that all current syllabi accurately reflect the requirement that students complete the Ethical Practice in Child Protection SDT.

#### **5. Increase Marketing and Communication with Students**

The program should ensure that all potentially eligible students are receiving clear and comprehensive information about UPP early in their academic careers. This could include providing information to students in majors related to social work who may still have the time to change majors if they are sufficiently interested in the program. Information provided to students should clearly outline all the requirements, expectations, and timelines for UPP, and be transparent about potential costs to the student, as well as the benefits. Marketing messages should also emphasize the new experiential learning reimbursement.

#### **6. Monitor the Impact of the Experiential Learning Reimbursement**

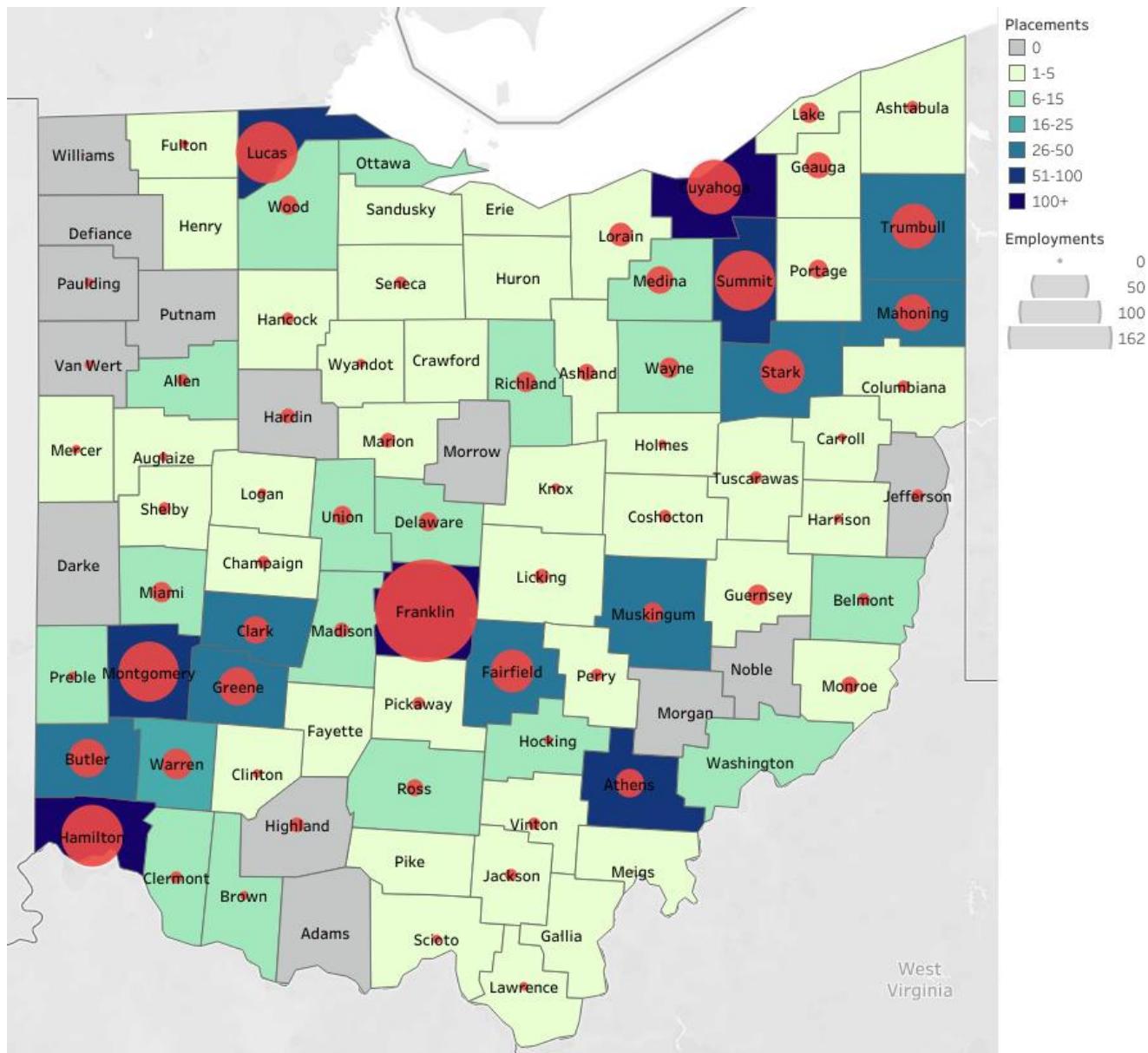
The program responded to student feedback about the costs associated with participating in the program and travel expenses by introducing a reimbursement for experiential learning. This reimbursement will begin in the 2025-26 academic year. The program should monitor the impact of this reimbursement to understand how it affects students' experiences, their progression through the program, and their transition into professional careers.

#### **7. Consider Requiring Participation in Survey Data Collection**

The program should assess both the benefits and potential challenges associated with mandating survey completion for current UPP students and campus coordinators. Increased response rates would enhance the reliability of outcome generalizations and subsequent program recommendations by ensuring comprehensive and representative data. However, it is essential to ensure that student anonymity is maintained to foster trust and confidentiality and that feedback remains objective.

# APPENDIX A

## UPP Placements and Employments by Ohio County since 2004\*†



\* Based on data reported in the CAPS LMS as of June 13, 2025

† An interactive version of this map can be accessed online [here](#).

# APPENDIX B

## UPP Supervisor Survey

1. In what county is your agency?
  - a. [Respondents were offered a dropdown list of all 88 Ohio counties.]
2. Upon hire, how competent was the most recent **UPP Graduate** in the selected areas of job responsibility?
  - a. Maintaining Confidentiality
  - b. Engaging Clients
  - c. Conducting/Completing a Safety Assessment
  - d. Conducting/Completing a Safety Plan
  - e. Conducting/Completing a Family Assessment
  - f. Conducting/Completing a Family Case Plan
  - g. Entering Data into Ohio SACWIS
  - h. Thinking Critically
  - i. Ability to Handle Stress
    - i. Poor, no evidence of skill, Not Competent
    - ii. Fair, lacks clear evidence of skill, Limited Competence
    - iii. Good, some evidence of skill, Emerging Competence
    - iv. Very Good, clear evidence of skill, Competent
    - v. Excellent, ample evidence of skill, Very Competent
3. Upon hire, how competent was the most recent **Non-UPP Graduate with a 4-year degree** in the selected areas of job responsibility? (This question is asking about a recent hire who had a 4-year degree when they were hired, but who was not part of UPP.)
  - a. Maintaining Confidentiality
  - b. Engaging Clients
  - c. Conducting/Completing a Safety Assessment
  - d. Conducting/Completing a Safety Plan
  - e. Conducting/Completing a Family Assessment
  - f. Conducting/Completing a Family Case Plan
  - g. Entering Data into Ohio SACWIS

- h. Thinking Critically
- i. Ability to Handle Stress
  - i. Poor, no evidence of skill, Not Competent
  - ii. Fair, lacks clear evidence of skill, Limited Competence
  - iii. Good, some evidence of skill, Emerging Competence
  - iv. Very Good, clear evidence of skill, Competent
  - v. Excellent, ample evidence of skill, Very Competent

4. What type of unit do you supervise?

- a. Intake
- b. Ongoing
- c. Intake & Ongoing
- d. Training
- e. Foster Care/Adoption/Kinship
- f. Other (please describe)

5. What is your race and/or ethnicity? (select all that apply)

- a. American Indian/Alaska Native
- b. Asian
- c. Black/African American
- d. Hispanic/Latino
- e. Middle Eastern/North African
- f. Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- g. White/Caucasian
- h. Another Race/Ethnicity (please describe)

6. What is your gender?

- a. Man
- b. Woman
- c. Another identity (please describe)

7. What is your highest level of education?

- a. BSW
- b. BA
- c. MSW

- d. MSSA
- e. MBA
- f. MEd
- g. MSEd
- h. Other degree (please describe)

8. What else should we know about your role or the program?
9. What email address would you like us to send your gift card to?

## APPENDIX C

### Results of Independent t-test Analysis Examining Supervisor Comparisons of Caseworker Skills

Independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare the supervisor skill ratings of UPP employees with those of non-UPP employees (Table 11). Ratings for UPP employees were significantly higher than non-UPP employees for all skills: 1) Entering data into Ohio SACWIS ( $M = 3.9, SD = 1.0$ ) vs. ( $M = 2.5, SD = 0.9$ );  $t(38) = 1.4, p = 0.0001$ ; 2) Thinking critically ( $M = 3.9, SD = 0.7$ ) vs. ( $M = 2.7, SD = 0.8$ );  $t(38) = 1.2, p = 0.0001$ ; 3) Ability to handle stress ( $M = 3.7, SD = 0.7$ ) vs. ( $M = 2.7, SD = 0.8$ );  $t(38) = 1.0, p = 0.0001$ ; 4) Conducting a safety assessment ( $M = 3.3, SD = 0.8$ ) vs. ( $M = 2.3, SD = 0.8$ );  $t(38) = 1.0, p = 0.0005$ ; 5) Conducting a family assessment ( $M = 3.3, SD = 0.8$ ) vs. ( $M = 2.3, SD = 0.9$ );  $t(38) = 1.0, p = 0.0005$ ; 6) Maintaining confidentiality ( $M = 4.2, SD = 0.6$ ) vs. ( $M = 3.3, SD = 0.8$ );  $t(38) = 0.9, p = 0.0002$ ; 7) Conducting a family case plan ( $M = 3.2, SD = 1.2$ ) vs. ( $M = 2.3, SD = 1.0$ );  $t(38) = 0.9, p = 0.0209$ ; 8) Conducting a safety plan ( $M = 3.1, SD = 0.8$ ) vs. ( $M = 2.2, SD = 0.9$ );  $t(38) = 0.9, p = 0.0009$ ; and 9) Engaging clients ( $M = 3.7, SD = 0.7$ ) vs. ( $M = 3.1, SD = 0.6$ );  $t(38) = 0.6, p = 0.0064$ .

Additionally, when scores were averaged across all nine skills, the difference between UPP employees and non-UPP employees was statistically significant ( $M = 3.6, SD = 0.4$ ) vs. ( $M = 2.6, SD = 0.4$ );  $t(16) = 5.5, p = 0.0001$  (Table 12).

Table 11. Results of Independent t-test Analysis Examining Supervisor Comparisons of Caseworker Skills

Skill	UPP Employees		Non-UPP Employees		<i>t</i> (38)	<i>p</i>	Hedge's <i>g</i>			
	(n = 22)		(n = 18)							
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>						
<b>Entering data into Ohio SACWIS</b>	3.9	1.0	2.5	0.9	1.4	0.0001	1.4636			
<b>Thinking critically</b>	3.9	0.7	2.7	0.8	1.2	0.0001	1.6077			
<b>Ability to handle stress</b>	3.7	0.7	2.7	0.8	1.0	0.0001	1.3398			
<b>Conducting/Completing a Safety Assessment</b>	3.3	0.8	2.3	0.8	1.0	0.0005	1.2500			
<b>Conducting/Completing a Family Assessment</b>	3.3	0.8	2.3	0.9	1.0	0.0005	1.1818			
<b>Maintaining confidentiality</b>	4.2	0.6	3.3	0.8	0.9	0.0002	1.2920			
<b>Conducting/Completing a Family Case Plan</b>	3.2	1.2	2.3	1.0	0.9	0.0209	0.8072			
<b>Conducting/Completing a Safety Plan</b>	3.1	0.8	2.2	0.9	0.9	0.0009	1.0636			
<b>Engaging clients</b>	3.7	0.7	3.1	0.6	0.6	0.0064	0.9130			

Table 12. Results of Independent t-test Analysis for the Average of Caseworker Skills

Skill	UPP Employees		Non-UPP Employees		<i>t</i> (16)	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
<b>Averages of All Nine Skills</b>	3.6	0.4	2.6	0.4	5.5	0.0001	1.4636

# APPENDIX D

## UPP Current Student Survey

1. What is your student status?
  - a. Junior
  - b. Senior
  - c. Master's
2. With what university are you affiliated?
  - a. Bowling Green State University
  - b. Central State University
  - c. Cleveland State University
  - d. Miami University
  - e. Ohio University
  - f. The Ohio State University
  - g. Rio Grande University
  - h. University of Akron
  - i. University of Cincinnati
  - j. University of Toledo
  - k. Wright State University
  - l. Youngstown University
3. Please select the option that corresponds with the following statement: "I receive adequate support from my Campus Coordinator."
  - a. Strongly Agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly Disagree
4. What other feedback do you have about your campus coordinator?
5. Please rate your overall satisfaction with your experience in the following categories:
  - a. Recruitment
  - b. Field Experience

- c. Coursework
- d. Required Readings
- e. Seminar
- f. Campus Coordinator
- g. Student Incentive
- h. Employment Assistance
  - i. Very Satisfied
  - ii. Satisfied
  - iii. Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
  - iv. Dissatisfied
  - v. Very Dissatisfied

6. Are you graduating at the end of the Spring semester of 2025?

- a. Yes [respondents will continue to question 7]
- b. No [respondents will skip to question 11]

7. Have you already accepted a job offer for after you graduate?

- a. Yes [respondents will continue to question 8]
- b. No [respondents will skip to question 10]

8. Which of the following best describes the type of job you got?

- a. Employment at a county PCSA
- b. Employment at another child welfare organization (public or private)
- c. Employment at a human services organization that does not focus on child welfare
- d. Other (please specify)

9. If you accepted a job at a human services organization that does not focus on child welfare, please tell us the name of the organization.

10. Which of the following best describes the type(s) of jobs you are looking for/applying for?

(select all that apply)

- a. Employment at a county PCSA
- b. Employment at another child welfare organization (public or private)
- c. Employment at a human services organization that does not focus on child welfare
- d. I am continuing as a full-time student (e.g., in a master's program)
- e. I am not searching for a job

f. Other (please specify)

11. Is there anything else we should know about your UPP experience?

# APPENDIX E

## UPP Campus Coordinator Survey

1. Please select your university affiliation.
  - a. Bowling Green State University
  - b. Central State University
  - c. Cleveland State University
  - d. Miami University
  - e. Ohio University
  - f. The Ohio State University
  - g. Rio Grande University
  - h. University of Akron
  - i. University of Cincinnati
  - j. University of Toledo
  - k. Wright State University
  - l. Youngstown University
2. Please rate your agreement with the following statement: “I feel satisfied in my role as a campus coordinator.”
  - a. Strongly Agree
  - b. Agree
  - c. Neither Agree nor Disagree
  - d. Disagree
  - e. Strongly Disagree
3. What suggestions do you have for improving your satisfaction in your role?
4. If you have had students leave UPP (or fail to be recruited for UPP), what made them decide not to pursue the program?
5. Is there anything else we should know about your role or UPP in general?