What Produces Greater Success for a CSI Chapter?

Richard Hazler and Dawn Lorenz
Rho Alpha Mu Chapter

Some years just turn out to be more successful than others for every CSI Chapter. While chapter leaders may not be able to eliminate these natural fluctuations, they can increase the consistency of quality from year to year if they know what factors tend to distinguish the best years from the less successful ones? Seeking some of these factors has been the goal of a CSI research project that can report some findings from the first two stages and also ask for help from current and past leaders on the third stage.

The first two stages of this research have looked at what general characteristics might be found in those chapters that have been CSI Outstanding Chapter recipients one year and then had other years where they might not have achieved at the same levels.

STAGE 1

The first stage of the study reviewed the official Chapter Plans and Chapter Reports submitted to CSI Headquarters during the years chapters receive outstanding recognition between 1994 and 2007. The review indicated similar activities and levels of professional involvement within chapters that can be summarized into four main points.

1. Planned Goals and Activities Established Early: All the Outstanding Chapter Recipients had formal Chapter Plans for the following year that identified very clear goals. Three Chapters who won awards twice went beyond identifying specific chapter goals to also state necessary actions and rationales for goals and actions. For example, one chapter stated that they wanted to increase visibility of their chapter to encourage more membership. To accomplish this they laid out a plan identifying particular committees to work on specific projects with time-lines, added new professional development activities, and increased more community service work.

2. Leader Communication: Business or Board meetings were generally conducted on a monthly or more frequent basis.

3. Multiple Connections to Students: Member to member and leader to member connections were highly encouraged through multiple activities such as social events, mentoring, orientations, student directories, and newsletters.

4. Created Additional Finances: Fundraisers, dues ($5-$25), or both were used to acquire additional income beyond CSI International reimbursement.

STAGE 2

This stage of the study sought specific comments from faculty advisors of Outstanding Chapters on the uniqueness of their best years. Their written and verbal comments had many similarities to what was found in the plans and also added new information.

1. Student Involvement: Greater numbers of students involved equaled more energy and accomplishments.

2. Leader Connections to Members: Leaders made more personal connections both within the leadership team and also among members and potential members.

3. Leadership Training: Energy was given to leadership training for leaders and others.

4. Goals and Activities Focused on Member Desires and Needs: Members got more excited when leaders were better organized and had defined goals or projects that focused on member wants and needs.

5. Expanded Professional Investment: Leaders seeking professional investment on a regional or national scale seemed more willing to give greater time and energy locally. Many times these leaders were also closely connected to CSI International, ACA and its divisions.

6. Additional Faculty Involvement: Additional faculty involvement beyond the faculty advisor added greatly.

7. Gaining Recognition: The desire

(continued on page 5)
Balance: The Path to Excellence

Catharina Y. Chang
CSI President

“Balance” is a term that is often employed in counseling, and for good reason. As counselors, we work with our clients to help them achieve balance in their lives. As counselor educators, we teach the importance of maintaining balance between one’s personal and professional lives in order to be effective counselors. Given the importance balance plays in our profession, I believe it is essential to focus on the integral contribution personal and professional balance makes towards the obtaining of our mission statement “... to promote excellence in the profession of counseling” and CSI’s vision to “... promote a strong professional identity through members who contribute to the realization of a healthy society by fostering wellness and human dignity”.

Personal Balance
As summer draws to a close, many of us will see our daily family and professional responsibilities increase from busy and complex to making the impossible happen each and every day. So in striving for excellence in all aspects of our personal lives, it is important to remind ourselves to maintain balance. Personally, when I can maintain balance in my life, I experience a sense of wellness and excellence, and I can share that with my spouse, children, and students, thus making me a better wife, mother, and counselor educator.

Knowing the importance that balance has on my wellness is one thing, maintaining that balance is another matter. Over the years I have learned that in order for me to maintain balance in my life I must do the following: a) practice self-care, b) set and maintain my priorities, and c) sustain a positive attitude. Self-care is an important aspect of maintaining personal balance. One must remember to take the time to enjoy the joys in life, both small and big. I also have had to prioritize and reprioritize things in my life as my life has transitioned from being a single individual, to being in a committed relationship, and to becoming a parent. Setting priorities means understanding that life is not about having it all rather, it is about knowing what is really important to me and making that a priority. Finally, life is not perfect and things do not always go as planned so maintaining a positive attitude is important.

Professional Balance
As counselors and counselor educators, we have chosen a profession in which our personal wellness impacts our professional effectiveness. A well-balanced, healthy counselor will be more successful with their clients, and a well-balanced healthy counselor educator will serve as a role model for future counselors and counselor educators.

Balance will help you to promote excellence in your own personal and professional development thus, contributing “to the realization of a healthy society.” So what are you doing to maintain balance in your life? What can you do as a chapter to help your members maintain balance in their lives?
Membership and Chapter Activity

As of April 30, 2009, Chi Sigma Iota is an organization of over 64,061 initiated members. When we add Life Memberships (N = 788), we have an annual active membership of 13,501.

Our new and renewal membership goals for the fiscal year ending 30 April 2009 were met: N = 4,800 vs. 4,804 and N = 4,800 vs. 4,914, respectively.

CSI continues as the world’s third largest membership organization for professional counselors and the only such organization with university based co-curricular service and leadership training (N = 260).

Treasurer’s Report: Revenue & Expenses

The full treasurer’s report is available online but a quick overview of income and expenses may be of interest. Revenues received for fiscal 2008-09 were $390,258 or 5% over our projections ($370,000). Our expenses were $366,498 or just under 1% of our projected expenses for the year, with income exceeding expenses by $23,760. We paid $54,220 in rebates to chapters last year ($12,000 more than the year before and three times more than year before that!). Chapters are receiving an average rebate of $300.

The higher income over expenses this year is due in large part to life memberships ($10,625), greater continuing renewal memberships ($6,369), dividends not usually shown as income ($8,465), and higher than usual donations ($2,476).

Our net income over expenses for the regalia and merchandise items was $29,612. This is a net loss of $6,000 in income over last year. The economy is no doubt a culprit in this regard. Nevertheless, this source of non-dues income is very important to the well being of CSI as inflation has eroded the dues basis of our budget.

In sum, we continue with stability in spite of the global economy and signs that members have less discretionary income to spend on CSI logo items. We continue to track income and expenses such that adjustments are made as necessary throughout the year.

Suspending Life Memberships

Life memberships were originally established to help build a financially sustainable organization. The Executive Council believes that the original purpose to build stability has been achieved. The continued growth of this membership category, however, could be a liability for the future. Life members’ mean/median age is 60 years. Based upon actuarial estimates with an average age of 60 years for the 80% who paid $250 for their lifetime memberships, the cost to CSI going forward is between $415,000-$630,000 with assumptions of CSI’s currently low annual dues ($25) or the real cost in 2008 dollars ($38). As a consequence, the Executive Council chose to increase the Life Membership to the equivalent 1999 dollars when the last increase was made ($500 to $1,000) through December 31, 2009 and then to suspend further life memberships for the foreseeable future. We are proud to have the support of our Life Members since it denotes a commitment to excellence though the efforts of CSI in perpetuity.

Going Forward: 25th Anniversary

Plan to join us in Pittsburgh next spring to help celebrate our 25th year! We also have three sessions in San Diego for the ACES conference in October. You can go online to get full details at www.csi-net.org!
Attention Leaders: Leadership Fellowship and Internship Opportunities

Donna Henderson
CSI Past-president

CSI is pleased to announce that we are currently accepting nominations for the 2010-2011 Leadership Fellowship and Internship Program. This program was designed to assist graduate counseling students and new professionals in developing leadership skills to benefit the counseling profession. Fellowships are awarded to 10 individuals of exceptional merit who have exhibited leadership potential in their CSI home chapters. Fellows are required to attend CSI Day activities at the ACA conference and participate in an additional 50 clock hours of service to CSI during the year with no more than 25% of the service hours spent serving their individual chapters.

Interns

CSI members nominated for the Fellowship program may also apply for one of the two CSI intern positions. The two interns have the unique opportunity to participate in CSI leadership under the mentoring and direction of CSI Executive Council and Committee Chairs. In addition to the CSI conference activities and Executive Council meetings, the interns are required to commit to a minimum of 100 hours of contributions including participation in CSI activities, committees, and other CSI projects.

Requirements and Support

Members selected for the 2010-2011 Leadership Fellowship and Internship program will receive a complimentary ACA registration and a $600 grant from CSI to help defer expenses to attend 2010 ACA conference in Pittsburgh and participate in CSI Day activities. The recipient’s local chapter agrees to provide a matching grant ($50 for small chapters; $100 for large chapters). In addition to this initial grant, interns who successfully complete their commitment to the program receive an additional $600 grant which will be awarded during CSI Day in 2011.

Eligibility and Application

All nominees for CSI Fellow or Intern positions must be (a) current and active CSI members, (b) active in their CSI chapter, and (c) enrolled in a graduate level counseling program or be a counseling program graduate in the early years of professional development (no more than three years since earning their last graduate counseling degree).

Online applications must be completed no later than December 1, 2009. Awardees will be notified by February 1, 2010. Full nomination guidelines are available at the CSI website at www.csi-net.org.

Contact CSI Headquarters (336) 841-8180 or Dr. Donna Henderson (336) 758-1890 with any questions.

Call for CSI Award Nominations

Danica G. Hays
CSI Awards Committee Chair

It’s time to nominate a deserving CSI member, program or chapter! The Awards Committee encourages you to submit a nomination packet to recognize those who exemplify the mission of CSI. Individual, program and chapter awards will be presented at the CSI Awards Ceremony at the American Counseling Association conference held in Pittsburgh in March 2010.

The CSI website (www.csi-net.org) provides information about the awards nomination process as well as eligibility criteria for each of the awards. Please verify that those you would like to nominate are active CSI members. To help you determine appropriate nominations based on other criteria, the rating form that reviewers use to select each award recipient is located at the CSI website.

The categories include:

- Outstanding Entry-Level Student Award
- Outstanding Doctoral Student Award
- Outstanding Individual Program Award
- Outstanding Chapter Award (small and large chapters)
- Outstanding Newsletter Award
- Outstanding Service to the Chapter Award
- Outstanding Research Award
- Outstanding Practitioner Award
- Outstanding Practitioner-Supervisor Award
- Thomas J. Sweeney Professional Leadership Award
- Chapter Faculty Advisor Award

Note that the last category, Chapter Faculty Advisor Award, is a new award established in 2007 to recognize an advisor who mentors and fosters future leaders of the counseling profession though a university chapter of CSI. Specific criteria for this award are available on the “Awards” menu at the CSI website.

Completed awards nomination packet should be sent electronically as one pdf to Dr. Danica Hays, CSI Awards Chair, at dhays@odu.edu, no later than December 1, 2009. Outstanding Newsletter Awards packets are to be mailed directly to Dr. Hays (110 Education Building, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia 23529) and postmarked no later than December 1, 2009. Further information about the awards nomination and selection processes is available at the CSI website or you may contact Dr. Hays at 757.683.6692 or dhays@odu.edu.
CSI’s New Strategic Plan Now Available

Jane Myers, CSI Strategic Planning Committee

Last year CSI began a multi-year strategic planning process to position the Society to respond to the future. The Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) was charged to review the CSI Strategic Plan and present a revised plan for final approval in March of 2009. The committee was chaired by Jane Myers (who chaired CSIs first SPC) and included the members selected to represent specific CSI interests: Past-Presidents and multicultural, international, and strategic planning experts Don C. Locke and Edwin Herr, Chapter Faculty Advisor Casey Barrio Minton, Doctoral student and CSI Intern Michael Brubaker, Professional Counselor Kathleen M. Connolly, President Donna Henderson and President-Elect Catharina Chang, and our Executive Director, Dr. Tom Sweeney.

The SPC engaged the CSI Executive Council in an environmental scanning process followed by an in-depth survey of our membership, the results of which were reported in the Summer, 2009 issue of the Exemplar (and may be found at csi-net.org under the Membership link). Member and chapter input were solicited through focus groups during the 2008 and 2009 CSI Day meetings. Following an intensive meeting in May of 2009, the SPC presented a new mission and vision statement, revised goals and objectives, and the new strategic plan for approval. The plan will be implemented over the next five years and may be reviewed and downloaded from csi-net.org.

CSIs Mission

After extensive discussion and consideration of data from multiple sources, the SPC affirmed the mission of Chi Sigma Iota as initially stated: to promote excellence in the profession of counseling.

CSIs Vision

CSIs vision statement was revised to better represent the diversity of our members, to reflect the purpose of the Society, and to distinguish CSI from other counseling organizations: CSI is an international honor society that values academic and professional excellence in counseling. We promote a strong professional identity through members who contribute to the realization of a healthy society by fostering wellness and human dignity.

CSIs Goals

To address our mission, the CSI Strategic Plan identifies four primary goals: (1) promoting and recognizing academic and clinical excellence in counseling scholarship, leadership, advocacy, and practice; (2) supporting and enhancing a strong counseling profession that fosters wellness and human dignity in an increasingly global society; (3) inspiring and supporting excellence in personal, academic, and professional practice; and (4) providing an organizational structure to implement the CSI Strategic Plan.

CSIs Leadership

In order to accomplish our strategic planning goals, CSI has established a number of new committees and task forces, and has expanded our web initiatives to assure timely and relevant services to our members. A complete list of committees is available on our web page under the What is CSI link. Members interested in becoming involved in our committees to help promote our strategic planning goals and initiatives are encouraged to contact jemyers@csi-net.org.

Expanded web initiatives include the selection and appointment of Editors to develop specific sections of our home page. CSI is pleased to welcome the following persons to our new leadership roles: Dr. Joshua Watson, JobLinks Editor; Dr. Heather Smith, Find-A-Counselor Editor; Ms. Maria Shine, Author Showcase Editor; and Drs. Chris Roseman and Jill Duba, Professional Advocacy Co-Editors. Further information about these expanded web pages will be provided in the next issue of the Exemplar.

What Produces Greater Success for a CSI Chapter

(continued from page 1)

for recognition influenced activities and submitting nominations for national awards.

STAGE 3

CSI Chapters come in all sizes, participant make-up, and locations that require adjustments to fit unique conditions. These differences require a next step of moving beyond the experiences of Outstanding Chapter recipients to find more specifics of what creates greater success in different settings. All chapters experience success and noteworthy accomplishments they can take pride in. Learning about what brought those accomplishments about can provide unique and more specific perspectives on what chapters can do to succeed.

To accomplish this greater depth of understanding and potential help to chapters, we are therefore inviting all experienced leaders, members, and faculty from all chapters to let us know of your answers to two key questions:

1. From your experience, what factors have made the difference between more and less productive years for your CSI Chapter?

2. What are the unique characteristics of your chapter (e.g. small or large; master’s only or doctoral and master’s; primarily full-time students or part-time students; high non-student membership or few non-student members; urban, suburban, rural campus; other key characteristics etc.)?

You can email your answers to Richard Hazler (hazler@psu.edu) or Dawn Lorenz (dcb232@psu.edu) or mail us at Counselor Education, Penn State University, 327 CEDAR Building, University Park, PA 16802.
OUTSTANDING CANDIDATES

Each year Chi Sigma Iota is fortunate to have an outstanding slate of candidates willing to serve CSI on an international level. Once again, we have four deserving and committed candidates for president-elect and secretary for 2010-11. For this year’s slate, Donna Gibson and Casey Barrio Minton are nominated for president-elect. Nominees for secretary are Jill Duba and Nicole Hill.

You are encouraged to read the biographical information and goal statements presented by each candidate before making your decision. Please note that your BALLOT IS INSERTED IN THIS COPY OF THE Exemplar OR YOU MAY VOTE ONLINE at www.csi-net.org. To vote online, go to our webpage and click on the “election” button. You will need your CSI member number—which you can find on the mailing label of this edition of the Exemplar. You may only vote once—either online or by mail-in ballot. No changes are allowed after the voting event.

Donna M. Gibson
Assistant Professor
University of South Carolina
Columbia, South Carolina

Academic and Professional Experience
Donna Gibson is assistant professor and program coordinator of counselor education at the University of South Carolina. She has held numerous service positions within Chi Sigma Iota, state and national counseling organizations. Since joining Chi Sigma Iota in 1997, she has served as mentoring committee chairperson and process observer (Upsilon Nu Chi). Currently, Donna is the Excellence in Research Grants Committee chairperson. At the state level, she has served as the secretary for the South Carolina Counseling Association. Nationally, Donna has served as Member-at-Large for Membership for the Association for Assessment in Counseling and Education (AACE). She served as AACE President during 2007-2008. At this time, Donna’s research interests include professional leadership, professional development of counselors-in-training and counselor education. She has published numerous journal articles and book chapters, and presented at state, regional, and national conferences. Donna is recipient of Chi Sigma Iota’s Outstanding Research Award (2001).

Goals Statement
In all of my service opportunities, I have discovered that it is truly a privilege to serve because of the learning that I experienced at both personal and professional levels. As president, it will be my honor to serve Chi Sigma Iota and its members by focusing on goals of membership involvement, leadership development, and professional development in research and scholarship.

Membership Involvement
For the majority of professional organizations, member-

Casey Barrio Minton
Assistant Professor
University of North Texas
Denton, Texas

Academic and Professional Experience
Casey Barrio Minton, a National Certified Counselor (NCC), is an Assistant Professor of Counseling and Program Coordinator at the University of North Texas. Since joining Chi Sigma Iota in 2001, Casey has served as CSI Fellow and Chapter President; she currently serves as Chapter Faculty Advisor for Rho Kappa Chapter, chair of the CSI Fellows Mentoring Committee, member of the CSI Strategic Planning Committee, and reviewer for the Excellence in Research Grants Committee. Casey is active on research teams regarding suicide and crisis, and she has multiple publications regarding crisis and counselor preparation. She is an editorial review board member for Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation and the Journal of Professional Counseling, and she serves as an ad hoc reviewer for Counselor Education & Supervision. Casey is a member of ACA’s Research and Knowledge Committee and is active with state, regional, and national professional counseling organizations.

Goals Statement
Chi Sigma Iota has been instrumental in my personal and professional development, and I am both honored and humbled to be nominated to serve as your president. As president, I would continue to dedicate myself to supporting the mission of CSI. In particular, I hope to promote scholarship, research, professionalism, leadership, and excellence in counseling by facilitating implementation of strategic planning initiatives, empowering chapters and chapter leaders, and facilitating chapter networking in a way that fosters wellness and human dignity and promotes a healthy society.

Implementing Strategic Planning Initiatives
Over the past two years, I have been privileged to work with a visionary group of leaders as the Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) assessed current and former members’ experiences (continued on page 8)
Nicole R. Hill
Professor, Deptment of Counseling
Idaho State University
Idaho

Academic and Professional Experience
Nicole R. Hill is a professor in the Department of Counseling at Idaho State University. She has served as Chapter Faculty Advisor for the Phi Omicron Chi chapter of Chi Sigma Iota since she arrived in Idaho in 2002. She began her involvement in CSI when she joined the Alpha chapter at Ohio University as a master's student. Her participation on the executive board as a student engendered her strong commitment to the mission and vision of CSI which has continued as she serves as a Regional Chapter Facilitator and member of the Chapter Development Committee.

Goals Statement:
For me, CSI embodies the principles of celebrating excellence, promoting a strong sense of counselor identity through advocacy, fostering a legacy of leadership, and cultivating an emphasis on wellness and development. CSI has a consistent and detailed history of translating these principles into action at the national, regional, and local levels. I am honored to be nominated for the role of Secretary because I believe that my personal commitment to excellence must be coupled with action.

As Secretary, I would dedicate myself to:
- Creating timely and pertinent records and communica-

Jill D. Duba
Associate Professor
Western Kentucky University
Kentucky

Academic and Professional Experience
Jill D. Duba is an associate professor in the Department of Counseling and Student Affairs at Western Kentucky University. She has been an active CSI member since 1998. In 2001, she served as treasurer of the Kappa Sigma Upsilon chapter. In 2006, as a second year faculty member she co-founded her university's CSI chapter and has served as faculty advisor since. In 2002, Jill joined the CSI Professional Advocacy committee, and became co-chair in 2005. She has co-conducted seven national presentations related to this committee's mission. Jill also has been a dedicated member of the counseling profession. In 2002, she received the ACES Student Award, served as IAMFC's Graduate Student Representative (2002), and will be completing her term as IAMFC Secretary. Further, her greatest scholarly achievements include receiving the 2007 Award for Outstanding Publication in The Adultspan Journal and publishing 11 peer reviewed journal articles and 1 book since 2008.

Goals Statement
As Secretary, I will have the honor and privilege of contributing to a documented legacy of CSI. My history in serving CSI has provided me with a knowledge base of the organization, as well as a growing sense of obligation and commitment. I am excited to serve CSI in this role, and will do so by exercising reliability, dependability, trustworthiness, as well as the skills I have obtained while serving as secretary in other professional contexts.

As CSI Secretary, I will be assuming a position of leadership. I use this opportunity to focus efforts in the following ways: (a) serve as a conduit between CSI and other counseling organizations so as to combine common efforts; (b) take aggressive steps to advocate for the field of Professional Counseling within my community and the profession of mental health; and (c) bridge relationships with non-active CSI members so as to reignite their activity.
Donna M. Gibson  
(continued from page 6)

Ship recruitment and retention are always issues that are of concern. Chi Sigma Iota has done an excellent job at recruiting members into our organization. It is usually one of the first “families” that counselors and counselors-in-training feel an immediate connection because of the commonality of counseling and professional identity as counselors. One of my goals as president will be to work on Chi Sigma Iota’s current strategic plan goal to examine how our organization can provide services to our membership that will increase both recruitment and retention. The key to retention may be in Chi Sigma Iota’s efforts to increase a sense of professional identity when members are counselors-in-training. If we can grow this identity with students, then we may see it continue to flourish in their professional lives.

Professional Development in Research and Scholarship

I am very proud to be a member of Chi Sigma Iota because of the opportunities I have experienced in terms of networking with other professionals and opportunities for research and scholarship. My goal in this area is to help our Chi Sigma Iota members learn how to develop research and scholarship ideas and then put them in practice. Working with American Counseling Association divisions that focus on research will enable our organization to help our members develop these skills and plan the implementation of their ideas. Specifically, Chi Sigma Iota’s emphasis on research initiatives in professional identity and leadership can lead us to a better understanding of the counseling profession and what are members require from this organization.

Leadership Development

Members of Chi Sigma Iota would be surprised to know that they have already begun their development as a leader. First, this began when you decided to be a professional counselor because counselors are leaders. Second, one of the goals of our organization is to promote leadership.

In every activity that Chi Sigma Iota supports, leadership development is integral in the outcome. Currently, we promote leadership development in our intern/fellows program. I propose that we carry this further by providing specific leadership training for all members in-person and through the use of technology to help members plan how to serve as leaders in Chi Sigma Iota and to eventually extend this to service in other professional counseling organizations. In doing this, members can learn how their work in Chi Sigma Iota can be applied to service in local, state, regional, and national counseling organizations. This sense of service comes from developing a strong professional identity as a counselor, counselor-in-training, and/or counselor educator. My hope is that I can promote this strong sense of professional identity through my own leadership efforts.

Casey Barrio Minton  
(continued from page 6)

with Chi Sigma Iota. Our process allowed us to affirm those aspects of our organization that are working and to identify opportunities for enhancing the ways in which we serve our members and meet our mission. As a result of SPC findings and recommendations, the executive council voted in support of a number of initiatives and task-forces that will be implemented in the near future. Our current and past leaders have done a phenomenal service to our organization by assessing the need for change and initiating actions to address these needs. Whether personal, professional, or organizational, change is hard, and change takes time. As president, I would continue this process of growth by assessing the effectiveness of our efforts and reaffirming or redirecting initiatives to best serve our members.

Empowering Chapters and Chapter Leaders

Chapters and their members are the heart of our organization, and I am continually amazed at the innovative and exemplary ways in which they support excellence on a local level. CSI International initiatives such as the Fellowship in Counseling Education...
Counseling in schools offers many challenges; most can be resolved through building trusting relationships with students, parents, school personnel, and outside agencies. Research shows that effective counseling occurs when trusting relationships are forged between client and practitioner. Moreover, building relationships with individuals in the client’s support system enhances the effectiveness of counseling in schools. Relationship building is critical to successful client identification, delivery of services, and student advocacy. The many layers of individuals that impact a school counselor’s ability to reach a child include parents, teachers, administrators, bus drivers, auxiliary staff members, and other students. These individuals operate in a school community made up of micro systems such as classrooms (middle school students may have as many as seven different classroom environments to adjust to), hallways, buses, gymnasiums, cafeterias, the neighborhood, and the home. In addition, the school community is impacted by district, state, and federal mandates. No Child Left Behind legislation (NCLB) is just one example of state and federal influences.

All of the above factors affect the climate in which school counselors practice. Although the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) recommends a caseload of 250 students, the typical middle school counselor delivers services through individual sessions, classroom guidance, and small groups for a caseload of 350 – 600 students (my school’s ratio is 350 to 1). Developing relationships with all stakeholders is essential to effective advocacy and student support. Because of the high caseload in my school, we counsel the same students from sixth through eighth grade. This allows us to better develop trusting relationships with students and their families.

Identifying the students most in need of services can be challenging but is often accomplished through referral. Referrals primarily come from parents, teachers, and administrators. Building relationships is critical to the referral process. Relationship building that generates referrals demands open communication (within the bounds of confidentiality) and clear information about the role of the school counselor in supporting students. Like many other school counselors, I use a variety of forums to build relationships that generate referrals: administrator/teacher workshops, parent workshops, consultation, individual conversations, and classroom visits. In all of these settings, it is critical that the counselor convey warmth, expertise, knowledge of the school environment, and empathy for the student’s circumstances. Other methods for initiating relationships are communication devices such as newsletters (for school staff and parents), user-friendly websites, and quick responses to emails and phone calls.

While the majority of referrals come from adults, some of the most salient referrals are from the students themselves or their friends. Generating student referrals requires that students have already developed a level of trust with the counselor. I develop student trust through classroom counseling lessons, visibility in the halls during class changes, speaking to students informally during breakfast or lunch in the school cafeteria, and being available for students before and after school. At my school, counselors conduct introductory classroom guidance sessions during the first few weeks. In these sessions, we inform students about our services, direct them on how we can be reached, administer a student self-assessment to determine their needs, and attempt to demonstrate our understanding of the school experience they are living.

Building good relationships with a variety of school and agency personnel generates a myriad of benefits. Good relationships with itinerant student support personnel—school psychologists, social workers, graduation coaches, and other school specialists—add to the school counselor’s arsenal of resources. Over the years, the counseling staff at my school has grown from one counselor and a secretary to three counselors, a secretary, a registrar, and a team of itinerant student support personnel. This large complement exists because of the relationships that have been built with school administrators. Especially critical is the development of relationships with outside agencies—particularly psychologists, psychiatrists, and counselors from the private sector. When professional collaboration can be secured, the speed of recovery for students with pathologies seems to shorten, and a collaborative effort often eliminates overlapping or opposing interventions. Finally, building relationships with trusted colleagues for peer supervision or consultation can be extremely useful in assessing interventions.

Many of the challenges counselors face in schools can be resolved by building trusting relationships with students, parents, school personnel, and outside agencies. The importance of relationship building cannot be overstated. I believe it is the key to a successful school counseling practice.
Faculty Advisor Highlight
Matthew Shurts: SUCCESS – A Great Momentum Builder

Nikki Vasilas
Exemplar Associate Editor

Myers with the Technology Committee by getting archived editions of the Exemplar onto the CSI website. From this first experience, he went on to join the Upsilon Nu Chi chapter, served as a Committee Chair, got elected President, and became a CSI International Fellow. After beginning his work at Montclair State, he was appointed to serve as the Intern/Fellow Co-Coordinator for CSI International. All of which he credits to the first encounter with CSI and the assignment of scanning Exemplars for Dr. Myers.

Dr. Shurts had the fortunate experience early in his master’s program of meeting Drs. Myers and Sweeney, so the significance and benefit of having a strong professional identity and commitment to service was evident. Their guidance and the connections with so many other CSI members have provided him with a network of support and purpose. From these early experiences and his continued work as a professional counselor educator, Dr. Shurts has seen the importance of and need for counselors to know how to articulate what makes counseling unique among the helping professions (e.g., wellness perspective; historical and current focus on development; bulk of our work is actually counseling as is our training). He states that he challenges his students to think about and be prepared to answer the question, “So what does it mean to be a counselor?” They need to be able to provide an answer in 1-3 sentences as if it was asked by a family member, friend, or just someone they met. “We need to be able to articulate our professional identity to non-counselors.” Involvement in Chi Sigma Iota and its local chapters is a great place to start, however getting students and even some faculty to see the benefit of membership in Chi Sigma Iota can be a difficult task.

As a Chapter Faculty Advisor, of a relatively young chapter, Dr. Shurts has found success to be a great momentum builder. He states, “Focus on the activities, services, events, etc. that you feel are most important, and do them REALLY well. In my view, a successful chapter is one that provides professional development opportunities for its membership, serves the community in some fashion, and actively encourages members to become involved in the chapter. After all, CSI is not just a line on your resume!”

Matthew Shurts

Dr. Matthew Shurts is the Chapter Faculty Advisor at Montclair State University. Dr. Shurts joined the Montclair State University faculty in 2004, and shortly thereafter, spearheaded the formation of the Chi Sigma Mu chapter. Fast forward five years and a lot of hard work, the Montclair State Chapter is now a thriving and successful chapter with approximately 145 active members!

When asked what he feels has been the key to the great success of the chapter Dr. Shurts states, “The easy answer is the officers (and committee chairs). From connecting with other CFAs, a common theme is that strong, organized, and committed leaders are vital for success. I’m proud of all the officers who have made the chapter successful, and I’m really excited by the leadership team we have in place for the 2009-2010 year. The officers are all strong leaders and I anticipate great things from our chapter!”

As a master’s student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and the graduate Research Assistant for Dr. Jane Myers, Dr. Shurts’ first personal encounter with Chi Sigma Iota was assisting Dr.
Advocacy Tips
Life Coaching: Why Professional Counselors Should be Concerned and Take Action When Appropriate

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During a story aired on NPR’s All Things Considered, Robert Siegel asked a life coach for her definition of the difference between life coaching and counseling. Her response: “Counselors try to help people by focusing on their past, childhood events; life coaches help people by focusing on their problems now and what they can do differently.” Although it is true that some counselors ascribe to past focused models, the majority of counselors today utilize present-focused, goal-driven models that represent the current thinking in the field. Thus, the life coach interviewed on NPR described professional counseling when defining what she does.

Based on the definition provided to Siegel by that life coach, she clearly is practicing professional counseling. A review of on-line directories of life coaches revealed a range of professionals providing this service, but most of them had no more than a bachelor’s degree, no specific graduate training, and no license to practice. Our concern is that if she is not properly trained and licensed from the practitioner’s perspective, it is unlawful for anyone practicing counseling. Thus, if you are concerned about whether someone is properly trained and licensed from the field’s perspective, it is unlawful for anyone practicing counseling. Thus, if you are concerned about whether someone is properly trained and licensed, call your licensure board or your state’s licensing board. If you are concerned about whether someone is properly trained and licensed, call your licensure board or your state’s licensing board. If you are concerned about whether someone is properly trained and licensed, call your licensure board or your state’s licensing board.

So, what exactly is life coaching? According to LifeCoaching.com, “Life Coaching is a new and rapidly growing profession that is profoundly different from consulting, mentoring, advice, therapy, or counseling. The coaching process addresses specific personal projects, business successes, general conditions and transitions in the client’s personal life, relationships or profession by examining what is going on right now, discovering what your obstacles or challenges might be, and choosing a course of action to make your life be what you want it to be” (emphasis added). This sounds like counseling to us. Indeed, it sounds very much like the definition of Solution Focused Brief Therapy (SFBT).

The implications here are significant. As licensed professional counselors, we receive extensive graduate training in order to be considered at least minimally competent to practice our work. There have always been those who believe that because they are naturally good listeners, they should be able to do counseling without any special training. It was largely because of such attitudes, beliefs and practices, that our field developed standards and pursued licensure more than 33 years ago. Prior to that time, anyone could hang out a sign and claim to be a counselor. Now, with life coaching, we have a new generation wanting to do counseling without doing the hard work of graduate training, which poses risks to consumers.

In many states with counselor licensure, it is unlawful for anyone who is not licensed to provide counseling services or services that fit the description of counseling. Life coaching is not a regulated, licensed discipline. In many states, anyone who identifies as a life coach and practices as described above, but who is not already a licensed mental health professional, is practicing outside of the law.

So what can we do? We believe that it is our responsibility to monitor and advocate on behalf of the field to protect client welfare and the counselor professional identity. As professional counselors, part of our charge is to protect the public from unscrupulous and incompetent practitioners and to prevent the integrity of the field. Know your state law. If your licensure law restricts the definition and practice of counseling, your licensure board may well be interested in preventing those who are not properly trained and licensed from practicing counseling. In Ohio, calling it life coaching when it is by all evidence counseling does not preclude the practitioner from licensure requirements. Our licensure board will intervene with non-licensed individuals, such as life coaches, who practice counseling. Thus, if you are or become aware of individuals practicing as life coaches, especially if they have documentation (such as a brochure or website) which demonstrates that they are effectively practicing counseling, then your state board might like to hear from you.

Life coaching should neither be an escape from licensure law nor a backdoor into the mental health field. The burden to protect our license and our professional identity, however, falls on our shoulders.
Cultural Competence in Disaster Response: The Use of Critical Consciousness Theory

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Globally, there is an increasing need for mental health professionals to respond to the rise in natural and human-made disasters (Guha-Sapir, Hargitt, & Hoyois, 2004; Walter, 2005). Professional counselors have answered this call through their work in areas affected by hurricanes, earthquakes, and political conflict. However, there remains significant concern that counselors may not be prepared to deliver effective services in diverse settings due to limited training and experience in cultural competence. Cultural competence involves the awareness, knowledge, and skills to understand cultural values and worldviews and to develop appropriate assessments and interventions (Sue & Sue, 2003). The purpose of this study was to examine the use of critical consciousness theory (Freire, 2000) to enhance cultural competence and effective disaster response counseling services for counselor-trainees deployed to post-Katrina New Orleans.

Culture-centered Disaster Response

Effective assessment, conceptualization, and treatment require an understanding of the cultural, social, and historical context of the client's presenting problems (Goodman & West-Olatunji, 2008). For culturally diverse and socially marginalized clients, oppression and historical trauma contextualize an individual's mental health as well as predilections toward the counseling experience (Cross, 1998; Harrell, 2000). Multicultural counseling theorists and researchers indicate that interventions informed by a client's cultural values can increase efficacy by intentionally incorporating culturally appropriate coping strategies and healing practices (Pedersen & Ivey, 1993). As such, culture-centered counseling practice can increase the effectiveness of disaster response interventions.

Critical Consciousness Theory

Training programs and community development initiatives have used critical consciousness theory to develop cultural competence and social justice ideals due to the emphasis on awareness, dialogue, and praxis (Harden, 1996; Watts, Williams & Jagers, 2003). The development of critical consciousness involves reflecting on one's personal biases, dialoging with peers and community members, deconstructing systemic oppression, and taking transformative action (Freire, 2000). Within the field of counseling, critical consciousness theory has been used as a foundation for cultural competence, social justice, and liberation theory (Alschuler, 1986; Ivey & Collins, 2003).

Prior to the study, the researchers established a seven-step model of critical consciousness development that guided the training and disaster response protocols. It was hypothesized that as a result of involvement in the disaster response experience in post-Katrina New Orleans participants would demonstrate critical consciousness that would inform their disaster response and cultural competencies. The researchers asked the following questions: “What are the outcomes of incorporating critical consciousness in a disaster mental health counseling outreach experience?” and, “Does critical consciousness influence cultural competence?”

Research Design

The researchers selected culture-centered research methodology, borrowed from educational research, because of its emphasis on transformation and praxis (King & Mitchell, 1995; Tillman, 2002). Culture-centered research establishes transformation of participants and researchers as a key element from the study design through data analysis. There was a purposeful sample of six outreach participants, all of whom were female and between the ages of 23 and 53 with a mean age of 31. The study participants were masters level counseling (n=5) and psychology students (n=1) in counselor education and school psychology programs, respectively, who were selected to participate in the disaster response outreach to New Orleans one year after Hurricane Katrina. The ethno-cultural backgrounds of the participants were as follows: Haitian American (n=1), Indian American (n=1), and European American (n=4). Data sources included the participant's application materials (demographic information form, essay, and screening measures), as well as the daily journal entries during the outreach experience. Informed consent was obtained from the participants prior to deployment.

Once participants arrived on-site in New Orleans, they were provided with a tour of the city and the areas impacted by Hurricane Katrina by a counselor educator from a local university. During the remainder of the eight-day deployment, participants provided disaster response counseling to teachers and other school personnel at a K-8 charter school. The primary participant tasks were to: (a) provide counseling services, consultation, and referrals, (b) journal for reflection, and (c) engage in processing with peers and the supervisor.

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved: (a) reading through the application information and journal entries and highlighting comments or phrases that were representative of the participants' experiences, (b) clustering highlighted statements into summary statements on the right margin of the journal notes, and (c) creating domains of meanings from the clustered summary statements. Data were analyzed...
using NVIVO (v2.0), a qualitative analysis software tool. Dialogue among research and member checking were used to develop consensus and ensure truth value of the data.

Results

Analysis of the data found six primary themes, which were then categorized into two dominant areas through member checking and critical dialogue. The first dominant theme, critical consciousness, was found to include the theme of cultural competence. The second overarching theme, meta-knowledge, included group cohesion, mentoring, transformation, and self-care.

Critical Consciousness

The results of the investigation suggest that participants increased their level of critical consciousness, resulting in greater cultural competence in their interactions with clients. Participants expressed a social justice-oriented perspective where client strengths instead of client deficits are the focus of the counseling process. One participant wrote about a meeting at the school, “As I looked at the fully-attentive, packed room I saw resiliency.” Participants also noted the desire to empower clients and to create sustainable, culturally appropriate methods of coping. One participant stated, “The goal is to try and help them depend on one another, building the system instead of enabling dependency on us.” Another participant wrote, “We are not here to influence their community in a way that they will feel dependent on our presence. ... We could empower them to talk to someone that is a part of their community....”

Meta-Knowledge

The initial analysis of the data yielded four additional themes: group cohesion, mentoring, self-care, and transformation. Through researcher dialogue and member checking these themes were reconceptualized as part of a broader construct, meta-knowledge. Meta-knowledge refers to the synergistic dialogue between two or more individuals that allows for new, shared knowledge to be created. Participants noted the importance of mentoring, reflection, and dialogue in their development of critical consciousness and their personal and professional transformation.

Significance

This study offers support for a training model that uses critical consciousness to instill cultural competence among counselor-trainees. Experiential and innovative programs in both national and international settings may be used to assist counselors in the development of cultural competence. Counselor education programs may choose to incorporate outreach experience into the curriculum of courses such as multicultural counseling or community counseling. Professional development programs may also use the outreach model guided by critical consciousness to ensure that practitioners responding to disasters in diverse settings are prepared to deliver effective services.

Future Research

Further research on culturally competent disaster response in a variety of settings is needed in order to expand on the results of this study. Longitudinal studies examining the impact of such programs on the professional and personal transformation of counselors could identify the long-term impact on individuals and also on the counseling profession. Replicating this study in various settings can also further the understanding of effective training practices for cultural competence. The researchers have since replicated this study in international settings with counseling students, professional counselors, and counselor educators. Preliminary findings indicate similar gains in the counseling profession.

References

Alschuler, A. S. (1986). Creating a world where it is easier to love: Counseling applications of Paulo Freire’s theory. Journal of Counseling and Development, 64, 492-496.


What types of professionals from related helping disciplines (e.g., social workers, educators, psychiatrists, psychologists) do you anticipate working with as a counselor? How can the counseling profession improve training for interdisciplinary practice?

As counselors, we already have a multitude of problem solving tools at our disposal. Helping students learn to use these tools not only with clients, but with other professionals as well, can further augment counselor training. For example, institutions with social work and counseling programs may cross-list one or more courses and require course work to be completed in groups composed of one student from each discipline. Students participating in such interdisciplinary educational exercises will learn how to collaborate with individuals from diverse professional backgrounds while simultaneously increasing knowledge as they learn from one another throughout the collaborative process. Early education regarding the advantages of interdisciplinary collaboration for clients can help counseling students prepare to work well with other professionals in the interest of providing holistic treatment that meets the highest standard of care. Carla D. Chugani, Gamma Eta Omega, Florida Gulf Coast University

In order to effectively collaborate and communicate with other helping disciplines, creative problem solving, mutual respect, and an understanding of each profession is needed. Although we all have different responsibilities and protocols to follow, our problem solving skills must be inventive and resourceful. At times each helping profession may disagree as to which direction a case should go, but each must respect the others opinions and professions as well. Each profession has its own set of responsibilities, roles, and ethical considerations. This makes it paramount for counselors to have a clear understanding of what each professional's task include.

Practicum and internship requirements should entail that a counselor-in-training must collaborate with other professionals in an interdisciplinary setting for a set number of hours. The code of ethics for other key professions should be reviewed in counselor's ethics courses. Training new counselors for interdisciplinary practice should include a mock training experience. This illustration could provide a hands-on demonstration of how multiple professionals collaborate together to proficiently treat a client. Kara Rasberry Brooks, Chi Theta, Jacksonville State University

The position of the professional counselor is about changing systems and helping individuals develop new coping strategies within those systems. Such service calls for collaboration in the most unusual places. As a student, I have not only worked with other counseling professionals and social workers, but have found myself collaborating with immigration professionals, budget professionals, and even hospice professionals. Looking to the future, I can only begin to imagine the varied and diverse opportunities for collaboration that will take place.

The counseling profession can improve training for interdisciplinary practice by allowing students more opportunity for service learning experience during their education. My experience as a student, coupled with the real life application through service learning, has shown me that these lessons are typically the most difficult and often best learned. Kirsten Wirth, Omega Sigma Eta, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh

It has been my experience that in order to effectively address the many complex needs of today's client, it is imperative to collaborate with each of the helping disciplines. Developing linkages with others within the helping professions serves to ensure seamless service delivery for clients. These collaborative relationships also serve to build the counselor's integrity with other professionals in addition to potential clients.

Training modules designed with a multicultural "teamwork" approach to counseling would greatly improve training for interdisciplinary practice. The ACA Code of Ethics clearly outlines the importance of collaboration within the counseling community and with other helping professionals. Students and professionals alike could only serve to benefit by participating in training that focuses on the development of collaborative relationships. Additionally, following a multicultural "teamwork" approach develops counselor integrity as helping professionals; a must if effective intervention is to occur. Kelli Lasseter, Chi Theta, Jacksonville State University

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Student Ideas and Experiences Needed for Publication!

Edited by Elizabeth A. Mellin

I am looking for CSI student member ideas to be published in the next edition of EXEMPLAR around the “Student Insights” question listed below. The new question is:

Submission deadline November 15, 2009

What area of research captures your interest most and what is it about that area?

Submissions of no more than 300 words should be submitted as a Word document to Dr. Elizabeth Mellin by email <eam20@psu.edu>. Please include your name, chapter, and institutional affiliation on your submission.
Why Did You Join CSI?

Thomas J. Sweeney, CSI Executive Director

Why did any of us choose to join CSI in the first place? In its simplest terms was it to get something or was it possibly to give of yourself? Will we quit the first time that it is not convenient or does not have an extrinsic, quid pro quo outcome (this for that)?

Social Contract vs. Covenant Organizations

There are fundamentally two types of organizations: social contract and covenant contract. The marketplace requires the social contract type. You work for pay. No pay, no work!

If you belong to a covenant organization such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) the weather may be cold, wet and otherwise miserable, but if you truly believe in the cause, you will be out in the bad weather demonstrating when that is what is required. You do so because of the common beliefs, the common commitment, and the conviction that everyone’s effort makes a difference.

I believe that CSI is a good example of a covenant organization because of its mission and the fact that leadership comes from the grassroots up rather than from the top down. Our mission:

CSI is an international honor society that values academic and professional excellence in counseling. We promote a strong professional identity through members (professional counselors, counselor educators, and students) who contribute to the realization of a healthy society by fostering wellness and human dignity. Our mission is to promote scholarship, research, professionalism, leadership and excellence in counseling, and to recognize high attainment in the pursuit of academic and clinical excellence in the profession of counseling.

More Than a Line on Your Vita

We like to emphasize that CSI is more than a line on your vita. May we ask, is it? Over half of our active members are practitioners, scholars and proven leaders. In fact, I believe CSI has more scholars, presenters, and leaders in its membership than any other counseling membership organization. They do not need more lines on their vitae. They are motivated by the belief, the commitment, and the conviction that no matter how small their contribution of time, talent, and money may seem, it is the cumulative effect that we make toward “… the realization of a healthy society by fostering wellness and human dignity…” through excellence in counseling and counselor preparation that is important.

CSI has initiated over 64,000 members since its inception. We are currently growing by approximately 425 new members per month. Imagine what good we can do together if we have a covenant to do so. If you are a new member in the last year, ask yourself why you belong. What is it others know about such a covenant that makes CSI unique as an organization? We foster leadership on all levels of endeavor but leaders always start out as volunteers at the local level. Are you prepared to make CSI more than a line on your vita?