



EXEMPLAR

Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International

LOOKING BACK, LOOKING FORWARD: THE ENDURING DEVOTION OF CHI SIGMA IOTA



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CSI Headquarters Update.....3

CSI Days at ACES: 40th Anniversary Celebration.....7

Special Feature: The First Student Member of CSI.....10

Excellence in the Field.....11

Chapter Happenings.....18

Counselors’ Bookshelf.....26

Call for Proposals.....29

References.....30

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Chi Sigma Iota Headquarters Update

by Dr. Holly J. Hartwig Moorhead

CSI Chief Executive Officer

Thank you to every member who has celebrated Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International's 40th anniversary this fall – through submitting photos, attending and contributing to 2025-26 CSI Days events at the October 2025 ACES Conference in Philadelphia, and being part of chapter events that further our shared mission to promote excellence in counseling during this noteworthy benchmark for our Society.



In Dr. Jake Protivnak's article within this issue, you can read about how members from more than 180 chapters connected with one another in Philadelphia, and with almost half of all forty CSI presidents who have served during the Society's history. CSI thanks the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) for welcoming CSI to be part of the conference with record-breaking attendance and a pervasive energy of connection, celebration, and commitment to mission throughout two days of events. Thank you to every member who gave of their time and talents to lead, serve, and build community during this special event for our Society! Learn how to access photos taken during CSI Days events, and feel free to share your photos too within CSI's GuestCam event (accessed through CSI's LinkTr.ee).



Our mission is 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.



Although 2025-26 CSI Days are over, our collective work continues – with more celebrations to come through the year. Here’s a snapshot of what CSI Committees are working on as fall is underway. Interested in serving on a CSI committee, review panel, or editorial team to give back and connect with other counselors who value service? Learn more about the servant leadership opportunities within CSI and complete the online [Volunteer interest](#) Form to get connected.

During the recent 2025-26 CSI Days events, the **CSI Awards Committee** celebrated recipients of CSI’s 2024-25 awards during the CSI Awards Recognition Ceremony. The submission window is now closed for this year’s [2025-26 individual and chapter awards](#) and the committee is actively reviewing applicants/nominations.

The Chapter Development Committee has welcomed Dr. Chris LaFever, Lambda Sigma Mu-Florida State University chapter, as incoming committee chair and thanks Dr. Jim McMullen, Omega Zeta-Walden University chapter, for his 6 years of service as committee chair. The committee hosted Chapter Leaders training virtually in Spring 2025 and in-person at 2025-26 CSI Days and is preparing another virtual Chapter Leaders Training in Spring 2026 and expanded Chapter Leaders Trainings for the new year. You can connect with information and resources developed by the committee by accessing the [April 2025 Chapter Mentorship recorded webinar](#) and joining the committee for a collaborative webinar with the Counselor Community Engagement Committee in Spring 2026 on the topic of supporting chapter activities and program development. In addition to these supports for chapter leaders, the Chapter Development Committee is available to provide direct support for chapter officers and CFAs for chapter development, membership recruitment, and initiations upon request.

The Chapter Faculty Advisors Committee also conducted CFA trainings both virtually in Spring 2025 and in-person during CSI Days and will host another virtual CFA Training in Spring 2026. Due to the successful start of the CFA Mentorship Program, the committee continues to grow this program intended to connect newer CFAs paired with more experienced CFAs for 1:1 mentoring in navigating issues of chapter development, membership, guiding chapter officers, and bylaws compliance. To apply to participate in the CFA Mentorship program as a mentor or mentee, contact admin@csi-net.org while applications are currently being accepted. To further the committee’s mission to provide direct support to CFAs, current CFAs are invited to provide feedback on specific support needs and interests within the online [CFA Survey](#).

CSI’s Counselor Community Engagement Committee has welcomed Dr. Kate Worley, Alpha Omega Nu-Stockton University, as incoming committee chair and expresses gratitude to Dr. Taylor Irvine, Beta Rho Chi-Florida Atlantic University, for her past service as committee chair. Members of both the CCE and Chapter Development Committee developed a webinar on Community Engagement chapter programs and activities as one of the ways they are furthering their charge to provide direct support for chapter officers and CFAs for chapter programs that emphasize community engagement. The committee also welcomes chapter leaders and CFAs to submit a [Chapter Highlights](#) nomination to recognize chapters that have unique/outstanding programs, initiatives, and activities to share knowledge and ideas between chapters.

On behalf of CSI, the **Excellence in Counseling Research Grants Committee** awarded \$15,000 in Excellence in Counseling Research Grants last year and plans to award \$20,000 this year with an emphasis on outcome and practice-focused research. Among the to-be-funded categories, preference will be specified for Leadership Research that advances Professional Counselor Identity, including work related to CACREP accreditation. Grant applications are accepted from September 1 through October 15 annually. Look for forthcoming spotlights showcasing grant recipients' completed (published/presented) research work.

The **Leadership and Professional Advocacy Committee** has welcomed Dr. Jenny Niles, Omega Mu-College of William & Mary, as incoming chair with thanks to Dr. Carla Adkison Johnson, Mu Beta-Western Michigan University, who has served as chair. The committee has been hard at work developing and publishing new interviews with CSI [Advocacy Agents](#) and [Advocacy Heroes](#), as well as developing webinars focusing on supporting a strong Professional Counselor Identity and relevant member resources. In collaboration with CACREP, the committee also is re-imagining the CSI-CACREP Leadership Contest with a planned launch in fall 2026. Stay tuned for more details.

The two interns and 9 fellows selected this year by the **Leadership Fellows and Interns Committee**, represent both master's and doctoral students from diverse professional counseling experiences. During the year the committee works to provide LFIs opportunities to develop individual leadership skills through committee membership, review panel contributions, and publication support. We appreciate all that the LFIs contributed to the success of CSI Days. The committee now reviewing applications for the [2026-27 LFI cohort](#).

The **Poster Sessions Committee** has welcomed Dr. Kristi Mouttet, Mu Chi Alpha-Messiah University, as incoming committee chair and thanks Dr. Panos Markopoulos, Alpha Eta-University of New Orleans, for 6 years of service as chair. The committee hosted two poster sessions at CSI Days at ACES, accepting 30 CSI Research Posters and 19 Chapter Legacy Posters. Look for announcements coming soon in spring 2026 to announce the call for proposals for 2026-27 CSI Days poster sessions.

Focused on support and retention of professional members within our Society, the **Professional Members Committee** is developing a webinar on clinical excellence especially for professional members and graduating CSI student members. Members who will be graduating soon are invited to stay involved with CSI by connecting with the Professional Members committee and [service opportunities](#).

The **Publications Committee** has welcomed Dr. Tricia Mikolon as the Counselors' Bookshelf Section Editor for Professional Books and is now reviewing [applications for the Counselors' Bookshelf Section Editor for Music](#). Members can access the most recently published issue of CSI's Journal for Counselor Leadership and Advocacy through their [CSI Member Profile](#).



The **Wellness in Counseling Practice and Research Committee** remains committed to developing practical resources for counselors in various ways. The committee is accepting submissions to the CSI [Counselors' Wellness Toolbox](#), along with organizing wellness research citations and abstracts on the CSI website for easier member access and developing a Wellness Competency Instrument founded on the Wellness Competencies. Chapters can invite the committee to connect with their members to share chapter wellness activities, programs, and trainings. This fall, the committee is partnering with the Excellence in Counseling Research Grants Review Panel to support grant submissions in the wellness category.

As we move into the fall initiation season, we look forward to welcoming members from these newly chartered chapters and recently reactivated chapter.

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

Reactivated Chapter

Alpha Xi-University of Oklahoma Chapter

Stay up to date on CSI deadlines, opportunities, and news throughout the year by connecting across social media platforms like [Facebook](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#), and by keeping a look out for the [CSI E-News](#). Happy 40th anniversary to CSI – we're delighted to celebrate this special year together!



Celebrating 40 Years of Excellence: CSI Days at the ACES 2025 Conference

by *Dr. Jake J. Protivnak*

*Chi Sigma Iota - International, President
Eta Chapter, Youngstown State University*

CSI Days was held in conjunction with the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) 2025 National Conference, on October 10-11, 2025, in Philadelphia. In keeping with our honor society's mission to promote scholarship, research, professionalism, leadership, advocacy, and excellence in counseling, we structured our CSI Days activities to engage our membership, strengthen professional identity, and foster a sense of community among students, practicing counselors, and counselor education faculty.



This event provided an opportunity for attendees to come together and celebrate the 40th anniversary of our honor society. It was wonderful to see many of our Past Presidents and leaders attend the CSI Days events and the CSI 40th Anniversary Reception, where they connected with long-time colleagues and met new members. I was thankful that Dr. Tom Sweeney, the founder of CSI, participated in the celebration of this milestone. Thanks to his vision and the efforts of many leaders over the years, CSI has chartered more than 460 chapters and initiated membership for over 177,000 Professional Counselors.

During CSI Days, we convened the Annual Delegate Business Meeting, CSI-sponsored Research Poster presentations, Chapter Legacy Poster presentations, the JCLA Editorial Board Meeting, Chapter Faculty Advisors Training, Chapter Leaders Training, the Executive Council meeting, open committee meetings, the Leadership Fellows and Interns Orientation, and the Awards Recognition Ceremony. CSI leaders delivered three CSI-sponsored invited educational sessions on the topics of leadership and advocacy for counselor identity, legislative issues impacting the counseling profession, and best practices for supporting wellness in counselor education.

CSI also partnered with ACES on a collaborative keynote panel discussion entitled, "Mapping the Legacy of Excellence in Counselor Education: Honoring Our Past and Envisioning Our Future," which brought together the following leaders: Dr. Tom Sweeney, Founding President of Chi Sigma Iota (CSI), Past-President of ACES & ACA; Dr. Gerard Lawson, Past-President of ACES & ACA; Brian Banks, Executive Director, Policy of Advocacy Research in Counseling Center & Chief Government Affairs for the NBCC; and Dr. Victoria Kress, President-Elect of ACA and Past-President of CSI. The panel was co-moderated by Dr. Spencer Niles, President of the ACES and Past-President of CSI, and myself to provide an opportunity for these leaders to reflect on the progress of our profession and share their vision for our future.

It was gratifying to see Chi Sigma Iota's legacy come alive through the CSI members and leaders who participated in the events. I am pleased to report that we had record attendance at many of the CSI Days events. Our presence within the ACES conference offered visible affirmation of our commitment to elevating the Professional Counselor identity and supporting counselor education and supervision. I was impressed by the energy and dedication of our student members, chapter faculty advisors, and professional members who engaged deeply in discussions around how to integrate research, leadership, and service in counselor education and practice. Building on the momentum from 2025, we are excited to move forward with future CSI Days:

- **Online CSI Days – October 2026:** To accommodate the evolving ways members connect and engage, we will host virtual CSI Days event in October 2026, featuring the Annual Delegate Business Meeting, leadership training sessions, research presentations, awards, and networking opportunities accessible to our international membership. This online format broadens access and fosters inclusivity. This ensures that chapter leaders and members who are unable to travel to an in-person conference still can access and benefit from CSI's professional development and community. I encourage every chapter to plan now to attend next year's Annual Delegate Business Meeting. The online format provides an accessible way for every chapter to have a delegate's attendance recorded at least once every three years to maintain active chapter status and remain eligible to earn a chapter rebate.
- **In-Person CSI Days – October 2027:** We are already looking forward to our next major in-person gathering in October 2027. Plans already are underway for expanded opportunities for in-person interactions, chapter-to-chapter connections, and CSI-sponsored trainings to continue strengthening our honor society's presence and impact.

We are committed to ensuring that these future gatherings align with our mission and strategic goals, which are to promote scholarship, advance leadership, foster a professional identity, and nurture connections across our membership. I encourage all Chi Sigma Iota chapter leaders and members to mark their calendars for October 2026 and October 2027, engage in pre-event planning, and bring their ideas, energy, and commitment to service to these gatherings. I am thankful for the strong partnership with the leadership of ACES (e.g., Dr. Spencer Niles, ACES President; Dr. Kelly Duncan, ACES Executive Director), which enables CSI Days to be provided in-person on a biennial basis at the ACES Conference. I would also like to express gratitude to the CSI Headquarters staff (e.g., Dr. Holly Moorehead, CEO; Dr. Amy Ross, Mission Coordinator; Ms. Alicia King, Member Services Coordinator; and Ms. Allison Moore, Information Coordinator), along with the CSI Leadership Interns and Fellows (LFIs) who supported the various activities during CSI Days. Thank you to every CSI member, chapter leader, Chapter Faculty Advisor, and our ACES partners who made CSI Days at ACES 2025 a success.

We remain committed to the focus of our mission, and we are proud to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Chi Sigma Iota. I look forward to our continued journey together as we build upon this foundation and support our members who advance the Counseling profession.



Celebrating 40 Years of Excellence: CSI Days at the ACES 2025 Conference



SPECIAL FEATURE

The Very First Student Member of CSI

Dr. Thomas Sweeney, Executive Director Emeritus, Chi Sigma Iota and Neslihan Karakan, 2025-2026 CSI Leadership Intern

The first student member of the Alpha Chapter is Dr./Sr. Lois Wedl, retired lecturer/teacher, College of Saint Benedict, St. Joseph, MN. At the time, she was an Ohio University doctoral student of Dr. Jane E. Myers, founder of the Rho Chi Sigma Rehabilitation Counseling Honor Society. Dr. Tom Sweeney, having completed years as president and chair of counseling organizations including founding chair of CACREP in its first 6 years, returned to campus to chair the counselor education programs. Dr. Myers, its first rehabilitation counseling program coordinator, invited him to attend some chapter events held nights and weekends at the time.



Dr. Lois Wedl, photo credit College of St. Benedict

From these experiences, Dr. Sweeney realized that this group was much more than a social gathering; these young members were learning leadership and advocacy for their future counselees and their profession. Clearly, it is the vision and commitment that all counselors need! Unlike other professional organizations, one earns the right to be invited to membership through excellence and a commitment to continued pursuit of excellence personally and professionally. Dr. Sweeney discussed this with Dr. Myers, and she agreed a new Society was a good idea. It would be an organization whose mission and vision would be embraced and protected by its members. Forty plus years later, leaders and members still do.

Drawing on prior business and professional experience, Dr. Sweeney set about establishing bylaws, articles of incorporation and reaching out to university counselor education programs

across the country. Sr. Lois helped lick stamps and stuff hundreds of envelopes. Consequently, it came quite naturally one day when Sr. Lois asked, “so, how do I become a member?” Dr. Sweeney replied, “Write me check” and she did immediately! A short time later, Dr. Myers came into the office and learned that she would not be member number one. Both Lois and Dr. Sweeney knew that they had unintentionally acted without thinking. Of course, Dr. Myers never mentioned it and as the second president of CSI and its Executive Director years later, Sr. Lois and Dr. Myers became the closest of friends.

As president of Rho Chi Sigma in 1989, Lois accepted a motion to request a merger of their society chapters with CSI. CSI immediately welcomed their new chapters to full active status. Today, at 94 years, Dr./Sr. Lois still pursues excellence in all that she does.



EXCELLENCE IN THE FIELD**Exploring Counseling Advocacy and Legislative Interventions**

*by Dr. LeAnn N. Wills, Upsilon Theta Chapter, Austin Peay State University
& Benjamin Saubolle-Camacho, Chi Sigma Sigma Chapter, California State University Sacramento*



As professional counseling and licensure grows across the country, the question of training, supervision, licensure, and regulation of licensed professional counselors (LPC) has become an intense stage of contention. Indeed, the recent victory of LPCs with Medicare, along with the spread of the Counseling Compact, looks to provide our profession with a means of achieving a decades-long goal: licensure portability (Kaplan & Kraus, 2018). However, the regulations and legislative changes accompanying these shifts are generating sites of conflict. Some of the conflict revolving around professional counseling comes from those proposing other means of accreditation. Some argue counseling's exclusivity limits access and collaboration (Brady-Amoon & Keefe-Cooperman, 2017), while others emphasize the importance of the historical need to build distinct training and licensure systems (Lawson, 2016). In other words, material, legislative, and regulatory conditions necessitated the creation of a profession intensely focused on advocacy and legislative action (Moorhead et al., 2023). This debate is likely to continue in the following years, especially given the calls for increased access to mental health care.

The Project

To examine the current landscape of advocacy within the counseling profession, the authors conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews with five distinguished leaders in counselor education during their 2024-2025 CSI Leadership Fellowship. This project was inspired by several key developments in the profession, especially Moorehead and colleagues' (2023) article, which emphasized the integral role of advocacy of defining and strengthening the identity of professional counselors. Other key developments included the continued spread of the Counseling Compact, Medicare's recognition of Licensed Professional Counselors, and Chi Sigma Iota's ongoing grassroots and national legislative advocacy campaigns. We interviewed six CSI members selected for their diverse leadership roles, alignment with CSI's mission, and commitment to professional advocacy. Guided by six core questions, we elicited in-depth insights on their perspectives on the state of advocacy, organizational roles, historical movements, barriers, and resources. We thematically analyzed themes to capture patterns and unique perspectives.

Current Advocacy Landscape

Our interviewees began by reflecting on key historical wins for the counseling profession that emerged from professional advocacy efforts. The majority of participants discussed the achievement of licensure in all 50 states and recognition of professional counselors from the Veterans Administration as key victories within recent memory. Each interviewee also provided a more local history that grounded their experience as an advocate and leader, discussing specific regional and state advocacy efforts. In turn, however, participants tended to cite these differences in local, state, and federal policies which regulate professional counselors as a major barrier to nationally-coordinated advocacy efforts. Another challenge included protecting the integrity of professional counseling identity against interprofessional influence: “[A]nd when I moved [to a new state], I entered this space where counselors were not at all valued. It was very heavy social work, psychology, MFT... and so I had to explain to people who I was as a professional counselor.” In the same vein, another participant cited their efforts to “make sure that people understand what it means to be a professional counselor,” speaking to the need to educate the public on our scope of practice. One interviewee captured all of these themes, along with the inherent pressures being placed upon Licensed Professional Counselors nationally: “We've worked so hard to establish ourselves as a unique profession... I think the threat is inherently that we lose our identity, that we lose our distinction, that we lose our special area of practice. I think it's kind of at the core of everything that we're concerned about right now.”

Cross-Organizational Efforts

The interviewees unanimously highlighted the significance of organizations coming together to strengthen advocacy efforts. One interviewee stated: “I think it would be wonderful if we could join together to do this work, and in so doing I think we'll be stronger.” Collaboration ought to influence all of our efforts, including the biggest undertakings by the counseling profession happening right now. One participant, in speaking about the Compact: “I think if those [Compact conversations] could be more thoughtful and could include a lot more input from different stakeholders, I think that's important. As a matter of fact, I experienced that in my state, we needed to make absolutely sure we were seeking input and support of all the stakeholders.” Another interviewee reminded us to focus on the essence of our advocacy: “So what we're doing is not just for us. It's for the people we serve.”

Emotions and Values

All interviewees emphasized the importance of acknowledging emotions and values as a crucial aspect of leading advocacy efforts. Rather than viewing advocacy efforts as solely a set of actions, they framed it as a deeply personal and values-driven practice, requiring reflection and connection to one's sense of purpose. It is crucial to keep our mission - our “why” - at the forefront of our efforts. As one interviewee shared, “...it kind of goes back to values and what we value and staying connected to that mission and value set is really key. Because if we lose sight of who we are and where we're going, we're gonna struggle.” This recognition parallels the process of recognizing countertransference within counseling sessions, where, as counselors, we must remain aware of our own reactions and emotional responses and monitor their impact on professional judgment. Leaders engaging in advocacy must also be attentive to the emotional dimensions to increase awareness of how they impact their leadership and advocacy within their role.

Multi-Level Advocacy

Additionally, our interviewees highlighted that advocacy occurs at multiple levels and takes various forms, utilizing the collective power of many to enhance these efforts. Each level of advocacy plays a critical role in building momentum, so that when integrated, overall advocacy efforts are amplified. Within this, engaging all stakeholders (e.g., counselor educators, practitioners, specialty areas, community members) enables advocacy efforts to thrive. As one interviewee shared in reference to partnering with all stakeholders, “I think our voices are louder together than they are apart.” Leveraging collaborative opportunities, engaging in advocacy across all levels, and remembering what the core reason for the effort is are essential.

A Call to Action

So, how does one begin advocacy efforts? First, it’s essential to recognize the urgent need for mobilization. An interviewee captured this concern: “...I’m worried that people are moving into a place of complacency because they feel that there’s really nothing we can do.” In turbulent times around funding and policy, we cannot shy away from advocacy: this is precisely when our voice matters most.

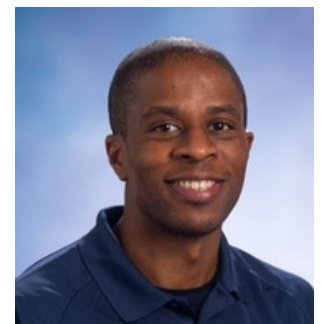
Advocacy takes on different forms. Coordinated efforts across local, state, regional, and national levels are essential. Whether through CSI resources like the Leadership and Professional Advocacy Committee, chapter-led initiatives, engagement with policymakers, and grassroots efforts, counselor educators have a responsibility to model the advocacy and professional identity desired in the next generation of counselors. Doing so helps ensure that “professional counselor” becomes a protected term everywhere.



EXCELLENCE IN THE FIELD

Excellence in Service, Leadership, and Advocacy with the CSI Epsilon Tau CPCE/NCE Exam Prep Program

*by Rocky Nguyen, Amanda Ly, Ana Castro, Martha Morales, and Dr. Karl Mitchell
Epsilon Tau Chapter, East Texas A&M University*



During the 2024–2025 academic year, the Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) Epsilon Tau Chapter at East Texas A&M University implemented the CPCE and NCE Exam Preparation Program to address the needs of counseling students preparing for the Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE) and the National Counselor Examination (NCE). Recognizing the prevalence of test-related anxiety, stress, and isolation among students, chapter leaders developed an eight-week program encompassing the eight core content areas. The program incorporated structured study sessions, collaborative review, test-taking strategies, and mock examinations designed to simulate the testing environment.

To promote accessibility, participation was extended to both CSI members and non-members, with the addition of virtual sessions to complement in-person meetings. This initiative exemplified excellence in service, leadership, and advocacy by fostering academic competence, professional development, and peer support. Preliminary outcomes indicated increased student engagement and reduced anxiety among students who attended based on their feedback provided. The program highlights Epsilon Tau's commitment to advancing the counseling profession by equipping students with knowledge, confidence, and support as they prepare for licensure and professional success.

Inaugural CSI Epsilon Tau Chapter CPCE and NCE Exam Preparation Program

The CSI Epsilon Tau Chapter leaders introduced the concept of the CPCE/NCE Exam Preparation Program to advertise the revival of Chi Sigma Iota at East Texas A&M University, as well as share and raise awareness about the experiences associated with exam and licensure preparation. The initiative of CPCE/NCE originated through collective conversation among the student leaders of Epsilon Tau Chapter. Each leader shared personal experiences with exam preparation, and overwhelmingly related to feeling symptoms of stress, anxiety, and loneliness. The common themes highlighted the emotional and psychological challenges often associated with preparing for high-stakes examinations such as the CPCE and NCE.



The chapter leaders described the pressure of reviewing extensive content areas within a short timeframe, the uncertainty of exam expectations, and the difficulty of balancing preparation with other academic, professional, and personal responsibilities. By openly discussing these experiences, the chapter leaders not only validated the struggles that many counseling students face but also recognized a need for structured support and community engagement. This collective acknowledgment of shared challenges became the foundation for the CPCE/NCE Exam Preparation Program, emphasizing the importance of reducing test-related anxiety, fostering peer support, and promoting both academic and professional growth among graduate-level counseling students.

The committee members completed many steps in establishing the current foundation of the preparation program. Starting from reaching out to campuses associated with East Texas A&M University to occupy a consistent location, advertising the program to graduate-level students through social media, establishing a form of inclusiveness for non-members of CSI, and brainstorming various preparation materials and activities to help promote and effectively facilitate the review of professional materials. Following these steps, the initial session shed light on some gaps of improvement and limitations to be addressed in the future but sparked a flame bright enough to interest and motivate the students. The summer preparation program highlighted the limitations of in-person sessions, as well as the difficulties in effectively reviewing each core area within a limited time span. In resolution, the committee members implemented joint virtual sessions, in addition to in-person sessions, and limited the number of topics reviewed in each core area.

Excellence in Service

During the 2024–2025 academic year, the chapter provided master-level counseling students with structured in-person opportunities to prepare for the CPCE and NCE examinations. This service was offered to all counseling students at East Texas A&M University regardless of CSI membership status, ensuring accessibility and support. The study sessions were designed to address student needs by offering collaborative review of exam content, test-taking strategies, and a supportive environment that fosters peer connection. In response to participant feedback, the chapter is exploring ways to refine the study materials and expand access through virtual options, further enhancing inclusivity and effectiveness.

This initiative was led by two chapter leaders who had recently taken both exams and recognized the challenges students face in preparing for them. Their vision was to expand opportunities for current counseling students to prepare alongside peers, build a sense of community, and alleviate the stress and anxiety often associated with high-stakes testing. By doing so, the chapter actively promoted academic success, professional development, and wellness among future counseling professionals.

Excellence in Leadership

The initiative of the CPCE/NCE Exam Preparation Program demonstrates exceptional leadership by aligning directly with the CSI and chapter's mission to promote scholarship, research, professionalism, advocacy, and excellence in the counseling field. The chapter leaders not only recognized a critical academic need but also proactively created a collaborative environment that fosters peer connection, professional growth, and student wellness.

The decision to provide this service to all counseling students at East Texas A&M University, including those without CSI membership, demonstrates a dedication to service and advocacy. Moreover, we aim to serve all future counseling students by enabling access to essential resources to help them prepare for these high-stakes exams.

During this journey, the leaders modeled the morals and values of the counseling profession by sharing knowledge, reducing test-related anxiety, and encouraging academic and clinical excellence. Based on the feedback received during the summer study group sessions, the leaders incorporated a virtual study session in the fall, demonstrating flexibility and action-oriented qualities characteristic of effective leadership and counseling.

Advocacy

The CSI Epsilon Tau Chapter's CPCE/NCE Exam Preparation Program advocates for the counseling profession through providing additional support to counselors-in-training, recognizing the high attainment of counselors in pursuit of academic and clinical excellence, and promoting professional networking between counselors to facilitate the progression of evidence-based practice and professional accountability. The preparation program establishes a safe space for counselors to cope with the struggles of test anxiety. It provides alternative perspectives in reviewing professional material by facilitating camaraderie in preparing for their program exit (CPCE) and licensing exam (NCE). In addition, the chapter emphasizes the efforts and achievements of counselors by awarding certifications and professional validation to those pursuing various levels and specializations of licensure, thereby supporting the initial process of obtaining licensure.

Implications for Continued Excellence in the Field

CSI's Epsilon Tau Chapter ensures that students participating in the CPCE/NCE Exam Preparation Program receive accurate, current, and comprehensive study materials. Chapter leaders utilize a variety of learning resources, including quizzes, games, mnemonic devices, and other memory aids, as well as question deconstruction techniques, to provide students with ample methods for obtaining and retaining information. The Epsilon Tau Chapter provides students with two opportunities per semester (pretest and post-test) to take mock exams in a simulated exam environment. This allows for a realistic exam experience in preparation for the actual exams, reducing the potential for test-day anxiety related to uncertainty and logistical mishaps, such as forgetting to bring two forms of identification. Additionally, counseling students can utilize their exam results to inform their study process and focus on areas of improvement. This process of identifying and strengthening weaker areas helps to hold students to the standards of professional knowledge that is expected of counselors. Since the implementation of this program, East Texas A&M University counseling students have achieved a 100% passing rate on the CPCE. By continuing to implement, refine, and expand this program, the Epsilon Tau Chapter will improve the quality and efficacy of exam preparation support offered to counseling students.

The CSI Epsilon Tau Chapter takes the initiative to support the success of current and future counseling students. The CPCE/NCE Exam Preparation Program promotes continued excellence in the counseling field by reducing symptoms of test anxiety, emphasizing and ensuring accountability for professional knowledge in counselors, and promoting professional networking to establish and maintain a supportive community.

Conclusion

Through the CPCE/NCE Exam Preparation Program, CSI's Epsilon Tau Chapter demonstrates excellence in service, leadership, and advocacy for the counseling profession. In alignment with Chi Sigma Iota's mission of promoting scholarship, research, professionalism, advocacy, and excellence in the field of counseling (About CSI, n.d.), the preparation program serves graduate-level students by offering collaborative review of exam content and test-taking strategies to help reduce test-taking anxiety. The program also supports prior research that indicates collaborative testing helps reduce test anxiety and improve test scores (Bovee, 2016; Pandey & Kapitanoff, 2011).

Leadership throughout the program is exemplified through the sharing of knowledge, encouragement of academic and clinical excellence, material refinement, and exploration of virtual options to empower students while strengthening the counseling community and upholding the high standards of the profession. Furthermore, holding a chapter leadership role is associated with enhancing counselor professional identity (CPI; Cureton et al., 2019). Participation in the program has offered meaningful opportunities to practice leadership behaviors, such as guiding discussion, modeling ethical reasoning, and fostering inclusive dialogue, directly supporting the ongoing development of a strong and cohesive CPI.

The program advocates for the counseling profession by providing a safe space for counselors-in-training to receive education and support in preparing for licensure. This safe space provides an opportunity for counselors to professionally network and hold one another accountable, thereby facilitating the standardization and ethical use of evidence-based practices in counseling. Providing a group-study environment allows for the trust level to increase throughout the study program process (Gültekin et al., 2011). In closing, the goal of the CSI Epsilon Tau CPCE/NCE Exam Preparation Program is to prepare future counselors for full licensure while supporting Chi Sigma Iota's dedication to promoting knowledgeable, ethical, and empowered professionals in the field.

If you are a faculty advisor/CFA wanting to share this opportunity with your students or a current member of CSI wanting to join as you prepare for the CPCE or NCE exam, please contact us at: epsilontauhonorsociety@etamu.edu for more information and details about the next study sessions. All CSI chapters, members and non-member students are welcome during the Fall, Spring, and/or Summer semesters of exam preparation. Updates will also be shared on the CSI Epsilon Tau Chapter website (https://www.csi-net.org/group/epsilon_tau) and Instagram page (@[epsilontaucsi](https://www.instagram.com/epsilontaucsi)). Good luck with your exams and future counseling career!



CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

Looking Back, Looking Forward: Keeping Wellness Alive in Busy Times

by Dr. Lamar Muro & Ceyda Haggan

Alpha Rho Chapter

Texas Woman's University

Wellness is foundational to this history of CSI and remains an important part of its Strategic Plan. In keeping with professional literature, this includes a commitment to wellness within the counseling profession, and a call to integrate wellness within counselor preparation (Foster, 2010; Wolf et al., 2012).



Over the course of CSI's history, certain studies have also revealed unique challenges for novice counselors, such as emotional exhaustion (Bilot, 2012) and heightened stress during clinical internships (Branco & Patton, 2020). While many strategies have been proposed to support wellness training among counseling students, such as classes and seminars (Roach & Young, 2007; Stalnaker-Shofner & Manyam, 2014), self-care plans (Branco & Patton, 2020), assessment tools (Barden et al., 2015; Harris, 2010), supervision goals (Meany-Walen et al., 2016), and wellness portfolios (Wolf et al., 2012); what often remains are shortages of time, for students and faculty alike. And given the demands of graduate programs, any additional task can often feel burdensome.

In response to this challenge, the Alpha Rho Chapter at Texas Woman's University created a brief, ten-minute video, grounded in the Indivisible Self Wellness Model (Myers & Sweeney, 2004) where CSI members' share personal stories and tips that correspond with the Five Wellness Factors, for each program stage. The training offers tips for beginning the program, starting clinicals and preparing to graduate, and includes a summary of wellness ethics, policies and resources.

In this training, the Faculty Advisor offers a brief overview of CSI's commitment to wellness, introduces the Indivisible Self Wellness Model (Myers & Sweeney, 2004) and the Five Wellness Factors, including the Essential, Social, Physical, Creative and Coping Self; as well as the special scales addressing safety at personal and systemic levels. Then, each officer describes an experience in which a particular wellness factor assisted them during a particular program stage, along with their most valuable wellness tip. For example, one student describes meeting with faculty to support their exploration of the Essential Self while taking initial courses that prompted new awareness. Another describes rest, nutrition and daily movement to stay energized and present with clients when navigating clinicals.

Other stories included an accountability circle for social support when students have minimal time for social engagement, arts and craft projects for grounding and creative expression, self-care and personal counseling to support the Coping Self, and advocacy or identity-based communities to address the special scales. In closing, the Faculty Advisor offers a summary of wellness policies related to counselor ethics and campus resources for wellness and support.

The training has been shared with incoming students enrolled in the introductory Professional Orientation course, as well as during official CSI meetings. At its conclusion, students are also asked to complete a feedback survey. Thus far, feedback indicates that respondents are very satisfied with the training. Most enjoyed hearing about the personal experiences of their peers, and the challenges unique to each program stage. Respondents also expressed appreciation for “the most valuable wellness tip” offered by each presenter, as a practical takeaway from their personal stories and experiences. All respondents found the presenters to be well-informed on the topics, and reported the training to be practical, relatable, and valuable. Suggested improvements include an opportunity for engagement with the presenters, such as through a panel or group discussion, which can easily be added as a follow up to the video during class or CSI meetings.

The Alpha Rho Chapter at Texas Woman’s University is striving to keep wellness alive during busy times! Through the creation of a short wellness video grounded in research, they offered personal and relatable wellness training and support in a time-manageable format. Please consider supporting your chapter through a similar wellness project.



Alpha Rho Chapter Officers



CHAPTER HAPPENINGS**Revitalizing Counselor Leadership: The
Reactivation of Gamma Eta Omega Chapter at
Florida Gulf Coast University**

by Dr. Sherdene Brown Simpson
Gamma Eta Omega Chapter
Florida Gulf Coast University

The Gamma Eta Omega Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) at Florida Gulf Coast University was reactivated after nearly a decade of inactivity. Its long-term goal was to mentor future counseling leaders in advocacy, leadership, and mentoring; its short-term goal was to guide current leaders to positively influence the chapter's direction. Reactivation meant building a foundation for longevity and ensuring the chapter would not lapse into dormancy again.



To support this vision, the chapter hosted a two-day leadership retreat for new officers, fostering team cohesion and planning for the upcoming year. The chapter focused on promoting its return and connecting with other CSI leaders across Florida. Soon after reactivation, Gamma Eta Omega joined the Florida CSI Collaboration, a statewide partnership among university chapters dedicated to leadership development and mentorship through annual conferences.

For its first major contribution, the chapter's faculty advisors and officers proposed a presentation on clinical supervision, an area aligned with their scholarly interests and professional aspirations as future counselor educators. All the officers, enrolled in their third internship course, collaborated on the session "Let's Talk: Effective and Ineffective Supervision," which examined supervision competencies from the perspective of advanced counseling students. The presentation explored the role of competency in clinical supervision. Using constructs from the ACES Best Practices in Clinical Supervision (2011) and the Competency-Based Model (Falender & Shafranske, 2004), the discussion encouraged CSI student leaders to engage critically with the qualities of effective supervision.

Panelists emphasized how supervision bridges classroom learning with real-world practice and underscored supervisors' ethical responsibility to safeguard client welfare, as outlined in the ACA Code of Ethics (2014). They highlighted supervisors' roles as gatekeepers who ensure counselor trainees' competence and readiness for independent practice. A key topic was the parallel process in counselor training (Getz, 1999) - how supervision mirrors counseling itself through stages such as building the working alliance, goal setting, addressing diversity and advocacy, maintaining ethics, and conducting evaluation. By examining both effective and ineffective supervision experiences, the panel illuminated how supervision quality directly impacts counselor development.

Ineffective supervision was described as hindering self-efficacy and skill growth, while effective supervision enhanced ethical awareness, professional identity, and confidence. The interactive discussion modeled reflective leadership by inviting participants to evaluate supervision practices through both theoretical and experiential lenses. It also encouraged a culture of feedback, transparency, and mutual accountability, key elements of leadership within counseling education.

The revival of the Gamma Eta Omega Chapter signifies more than the return of a student organization; it represents a renewed commitment to professional excellence in counseling. Through leadership, advocacy, and mentorship, the chapter is cultivating a culture of lifelong learning and ethical responsibility that reflects the highest standards of the profession. The Let's Talk presentation exemplified how emerging counselor leaders can bridge the gap between academic preparation and professional application. By engaging in dialogue about ethical supervision, competency development, and reflective feedback, members modeled the leadership and critical thinking essential for sustaining the counseling profession. The chapter demonstrated that supervision is not merely an evaluative task but a relational and ethical practice that shapes counselors' personal and professional identities.

Looking ahead, Gamma Eta Omega's involvement in the Florida CSI Collaboration reinforces how partnerships can expand leadership impact beyond a single campus. By working collectively to promote scholarship, leadership, and service, members strengthen CSI's mission and advance equitable, ethical practices across the counseling field. Participation in statewide initiatives will continue to prepare members for leadership roles that influence policy, education, and community engagement.

Ultimately, the chapter's reactivation embodies the essence of counselor leadership - vision, mentorship, and intentional growth. Gamma Eta Omega's efforts to build sustainable structures for leadership development demonstrate a deep understanding of what it means to serve with purpose. As the chapter continues to evolve, it invites current and future members to engage actively in shaping its legacy, ensuring that its devotion to advocacy, ethical practice, and excellence endures for generations to come.



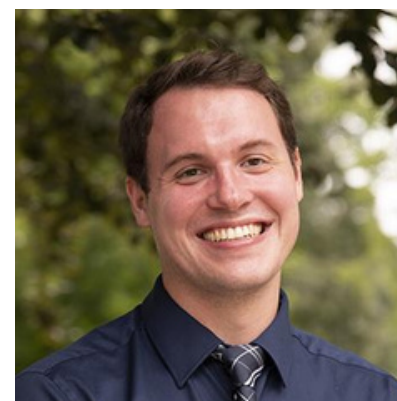
CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

Past Steps, Future Strides: A CSI Chapter's Journey Toward Lasting Impact

by *Dr. Amber Samuels and Dr. Erik Messinger*

Eta Chi Chapter, Hood College

Since its establishment at Hood College in 2019, Eta Chi has organized chapter activities around developing professional capacity, engaging members, and facilitating community outreach.



Professional Development

Professional development priorities in Eta Chi have been shaped by early faculty–student research collaborations, including the chapter book club initiative, supported by the “Beyond the Pages” Chapter Development Grant from CSI. Joint presentations at CSI’s national conferences have routinely paired Eta Chi members with Chapter Faculty Advisors, giving students meaningful development through presenting research alongside faculty. These conference experiences promote patterns of scholarly engagement and professional networking that benefit students throughout their careers. One member, reflecting on their leadership role, shared that the chapter’s flexibility allowed for events members valued, and emphasized the benefit of alumni engagement: “Our members love to learn from alumni, so we organize guest speakers. It connects right back to the idea of having a network in your profession of people to learn from and refer to.”

Member Engagement

As a small chapter at a private liberal-arts institution, Eta Chi encounters both strengths and challenges in sustaining member engagement. The compact size encourages close mentorship and collaborative projects while requiring continuous effort to involve new members and balance leadership responsibilities. Officer transitions are approached as learning opportunities: outgoing leaders document concrete lessons learned, both successful strategies and unresolved difficulties, for successors, promoting transparency rather than perfection. Reflective practice is a foundational aspect of Eta Chi’s member experience. Leadership and alumni regularly revisit previous years’ initiatives, asking not only what worked, but how the process can support future member leadership.

When asked about what it means to be part of a small chapter and how it has shaped involvement and connection with others, one member described how being in a small chapter helped them form closer relationships and emphasized the value of “quality over quantity,” stating, “Being part of this chapter has shaped and influenced my connection with others because I firmly believe in ‘quality over quantity’ when it comes to relationships with the people I care about.”

Community Impact

Eta Chi's approach to community engagement reflects both its scale and its commitment to meaningful participation. As a small chapter, the group prioritizes initiatives that balance available resources with significant local impact. A central example is the annual Holiday Toy Drive, developed in the chapter's initial years and refined each cycle. By focusing on needs identified through direct feedback and ongoing conversations with campus and Frederick community partners, Eta Chi ensures relevant and targeted support. Other outreach programs, such as community clean-ups, mental health awareness campaigns, and practicum and internship mentorship, are designed collaboratively with attention to community context, student interest, and continued engagement.

When asked about how experiences with Eta Chi's service programs shaped views on community involvement, one member shared, "My experience with Eta Chi has influenced my views on service because it's inspired me to get more involved in my own community in different ways. Giving back to the community and helping others is a big reason why I wanted to go into the counseling profession. Seeing the ways I can give back/make a difference has made me think of creative ways I can continue doing so in my future career." Additionally, when discussing the impact of alumni support and cross-generational connections, a member observed, "We have been fortunate enough to have alumni come back and hold seminars for our current members, which has been invaluable as they have built upon our shared academic background with real-world experience."

Linking History and Strategic Planning

Strategic planning in Eta Chi is iterative and informed by previous achievements and challenges. Records of past events and member reflections evaluate and adjust current programming, including mentorship structures and guest speaker selection. The chapter maintains continuity in central practices while adapting to shifts in professional expectations and local context, demonstrating an ongoing approach to integrating tradition with adaptation.



CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

Reigniting the Molloy University CSI Chapter in a Time of Advocacy and Need in the Long Island Communities

*by Amanda Cannarozzo, Dr. Raymond Blanchard, and Dr. Orsolya Varkonyi
Mu Chi Nu Chapter, Molloy University*



Molloy University's Mu Chi Nu chapter of Chi Sigma Iota has been reactivated this year. As the fall semester kicks off, Mu Chi Nu is excited to announce our upcoming events and how our chapter plans to contribute to Chi Sigma Iota's 40th Anniversary celebration. In alignment with this year's theme of Looking Back, Looking Forward: The Enduring Devotion of Chi Sigma Iota, our chapter's upcoming events demonstrate commitment to Chi Sigma Iota's mission of promoting scholarship, research, professionalism, leadership, advocacy, and excellence in counseling by engaging the local Rockville Centre community and nearby New York City boroughs.

To practice advocacy in the field of counseling, our chapter will be participating in a walk held by the National Alliance on Mental Illness, called NAMI Walks. By walking alongside the community in this event, Mu Chi Nu will be engaging in advocacy and reducing the stigma surrounding mental health. Our chapter will also be engaging the community through partnering with God's Love We Deliver around the holiday season. This event will allow for members of our chapter to volunteer to deliver medically tailored meals to those in need in New York City. We will also be hosting a panel discussion on "Advocacy in the Counseling Field" to encourage dialogue surrounding topics such as how to best support those that are struggling to advocate for themselves. This also demonstrates Mu Chi Nu's devotion to upholding the missions of leadership and excellence in counseling, as starting the discussion on topics such as advocacy encourages advancement and further developments.

Mu Chi Nu's upcoming events also promote scholarship and research. Our chapter's panel discussion on "Clinical Work with LGBTQIA2S+ Clients: Best Practices and Policy Impacts" will start a conversation surrounding how to best support the LGBTQIA2S+ community. This shows our devotion to educating future members of the counseling field on how to best practice in a framework that supports Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies. Mu Chi Nu will also host a webinar on "Digital Mental Health, AI, and Clinical Risk Management," which will inform attendees about the usage of artificial intelligence in the field and ethical considerations when doing so. This shows commitment to the values of ethics while also promoting engagement with innovations in the field.

Through these events, Mu Chi Nu demonstrates how the past informs the future. The guiding values of scholarship, research, professionalism, leadership, advocacy, and excellence in counseling continue to inform our practices. By devoting resources and time to educating the future members of the counseling field, Mu Chi Nu is hoping to embody the spirit of this prestigious honor society as we celebrate 40 years of Chi Sigma Iota.





CHI SIGMA IOTA THE COUNSELORS' BOOKSHELF

<https://www.csi-net.org/page/counselorsbookshelf>

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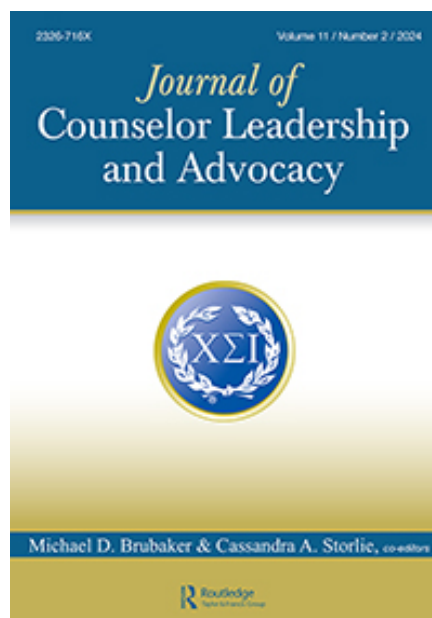
EXEMPLAR

Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International

The 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.

The Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy

The *Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy (JCLA)* promotes the development of leaders to serve in diverse counseling settings, brings awareness to professional and client advocacy initiatives, and provides a forum for discussing professional issues. *JCLA* welcomes empirical and conceptual manuscripts focused on leadership, professional and client advocacy, and professional identity for counselors, counseling students, and counselor educators. Because evidence-based practice is at the heart of the counseling profession, *JCLA* occasionally publishes exemplary scholarship related to evidence-based practice in counseling practice, supervision, and education. *JCLA* is published twice a year and is available worldwide through EBSCO Host and Taylor & Francis Online, with membership circulation in excess of 15,000. The editorial board accepts manuscripts on a rolling basis with an average initial response of two months. To learn more about author guidelines, please visit www.tandfonline.com/ucla. For helpful tips on preparing your work for publication, please review the free CSI Webinar, *How to Publish in the Journal of Counselor Leadership and Advocacy*. Our manuscript submission portal is located at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ucla>. You may also address inquiries to jcla@csi-net.org.





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Special Call for Proposals: Celebrating 40 Years of Chi Sigma Iota

As we commemorate the fourth decade of Chi Sigma Iota, we invite members to submit proposals dedicated to looking back and celebrating the accomplishments, advancements, connections, and memories of CSI.

SPRING THEME 2026: Servant Leadership

For our next issue, our theme is *Servant Leadership*. We eagerly accept proposals related to the history of leadership in Chi Sigma Iota – from leaders in the profession with CSI roots to unsung heroes who may not widely well-known. We also welcome personal reflections. What is a long-standing tradition of your chapter? What are your favorite memories of Chi Sigma Iota? Do you have a unique CSI story to share? We want to hear from you.

Please submit proposals by **January 30, 2026** using the [Exemplar Submission Form linked here](https://www.csi-net.org/page/Exemplar_Submission) and at https://www.csi-net.org/page/Exemplar_Submission. Proposals should address the edition theme within one of the following columns: (a) Chapter Happenings, 400-500 words; (b) Student Success, 1,300 to 1,700 words; (c) Counselors' Corner, 1,300 to 1,700 words; (d) Educational Advances, 1,300 to 1,700 words; (e) Chapter Resources, 400 to 650 words; (f) Excellence in the Field, 1,300 to 1,700 words, (g) Wellness Counseling, 1,300 to 1,700 words; or (h) Personal Stories, 400 to 650 words.



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