OSU counseling program aims toward accreditation

By Rebecca Mugler
Lantern staff writer

Faculty and graduate students from the Department of Education Human Services and Resources are taking the first steps toward receiving accreditation for their counseling program.

An informal group met Wednesday to hear from a consultant who has been hired to help the program reach that goal.

Mike Altekruse, president-elect of the Association for Counselor Education, told about 20 people from the department that accreditation adds prestige to a program. He also said within the next ten years, the graduates of unaccredited counseling programs will have difficulty finding jobs.

Barbara Roidl, a graduate student in the counseling program, said the program, which is within the Department of Education, trains school, mental health and employee assistance counselors.

Altekruse said the standards for accreditation can be very tough. He said only 20 doctoral programs and 52 masters programs are accredited in the United States.

Altekruse was hired on an informal basis to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the current counseling program according to the standards of the Council for Accreditation and Related Educational Programs.

Susan Sears, associate professor of human services education, said the department has already been accredited by the National Counsel for Accreditation of Teacher Education, but the accreditation body has not been certified.

The counseling program at Ohio State is trying to qualify for accreditation from the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs Sears said.

“We are seeking accreditation from the most prestigious of accrediting bodies for counselor education programs in the United States,” she said.

Altekruse said the accreditation bodies are evaluated by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation. He said currently only two organizations exist that have been certified to accredit counseling programs.

He said most universities seeking accreditation hire consultants from outside the institution to evaluate their program before beginning the formal process.

James Wigtil, professor of human services education, said the purpose of the informal consultation was to give them an indication of what the council expected.

Wigtil said this process involves the actual documentation of everything the department is doing to strengthen areas of the program that are not up to the council’s standards.

“I’m here to help them organize for the self-study process,” Altekruse said.

Wigtil said hopefully they will be ready to begin the self-study process by next fall. He said it should take six to eight months to complete the report before submitting it for review.