



EXEMPLAR

Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International

Servant Leadership



Eta – Youngstown State University Chapter



Sigma Alpha Chi –
University of Texas-San Antonio Chapter



Eta Beta Gamma Omega -
Hazelden Betty Ford Graduate School-Online Chapter



Alpha Omega – University of Toledo Chapter

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Chi Sigma Iota Headquarters Update

by Dr. Holly J. Hartwig Moorhead

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Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International celebrated its 40th anniversary during the past 2025-26 year and begins the new 2026-27 year continuing to further our shared mission to promote scholarship, research, professionalism, leadership, advocacy, and excellence in counseling, and to recognize high attainment in the pursuit of academic and clinical excellence in the profession of counseling.



Closing out the 2025-26 year, CSI chartered seven new chapters.

Sigma Upsilon Eta - Stockton University Chapter
Eta Beta Gamma Omega - Hazelden Betty Ford Graduate School-Online Chapter
Chi Iota Upsilon - Columbia International University Chapter
Omega Mu Omega - College of William & Mary-Online Chapter
Nu Phi - SUNY-New Paltz Chapter
Sigma Alpha Nu - Texas A&M University-San Antonio Chapter
Tau Omicron - Touro University Chapter

These six chapters were reactivated as well.

Alpha Xi - University of Oklahoma Chapter
Omega Upsilon - West Virginia University Chapter
Lambda Rho Upsilon - Lenoir-Rhyne University-Asheville Chapter
Lambda Rho Chi - Lenoir-Rhyne University-Hickory Chapter
Alpha Tau Chi - The Citadel Chapter
Omega Mu - College of William & Mary Chapter



Through some of the 466 chapters that CSI has chartered since the Society was chartered in 1985, CSI welcomed 8,459 new members last year, including students, practitioners, and faculty, bringing the total to 183,437 Counselors who have become initiated members. In the 2025-26 Spring Annual Reports submitted, chapters reported that their members devoted approximately 24,000 service hours in their communities.

CSI closed out another year in solid financial shape, surpassing budgeted income projections and keeping expenses below budget. While CSI has not increased member dues since 2012, the Society has continued to increase funding for many types of member and chapter support. This includes issuing \$106,000 in Earned Chapter Rebates (\$10 for every active member) to 70% of active CSI chapters to support counselor education. Additionally, CSI continued funding Excellence in Counseling Research Grants, Chapter Grants, Statewide/Regional Networking Grants, Leadership Fellows and Interns (LFIs), and funded awards to recognize excellence in Counseling.

CSI moves into the new 2026-27 year with a strong and stable foundation of resources, committed members, and focus on mission. In June 2026, the Executive Council, joined by this year's interns and the Exemplar Editor, convened for the annual summer meeting to plan for the coming year.

As the summer has progressed, hundreds of leaders within CSI's Executive Council, publication editors, and members of CSI committees and review panels have been diligently preparing resources, programs, and supports for another year of meaningful work led by CSI members and chapters.



2026-27 CSI Executive Council Summer Meeting



As we appreciate the many dedicated volunteers who continue their valued service across many groups and projects, we also warmly welcome leaders transitioning into new roles, including Dr. Hannah Carter, who is serving as co-chair of the Awards Committee (alongside Dr. Joe Campbell, who continues to serve). Dr. Allison Arnekrans, who is chairing the CFA Committee. Dr. Katherine McVay is serving as co-chair (alongside Dr. Derron Hilts, who continues to serve) of the Excellence in Counseling Research Grants Committee, and Dr. Mary Wynn is chairing the Wellness Counseling Practice and Research Committee.

We also thank Dr. Jillian Blueford for serving as the incoming Exemplar Editor and Dr. Olivia Ngadjui as the incoming Counselors' Bookshelf Editor. More information about leadership within CSI's committees, review panels, and publications can be found within the online CSI [Directory of Leaders](#).

The work of so many volunteers will be seen across numerous programs and initiatives this year, including professional development resources, service collaborations, advocacy engagements, and member and chapter funding opportunities. Watch CSI's social networking sites for announcements on details for all upcoming events! ([Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [X](#))

Several committees, including the Excellence in Counseling Research Grants Committee, Wellness Counseling Practice and Research Committee, Professional Members Committee, and the Leadership and Professional Advocacy Committee, are preparing a number of webinars that will focus on a broad range of valuable, practical topics, including supporting Counseling research and supporting professional Counselor wellness. Visit CSI's [Upcoming Webinars webpage](#) to register and earn free CE by attending (or viewing) CSI webinars. Also check out webinars already offered this year, including [Everyday Ethics: Recognizing and Preventing Common Counselor Violations](#), a collaboration with CSI, the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES).

CSI is committed to continuing to provide financial support for members and chapters...and wants to see you and your chapter apply for awards and grants! The Executive Council approved increased funding for more Chapter Grants and expanded opportunities for 2-year (vs. 1-year) Excellence in Counseling Research Grants. Mark your calendar for [September 1, 2026](#), when CSI will begin accepting nominations for [Individual and Chapter award nominations](#), [LFI program applications](#), [Chapter Development and State/Regional Networking grant applications](#), and [Excellence in Counseling Research grant proposals](#).



In addition to providing funds to members, CSI also wants to help members save. Don't forget to utilize your CSI member discount for Taylor & Francis texts (available in your [CSI Member Profile](#)). CSI is also collaborating with NBCC and ACES to offer discounts and additional [liability insurance](#) options for Counselors and Counseling Students.

Explore chapter resources like [CSI's Speaker Assistance Program](#) and [Earned Chapter Rebates Program](#). CSI wants every chapter to earn a rebate during the 2026-27 year, so look for reminders throughout the year about these requirements to [Maintain an Active CSI Chapter](#) and pay special attention to these updated requirements that must be met every year (changing from every other year, etc.).

- [Submit a Fall Annual Plan between August 1st and September 30th](#) (incoming officers) every year.
- [Submit a Spring Annual Report between March 1st and April 30th](#) (present officers) every year.
- Invite and [initiate](#) new members at least once every fiscal year (May 1st-April 30th) consistent with [CSI's procedures](#) for CFA-approval (or CFA-decline) of new members and submission of initiation dates at least three weeks prior to an initiation.
- Have a chapter delegate's attendance recorded at the [CSI Day's Annual Delegate Business Meeting](#) at least once every three years.
- Comply with CSI policies as determined by the Executive Council (e.g., only authorized uses of the CSI registered logo; active CSI membership of CFAs; required number of approved CFAs serving who are active CSI members).
- Send CSI Headquarters contact information of officers when there are changes.
- Have the required number of approved CFAs (Primary and Secondary CFA) on record for the chapter. A CFA must have completed at least one year as an active (current) CSI member (at any time) and remain an active member during CFA service as required by [Article 9 of the CSI Bylaws](#). Chapters must submit the [online CFA Change Form](#) to have new CFAs approved, CFAs updated, etc.

Make plans to connect too! Read about [2026-27 CSI Days events](#) outlined in the article authored by Dr. Devon Romero, President-Elect, in this issue. Since CSI Days will be hosted online this year, October 19-23, 2026, every chapter can easily fulfill the requirement to have a chapter delegate attend the [CSI Annual Delegate Business Meeting](#) (required at least once every three years) and connect with other members, chapter leaders, and CFAs for Poster Sessions, CFA Training, and Chapter Leader Training throughout the week. Chapter delegates can [register](#) now for the business meeting, as well as access minutes from the 2025-26 Annual Delegate Business Meeting.

Thank you for being part of CSI's vibrant, productive, generous, and growing community. Share your [chapter highlights](#) as fall begins. We look forward to celebrating excellence together, strengthening our connections, and welcoming new members to our community in the months to come!



Join Chi Sigma Iota for CSI Days 2026-2027

by Dr. Devon E. Romero

CSI President-Elect

Sigma Alpha Chi Chapter, University of Texas at San Antonio



With fall approaching, we are looking ahead to 2026-27 CSI Days, taking place virtually **October 19-23, 2026**.

Throughout the week, members will have opportunities to participate in chapter leader and CFA trainings, virtual poster sessions, webinars, and the Annual Delegate Business Meeting. Building on the rotating format adopted in recent years, CSI alternates between in-person and virtual CSI Days to balance the benefits of face-to-face connection with the accessibility and flexibility of online engagement.

This year's virtual format makes it easier than ever to participate, regardless of where you are geographically or professionally. Whether you are a student beginning your counseling journey, a Chapter Faculty Advisor supporting a chapter, or a professional counselor serving clients and communities, you will find meaningful opportunities to connect, learn, and engage with the broader CSI community.

What to Expect

Virtual CSI Days offer a week of opportunities for members to learn, connect, and contribute across the many areas of CSI's work. Chapter Faculty Advisors and chapter leaders will have opportunities to strengthen their chapter support and leadership skills, while students, professional counselors, counselor educators, and other members can engage with professional development, scholarship, advocacy, and conversations about the future of counseling.

The full CSI Days schedule is still taking shape. Detailed information about each event, including presenters, topics, and registration, will be posted on the CSI Professional Development webpage (https://www.csi-net.org/page/professional_development) as it becomes available. Attendees must register for each day they plan to attend, and registration is opening soon! The current event lineup includes:

Chapter Faculty Advisor Training

Wednesday, October 21, 2026 1:00 - 2:30 PM EDT

Designed for Chapter Faculty Advisors, this training will provide practical information, resources, and support to help advisors strengthen their chapters and promote long-term chapter success. This 90-minute session includes dedicated time for questions and discussion.



Chapter Leader Training

Wednesday, October 21, 2026 3:00 - 4:30 PM EDT

Designed for CSI chapter officers, this training provides key information, resources, and support to help chapter leaders plan meaningful programming, strengthen member engagement, recruit and retain members, and increase involvement in CSI initiatives. This 90-minute session includes dedicated time for questions and discussion.

Poster Sessions

Thursday, October 22, 2026 12:00 - 2:00 PM EDT and 2:30 - 4:30 PM EDT

During CSI Days, members representing 15 CSI chapters will share 16 virtual poster presentations. The sessions will highlight topics such as professional counselor wellness, cultural responsiveness in international settings, service and leadership, support for diverse client populations, and counselor professional identity development, reflecting the 2026-2027 theme, Emerging Practices in Cultivating Belonging and Connection in Counseling.

CSI Annual Delegate Business Meeting

Friday, October 23, 2026 10:00 - 11:00 AM EDT

CSI Awards Ceremony

Friday, October 23, 2026 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM EDT

The Annual Delegate Business Meeting provides chapter delegates with an opportunity to receive annual reports and updates from the CSI Executive Council and Headquarters Staff, as well as to participate in the Society's annual business and governance activities. Attendance at the Delegate Business Meeting at least once every three years is one of the requirements for chapters to remain active and maintain eligibility for chapter rebates. If your chapter is unsure of its attendance record, we encourage you to view your chapter's group site on the CSI website (www.csi-net.org < ABOUT < DIRECTORY OF CHAPTERS < {CHAPTER}). Chapters should ensure that their representative registers in advance and attends the entire meeting. Chapter delegates may register now. **Registration will close on Friday, October 2, 2026.**

Please note: Attendance at other CSI Days events, including the Chapter Faculty Advisor Training and Chapter Leader Training, does not count toward the three-year delegate requirement.

The Awards Committee will recognize award recipients initially announced in spring 2026 during the CSI Awards Ceremony, which will immediately follow the conclusion of the CSI Annual Delegate Business Meeting. Join us in celebrating the outstanding achievements of CSI members.



Looking Ahead

CSI Days are one of the ways our Society turns membership into connection, learning, and service across chapters and professional roles. I hope you will set aside time during the week of October 19-23 to participate in the sessions most relevant to your interests, responsibilities, and professional goals.

As the schedule takes shape, please register for the sessions that align with your interests and responsibilities. Registration will help ensure that you receive access links and event updates. Watch for announcements by email, through CSI's social media channels, and at csi-net.org, where we will share the full schedule, registration information, and event details.

I look forward to connecting with you online this fall and to seeing the many ways CSI members will learn, lead, and serve together.



SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Shaping Scholarship, Advancing Advocacy: A Tribute to Dr. Michael Brubaker

by Dr. Cassie A. Storlie, JCLA Editor, Kappa Sigma Upsilon Chapter, Kent State University

The Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy (JCLA) has been in production for over 10 years, acting on the mission of Chi Sigma Iota International (CSI) by promoting excellence in counseling through publishing research and scholarship. We are grateful to the Exemplar for the space to provide a tribute to Dr. Michael Brubaker and his steadfast commitment to JCLA in his roles as Associate Editor, Editor and most recently, Co-Editor. His nine years of service to JCLA reflects a sustained commitment to shaping both scholarship and practice within the counseling profession. In all his editorial roles, Dr. Brubaker has been committed to ensuring rigorous peer review, cultivating a strong editorial board, and maintaining the journal's scholarly integrity while also expanding its relevance to practitioners and emerging leaders.



Dr. Michael Brubaker

Dr. Casey Barrio Minton, Founding Editor for JCLA and CSI Past President, shared:

Dr. Brubaker was instrumental in shaping JCLA in its early development, and he has served both CSI and the journal with steady dedication, depth, and impact over time. I am deeply grateful for how he models excellence as a servant leader who lives out our philosophical commitments with care, humility, and a vision for a stronger profession. Even as his editorship comes to a close, we will long benefit from his wisdom, generosity of spirit, and unwavering commitment to wellness and human dignity.

When Dr. Brubaker stepped into the role of Associate Editor, he took on a platform to elevate voices, advance leadership discourse, and bridge the gap between theory and real-world advocacy. He empowered diverse perspectives, encouraged submissions centered on core counseling principles, and highlighted issues central to equity, inclusion, and systemic change. Dr. Melissa Luke was the Editor-in-Chief for JCLA when Dr. Brubaker was Associate Editor and reflected:

Dr. Brubaker's professionalism stood out; his stellar commitment and dedication to Chi Sigma Iota channeled through his scholarly and editorial expertise. I deeply value the collegiality that developed through our work and the myriad opportunities to learn from Dr. Brubaker over time. He has left an indelible legacy on JCLA and CSI, and all of the professionals with whom he has collaborated, mentored, and advised across both contexts.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION



Dr. Cassie Storlie, JCLA Editor

Under his guidance as Editor, JCLA became an invitation for counselor leaders to think critically about their roles as advocates across communities, schools, and systems. His behind-the-scenes editorial voice helped shape the tone of each volume and issue. While Co-Editor, JCLA's mentorship program began, supporting emerging peer reviewers and helping foster the next generation of editorial leadership. His time as Editor and Co-Editor provided JCLA readers and CSI members with a deeper understanding of professional identity, wellness, and advocacy. He ensured the journal remained responsive to emerging issues while honoring its foundational mission aligned with CSI.

As Dr. Brubaker transitions to other service and leadership ventures, JCLA is left strengthened by his leadership, which has become more attuned to the evolving needs of the counseling profession. His influence in shaping scholarly conversations, elevating standards, and creating space for voices that advance the counseling profession has been invaluable and will continue to be celebrated!

Thank you, Dr. Brubaker.



EXCELLENCE IN THE FIELD**Post-Graduation Bootcamp: A Chapter-Based Model of Servant Leadership**

*by Dr. Katelyn S. Lee, Ashley Marshall, MS, & Sloane Sivek, MS
Rho Kappa Chapter, University of North Texas*



The Rho Kappa Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota at the University of North Texas hosted its inaugural Post-Graduation Bootcamp (PGB) in March 2026, exemplifying servant leadership by providing targeted support for counselors-in-training. Rho Kappa leadership recognized a need for hands-on support for graduating master's students as they navigated the often-turbulent transition to professional licensure. Recognition of the need for additional guidance and support came from member feedback to Rho Kappa members through a formal needs assessment and informal conversations. After hearing member feedback, Rho Kappa executive committee members explored events hosted by other Chi Sigma Iota chapters by viewing the Spring Annual Reports on csi-net.org. Finally, in planning the event, executive committee members consulted research on evidence-based practices to support counselors-in-training preparedness. Prior research suggests that internship students are vulnerable to burnout and often experience anxiety about their readiness to enter the workforce (Blount et al., 2022). Through the synthesis of member feedback, research exploration, and analysis of prior chapter-hosted events, the PGB was developed.

Through the PGB, Rho Kappa sought to ensure that every graduate from the master's program, which encompasses three different specialties: clinical mental health, school, and rehabilitative counseling, and multiple tracks, child, adolescent, and adult, entered the counseling profession equipped with the knowledge, confidence, and community support necessary to thrive. Both CSI members and non-members were encouraged to attend to promote inclusion and equitable access to resources. Students were notified about the event using flyers placed around counseling program buildings, targeted social media blasts using our Rho Kappa Instagram account, program announcements, and word of mouth, particularly by executive committee members in courses. The event was designed to provide service and leadership by preparing the next generation of North Texas counselors for the next step in their professional journey.



The Event

The Rho Kappa Chapter received a Chapter Development Grant during the 2025-2026 academic year to help fund this endeavor. The grant-writing process required chapter leaders to clearly lay out the identified need, develop measurable objectives, create a realistic implementation plan, and demonstrate how the plan aligned with CSI's values. Receiving the grant funding felt very rewarding to the executive committee, knowing that this initiative was hoped to be successful with these students and alleviate the financial burden on the chapter and students. The grant funding supported the creation of the comprehensive licensure guidebooks, participant resource materials, refreshments, professional networking supplies, and other resources that enhanced the overall experience for the attendees. More importantly, the funding promoted equitable access by ensuring that all graduate students, regardless of financial circumstance or chapter membership status, could benefit from the event. This decision reflected the chapter's commitment to servant leadership by prioritizing students' needs over financial gain and emphasizing service to the broader counseling community.

The purpose of the event was to provide students in their internship phase with guidance and support as they transitioned from graduate students to provisionally licensed counseling professionals. To address the identified needs of our members, the Rho Kappa developed a comprehensive Post-Graduation Professional Development Guidebook that included state-specific licensure information, questions to ask potential clinical sites, and questions to ask potential supervisors. Two rooms in the university teaching clinic were utilized during the event. One room hosted the alumni speakers, while the second served as a collaborative workshop space. The alumni speakers prepared a presentation based on their counseling niche while still allowing time for student questions. Speakers provided attendees with their contact information for further networking opportunities. The workshop room was facilitated by Rho Kappa leaders, who assisted students with resume reviews, distributed the licensure guidebooks and goodie bags, and hosted a resource table for the Counselors for Justice chapter to share information about advocacy opportunities for the upcoming semester.

Prior to the event, attendees were encouraged to bring their resumes and prepare questions for the presenters. Within the collaborative workshop space, Rho Kappa provided refreshments and a variety of foods to cater to different dietary preferences, making the PGB a one-stop destination for students. While the chapter selected the date and time of the PGB based on results from an interest survey sent to internship students, the Rho Kappa board wanted to provide a flexible and accommodating experience where students could come and go based on their availability but also have the option to connect for longer periods of time with alumni and peers.





The career-readiness sessions featured three chapter alumni who are practicing counselors and shared their real-world experiences and strategies for early career success. One speaker, the owner of a private practice, discussed her experiences as a woman of color business owner. Another shared their work in community mental health, specifically within a substance-use rehabilitation hospital that serves as an approved internship site for the University of North Texas. The third speaker discussed her role as a clinical supervisor and owner of a private practice that also serves as an approved internship site.

Together, the speakers answered students' questions about the rewards and challenges of their respective career paths. Alumni were recruited by Rho Kappa executive committee members through personal or mutual connections. Rho Kappa leadership were committed to involving chapter alumni as speakers for two reasons: 1) finding ways of involving and keeping alumni connected to Rho Kappa has been an ongoing initiative to increase our professional membership and 2) internship students had expressed concerns with finding their place in the north Texas counseling community due to uncertainty about career prospects.

Service to Others

The PGB provided graduating counseling students with practical resources, professional guidance, and meaningful opportunities to engage with experienced clinicians. By offering resume support, licensure resources, networking opportunities, and direct access to practicing professionals, Rho Kappa demonstrated its commitment to serving counselors-in-training during a critical transition in their professional development. The event ensured that students, regardless of CSI membership, had equitable access to information and support as they prepared to enter the counseling profession.

From the event's inception, servant leadership served as its foundation. Greenleaf (2008), who coined the term "servant leadership," explains that "a servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong." This style of leadership is in contrast to traditional leadership, which involves accumulating power, whereas servant leadership prioritizes the needs of others. As described earlier, rather than assuming what members needed, chapter leadership intentionally used both formal and informal feedback to guide programming decisions within this executive board. This member-centered approach ensured that the PGB addressed authentic concerns while remaining aligned with Chi Sigma Iota's mission of promoting professional excellence through service and leadership.

While the Post Graduation Bootcamp addresses an immediate need for graduating counseling students, its impact extended beyond a single day of programming. From the perspective of chapter leadership, one of the most meaningful outcomes was the opportunity to strengthen Rho Kappa's culture of servant leadership. Rather than viewing leadership as a collection of officer responsibilities or event-planning tasks, the executive board approached it as an ongoing commitment to investing in others. The following sections will provide more detail on servant leadership at the event.

Leadership Through and Beyond Academia

The PGB also provided alumni members with an opportunity to remain connected to Rho Kappa while supporting the professional development of counselors-in-training. By sharing their experiences, mentoring students, and giving back to the counseling community, alumni modeled servant leadership in action. This initiative reflects the chapter's commitment to ongoing professional development, community building, and sustained alumni engagement. The PGB serves as a model for other CSI chapters by demonstrating how servant leadership can extend beyond graduate training. By providing a free, accessible professional development event, Rho Kappa fostered leadership, strengthened community connections, and created meaningful opportunities for alumni to invest in the next generation of counselors.

Another important leadership consideration involved designing an event that could be sustained beyond a single executive committee's term. Student organizations frequently experience leadership turnover, making continuity a challenge for long-term initiatives. Throughout the planning process, chapter leadership intentionally documents planning procedures, establishes relationships with alumni speakers, creates reusable materials, and develops systems that future executive committees can adapt. Viewing the PGB as the beginning of an annual tradition, rather than a one-time event, shifted planning decisions toward sustainability and long-term impact. This perspective reflects one of the central responsibilities of servant leadership; leaving organizations stronger than they were found by creating opportunities for future leaders to build upon previous successes.

Conclusion

Overall, the PGB demonstrates the feasibility of CSI chapter-led initiatives that are directly responsive to students' needs within their counseling program. The development and implementation of the PGB demonstrate how servant leadership can extend beyond a chapter's executive committee through student-facilitated professional development and alumni engagement. This event focused on supporting master's counseling students as they prepare for life after graduation. Other chapters may choose to modify the presented framework to meet the needs of their program's students. Ultimately, through intentional planning and a commitment to serving others, the PGB has the potential to become an annual Rho Kappa tradition that supports future generations of counselors.



EDUCATIONAL ADVANCES**Standing on the Shoulders of Giants: Servant Leadership as a Pedagogical Frame for Counselor Professional Identity Development**

by Christina Daou

Sigma Alpha Chi Chapter, University of Texas at San Antonio

Picture the first day of an Introduction to Counseling course. Twenty graduate students walk in, most unsure whether they have chosen the right career, many unaware that counseling has a history worth claiming. By the end of one carefully sequenced class session, those same students stand in a circle, each declaring their commitment to the profession while adding their names to a collaborative counseling tree alongside the field's pioneers. This becomes possible when students encounter the profession's history not as a catalog of theories to memorize, but as an unbroken lineage of servant leaders. These individuals set aside personal advancement to place their gifts in service of others.



The counseling profession was built by servant leaders. Frank Parsons founded vocational guidance to give working-class young people access to meaningful futures (Leahy & Zanskas, 2015). Dr. Thomas J. Sweeney spent decades fighting for licensure, accreditation, and a distinct professional identity at a time when counseling was still an occupation searching for its soul (Brubaker, 2022). Dr. Jane E. Myers insisted that human dignity across the lifespan was not a specialty topic but the very foundation of the profession (CSI, n.d.). These figures exemplify what Greenleaf (2002) described as the servant leader's defining impulse: the desire to serve first, and only then to lead. Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) was itself founded as an act of service to a profession that deserved a community of excellence, an organizational embodiment of the servant leadership model it has consistently championed (Prasath & Bhat, 2022).

This article presents "Whose Shoulders Will You Stand On?", a structured, experiential curriculum intervention designed for use on the first day of introductory counseling courses. It makes servant leadership its central interpretive frame, positioning counseling's historical figures as servant leaders whose legacies students are invited to continue, while addressing a gap in early professional identity formation.



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Phase 1: Meeting the Servant Leaders

Students receive “Giant Cards”, brief biographical narratives written in the first person that foreground each pioneer’s motivation for service, personal cost, and chosen communities (see Figure 1). The cards do not open with theoretical contributions; they begin with the servant’s heart and personal story. For example, Virginia Satir’s card opens with her childhood witness of family suffering and her realization that families need help learning to speak to one another. While Viktor Frankl’s card acknowledges the Holocaust while centering his discovery that meaning-making can be offered to those whose suffering seems unbearable.

The card set includes CSI’s own servant leaders. One card describes CSI’s founding as an act of community-building for a profession that deserved a sense of belonging and recognition within the broader academy. Another describes the wellness paradigm as an act of professional advocacy, insisting that the field attend to the flourishing of the whole person, not merely the remediation of disorder.

Card 3: Virginia Satir (1916–1988)

Mother of Family Therapy

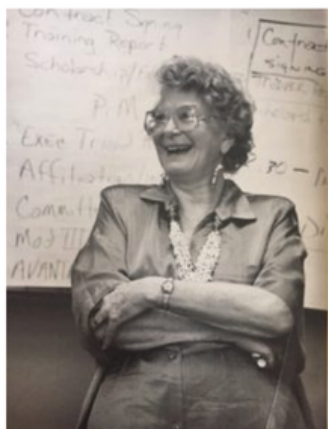
“I saw families as systems that need balance and healthy communication.”

Who I Was: Virginia Satir was a teacher who noticed that children’s problems often reflected family pain. She became a family therapist and created experiential, creative approaches to help families heal together. She believed people are intrinsically good and just need the right tools.

My Big Idea: Family Systems Theory — The problem isn’t ONE person; it’s how the whole family system functions. She used: **Family sculpting** (physical positions showing relationships); **Communication stances** (placater, blamer, super-reasonable, irrelevant, congruent); **Growth model** (families can change and thrive).

Why I Helped: She saw too many families stuck in pain, blaming each other. She knew that underneath anger is hurt, and underneath hurt is a longing for connection.

My Challenge to You: “We need 4 hugs a day for survival. We need 8 hugs a day for maintenance. We need 12 hugs a day for growth.” Can you see the WHOLE system, not just the “identified patient”?



Example of Giant Cards

After reading individually, students complete two sentence stems with a neighbor: “My giant believed...”, “they were drawn to helping people because...”, “the value that drives my giant’s work is...”, and “What would be different if every counselor used this approach would be...”. The second prompt is intentional. It invites students to read these figures not as credentialed experts but as people who made a moral decision, one that students themselves are in the process of making.

Phase 2: Building the Counseling Legacy Tree

Following the paired discussion in Phase 1, students begin constructing the centerpiece of the intervention: a large, collaborative printed poster, **Counseling Legacy Tree**, designed specifically for this teaching intervention by Lorelei Voronin, LPC-S, ATR, to be printed and displayed on the wall (see Figure 2). The tree serves as a living visual metaphor; the profession itself is rendered in branches, roots, and leaves, and students build it together, step by step.

The instructor first directs students to the roots. Each student takes a sticky note and writes down a core value their giant stands for, drawn directly from their Giant Card, then places it at the base of the tree. Through this simple act, the class collectively surfaces the shared moral foundation beneath the entire profession, service, human dignity, advocacy, and hope, without the instructor ever naming it for them.

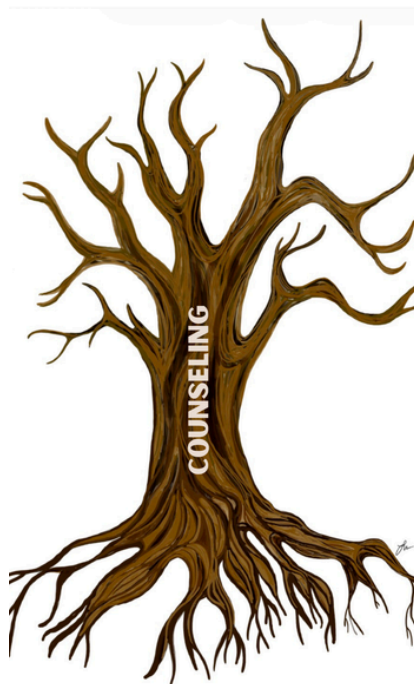
EDUCATIONAL ADVANCES

The instructor then draws attention to the trunk, explaining that it represents the counseling profession itself: the unified identity that all these pioneers helped shape and that students are now entering. From there, students are invited to the branches, each of which represents a pioneer. Every student writes their giant's name on a branch, gradually populating the tree with the figures who built the field.

Finally, the instructor invites students to the top of the tree, where leaf-shaped sticky notes await. Each student adds a leaf bearing their own name and one strength they bring to the profession, “deep listening”, “lived experience as a first-generation student”, “passion for communities failed by helping systems”. The message is explicit: You are the new growth.

Once every leaf is placed, the instructor closes Phase 2 with a brief reflection prompt directed at the completed tree: “Look at this tree. The roots are our shared values. The trunk is our profession. The branches are the giants who shaped us. And the leaves? That’s you. You’re the future. What do you notice? What do you feel?”. This moment of collective pause allows students to experience, rather than simply hear, that they are inheritors of a meaningful tradition, positioned not as outsiders learning about a field, but as new growth on an established servant-leadership tree.

Phase 3: The Legacy Circle



Counseling Legacy Tree

The final phase brings the class together in a standing circle, a shape that, unlike rows of chairs facing a podium, communicates equality and mutual accountability. The instructor opens with a simple framing: “This is a moment to honor the legacy you are joining and claim your place in it. One by one, we will go around the circle.”

Each student then completes four steps in sequence: stating their name, naming their giant, and completing two sentence stems aloud, “I stand on the shoulders of [name] because...” and “And I will contribute to counseling by...”. The instructor models first, demonstrating the vulnerability and intentionality that the moment calls for before asking students to do the same. This ritual structure signals that what follows is more than a classroom exercise.

The public declaration activates what Spears (2010) identified as the healing dimension of servant leadership: the recognition that both the servant leader and those being served are made more whole through genuine relational commitment. Students who articulate their professional commitments to peers experience both social and internal motivation to honor those commitments across subsequent coursework, practicum, and professional life. The ceremony also enacts Prasath and Bhat’s (2022) recommended strategy for developing servant leadership by providing opportunities to internalize servant leadership traits.

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In the context of this classroom activity, this is done by examining the leaders' vignettes and reflecting on how the leaders added value to the field of counseling by identifying their core convictions, motivation, calling, and guiding values. and their broader impact on the communities they serve. When students witness their instructor and peers articulating servant commitments, they observe servant leadership being modeled in real time.

Conclusion

"Whose Shoulders Will You Stand On?" demonstrates that professional identity formation and servant leadership development need not wait until students have accumulated clinical hours. When the profession's history is framed as a legacy of people who chose to serve, and when students are invited, from the very first day, to place themselves within that lineage, something shifts. They are no longer passive recipients of a curriculum. They are the newest generation of a profession built on service, standing on the shoulders of giants, and beginning to imagine whose shoulders will one day stand on theirs.



COUNSELORS' CORNER**Servant Leadership in School Counseling:
Empowering Students Through Small Groups***Dr. Ashley Smith**Phi Sigma Chapter, University of North Carolina at Pembroke*

As integral leaders of the school community, professional school counselors are uniquely positioned and equipped with essential tools to provide proactive and preventive services to at-risk students (Merlin-Knoblich et al., 2012; Smith, 2021). School counselors are charged with delivering comprehensive data-driven school counseling programs designed to support the academic, career, and social-emotional development of all students (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2025).



As such, school counselors play a critical role in supporting students' development while also promoting a positive and equitable school community. To support these areas, professional school counselors address student needs with direct services (e.g., individual, small-group, classroom guidance, and responsive services) as well as with indirect services (ASCA, 2025). Applying a servant leadership lens to data-driven advocacy begins with a commitment to the ethical responsibility of professional school counselors to identify and eliminate systemic barriers that impede student development (ASCA, 2022). As student populations become increasingly diverse, school counselors must look beyond reactive practices and adopt servant leadership approaches that center the needs of all students, especially those from marginalized and underserved populations.

Childhood and adolescence are both times where youth are learning how to navigate the world through inter- and intra-relationships; as such, one of the most effective ways school counselors can incorporate servant leadership in their practice is by facilitating intentional small group counseling, a unique experience that can afford students the opportunity to experience connection and diverse perspectives (Corey, 2023; Grant et al., 2021; Harris & Hockaday, 2018). This article aims to encourage professional school counselors to explore small-group counseling in a school setting.

Servant leadership is an approach that helps school counselors determine which students' needs to address and how to allocate their time and resources by amplifying students' voices (Bier, 2021; Harris & Hockaday, 2018). School counselors who approach their comprehensive school counseling program from a servant leader perspective begin by actively listening to students, school and community stakeholders, and administrators, and then examining the data to identify and create targeted closing-the-gap action plans (Harris & Hockaday, 2018; Prasath et al., 2021).

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This process can involve reviewing academic performance records, attendance data, and behavioral reports, which can reveal patterns that indicate which students may be underserved. It is important to note that servant leadership extends beyond quantitative data and emphasizes understanding students' lived experiences through surveys, informal check-ins, and of course, small groups to capture contributing factors (Prasath & Bhat, 2022). Once data has been analyzed, a servant leader school counselor uses the collected data as a strategic tool to advocate for students, which can involve translating those findings into compelling narratives to facilitate meaningful collaboration with administrators and school and community stakeholders to prioritize needs and gain support for intentional small groups. Small groups in each iteration (i.e., psychoeducation, support group, skill-building) have been used to support students' therapeutic and educational endeavors (ASCA, 2020).

Largely due in part to the preventive and remedial aims of group counseling, which allow professional school counselors to attend to students' academic, career, and social-emotional development (ASCA, 2020, 2025; Merlin-Knoblich et al., 2022; Prasath et al., 2024). For students, school counselors can help create opportunities for self-exploration, encourage the receipt of feedback from peers, support relationship development, and foster meaningful connections with others in a group (Grant et al., 2021).

To efficiently run small groups, professional school counselors are encouraged to remember that they are the most important instrument they have at their disposal. School counselors who demonstrate effective group leadership skills can enhance students' ability to connect with the group and its process, helping them experience reduced feelings of loneliness and maladaptive behaviors (Corey, 2023; ASCA, 2020). This requires professional school counselors to show up sincerely and authentically, with a willingness to help their students process what comes up in group.

Facilitation of small groups can allow school counselors the opportunity to utilize clinical counseling skills (i.e. active listening, reflections feelings of content/feeling/meaning, questioning, goal setting, summarizing, and modeling; (Corey, 2023; ASCA, 2025) and by focusing on collaboration with students, school staff, and guardians, school counselors can help determine group topics and develop action plans to address achievement, attainment, and opportunity gaps students may face (ASCA, 2025; Steen & Kaffenberger, 2007).



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This emphasis on active listening allows school counselors to center student voice in the decision-making process (Harris & Hockaday, 2018; Prasath & Bhat, 2022). For instance, students experiencing challenges with connection and belonging, marginalization, or other mental health challenges such as depression or anxiety may not always be identified with quantitative data. When barriers arise, school counselors can start small by piloting a group, tracking outcomes, and using the data to advocate for expansion. Small groups create opportunities for students to share their lived experiences, and school counselors gain a more holistic understanding of the students' needs and can respond with greater empathy and intentionality (Harris & Hockaday, 2018; Prasath & Bhat, 2022).

As servant leaders, school counselors should be aware of the varied developmental, emotional, and behavioral problems children may experience. This unique lens into their students' world can encourage school counselors to be more attuned to the issues children face, fostering holistic wellness (Corey, 2023). There can be a variety of group types when working with children: psychoeducation – where students learn a new skill or unlearn maladaptive behaviors (e.g., behaviors, self-concept, social skills, communication) (Corey, 2023). Skill-based groups for children are another avenue for exploring the group process with young students, allowing them to learn and practice skills (e.g., conflict resolution, friendships, communication skills, self-regulation, and self-esteem) (Bore et al, 2003). These types of groups for children may include situational support groups, which can provide coping skills and opportunities to help students process their feelings about changes they are experiencing (e.g., parental separation, grief/loss, new students, change, and transitions).

Adolescence is a time of both continuity and change, marked by physical, cognitive, and social development (Prasath et al., 2024). Groups of all kinds can be helpful for adolescents in marking developmental transitions. Groups are often spaces where adolescents can experiment with reality, test their limits, and express themselves, which can lead to feeling accepted and motivated by their peers (Prasath et al., 2024). Similarly to children, the types of groups for adolescents may include psychoeducation groups that focus on common concerns such as identity, sexuality, peer acceptance, career goals, and educational problems, which may touch on various topics (e.g., parental separation, changes and transitions, and grief/loss). Counseling groups with adolescents tend to focus more on adolescents' relational concerns with adults, identity, and autonomy.



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Common topics often faced by children and adolescents in school involve bullying, substance abuse, self-confidence, and non-suicidal self-injury (Brigman & Campbell, 2003; Corey, 2023). Additionally, small-group curriculum structures can be based on core ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors and ASCA National Model domains: academic, social-emotional development, and college and career readiness, seeking to support students facing poverty, students with disabilities (physical, emotional, intellectual), first-generation students, and students from non-dominant family types, as well as graduation and dropout rates, and career planning (ASCA, 2020, 2021, 2025).

Servant leadership encourages school counselors to adopt proactive and preventive approaches rather than waiting for issues to escalate; this approach enables them to better anticipate students' needs and create interventions in advance (Tate, 2003). School counselors are encouraged to rise to the call of utilizing small groups in their comprehensive school counseling program to assist students in their academic, career, and social-emotional development. Ultimately, when a comprehensive school counseling program is grounded in servant leadership, it consists of an intentional process such as small group counseling, where the school counselor actively engages in prevention, intervention, and provides direct services that facilitate communication and understanding between students to further strengthen and grow their development and sense of self, contributing to a more inclusive and supportive school community.



CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

Mu Upsilon Gamma: Threads Of Transformation

Dr. Chanel S. Rodriguez

Mu Upsilon Gamma Chapter, Marymount University



This past 2025-2026 academic year, Mu Upsilon Gamma CSI Chapter at Marymount University emphasized its alignment with the theme of servant leadership. CSI faculty advisors, Dr. Chanel S. Rodriguez and Dr. Mirian Campos, and chapter members engaged in community service through participation in the Out of Darkness Walk in Washington, D.C., demonstrating a commitment to mental health awareness and public service.

In October 2025, advocacy efforts were further exemplified by member participation in the ACA Hill Day, where students joined Dr. Rodriguez and engaged with legislators and staff during a federal government shutdown to promote the counseling profession. In addition, CSI held its annual Angel Trees event in partnership with the local Salvation Army, providing gifts for 25 kiddos during the holiday season through generous donations and students voluntarily choosing a kid to fulfill their gift wishes. Leadership within the chapter was highlighted by Edwin Hanna, the Counseling Community Engagement Chair, who received the 2026 Outstanding Entry-Level Student Award from Chi Sigma Iota International.

Many students in our counseling programs requested topics not typically covered in counseling training programs to build stronger connections with our richly diverse communities, and we could not agree more! The chapter also prioritized education and inclusivity by hosting two free webinars focused on culturally responsive counseling and intersectional issues, moderated by Dr. Rodriguez and facilitated by CSI faculty advisors from other chapters.

To provide an equitable opportunity, the webinars also provided 1 NBCC CE credit hour per webinar and were free for all audience members. One was titled "Invisible Struggles: Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders and Maternal Mental Health," presented by Dr. Nouna Jalilzadeh. This webinar was part two of a maternal mental health webinar held in fall 2025, which our CSI chapter also hosted. The second webinar, titled "Bridging Neurodiversity Gaps: Connecting Counselor Educators, Counselors, and Clients," was presented by Dr. Rosanna Sanchez John. Additionally, Mu Upsilon Gamma secured a \$400 chapter development grant from Chi Sigma Iota to support the Spring 2026 "Workshop Series for Understudied Counseling Topics," which funded two webinars addressing neurodiversity and maternal mental health.

The academic year concluded with the annual initiation ceremony on March 24th, reinforcing professional identity and community. Collectively, these efforts reflect a sustained commitment to servant leadership through advocacy, outreach, and the advancement of inclusive counseling practices.

“I am grateful for the past 5 years as a CSI faculty advisor as I move to a new chapter in my career. It was important to me to emphasize CSI’s mission and values in the counseling field, and teach students to take advantage of resources and access (like CSI). I hope the socially just, equitable, and inclusive narrative of the CSI Mu Upsilon Gamma chapter continues moving forward.” - Dr. Rodriguez



CHAPTER RESOURCES**Cultivating Servant Leadership in CSI Student Leaders While Negotiating Personal Values and Professional Demands**

Michelle Schwab, M.S.Ed & Dr. John Harrichand
Chi Sigma Mu Chapter, Montclair State University



Servant leadership, first articulated by Robert Greenleaf, is a leadership philosophy rooted in a desire to serve others first, with leadership measured by whether those served grow as persons, becoming healthier, wiser, freer, and more capable of serving others (McDaniel, 2023). It is also understood as a relational and ethical approach in which leaders prioritize the development, empowerment, and well-being of others while fostering community and stewardship (Letizia, 2018). Within Chi Sigma Iota (CSI), servant leadership reflects a commitment to mentoring and advancing the counseling profession (Herr, n.d.). At times, however, it can be misconstrued as excessive self-sacrifice (Eaton, 2020); therefore, CSI chapter leaders must reaffirm servant leadership as purposeful service combined with responsible leadership that strengthens both the organization and its members' professional development.

Reaffirming servant leadership requires a critical examination of how professional and educational structures can distort its original intent. While servant leadership has functioned as a distinctive and widely recognized leadership model, there is no unified consensus among scholars, leaders, and practitioners on its definition (Letizia, 2018; Parris & Peachey, 2013). This ambiguity creates conditions where servant leadership can be co-opted by institutional cultures that prioritize productivity and performance over genuine empowerment. McDaniel (2023) asserts that servant leadership has “the potential to open a door of vulnerability for servant leaders and the organizations they lead” (p. 23). Some organizations may romanticize distorted enactments of servant leadership, overlooking structural inequities, power dynamics, and subjugation of those who serve (Eaton, 2020).

Servant leadership is born of the desire to serve others first, positioning service over authority, obligation, or external pressures and incentives as the motivation for leadership (Greenleaf, 1977). It is an essential responsibility of CSI chapter leaders to foster alignment between personal values and servant leadership, providing a critical foundation for resisting pressures within environments shaped by certain institutional, academic, and professional demands. Differing cultural norms are often perpetuated by institutional classification, such as research or teaching universities, as well as factors including the accreditation process, service expectations, and potentially “bigoted ideology” (Letizia, 2018, p. 136), for example, the ‘publish or perish’ mentality (Yeo et al., 2022). Servant leadership is most effective when its potential vulnerabilities are actively addressed and the risks of distortion are mitigated through reflection, healthy boundaries, and ethical accountability (McDaniel, 2023). Operationalizing the intended vision of servant leadership requires a decolonial approach, translating the values of service into concrete leadership behaviors and prioritizing both accountability and the servant leader's empowerment.

We offer the following recommendations to help CSI chapter leaders sustain servant leadership while promoting equitable leadership development and organizational sustainability.

- Practice reflective servant leadership through clear boundaries: Engage in critical reflection on their motivations for service, ensuring leadership decisions balance care for members with accountability to chapter goals (McDaniel, 2023). For example, a chapter president can schedule regular check-ins with members to provide support and mentorship while also setting clear expectations for committee responsibilities and following through on accountability measures when commitments are not met.
- Sustain leadership through structured mentorship: Intentionally create and facilitate layered mentorship models (e.g., faculty–doctoral–master’s mentorship) that cultivate leadership continuity and empower emerging counselors and counselor educators to develop service-oriented leadership capacities (Houston, 2023). For example, the chapter mentorship chair pairs experienced executive committee members with newer members to co-lead committees, creating opportunities for mentorship, leadership development, and a smooth transition of responsibilities from one leadership team to the next.
- Use service as a leadership learning space: Design service initiatives, e.g., community advocacy projects, research collaborations, and professional outreach, allowing members to practice servant leadership while simultaneously strengthening professional counselor identity and organizational stewardship (Houston, 2023). For example, the chapter's counselor community engagement chair organizes a legislative advocacy day where members meet with state representatives to discuss counseling licensure or mental health policy.



- Encourage dialogue about gender and leadership: Given the strong presence of women in CSI chapter leadership, leaders should intentionally examine how servant leadership can both empower and potentially overburden women, applying feminist-informed perspectives that challenge assumptions about service, labor, and leadership expectations (Eaton, 2020). For example, chapter leadership could facilitate discussions about invisible labor by examining who is expected to remember deadlines, organize meetings, mediate interpersonal tensions, and anticipate organizational needs, and by encouraging members to critically assess whether these responsibilities are distributed equitably or disproportionately fall on specific leaders.



- Reflect on the future of servant leadership in CSI: As CSI marks its 40th anniversary, chapters could host discussions or retreats that revisit the meaning of servant leadership, ensuring that it continues to guide mentorship, scholarship, and advocacy, strengthening the profession and future counselor leaders (Houston, 2023; McDaniel, 2023).

Altogether, servant leadership, when grounded in humility, integrity, and a commitment to service, can function as a vehicle for sustainability, promoting a decolonial orientation that centers diverse perspectives.



CSI COMMITTEE UPDATES

The Work of the CSI Wellness Counseling Practice and Research Committee

Lyndsay Deal (Iota Delta Sigma), Dr. Mary Wynn (Upsilon Chi Chi), & Hanna Lainas (Chi Chi)

Wellness in Counseling Practice & Research Committee

The Chi Sigma Iota Wellness Counseling Practice and Research Committee (WCPRC) is committed to work rooted in CSI's mission to strengthen the professional identity of Counselors by supporting its members in building a healthier society grounded in wellness and human dignity. This committee's work has included compiling wellness-focused research, creating competency standards, and advocating for wellness practice and leadership throughout CSI's activities and resources. The primary mission of this committee is to promote the integration of wellness scholarship and materials and to advance knowledge in wellness, which is integral to the professional counselor identity.

For nearly a decade, the Chi Sigma Iota Wellness Counseling Practice and Research Committee has consistently provided a significant service to the counseling profession: curating and organizing wellness scholarship to make it accessible to clinicians, educators, and students. This service has included compiling resources on the [CSI Wellness in Counseling.group webpage](#), establishing the [Wellness Toolbox](#), delivering CSI-focused [webinars](#) on wellness scholarship and practice, developing a repository of categorized wellness research abstracts and citations, and supporting the professional development of CSI Leadership Fellows & Interns (LFIs).

Wellness Resources

The [CSI Wellness in Counseling.group webpage](#) serves as a central hub to showcase the history of wellness counseling, wellness models and inventories, current research, and shared resources. The page includes foundational documents, such as the [CSI Wellness Position Paper](#), which defines wellness as central to counselor identity and CSI's role in wellness promotion. Furthermore, the CSI Wellness Competencies serve as a guide to support counselors in implementing wellness, spanning from their personal lives through professional practice and into the promotion of wellness with their clients. In addition to these unchanging historical documents are wellness resources that continue to grow and evolve in reflection of the excellent wellness scholarship and practice occurring within our field, such as the Research Citations & Abstracts, and the Counselors' Wellness Toolbox, among others.

Recently, the committee established the [Counselors' Wellness Toolbox](#) to house peer-reviewed, practical tools to make wellness promotion more accessible. The toolbox has four main categories of tools: Tools for Counselor Educators, Counselor Trainees, Professional Counselors, and CSI's Chapter Wellness Initiatives. Current resources include a Wellness Bumper Sticker, a creative self-reflection activity for use with clients or counselors-in-training, and a Residency Wellness Toolkit, an Indivisible Self Model initiative for counseling students to support holistic wellness. The WCPRC is currently seeking submissions for the toolbox, including original wellness-based techniques, interventions, worksheets, and activities. Review the [CSI Counselors' Wellness Toolbox Submission Form](#) for more details and submission guidelines.

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Wellness Webinars

The WCPRC has also worked to disseminate knowledge related to wellness practice and research by hosting CSI webinars and delivering presentations at CSI Days. From 2021 to 2024, the webinars hosted by the committee included the following presentations: Wellness Research Incubation: Advancing Wellness Research Agendas; Wellness Competencies in Action: Supervision, Self-care, and Support for Counselors; Wellness Research: Practical Tips to Secure Grant Funding.

The WCPRC's seminal, historical webinars include Counseling for Wellness: An Overview of Models, Factors, and Research presented by Dr. Thomas J. Sweeney in 2015; Infusing Ecowellness into Counseling Practice Without Leaving the Office presented by Dr. Ryan F. Reese in 2015; and Technowellness: Exploring the Relationship between Technology Use and Wellness presented by Dr. Stephen D. Kennedy in 2015.

Most recently, WCPRC partnered with the CSI Professional Development Committee to present a webinar titled "Building Community Relationships among Counselors to Manage Conflict and Prevent Burnout." This presentation included education concerning community care and the development of professional communities rich in growth-fostering relationships to enhance wellness and prevent burnout. Further, the WCPRC has an initiative currently under development with the International Association of Wellness Counseling's (IAWC) Professional Development Committee to create a webinar presentation on strategies for integrating wellness counseling with an international focus.

Research Abstracts and Citations Repository

The committee members identify peer-reviewed articles related to wellness across multiple academic databases and upload the citations and abstracts to the CSI wellness webpage. The committee compiles searchable citations and abstracts, creating a centralized repository of wellness research. This structure allows practitioners — especially those without access to subscription-based academic journals — to explore current scholarship, identify relevant studies, and pursue additional access when needed.

The scope of this task is substantial. Wellness scholarship spans diverse domains, including multicultural and social justice perspectives, spirituality, counselor self-care and burnout, supervision practices, assessment and measurement of wellness, coping and stress processes, lifespan development, group and family systems, career and academic functioning, addiction and mental health concerns, and advocacy efforts. Committee members systematically review databases, identify relevant articles, verify citation accuracy, and ensure abstracts are properly formatted and searchable on the website. Because this is an ongoing and labor-intensive effort, multiple committee members typically share responsibilities. CSI Leadership Fellows & Interns often contribute to this work as part of their professional development and service learning.

CSI COMMITTEE UPDATES

Recently, the committee has expanded its mission. In addition to collecting and uploading new citations, members have undertaken the significant task of categorizing the growing body of archived research into broader wellness domains. Rather than simply housing a long list of abstracts, the repository is being organized into thematic groupings that reflect contemporary counseling concerns — such as multicultural wellness, social supports and community systems, mindfulness and coping, career and academic wellness, military and family contexts, and counselor development and supervision. This organizational structure enhances usability, allowing clinicians and scholars to more easily locate scholarship aligned with their client populations, professional roles, or research interests. What began as a repository is evolving into a structured and searchable knowledge system.

The importance of this work cannot be overstated. Many practicing clinicians lack institutional access to paywalled academic databases. By providing free access to citations and abstracts in one centralized location, the committee reduces barriers to scholarship and supports evidence-informed practice. The repository also promotes ongoing engagement with wellness as a foundational framework in counseling — not simply as a theoretical construct, but as an applied, research-supported orientation to practice.

The WCPRC remains committed to serving as a living archive of wellness scholarship. As research continues to expand to encompass multicultural contexts, systemic resilience, clinical practice, counselor well-being, and global mental health, the committee's work ensures that this knowledge remains visible, organized, and accessible to the broader professional community.

Supporting LFI Professional Development

The WCPRC continually includes LFIs among its members. In alignment with the [CSI LFI program's](#) mission to provide opportunities for leadership development for CSI members in the early years of their professional careers, the WCPRC works to support LFIs by inviting them to participate meaningfully in the committee's projects and initiatives. LFIs play integral roles within the committee's work, enabling them to realize their leadership potential through their contributions and hands-on experience. This year, LFI members have taken on a significant initiative to enhance the Citations and Abstracts repository. They organized all entries into clearly defined categories, such as multicultural counseling and international student voice, and developed a searchable database. This new format will allow users to search for citations and abstracts not only alphabetically, but also by specific topic areas, making the resource more accessible and user-friendly.



CSI COMMITTEE UPDATES

Empowering Counselor Faculty Advisors: The Chapter Faculty Advisors Committee

Dr. Ye (Agnes) Luo, Tau Tau Upsilon Chapter

Chapter Faculty Advisors Committee

The Chapter Faculty Advisors Committee (CFAC) currently consists of nine members, including a leadership fellow, in the 2026-2027 academic year. The committee works in collaboration with CSI leadership and in partnership with other CSI committees, such as the Awards Committee and the Chapter Development Committee. The Committee serves as a central resource for both new and experienced Chapter Faculty Advisors (CFAs) and fosters collaboration, connection, and leadership development across chapters. CFAC is committed to supporting CFAs in effectively fulfilling their roles through CFA training sessions, a mentorship program, and other ongoing professional support for all chapters. The Committee meets periodically to discuss how it can better serve CFAs and Chapters, and to share resources and updated information with CFAs nationally and internationally.

Chapter Faculty Advisor Annual Training

Each year, CFAC facilitates at least two training sessions for both new and experienced CFAs: (a) in-person sessions held at the conferences of the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) and its regional divisions, and (b) a virtual session offered in early spring for those unable to attend in person. These trainings adopt an interactive format to provide important information and updates, highlight available resources, share success stories and tips, and address participants' questions. Currently, CFAC is preparing to facilitate in-person training sessions at the regional ACES conferences in Fall 2026.

Updated Chapter Faculty Advisor Resources

At a recent CFA training, we shared several updated resources. The following section highlights important updates for CFAs and chapters. These updates are also featured on the CSI website, and a link to the CFAC's training slides is also included at the end of this article.

Primary and Secondary Chapter Faculty Advisor

CSI previously used various terms, such as co-CFA, first CFA, and backup CFA, to refer to chapter advisors. Since 2025, CSI has standardized the terminology to "Primary CFA" and "Secondary CFA." If your chapter has not updated these titles, we encourage you to adopt this terminology and identify additional advisors as Secondary CFAs.



CSI COMMITTEE UPDATES

Eligibility to become a Chapter Faculty Advisor

To serve as a Chapter Faculty Advisor, a counselor educator must maintain active CSI membership for at least one year prior to approval. CFAs are required to hold a terminal degree (Ph.D./Ed.D.) in Counselor Education and Supervision programs and be full-time faculty members within a counselor education program. All Chapters must have two approved CFAs to maintain an active CSI chapter status. When changing CFAs, a [Chapter Faculty Advisor Change Form](#) must be submitted electronically.

Chapter Initiation Requirement

To maintain active chapter status, all CSI chapters must initiate new members at least once a year. This requirement aligns with the CSI's fiscal year, which runs from May 1st to April 30th, and may differ from an institution's academic year. CFAs play an important role in the new member approval process, which must be completed at least three weeks before the scheduled initiation date. CSI Headquarters will email the chapter's Primary CFA to confirm the initiation date and the newly approved members. It is important to respond promptly to their email to confirm, so that certificates and pins can be mailed in time for the ceremony. All requirements to maintain an active chapter are on the [CSI Chapter Faculty Advisors Resources page](#). The committee can assist all CFAs in navigating the website to complete the new member approval process. You may contact the committee at admin@csi-net.org.

CFA Resources: Orientation for New Chapter Faculty Advisor and Best Practice Document

CFAC has published [Orientation Module videos](#) for new CFAs and the [Best Practices Guide for Chapter Faculty Advisors](#) on the CSI website. CFAC members have also shared additional resources, and the links can be found at the end of this document. The Orientation Module video series can help CFAs review CSI policies, navigate the membership management system, maintain an active chapter, understand financial responsibilities, and become familiar with Robert's Rules. The Best Practice Guide for Chapter Faculty Advisors provides ideas for facilitating new student orientation, chapter officer election, chapter leadership training, and the induction ceremony. It also offers guidance on developing chapter committees, planning events, and building community in both online and in-person programs.

Mentorship Program

The CFAC Mentorship Program is designed to support CFAs' success, leadership development, and well-being. The program aims to enhance CFAs' leadership skills, strengthen their ability to guide chapter officers, and promote the growth and excellence of their chapters. Mentorship relationships are typically established for one academic year, pairing experienced CFAs (mentors) with newer CFAs (mentees). Typically, mentors have at least three years of successful chapter management as a Primary or Secondary CFA. The Committee prioritizes thoughtful matching processes, with attention to representation across diverse program types and chapter sizes.



CSI COMMITTEE UPDATES

Needs Assessment Survey

In Fall 2025, the CFAC launched a Chapter Faculty Advisor Survey to gather feedback from CFAs on their positive experiences, challenges they face, use of resources, support needs, best-practice insights, and engagement preferences. The survey was distributed through training sessions, emails, and the CSI newsletter. We would like to extend our appreciation to the CFAs who have already participated. As the survey remains open, all CFAs are encouraged to complete it so that CFAC can continue to better support their work.

Responses received thus far identified “supporting student leadership development” as the most rewarding aspect of the CFA role. At the same time, “time constraints and workload” emerged as the most common challenge. These themes are often identified and discussed during CFA training. Respondents also shared unique positive experiences, including professional identity development, opportunities to support student leadership development, opportunities to network with other professionals, and witnessing the positive impact their chapters have on local communities. Although each CFA’s situation may vary, we are sharing a few tips we have learned from experienced CFAs:

1. Schedule and protect a specific “CSI work time/day,” such as Fridays, 9 am - 11 am, to focus on the CSI-related work by setting other responsibilities aside.
2. Schedule a weekly virtual or in-person “CFA co-working space” to work together or independently in a shared space.
3. Join other chapters’ events to co-facilitate programming. It can be challenging to facilitate all events independently, but joining other chapters’ events can create opportunities for connection, networking, and learning about how other chapters facilitate events. CSI also offers the Chapter Development Grants and Statewide/Regional Networking Grants, which can provide valuable opportunities for chapters to connect with chapter members, other chapters, and local communities.
4. Prioritize team building and building relationships with officers before assigning tasks or responsibilities. Helping officers feel empowered within the chapter can further encourage their engagement and motivation. “Mentoring, encouragement, and empowerment,” as well as “recognition of others,” are two of CSI’s ten Principles and Practices of Leadership Excellence (Chi Sigma Iota Academy of Leaders, 1999). Intentional, student-centered decision-making is one way to empower student chapter officers.
5. Having a CFA mentor can help reduce possible isolation and broaden perspectives. CFA mentors can be invaluable resources in brainstorming ideas, reflecting on CFA experiences, and expanding the use of available resources.

CSI COMMITTEE UPDATES

Re-Starting and Sustaining CSI Chapter Committees: Rebuilding Community, Purpose, and Momentum

Dr. Orsolya Varkonyi (Mu Chi Nu), Chaunte' Roberts (Omega Zeta), & Justen Schroeder (Theta Alpha Mu)
Chapter Development Committee

Across Chi Sigma Iota chapters, periods of transition are both natural and expected. Leadership changes, fluctuations in student enrollment, shifting academic demands, and competing personal and professional responsibilities can all impact a chapter's level of engagement at any given time. Rather than viewing these moments as setbacks, chapters are encouraged to reframe them as opportunities for intentional reflection, recalibration, and growth.

Committee work provides a foundational structure that helps chapters remain connected, organized, and mission-driven during these transitions. When thoughtfully implemented, committees provide a manageable and meaningful way to sustain engagement, distribute leadership responsibilities, and create continuity across academic terms. Grounded in Chi Sigma Iota's core values of scholarship, research, professionalism, leadership, and excellence in counseling, committee structures allow chapters to translate these values into consistent, actionable practices that align with both institutional context and student capacity.

This resource is designed with the recognition that chapters vary widely in size, format, and stage of development. Whether a chapter is newly established, actively engaged, or navigating a period of rebuilding, there is no single "right" way to move forward. Instead, this guidance offers a supportive, nonjudgmental framework to help chapters assess where they are, identify what is realistic, and take intentional steps to strengthen their community through sustainable committee work.

Starting Small and Building Consistently

Re-establishing committee work does not require large numbers, extensive programming, or immediate expansion. In fact, many chapters experience renewed momentum by intentionally starting small and building consistently over time. Normalizing small committees (sometimes consisting of only two or three members) reduces overwhelm and allows chapters to focus on attainable goals that fit their current capacity. Short-term initiatives, such as a single service activity, an advocacy action, or a professional discussion, can foster meaningful engagement without placing undue pressure on student leaders. Emphasizing clear communication, realistic timelines, and shared expectations helps committees remain grounded and functional, even during periods of transition. Sustainability is cultivated not through scale, but through consistency, responsiveness, and a shared commitment to showing up, reinforcing that steady, intentional efforts often have the greatest long-term impact.

CSI COMMITTEE UPDATES

Committees as Pathways for Advocacy and Service

Committees also serve as natural pathways for advocacy and service, connecting chapter members to the broader counseling profession's social responsibility. Through committee work, students can engage in applied professional identity development by translating counseling values such as equity, wellness, and ethical leadership into action. Advocacy and service may take many forms, from campus-based initiatives and community partnerships to policy awareness efforts or participation in professional campaigns, allowing chapters to align engagement with local needs and resources. Importantly, flexibility in how advocacy and service are expressed honors the diverse contexts in which chapters operate, including variations in size, modality, and institutional support. When committees are positioned as spaces for ethical reflection, collaboration, and purposeful action, they reinforce counseling's commitment to social justice while empowering students to see themselves as emerging advocates and leaders within the profession.

Looking Ahead: Committees as Sustainable Anchors

As chapters look toward the future, it is important to recognize that effective committee work is not a fixed model but an evolving process that adapts alongside the needs, capacity, and vision of its members. Committees are most impactful when they remain flexible, responsive, and grounded in purpose rather than rigid structure. Growth may look different from one semester to the next, and progress should be measured not only by activity but by consistency, engagement, and alignment with Chi Sigma Iota's mission. Committee involvement also serves as a meaningful pathway for leadership development and shared responsibility. By distributing roles and encouraging participation at multiple levels, chapters create opportunities for members to develop confidence, professional identity, and leadership skills in ways that feel accessible and supportive.

This shared approach helps prevent burnout, strengthens collaboration, and fosters a sense of collective ownership within the chapter. Sustainability is cultivated through clarity in purpose, ongoing communication, and a willingness to adjust as circumstances change. Chapters that prioritize these elements position themselves to remain active and connected, even during periods of transition. Ultimately, committee work offers a steady anchor, one that supports continuity while allowing space for growth, innovation, and renewed energy. Regardless of size, structure, or current level of engagement, every chapter has the capacity to move forward with intention. By approaching committee development with patience, flexibility, and a commitment to shared progress, chapters can build a strong and sustainable foundation that continues to support their members and the counseling profession over time.



CSI COMMITTEE UPDATES

Advancing Research Support: Growth and Stewardship within the Excellence in Counseling Research Grants Committee

Dr. Derron Hilts, Sigma Upsilon

Excellence in Counseling Research Grants Committee

The Excellence in Counseling Research Grants Committee demonstrated continued growth and development during the 2025-2026 academic year. Submission activity reached a new high point, with a substantial number of proposals receiving funding, reflecting the program's expanding reach and continued value to members. Beyond the research grant proposal reviews and dissemination of funds, the committee made progress in several areas intended to support its quality and sustainability. Adjustments to elements of the application and review process appeared to improve accessibility and participation, while additional efforts were made to clarify reviewer expectations and establish more consistent follow-up procedures with grant recipients. These developments reflect the committee's commitment not only to promoting and providing tangible support for excellence in counseling research, but also to improving accountability and creating stronger mechanisms to document and share the outcomes of funded work.

Outcomes of the 2025-2026 Excellence in Counseling Research Grants Program

During the 2025-2026 academic year, the Excellence in Counseling Research Grants Committee was allocated a budget of \$20,000, an increase of \$5,000 from the 2024-2025 academic year and \$10,000 from the 2023-2024 academic year. This funding supports quality proposals as determined by Excellence in Counseling Research Grant Reviewers and the Chair. Unfortunately, while we do our best to recognize the terrific scholarly work our counseling community is engaged in, not all proposals receive funding. For the most recent grant cycle, we received 32 proposals, a record high for submissions in a single cycle.

The average requested amount for awarded proposals was \$1,584, while the actual average awarded amount per proposal was \$611.00. In most cases, proposals did not receive full funding because their budget requests did not align with CSI's funding guidelines (e.g., requests exceeding \$500 for participant incentives, requests for overhead costs, or funds that were vague or not clearly defined). Of the 32 submitted proposals, 19 (59%) were awarded partial or full funding. Given that research grant recipients, regardless of the funding priority area, are expected to initially submit their prospective manuscripts to the Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy (JCLA), we can expect that some of these projects may eventually be submitted for review and perhaps lead to publication in CSI's JCLA, if deemed appropriate and of quality by JCLA's Editorial Board.

CSI COMMITTEE UPDATES

Committee Development and Process Improvements

For the 2025-2026 academic year, the Excellence in Counseling Research Grants Committee moved the application deadline from November 15 to October 15 in order to allow more time between recipient notification and the submission of subsequent interim and final reports; however, because the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) bi-annual conference overlapped with the revised deadline, the committee extended the deadline to November 1 for last year's cycle.

The committee also made meaningful progress in strengthening post-award follow-up communication and support by developing a process to engage in periodic communication with grant recipients during and after the funded project's completion. These processes include tracking research completion and dissemination, gathering recipient feedback, and formalizing survey completion as an expectation for future award dispositions. In this way, the committee will be able to monitor, support, and promote work that has been tangibly supported through the Excellence in Counseling Research Grants Program. Lastly, the committee is actively making adjustments to relevant webpages to improve clarity for current and prospective research grant applicants.



CSI COMMITTEE UPDATES

Leading with Integrity and Passion: An Update from the CSI Leadership Fellows and Interns Selection and Mentoring Committee

Dr. Amy Ross (Upsilon Chi Chi), Dr. Julia Whisenhunt (Gamma Zeta),

Dr. Jake Protivnak (Eta), & Dr. Dana Levitt (Chi Sigma Mu)

Leadership Fellows and Interns Selection and Mentoring Committee

Each year since 1988, the CSI Leadership Fellowship and Internship (LFI) program has accepted a cohort of approximately 10 graduate counseling students or early-career counselor educators. The LFI program is designed to help graduate counseling students (master's and doctoral) and professionals in the early years of their counseling careers to develop leadership skills for the benefit of the Counseling profession. The CSI LFI program provides a structured and immersive leadership development experience that supports the next generation of servant leaders.

The Chi Sigma Iota International Leadership Fellows and Interns Selection and Mentoring Committee extends heartfelt thanks to the 2025-2026 Leadership Fellows and Interns (LFIs) for their service from May 1, 2025 through April 30, 2026. Following a competitive application process, two Interns and nine Fellows were selected.

2025-2026 Leadership Interns

- Nesli (Neslihan) Karakan Can, Alpha, Ohio University
- Melanie Calhoun, Chi Epsilon, Georgia State University

2025-2026 Leadership Fellows

- Christina Daou, Sigma Alpha Chi, University of Texas -San Antonio
- Dani (Daniella) Aron-Schiavone, Rho Theta, George Washington University
- Jessica Ofray, Sigma Chi Sigma, Southern Connecticut State University
- Tania Perez-Rodriguez, Upsilon Nu Chi, University of North Carolina-Greensboro
- Alec Prince, Chi Epsilon, Georgia State University
- Justen Schroeder, Theta Alpha Mu, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
- Christa Vento-Jones, Sigma Alpha Chi, University of Texas-San Antonio
- Sonah Kho, Mu Nu Tau, University of Wyoming
- Jenna Norton, Eta Upsilon Mu, Husson University



CSI COMMITTEE UPDATES

During their year of service to CSI, the 2025-2026 LFIs attended seven monthly meetings with key Professional Counseling leaders (i.e., Leader Talks). The LFI committee is exceptionally grateful to the following leaders who shared their leadership journey and wisdom.

- Dr. Kelly Duncan, ACES Executive Director
- Dr. Spencer Niles, ACES President
- Dr. Beverly Smith, BS Consulting Group
- Dr. Sonja Sutherland, CACREP Board Chair
- Dr. Elsa Soto Leggett, ACA President
- Dr. Kylie P. Dotson-Blake, NBCC President and CEO
- Dr. Sylvia Fernandez, CACREP President and CEO



In addition to participating in monthly Leader Talks, the LFIs each actively served on a CSI committee, contributing to webinar development and presentations, chapter outreach initiatives, organizational process improvements/enhancements, and ongoing research projects. Each LFI also served on a review panel (Excellence in Counseling Research Grants, Chapter Development and State / Regional Networking Grants, Awards, and/or Poster Session review panel), through which they gained experience in blinded evaluation of proposals and supported CSI's work in furthering research and member development in the counseling profession.

Moreover, the LFIs contributed to CSI's publications. Melanie Calhoun served as an Editorial Assistant with the Journal of Counseling Leadership and Advocacy and Nesli Karakan Can served as an Editorial Assistant with the Exemplar. Additionally, LFIs reviewed and/or contributed submissions to the Counselors' Bookshelf. The LFIs also completed individual projects as part of their service. In consideration of her photographic expertise, Dani Aron-Schiavone volunteered to serve as the official photographer of CSI's 40th Anniversary celebration at ACES. Some LFIs undertook the task of developing a manual for incoming LFIs, updating important member materials and brochures (e.g., Member Benefits brochure, publications flyer), and updating other existing CSI leadership manuals (e.g., Best Practices for Initiations, Chapter Leaders Manual).

Finally, all of the LFIs convened at CSI Days at ACES 2025 and supported key CSI Days Events, including the Delegate Business Meeting, cohort connections, CSI-sponsored educational sessions, CSI Poster Presentation sessions, and chapter outreach. During CSI Days, the LFIs also engaged with key CSI leaders and Past-Presidents, including CSI founder, Dr. Tom Sweeney. Special thanks to Fellow Dani Aron-Schiavone, who generously used her expert photography skills to record so many special moments of CSI's 40th anniversary.

CSI COMMITTEE UPDATES



2025-2026 LFIs with Dr. Tom Sweeney at CSI Days 2025

Neslihan Karakan Can, 2025-2026 Leadership Intern, shared that she found her LFI term rewarding, noting that she learned so much through her leadership experiences with the Exemplar and the Leadership and Professional Advocacy Committee, using descriptors of “embracing, inclusive, welcoming, encouraging, and supportive” to describe her LFI experience.

Christa Vento-Jones, 2025-2026 Leadership Fellow, really enjoyed helping out during CSI Days at the ACES conference, sharing she:

“had the opportunity to network with extraordinary servant leaders in the counseling field, and I am especially grateful to have met Dr. Sweeney, the founder of CSI. It was fulfilling to see the legacy that I could someday be a part of and affirmed my sense of purpose. Outside CSI Days, I appreciated the opportunity to work with my mentor, Dr. Matt Nice. He was instrumental in helping me apply to doctoral programs and preparing for interviews. I am so grateful to have had his guidance, and I hope to stay in contact with him after my LFI experience comes to a close. The most impactful part of this LFI experience was being able to connect with my cohort and attending the leader talks. This experience caught me at a time when I was feeling scattered and lonely in my professional life. My cohort reminded me that I was not alone in what I was going through, and I ultimately found a place where I belong. I am grateful for this journey, and I am looking forward to seeing what the future has in store.”

CSI COMMITTEE UPDATES

As the 2025-2026 LFI cohort concluded, we welcomed a new cohort of CSI LFIs for 2026-2027, all of whom have passed a competitive selection process. Their names and chapter affiliations are provided below.

2026-2027 Leadership Interns

- Brittney Carneal, Upsilon Theta, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
- Sarah Litt, Sigma Upsilon, Syracuse University

2026-2027 Leadership Fellows

- Austin LaBrot, Omega Lambda Iota, Virginia Commonwealth University
- Daniela Amoroso, Alpha Omega Mu, University of Nevada, Reno
- Delaney Hansen, Theta, Oakland University
- Fatima Leghari, Rho, University of Alabama
- Sarah Powers, Alpha Sigma Chi, Adams State University
- Sarah Streitmatter, Chi Epsilon, Georgia State University
- Zeming Wang, Upsilon Theta, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Finally, without the support of esteemed mentors, this LFI program would not be possible. Accordingly, we would like to extend heartfelt thanks to the following 2025-2026 LFI mentors:

- Dr. Peggy Ceballos, Sigma Alpha Chi, University of Texas-San Antonio
- Dr. Louisa Foss-Kelly, Sigma Chi Sigma, Southern Connecticut State University
- Dr. John Harrichand, Chi Sigma Mu, Montclair State University
- Dr. Dana Levitt, Chi Sigma Mu, Montclair State University
- Dr. Panos Markopoulos, Alpha Eta, University of New Orleans
- Dr. Matt Nice, Iota Upsilon Pi, Indiana University of Pennsylvania
- Dr. Jake Protivnak, Eta, Youngstown State University
- Dr. Devon Romero, Sigma Alpha Chi, University of Texas-San Antonio
- Dr. Keiko Sano, Omega Mu Gamma, Antioch University-Seattle
- Dr. Julie Whisenhunt, Gamma Zeta Chapter, University of West Georgia

If you are interested in applying to the CSI LFI program for 2027-2028, please visit https://www.csi-net.org/page/Awards_Individual. There, you can learn about the prerequisites and service commitments for the program. Applications will be accepted starting September 1.



CSI COMMITTEE UPDATES

CSI's Leadership and Professional Advocacy Committee: Accomplishments from the 2025-2026 Academic Year

Dr. Jennifer Niles (Omega Mu) & Dr. LeAnn Wills (Upsilon Theta)

Leadership and Professional Advocacy Committee

The Leadership & Professional Advocacy Committee (LPAC) was active throughout the 2025-2026 academic year, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to connection and engagement within the field of counseling. Grounded in servant leadership, the LPAC aims to promote advocacy and leadership development among CSI members. Our hope is to find strategies and resources that empower our fellow counselors, counselor educators, and counseling students to engage in leadership and advocacy for the counseling profession. With this goal in mind, the LPAC members met monthly to discuss our initiatives and offerings. While there were many successes throughout the year, we highlight three key achievements below.

CSI Days at ACES

The LPAC participated in CSI Days at the ACES Conference in October 2025. With multiple LPAC members in attendance, we connected with CSI members interested in committee involvement. We shared our excitement about the LPAC and our belief in the value of counseling leadership and advocacy. As a committee, we recognize that leadership and advocacy can sometimes be intimidating, particularly for new counselors! Therefore, it is our shared goal to encourage CSI members to reflect on their leadership and advocacy skills. The energizing environment at CSI Days provided a space for new connections and inspiring conversations about leadership, advocacy, and LPAC involvement. We look forward to continued engagement in this meaningful event alongside our counseling peers.

Webinars

The LPAC committee hosted a webinar titled Pathways to Leadership in Professional Counseling, featuring a panel at various stages of their leadership journeys. The discussion aimed to highlight inclusive, socially conscious approaches to connecting with CSI members and diverse communities. The panel emphasized that leadership is not one-size-fits-all; rather, it takes numerous forms, all of which are vital to advancing our work with clients, students, communities, and the profession. They also discussed leadership as an ethical imperative within the counseling profession, highlighting that it is embedded in who we are as professional counselors and in the ethical call to be system-change agents, to promote client welfare, and to advocate through leadership.

CSI COMMITTEE UPDATES

The panel explored various leadership frameworks to guide one's practice and shared personal reflections on their leadership involvement, including organizational involvement, supervision, mentorship, and policy engagement. They shared practical strategies for getting involved, including identifying your own leadership goals, actively engaging in opportunities relevant to those goals, and committing to ethical and culturally responsive practices, prompting reflection on how you see your leadership centering on client, student, or community welfare.

Attendee feedback reflected the value of having a panel with representatives from varying career levels, from pre-licensed to established counselor educators. Participants valued practical examples and authentic reflections on the hills and valleys associated with beginning leadership involvement. We are grateful for the panel's time!

Heroes and Advocacy Agent Interviews

Throughout the year, multiple LPAC members facilitated and published new [Professional Counselor Advocacy Heroes Interviews](#) and [Advocacy Agent Interviews](#) with inspiring counseling leaders. Our interviewees included Dr. Casey Barrio Minton, Dr. Jamian Coleman, Dr. Isabel Farrell, Dr. John Harrichand, Dr. Gary Patton, and Dr. Maddie Stevens, each of whom has had a significant impact on the counseling profession through their leadership and advocacy. Across each interview, the LPAC members noted that the leaders spoke to themes of encouragement, collaboration, hope, connection, and dedication. Each interview highlights the unique and valuable ways each counseling leader has shaped our profession and the myriad ways their work has benefited clients and communities. The Heroes and Advocacy Agent Interviews underscore the unique opportunities counselors have to make a difference in the world around us. We continue to be grateful for and inspired by their leadership and advocacy! Members can read the published Heroes and Advocacy Agent Interviews on [CSI's website](#).

As the LPAC committee looks to the future, we aim to continue offering timely, relevant, and helpful webinars for CSI members. We also hope to invite member input on topics they feel are particularly relevant and needed for leadership development and advocacy, allowing us to better meet the evolving needs. We strive to expand opportunities for member engagement across various communication channels, including social media platforms. At the heart of our work is remaining responsive to the emerging needs of the counseling profession and of the CSI membership.





EXEMPLAR

Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International

The CSI Exemplar is published three times a year by Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International (CSI). *The Exemplar* is grounded in the mission and vision of CSI, and is thereby an apolitical publication. CSI and/or *The Exemplar* Senior Editor reserve the right to determine mission fit of all submitted material and to edit and/or reject all copy accordingly. Material submitted by a contributor is the expression of the contributor and is not necessarily the official position of *The Exemplar* or CSI.

FALL/WINTER 2026 THEME: Hope through History: Legislative Advocacy, Leadership, and Safeguarding the Profession

The Fall/Winter issue will focus on the theme “Hope through History: Legislative Advocacy, Leadership, and Safeguarding the Profession” to promote understanding of the legislative efforts and history of our CSI leaders in establishing the profession that can guide our advocacy in safeguarding the profession today.

Please submit full submissions by **September 18th, 2026** using the [Exemplar Submission Form linked here](#) and at https://www.csi-net.org/page/Exemplar_Submission.

Full submissions should address the edition theme within one of the following columns:

- Chapter Happenings, 400-500 words;
- Student Success, 1,300 to 1,700 words;
- Counselors’ Corner, 1,300 to 1,700 words;
- Educational Advances, 1,300 to 1,700 words;
- Chapter Resources, 400 to 650 words;
- Excellence in the Field, 1,300 to 1,700 words;
- Wellness Counseling, 1,300 to 1,700 words; or
- Personal Stories, 400 to 650 words.

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