

### **Clarification on reported information**

1. Can you clarify what will happen to the program over the next two years? Will students already enrolled in the program shift to a virtual/hybrid model? Or will it remain an in-person program through 2028?

Students who are admitted to the Wichita program for fall 2026 will complete the program in an in-person format. Students admitted to the program in future years will most likely complete the program in a hybrid format, assuming that the program receives the appropriate approval from its professional accreditor to move to a hybrid format.

2. Can you clarify what will happen to the MFT program after the fall 2026 cohort graduates? KAKE News reports that the program will “move to Kansas City” following their graduation in 2028. Does that mean there will still be a virtual/hybrid option for the MFT program for students based in Wichita? Or would they have to attend class at the Kansas City campus to enroll in the program?

The program will move to a hybrid format and recruit students from across the region. The program will include two in-person residencies. We are exploring the possibility of holding these in Kansas City. Wichita may also be an option depending on the composition of the cohort.

3. What will the virtual/hybrid model look like? How will coursework be divided between in-person and online?

The hybrid program will consist primarily of online instruction supplemented by the two in-person residency experiences described above.

4. Can you provide the statement you gave KAKE?

The Friends University Marriage and Family Therapy program is continuing. However, due to shifting enrollment trends and market demand for online and hybrid delivery options, the Friends University Wichita and Kansas City Marriage and Family Therapy programs will be combining resources to provide a hybrid program for students. Over the next two years the MFT Faculty will be working together to ensure the excellence of the program continues, and to position the program to draw students regionally. Internships will be offered in a variety of local settings including the Center

on Family Living Clinic at Friends University, and the program will remain accredited by COMAFTE.

5. Can you provide any mass communications you sent to students, staff, faculty or alumni on this topic?

There have been no mass communications, because there are still a number of details we are working to finalize. The current MFT program director and division chair, Dr. Chris Habben, sent a personal email to students, faculty, and staff discussing his desire to move away from an administrative role after 25 years as a program director and to return to teaching. In the email, Dr. Habben also briefly described the other changes to the program.

6. In March 2026, the university announced that it had received nearly a million dollars in program support, including stipends for MFT students.
- a. How is that money being used to support MFT students?

A committee allocated the funds to provide stipends to MFT students. The stipends provide support to students while they are completing their clinical placements, as the time commitment for both course work and clinical work makes it difficult for students to maintain employment during that phase of the program.

- b. How many years will that funding last?

The funding will be available through the 2027-2028 academic year.

#### **Info that factored into decision to consolidate/relocate MFT program**

7. How many students are currently enrolled in the MFT program at Friends?

There are currently 122 students enrolled in the program at both locations (Wichita and Kansas City). We are projecting there will be 70-75 students enrolled next year.

8. Can you provide enrollment data for the program from the past 5 years, or even 10?

In 2021 we enrolled 67 new students total at both sites. In 2025 we enrolled 46 new students. We project there will be fewer than 40 new students who enroll for Fall of 2026.

Our enrollment dropped significantly in Fall 2025 and is likely to be even lower in Fall 2026. This drop coincides with a change in Kansas licensing regulations that allows individuals who have graduated from online programs to apply for licensure. This is the primary reason we are planning to move to a hybrid format. We believe this change in delivery format will enable Friends University to continue to provide a significant number of well-trained mental health professionals who can serve their local communities.

9. What are some of the specific “emerging market realities” that factored into this decision?

A change in Kansas licensing regulations allows individuals who have graduated from online programs to apply for licensure. This means that our program, which has always been a face-to-face program, has faced increased competition from online programs. The licensing regulation change has also led to local universities launching new online programs that have further increased the competition our programs face. This is the primary reason we are planning to move to a hybrid format.

10. What will happen to faculty members in the MFT program in Wichita?

- a. Will they eventually be offered to relocate to KC?

Because the program will be primarily online, no one would need to physically relocate. The faculty can teach most courses remotely.

- b. Will anyone be laid off in the process?

We plan to preserve all current positions. However, as with all of our programs, our staffing ratios depend on the number of students in the program.

### **Addressing community concerns/rumors**

11. Are there any plans to replace the MFT program with another graduate-level therapy program of any kind?

There are no plans to replace the MFT program. The university is introducing an addictions counseling track within our undergraduate

psychology program. This new track will prepare students for licensure as addiction counselors.

- a. Some have also suggested that the university plans to develop a Christian counseling program in place of the MFT program. Can you provide any clarification on that?

As per above, there are no plans to replace the MFT program.

12. Will this impact the availability of MFT students/interns/graduates for local clinics and agencies like COMCARE? (Particularly after the fall 2026 cohort graduates)

We hope the new hybrid format of the program will allow us to increase enrollment, which will provide additional support for community agencies.

13. What steps will be taken to ensure the program retains its rigor and quality, even as it transitions to a virtual/hybrid model?

The program's professional accreditation with the Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) ensures that the program will maintain its quality and rigor.

14. Some in the community have suggested that the decision to relocate/consolidate the MFT program stems from an administrative desire to align course offerings with the university's Christian mission. Is there any truth to that? What is your response to those rumors?

Friends University is a Christian university and we integrate faith in our curriculum and cocurricular activities. However, this is a secular program.