**COUNSELOR CHARACTERISTICS/CULTURAL WRITING SAMPLE M.A. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and**

**M.A. in Addictions Counseling Counseling**

**Ph.D. and Ed.D CES programs**

**Neukrug’s 8 Characteristics of an Effective Counselor (Neukrug, E. (2011) The World of the Counselor: An Introduction to the Counseling Profession). The School of Counseling at the University of the Cumberlands believes that the following eight characteristics are important aspects of professional counseling. Consider the descriptions of the eight characteristics listed below and use this template to** **provide a writing sample to be included with your application materials. Write your responses in this document directly below each item using space between the items. Do not limit your response to the space provided below the item. The space will expand as you discuss the item.**

**First: Criteria for the Writing Sample**

Construct a 1500-2500 word writing sample answering the following questions about these 8 characteristics:

**Second: Self Review of the Characteristics**

Rate yourself on the degree to which you possess each of these 8 characteristics on a scale of 1-10, with 1,2,3 representing a low amount of this characteristic, 4,5,6,7 representing a moderate amount of this characteristic, and 8,9,10 representing a high amount of this characteristic.

1. Begin this paper with a brief introductory, biographical paragraph telling the admissions committee something about yourself and your culture (e.g. where did you grow up, describe the diversity of your and your family’s friends, discuss the positives and negatives of your cultural background, and discuss what groups of people you believe you would find the most challenging to work with as a counselor).
2. Give yourself a numerical rating in each of the eight areas and provide concrete examples from your life on two of Neukrug’s eight Characteristics listed below that represent your strengths. Then pick two of Neukrug’s eight Characteristics listed below that you might be able to improve, and state what you could do and how do you think the program, classes, and faculty could help you improve in these areas? This may be part of a personal growth plan for improvement over the course of the program.
3. In your discussion of items 4 and 5 of Neukrug’s 8 Characteristics listed below (Acceptance and Open-Mindedness), explaining how you are continuing to improve in your ability to regard all people unconditionally and reduce your preconceptions, stereotypes, and prejudices regarding issues involving race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, cultural heritage, etc. This may be part of a personal growth plan for improvement over the course of the program.
4. Introductory biography begins here. >

**Neukrug’s 8 Characteristics of an Effective Counselor:**

1. Relationship Building (ability to build rapport and trust with a client)

1. Empathy (ability to understand a client’s feelings and world)
2. Genuineness (ability to be authentic and monitor one’s emotions)

4. Acceptance (ability to regard all people unconditionally despite differences in race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, cultural heritage, etc.)

5. Open Mindedness (ability to reduce and work toward being free from preconceptions, stereotypes, and prejudices regarding issues involving race, religion, sexual orientation, disability, cultural heritage, etc.)

6. Cognitive Complexity (ability to be self aware and receive feedback)

7. Psychological Adjustment (ability to work on your own psychological issues so they do not negatively impact your role as a counselor)

8. Competence (ability to maintain competence through lifelong learning)

One additional question. Write a paragraph long (about one quarter of a page) giving your interpretation of the following statement. “***Belief is too often the death of reason***.” Begin that here. >

**Scoring Rubric for Counselor Characteristics/Cultural Writing Sample**

Follow the guidelines outlined in this scoring rubric for a successful writing sample.

**Satisfactory Writing Sample**

A Satisfactory writing sample indicates that the student:

* gave complete responses to all aspects of the writing requirement;
* responses on the eight characteristics appear to be a fit for the counseling program and profession;
* responses provide adequate clarity in written expression;
* responses consistently used correct punctuation and were grammatically correct;
* the overall writing sample is at least at the beginning graduate level.