COUNSELING AND REHABILITATION PROGRAM

FLOYD SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

2026 ANNUAL REPORT

The 2026 Annual Report presents an overview of the Counseling and Rehabilitation (C&R) Program's mission and objectives, which continue to guide the evaluation process; the results of our program evaluation; discussion of our findings; a presentation of subsequent program modifications that resulted from the process; and a discussion of other substantial program changes. Data are from 2025-2026, unless otherwise noted.

Executive Summary

During AY 2025-2026, the Counseling and Rehabilitation program expanded enrollment, clinical partnerships, and community services while maintaining strong evidence of student preparation. Annual evaluation findings affirmed the value of experiential learning and faculty support and identified priorities for assessment, applied practice, and sustainable program growth.

Enrollment and graduate outcomes. Unduplicated enrollment increased from 78 to 98 students, approximately 26%.

Student learning and professional preparation. All 12 common-core student learning outcomes were met following the developmental assessment process. Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling and Clinical Addiction Counseling students met all reported specialty measures; findings for the newer specialties remain limited by small cohorts and incomplete progression through the curriculum. Professional dispositions remained consistent despite enrollment growth. Graduates, employers, and site supervisors emphasized clinical readiness, ethical practice, supportive faculty relationships, and the value of practicum, internship, and the Learning Community.

Clinical training and community access. The program expanded the training network by 19 field-placement partnerships and strengthened affiliations with state agencies. The Clinic for Counseling and Assessment opened for referrals on January 20, 2026, expanding supervised training for C&R students and access to care in rural and underserved communities. Through June 30, the clinic received 26 referrals, completed 15 initial assessments, and provided counseling to 12 clients.

Program development and engagement. Faculty implemented curricular revisions aligned with the 2024 CACREP Standards and submitted a self-study in July 2026 to align all three specialty practice areas under one accreditation cycle. A five-year RSA training grant supports up to five new scholars annually and CRC examination costs for eligible rehabilitation professionals. Learning Community events, Lunch and Learn sessions, an alumni mentorship initiative, student scholarship, faculty research and service, virtual reality, and assistive technology activities strengthened professional and community engagement.

Priorities for continued improvement. Faculty will expand applied opportunities in career assessment, counseling theories, and addictions and strengthen communication about field

placements, examinations, licensure, and professional transitions. Additional priorities include improving digital course accessibility and securing a data management system to track learning outcomes, key performance indicators, dispositions, and student progression.

Enrollment	98 up 26%
New students	39
Graduates	18
NCE Pass Rate	100%
Employment Rate (actively seeking)	100%
New Clinical Sites	19
CCA Clinic Referrals	26
CCA Community Clients Served	12

Mission and Program Objectives

Counseling and Rehabilitation Mission Statement

The **Mission** of the Counseling and Rehabilitation Program is to enhance the quality of life of persons who have physical or mental disabilities, including addictions, or who are disadvantaged by cultural differences and educational and economic impoverishment, through educational, scholarly, and service activities.

Program Objectives

Education

- To provide high-quality professional **education** that includes classroom learning, field experiences, and other applied learning opportunities to equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary for successful, effective, and responsible participation in changing diverse state and national rehabilitation counseling environment. Specifically,
    - Education/Program Objective # 1. Students will demonstrate current knowledge and competencies required for successful practice in the field of professional counseling.
    - Education/Program Objective # 2 (Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling). Students will be able to demonstrate specialized clinical and technical knowledge in working with individuals with disabilities to achieve their personal, social, psychological, and vocational goals.
    - Education/Program Objective #2 (Clinical Addiction Counseling). Students will be able to demonstrate specialized clinical and technical knowledge in working with

individuals with and without disabilities who experience substance-use disorders and addictions to achieve their personal, social, psychological, and vocational goals.

- Education/Program Objective #2 (Career Counseling). Students will be able to demonstrate specialized clinical and technical knowledge in working with individuals with and without disabilities to build life skills and achieve their career goals and with businesses to promote workplace health and wellbeing.

Scholarship

- Through research and **scholarship** activities, to advance knowledge and understanding of the effects of disability on the lives of persons with disabilities, the effectiveness of programs and services for people with disabilities, and the role of individuals with disabilities in society, the workplace, and the world.

Service

- To provide **consultation** and **training** to agencies and programs to enhance the abilities of their personnel serving disabled and disadvantaged persons in South Carolina and throughout the southeast.

- To provide rehabilitation **services** while offering students the opportunity for firsthand learning under the supervision of qualified, experienced professionals.

- To **support** the operations and activities of the Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science, School of Medicine, and University

Respect for Diversity

- To actively demonstrate **respect** for cultural and individual diversity in areas of education, scholarship, and service.

Section 1. Results of the Evaluation

Section 1 includes the following data: (1) demographic and other characteristics of applicants, students, graduates; (2) vital statistics; (3) aggregate student assessment data including knowledge, skills, and dispositions; (4) systematic follow-up studies; and (5) external review.

1.1 Demographic and Other Characteristics of Applicants, Students, and Graduates

Applicant Data

	# Applications	Number Accepted	Number Matriculated
Fall 2025	88	42	27
Spring 2026	38	19	12
Total AY 25-26	126**	59**	39
Fall 2024	120	51	33

Spring 2025	73	11	9
Total AY 24-25	183**	62	42
Fall 2023	51	39	24
Spring 2024	24	17	8
Total AY 23-24	64**	50**	32
Fall 2022	21	11	7
Spring 2023	4	2	2
Total AY 22-23	**25**	**13**	**9**

**unduplicated applications

Applicant Demographic Data for AY 2025-2026

	# Applications N=126	Number Accepted N= 59	Number Matriculated N= 39
Gender	Female- 90 Male- 36	Female- 51 Male- 8	Female- 33 Male- 6
Race/Ethnicity	African American- 62 Caucasian- 35 Hispanic- 1 Asian- 7 American Indian or Alaskan - 1 More than one- 18 Race/Ethnicity Unknown- 2	African American- 22 Caucasian- 21 Hispanic- 1 Asian- 0 American Indian or Alaskan - 1 More than one- 14 Race/Ethnicity Unknown- 0	African American- 15 Caucasian- 12 Hispanic- 0 Asian- 0 American Indian or Alaskan - 0 More than one- 12 Race/Ethnicity Unknown- 0
Age (average)	30.03 years old	31.51 years old	30.49 years old
Age (range)	21 years to 73 years	21 years to 65 years	21 years to 65 years

Applicant Score Data

For the 2025-2026 academic year, the average GPA for accepted students was as follows:

	Undergraduate GPA	**GRE**	**MAT**
AY 25-26	3.13	Approval by university to discontinue requirement of GRE	Approval by university to discontinue requirement of MAT
AY 24-25	3.51	Approval by university to	Approval by university to

		discontinue requirement of GRE	discontinue requirement of MAT
AY 23-24	3.45	Approval by university to discontinue requirement of GRE	Approval by university to discontinue requirement of MAT
AY 22-23	3.40	Writing: 3.25 Quantitative:143 Verbal: 146	413

Student Data (does not include summer)

	Number Enrolled	New students	Graduates
Fall 2025	86	27	7
Spring 2026	85	12	9
Total AY 25-26	**98 (unduplicated)**	**39**	**16**
Fall 2024	69	33	4
Spring 2025	70	9	3
Total AY 24-25	**78 (unduplicated)**	**42**	**7**
Fall 2023	53	24	8
Spring 2024	52	8	4
Total AY 23-24	**62 (unduplicated)**	**32**	**12**
Fall 2022	45	7	0
Spring 2023	46	2	12
Total AY 22-23	**48 (unduplicated)**	**9**	**12**

Student Demographic Data

	2025-2026	2024-2025	2023-2024
	Number Enrolled N= 98	Number Enrolled N= 78	Number Enrolled N= 62
Gender	Males- 15 (15%) Females- 83 (85%) Affirmed gender- 0	Males- 12 (15%) Females- 66 (85%) Affirmed gender-0	Males- 8 (13%) Females- 53 (85%) Affirmed gender- 1(2%)*
Race/Ethnicity	African American- 27 (28%) Caucasian- 51 (52%) Hispanic- 2 (2%) Asian- 0 More than one- 18 (18%) Race Not Reported- 0	African American- 18 (23%) Caucasian- 51(65%) Hispanic- 2 (3%) Asian- 0 More than one- 6 (8%) Race Not Reported- 1 (1%)	African American- 17 (27%) Caucasian- 34 (55%) Hispanic- 2 (3%) Asian- 1 (2%) More than one- 8 (13%) Race Not Reported- 0

Age (average)	31	31	32

*self-report

Graduation Data

- Eighteen (18) students graduated in the 2025-2026 academic year. Of those graduates who were actively looking for employment (16), all found employment within 6 months of graduation.

	Number of Graduates	Number Employed at Graduation	Number Employed 6 Months After Graduation
Fall 2025	7	4	7
Spring 2026	9	4	8
Summer 2026	2	0	1
Total	18	8	16**
Fall 2024	4	3	4
Spring 2025	3	3	3
Summer 2025	1	1	1
Total	8	7	8
Fall 2023	8	7	8
Spring 2024	4	3	4
Summer 2024	4	1	4
Total	16	11	16
Fall 2022	0	0	0
Spring 2023	12	10	11
Summer 2023	4	3	4
Total	16	13	15**

** Number reflects students actively pursuing employment. **

Graduate Demographic Data

	2025-2026	2024-2025	2023-2024
	Number of Graduates N = 18	Number of Graduates N = 8	Number of Graduates N = 16
Gender	Female- 17 Male- 1 Affirmed gender- 0	Female- 6 (75%) Male- 2 (25%) Affirmed gender- 0	Female- 13 Male- 2 Affirmed gender- 1
Race/Ethnicity	Black/African American- 4 (22%) Caucasian- 10 (56%) Asian- 0	Black/African American- 2 (25%) Caucasian- 6 (75%) Asian- 0	Black/African American- 3 (18.75%) Caucasian- 10 (62.5%) Asian- 1 (6.25%)

	Hispanic – 2 (11%) More Than One- 2 (11%) Race Not Reported- 0	More Than One- 0 Race Not Reported- 0	More Than One- 2 (12.5%) Race Not Reported- 0
Age (average)	32	33	35

Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) scholarships

In 2025, the Counseling and Rehabilitation program was awarded its most recent U.S. Department of Education Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Long-Term Training Grant. The five-year grant is designed to support up to five new RSA scholars annually throughout the grant period. As of the end of Spring 2026, 10 scholars were identified across both the 2025–26 academic year and the 2026–27 academic year.

In addition to supporting students, the grant provides annual funding for the cost of the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) examination for up to 20 managers and supervisors from the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD) and other South Carolina agencies providing vocational rehabilitation services. The program continues to monitor RSA grant opportunities that advance students' education while supporting the rehabilitation service needs and goals of communities across South Carolina.1.2 Vital Statistics

Program Graduates

- 2025-2026: 18 MA program graduates (60 credit hour degree)*
- 2024-2025: 8 MA program graduates (60 credit hour degree)
- 2023-2024: 16 MA program graduates (60 credit hour degree)
- 2022-2023: 16 MA program graduates (60 credit hour degree)
- 2021-2022: 10 MA program graduates (60 credit hour degree)

*Includes first clinical addiction counseling specialty practice area graduate.

Program Completion

For students who started the 60 credit-hour program in 2023-2024 (N=32):

- 15 graduated in 2.5 years
- 1 is on track to graduate in exactly 3 years
- 7 are on track to graduate in 3.5 - 4 years
- 9 left the program for non-academic reasons

For students who started the 60 credit-hour program in 2022-2023 (N=9):

- 4 graduated in 2.5 years
- 4 are on track to graduate in 3.5 - 4 years
- 1 left the program for non-academic reasons

For students who started the 60 credit-hour program in 2021-2022 (N=10):

- 7 graduated in 2.5 years

- 2 are on track to graduate in 3.5 - 4 years
- 1 left the program for non-academic reasons

For students who started the 60 credit-hour program in 2020-2021 (N=24):

- 16 graduated in 2.5 years
- 5 are on track to graduate in 3.5 - 4 years
- 3 left the program for non-academic reasons

Certification

In 2025-2026, Two program graduates took and one passed the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) exam (50%). The other 16 graduates opted not to take the exam at this time. Not all program graduates seek this certification.

In 2024-2025, 1 of 1 (100%) program graduates took and passed the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) exam. The other 7 graduates opted not to take the exam at this time. Not all program graduates seek this certification.

In 2023-2024, 1 of 2 (50%) program graduates took and passed the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) exam. The student who did not pass opted to not retake as it is not needed for the graduate's place of employment.

In 2022-2023, no program graduates reported taking the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) exam.

In 2021-2022, 1 of 1 (100%) program graduates took and passed the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) exam.

Licensure Examination

In 2025-2026, 16 of 18 recent program graduates reported taking the National Counselor Examination (NCE), and of those who took it, all 16 (100%) passed the exam on their first attempt. Not all program graduates seek licensure. *Includes first clinical addiction counseling specialty practice area graduate.

In 2024-2025, 7 of 8 recent program graduates reported taking the National Counselor Examination (NCE), and of those who took it, all 7 (100%) passed the exam on their first attempt. Not all program graduates seek licensure.

In 2023-2024, 9 recent program graduates took the National Counselor Examination (NCE), and of those who took it, all (100%) passed the exam on their first attempt. Not all program graduates seek licensure.

In 2022-2023, 11 recent program graduates took the National Counselor Examination (NCE), and of those who took it, 10 (90.9%) passed the exam on their first attempt. Not all program graduates seek licensure.

In 2021-2022, 8 (100%) recent program graduates took and passed the National Counselor Examination (NCE). All 8 of these program graduates are seeking licensure (Note: 2021-2022 is the first year reporting this statistic in Annual Report).

Employment Outcomes

- Academic year 2025-2026: Program graduates who were actively seeking employment (N=16) were employed within 6 months of their graduation (100%). Ten of 16 (62.5%) graduates are employed as professional counselors in rehabilitation agencies or community mental health centers. One graduate (6.25%) is working in higher education. The other five (31.25%) graduates are employed in private practice. Two graduates delayed employment searches.

- Academic year 2024-2025: 100% of program graduates (N=8) who were actively seeking employment are employed. Four of 8 (50%) graduates are employed as professional counselors in rehabilitation agencies or community mental health centers. One graduate (12.5%) is working in higher education, and one (12.5%) is employed with a Sheriff's Office as well as part-time in a Chaplaincy position. The other two (25%) graduates are employed in private practice.

- Academic year 2023-2024: 100% of program graduates (N=16) who were actively seeking employment are employed. Eleven of 16 (69%) graduates are employed as professional counselors in rehabilitation agencies or community mental health centers. Five (31%) of the graduates are employed in private practice.

- Academic year 2022-2023: 100% of program graduates (N=15) who were actively seeking employment are employed. One (1) graduate opted to delay their job search. Eleven of 15 (73%) graduates are employed as rehabilitation counseling professionals in rehabilitation agencies or community mental health centers or practices. Two (2) graduates are employed in a school setting, one (1) is employed at a family community agency, and one (1) is self-employed.

1.3 Aggregate student assessment data including knowledge, skills, and dispositions

This section addresses the student assessment data, including knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions.

Student Learning Outcomes for 2025-2026

This section summarizes aggregate student learning outcome (SLO) data for the 2025-2026 academic year, including knowledge and skill performance across the eight CACREP common core areas and the three specialty practice areas: Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling, Clinical Addiction Counseling, and Career Counseling. Results are reported as the percentage of students meeting the established performance criteria for each measure. The Program reviews both initial performance and performance after the established developmental assessment process, including retake and oral comprehensive assessment opportunities where applicable.

Assessment Framework

The 60-credit-hour MA program uses 12 SLOs to assess the eight common core areas of professional counseling and an additional three SLOs for Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling, three for Clinical Addiction Counseling, and two for Career Counseling. Each SLO is assessed through two to four direct measures, including course-embedded assignments, pre-practicum and field evaluations, and comprehensive assessment questions. Most core, practicum, internship, and specialty courses measures use a 90% success benchmark; comprehensive assessment measures specify both a first-attempt expectation and successful completion through the Program's developmental assessment process.

Aggregate Results: Common Core

Across the 28 reported common-core measures, 25 (89.3%) met their stated benchmark at the initial point of assessment. All course-embedded, practicum, internship, pre-practicum, and site-supervisor measures met or exceeded the 90% benchmark, with results ranging from 94% to 100%. These findings provide consistent evidence of student attainment in professional orientation and ethics, social and cultural diversity, human growth and development, career development, counseling relationships, group work, assessment, and research/program evaluation.

Three comprehensive assessment measures did not meet the 90% first-attempt benchmark: ethics, lifespan development, and career development (14/16 passed lifespan; 14/16 passed ethics; 13/16 passed career). For the comprehensive assessment, 12 of 16 students (75%) earned a passing score on the first attempt passing all sections. Following the established retake opportunity, all 16 students (100%) successfully completed each component; one student also participated in an oral comprehensive assessment as part of the developmental process. The Program therefore determined that all 12 common-core SLOs were met at the completion of the assessment process, while also identifying first-attempt comprehensive-assessment performance in these three areas as a priority for continued monitoring.

Aggregate Results: Specialty Practice Areas

Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling students met all seven specialty measures. Performance ranged from 90% to 100%, including 100% on the case-management presentation and internship case-conceptualization measure; 95% on the neurobiology assignment; 94% on the diagnostic assessment capstone; and 90% on the NPSY 757 case-based assessment. All three Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling SLOs met their performance criteria.

Clinical Addiction Counseling students met all nine reported specialty measures, each reported at 100%. Cohort sizes ranged from one to six students, so results should be interpreted as preliminary and reviewed across additional cohorts. In Career Counseling, the two students enrolled in RCON 703 successfully completed the assessed capstone measure (2/2, 100%). Other Career Counseling specialty measures were not available because students had not yet progressed to RCON 780, RCON 885, or the related comprehensive assessment. Accordingly, Career Counseling findings represent preliminary evidence for SLO 1 rather than a full evaluation of both specialty SLOs.

Use of Results and Continuous Improvement

Faculty review focused on measures below the initial benchmark and on measures with limited cohort sizes. In response to the comprehensive assessment pattern, the Program formalized procedures for oral comprehensive assessment to improve consistency and assessment-process integrity. Faculty will continue to disaggregate and monitor ethics, lifespan, and career comprehensive assessment questions by attempt and cohort to determine whether additional curricular or instructional adjustments are warranted. The Program will also continue to monitor specialty outcomes as students' progress through the newer Clinical Addiction Counseling and Career Counseling curricula, with particular attention to obtaining complete data for Career Counseling SLO 2. Existing curricular refinements, including applied ethics activities, targeted multicultural practice, theory teaching and application, group-leadership experiences, and clinically focused assessment activities, will remain in place while their relationship to subsequent outcome data is monitored..

The first-attempt comprehensive examination pass rate warrants careful contextualization. The comprehensive examination is an internal program assessment and not a licensure or certification examination that is designed to evaluate students' ability to understand, critically analyze, and apply core counseling knowledge. During the reporting period, 75% of students earned a passing score on the comprehensive examination on their first attempt; however, all students who required a retake ultimately achieved a passing score, resulting in a 100% eventual pass rate.

As part of the annual SLO review, faculty examine the examination's structure, content balance, scoring expectations, and alignment with instruction and program outcomes. The retake process serves a developmental purpose by allowing students additional time to focus on analyzing questions, organizing their responses, and demonstrating their reasoning rather than managing time pressure alone. This process reinforces the critical-thinking, conceptual integration, and applied counseling skills students continue to develop during internship. Faculty will continue to monitor first-attempt and eventual pass rates, as well as performance by content area, to determine whether further instructional or assessment adjustments are needed.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The C&R program allows students to matriculate in both Fall and Spring semesters and to attend as either part-time or full-time students. Without a cohort model, aggregate data does not always match individual student data. The program faculty systematically collects Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for individual students across time.

In addition to enrolling students in fall and spring semesters, students may attend part-time or full-time. While this flexibility meets program students' needs, it also presents challenges as to how faculty can collect data related to key performance indicators for individual students at multiple points in the curriculum. Faculty record KPI information during our bi-annual disposition meetings and then review the KPIs with students during the Spring semester to ensure that all feedback related to academic progress is formally presented to each student at least once per year.

Due to the primarily virtual nature of contact with students, we continue to seek the most efficient and effective mechanism by which to provide and manage copies of the feedback. Program faculty review the information via shared screen using a meeting platform (e.g., WebEx).

The program's systematic review of key performance indicators (KPIs) has continued through the 2025-2026 academic year and has proven useful for monitoring student learning and supporting timely intervention. Students have been informed that designated assignments serve as KPIs and may be reviewed programmatically in addition to their role in individual course grading.

During the 2025–2026 academic year, no KPIs were identified as unmet through the programmatic review process. However, students enrolled in RCON 711 who do not demonstrate adequate development of skills for working effectively with diverse clients may be required to complete additional recorded mock-client practice sessions before progressing to the next skills-based course. This process supports remediation, reinforces the importance of demonstrated competency, and promotes student readiness for continued clinical skill development.

Comprehensive Examination Data

Summarized Results: In 2025-2026, students did well on the Comprehensive Examination overall. We had an ultimate 100% pass rate. Our first-time pass rate (12 of 16) was 75%, with 25% of students returning to take one or more sections. This iterative process is designed to be an intentional part of the learning process, providing students who have not yet fully developed their knowledge and skills with the opportunity to further explore the material and to participate in a different case study. This formal process allows students to gather formative feedback on areas for further growth to address those areas and reflect professional competence.

Faculty Discussion: Faculty will continue to monitor the exam as a measure of students demonstrated knowledge and competencies necessary for practice in the field of professional counseling.

Clinical Evaluation Data

Internship students are required to complete case conceptualizations as a mechanism for assessing clinical case competency, including their ability to understand how mental health conditions affect the counseling and/or rehabilitation process. Competency is demonstrated by earning a rating of "Satisfactory" or higher on the case conceptualization assignment. The assignment focuses on individuals with serious mental illnesses and assesses students' ability to critically evaluate a client's psychiatric diagnosis.

During the reporting period,19 internship students, based on their enrollment status, completed the assignment and successfully met the established competency goal. All 19 students accurately described the impact of mental health conditions on key areas of functioning, including interpersonal relationships, employment, and independent living. Each student earned

a rating of “Satisfactory” on the first attempt and demonstrated competency in the section requiring critical evaluation of the client’s psychiatric diagnosis.

Dispositions Data

Assessment Process

Faculty assess student dispositions using an adapted process based on the work of Spurgeon, Gibbons, and Cochran (2012). Dispositions include commitment, interpersonal competence, openness, respect, integrity, and self-awareness. Professional dispositions are assessed 2 times per year, in the Fall and Spring semesters. Each disposition is rated on a 3-point continuum of Growth Needed, Developing Well, and Exceptional. Students are rated according to what would be expected of them during the semester in which they are enrolled. That is, a first semester student is not compared to what would be expected of a practicum or internship student.

In addition to faculty review of dispositions, each student completes a self-assessment of dispositions. This “two-step” iterative process is designed to help students calibrate their own professional and personal development monitoring skills. Designated faculty members meet individually with students to compare the faculty and student assessments and identify areas for growth and continued improvement. This process for review of dispositions is intentionally separate from academics and is not graded. Rather, students reflect on their own development, rate themselves, and receive critical feedback in key professional dispositional areas in a setting that maximizes adult learning capacities.

Summary of 2025-2026 Results:

Despite increased enrollment, student disposition ratings have remained consistent. Students continue to demonstrate strong professional dispositions, with most receiving ratings of *Developing Well* across all six characteristics. Ratings of *Exceptional* are reserved for instances in which a student demonstrates a dispositional characteristic beyond what would typically be expected of a developing counseling professional. Consistent with prior years, approximately 10–15% of students received one or more ratings of *Exceptional*, while approximately 10% received one or more ratings of *Growth Needed*.

During the 2025–2026 academic year, approximately 15% of students received an *Exceptional* rating in at least one area during one of the rating periods. These ratings reflect students’ significant efforts toward personal and professional development. The *commitment* category was among the highest-rated areas for these students, reflecting their investment in learning; development of counselor identity; advocacy; professional excellence; civic engagement; collaboration; scholar-practitioner development; and responsiveness to feedback.

As in previous years, most students who received a rating of *Growth Needed* had identified similar areas for development in their self-assessments and/or were receptive to faculty feedback. When remediation is needed, program faculty meet collaboratively with the student to develop a Professional Development Plan (PDP). Drawing on the PDP framework presented by faculty at Youngstown State University and consultation with Dr. Protivnak, the C&R program

developed procedures to guide the creation of individualized remediation plans that promote student success and support continued progression through the program.

The PDP process is outlined in the Student Handbook and introduced during the program's Annual Orientation and Returning Student Meeting as a supportive opportunity for professional and dispositional growth rather than a punitive process. Students are informed that a PDP may be initiated by faculty, by the student, or collaboratively.

Disposition review is integrated into the formal annual spring evaluation process, during which students receive feedback on the development of knowledge and skills, including key performance indicators (KPIs), as well as professional dispositions. As the program continues to grow, C&R would benefit from access to a data management system to capture, monitor, and analyze disposition data alongside student learning outcomes (SLOs) and KPIs more efficiently.

1.4 Advisement Survey

The 2026 Annual (Inaugural) Advisement Survey was sent out to all program students (n=87). Responses were received from 16 students. Reminders were sent out at one and three weeks. That brings the response rate on the electronic survey to 18.3%. Students indicated general satisfaction with the Advisement process, with 100% reporting access to regular Advisement within the program and a satisfaction rate of 86.3%. Students also reported that advisement seemed productive, reporting an 86.6% productivity rating.

Students noted areas of strength in Advisement as helpful in navigating the program, availability of faculty and staff for consultation, the caring and helpful nature of faculty and staff, emotional support and connection with faculty, and many seemed to value the one-on-one connection to faculty and staff. There were a few suggestions that students provide. These included Advisement availability of text-based communication with faculty, increased availability of faculty, and the possibility of group advisement.

Faculty Discussion: Faculty noted student satisfaction with advisement seemed high. Faculty will continue to be available and tailor advisement to individual student needs.

1.5 Exit Interview

To capture current contact information and other helpful information for program continuous improvement efforts, the C&R program captures student feedback in an exit interview with each student in the semester in which they are preparing to graduate or exit the program. The exit interview is divided into two parts. Part 1 is designed to capture contact information, reason for exiting the program, current employment, use of student services, and professional organizational memberships. Part 2 is a survey designed to gather information about students' perspectives regarding their learning related to several SLOs areas (professional counseling orientation, theories, human growth and development, ethics, working with diverse clients, career counseling, basic counseling skills, research, and disability, MH & addictions).

All 18 graduates completed Part 2 of the exit interview during AY 2025-2026. Graduates rated their learning on a scale from 1 to 7, with 7 indicating the highest level of preparation. Mean

ratings ranged from 5.72 to 6.50, indicating that graduates perceived the program as providing above average to strong preparation across all assessed areas.

The highest-rated areas were Ethics (6.50), Culture and Diversity (6.44), Intentional Interviewing and Basic Counseling Skills (6.33), and Research (6.17). Graduates also rated Professional Counseling Orientation and Human Growth and Development at 6.00. These findings reflect strong preparation in ethical decision making, multicultural responsiveness, foundational counseling skills, and the integration of research into counseling practice.

Graduates frequently described the value of skill practice, faculty feedback, practicum and internship, and the Learning Community:

- *"The program was 'well rounded' in that when I began work in practicum and internship, much of the work I was doing, from intake to counseling theory, was familiar through coursework."*
- *"Learning and enhancing basic and advanced counseling skills were foundational elements of this program. Practice in class and during internship and practicum ensured that I was developing in areas that influence the therapeutic relationship."*
- *"Every scenario had ethics tied into it. It really helped me know what to look out for when making ethical decisions and using different models to protect myself and my clients."*
- *"The most valuable experience was the student, peer, and instructor interaction. Without that invaluable part of the experience, I would be walking away with a diploma, but not the education necessary to prepare me for my eventual role as a counselor."*

The lowest mean ratings were in Career Theories and Assessment (5.72), Addictions and Mental Health Counseling (5.78), and Counseling Theories and Techniques (5.83). Although these scores remain above average, qualitative feedback identified opportunities for continued improvement. Graduates requested additional opportunities to interpret career assessments, greater depth and practice with counseling theories and their application with diverse client populations and expanded exposure to addictions counseling for students outside of the Clinical Addictions Counseling specialty practice area.

Additional feedback identified several program strengths, including accessible and supportive faculty, faculty responsiveness to distance-learning students, active and experiential learning, role-play and mock-client activities, practicum and internship preparation, the Learning Community, and peer relationships. Students also valued Lunch and Learn events, CRSA involvement, graduate assistantships, and opportunities for professional identity development

Graduates identified several areas for continued attention:

- Maintaining connection and faculty accessibility as cohort sizes increase.
- Providing additional preparation and earlier communication related to practicum, internship, comprehensive examinations, and professional pathways.
- Continuing to strengthen exposure to diverse counseling settings, specialty populations, and post-graduation professional development opportunities.

Faculty discussions

Exit-interview findings indicate that graduates perceived the Counseling and Rehabilitation program as providing strong preparation across all assessed outcomes. Faculty will continue to monitor the relatively lower-rated areas of career development, addictions and mental health counseling, and counseling theories; consider additional applied learning and case-based opportunities; and maintain the relational, practice-focused learning experiences identified by graduates as central strengths of the program. A review of the NPSY 760 Addictions Rehabilitation to streamline assignments in weekly modules took place Spring 2026 in preparation for the Summer term. NPSY 760 is a core course for all specialties and is taken by students in the Counselor Education program from the College of Education. In addition, the program faculty noted that NPSY 761: Dual Diagnosis and RCON 712: Addiction and the Family, which are specialty practice area requirements for students in the clinical addiction track may be taken as electives for those who want more addiction and/or family focused content. During Spring 2026, faculty who attended the ACA Conference in Columbus, OH were introduced to SimCare, an AI simulation program for supporting student skill development. Throughout the summer term, the Program worked to learn more about the company and its resources for student practice. It is hoped to have the SimCare AI program available to students in Fall 2026 or Spring 2027. This resource may offer opportunities for students to have more opportunities for practice of applied and case-based learning.

1.6 Systematic follow-up

Site Supervisor Survey Data

The 2026 Site Supervisor Survey was conducted from January through February 2026. Of the 23 site supervisors surveyed, five responded, yielding a 22% response rate. Sixty percent of respondents supervised internship students, while 40% supervised practicum students. Respondents primarily represented fall-semester placements.

Site supervisors evaluated the quality of program communication and documentation processes on a 10-point scale, with 10 indicating outstanding. Mean ratings were 10.00 for access to faculty members, 9.68 for clarity of USC documentation processes, and 10.00 for ease of completing required documentation. These results indicate a high level of site supervisor satisfaction with faculty availability and administrative processes.

Qualitative feedback further supported these findings. Supervisors reported that practicum and internship students were well prepared, adapted quickly to clinical expectations, and were ready to apply program learning in field settings. Faculty were described as supportive of students and responsive to site-specific systems and constraints. Supervisors expressed confidence in the quality of the program and noted few, if any, weaknesses.

Faculty Discussion

Recommendations for continued program improvement included maintaining attention to professionalism and workplace roles and sustaining or expanding role-play opportunities. One site supervisor also recommended increased preparation in documentation practices relevant to

state settings, including FIRPP notes. While faculty recognize that sites may want interns to arrive familiar with administrative expectations, training students on site-specific documentation requirements and procedures remains the responsibility of the placement site. Faculty will continue to support students' general professional documentation skills while considering the broader recommendations as part of ongoing curriculum and field-experience evaluation.

Employer Survey Data

The 2026 Annual Employer Survey was distributed to 15 employers of Counseling and Rehabilitation program graduates. Survey links were shared with each graduate/employee, who was asked to provide the link to their supervisor for completion. Responses were received from five employers. Reminders were sent at one and three weeks, resulting in a 33.3% response rate. Survey links were shared with each graduate/employee, who was asked to provide the link to their supervisor for completion. Responses were received from five employers. Reminders were sent at one and three weeks, resulting in a 33.3% response rate.

Consistent with counselor education practice, the Employer Survey measures employers' satisfaction with graduates' knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Respondents rate each area on a five-point scale, with 5 indicating most satisfied and 1 indicating least satisfied.

In the knowledge domain, all respondents rated their satisfaction as 5 out of 5 in the areas of the role of the rehabilitation counselor and vocational concepts and the world of work. Counseling techniques and theories received a rating of 4 out of 5, indicating broad satisfaction with graduates' preparation in this area.

In the skills domain, employers rated all areas as 5 out of 5, except for using disability-related information to assist clients, which received a rating of 4 out of 5. Areas receiving the highest rating included rehabilitation counselor job responsibilities; helping clients explore the world of work; use of counseling theories and techniques; use of disability-related information; and culturally appropriate interventions with clients.

In the attitudes domain, all respondents rated their satisfaction as 5 out of 5 in areas including workplace attitude, attitudes toward supervisors, persons with disabilities, persons from diverse cultural and background experiences, and coworkers.

Employers identified several strengths among program graduates:

- "Compassion and empathy."
- "Generally knowledgeable and ready for entry-level counseling."
- "Passionate about clinical work, documentation, willingness to help to support others, rapport building with clients served, performs all duties well, and communicates well."
- "Team collaboration, group facilitation, proficiency in clinical documentation."

Faculty Discussion

Faculty noted that employer satisfaction was high and that the reported employee strengths reflect strong preparation for professional practice. The program will continue efforts to increase

employer participation in future surveys through regular reminders and by engaging graduates to encourage supervisor responses.

Alumni/Graduate Survey Data

The 2026 Annual Graduate Survey was distributed to 15 program graduates, with 10 responses received, for a 66.6% response rate. Graduates rated the importance of coursework to their current professional practice on a four-point scale, with 4 indicating “Very Important” and 1 indicating “Not Very Important.”

Overall, graduates rated most courses at 3.25 or higher, indicating that the curriculum is perceived as relevant to professional preparation. The highest-rated courses were RCON 880 and RCON 883 (4.0), RCON 704: Issues and Ethics in Rehabilitation Counseling (4.0), RCON 601 and NPSY 757: Psychopathology for Counselors (3.85), and RCON 711 and RCON 720 (3.75). EDCE 510: Introduction to Counseling was rated 3.5, and EDPY Human Growth and Development was rated 3.1. The redesigned addictions course was rated 3.25.

The lowest-rated courses were RCON 702: Research and Program Evaluation in Counseling (2.75), RCON 700: Foundations of Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling (3.0), and RCON 734: Professional Issues in Rehabilitation Counseling (3.0). At the practice-area level, evaluating and utilizing research, job development, and occupational analysis were rated as less important to graduates’ current work than clinical competencies such as listening skills and conducting counseling.

Qualitative findings were consistent with quantitative data. Graduates identified clinical training, practicum and internship, the Learning Community, faculty relationships, and active, application-based learning as program strengths. Graduates also reported strong satisfaction with advisement, with a mean rating of 8.1 out of 10.

Faculty Discussion

Faculty will continue to monitor the relevance of research, job development, and occupational analysis content; assess the impact of the addictions course redesign; and strengthen communication related to licensure, comprehensive examinations, and post-graduation planning.

Student Evaluation of Site Supervisor Survey Data

Each student evaluated the perceived effectiveness of their site supervisor at the end of their practicum and internship as part of the Agency Placement Evaluation. This year, all students (12 practicum; 10 internship) rated their experiences with their site supervisors. The average ratings ranged from 8.75 to 9.37 each semester on a scale from 1 (unsatisfactory) to 10 (outstanding), with an overall average of 9.03, reflecting consistently high levels of satisfaction throughout the year.

Summary

Students consistently noted that their site supervisors provided helpful and supportive guidance during field experiences. The Practicum and Internship Coordinator worked closely with

students and site supervisors throughout field experiences, which worked to build and strengthen collaborative opportunities.

1.7 Additional external review Additional external review

CACREP Accreditation

The C&R Program used the 2025–2026 academic year to develop a comprehensive self-study designed to bring all specialty practice areas under a single accreditation cycle. This process supported the program's transition to the 2024 Standards and alignment with CACREP's compliance requirements. The completed self-study was submitted to CACREP in July 2026.Counseling and Rehabilitation

Advisory Board Data

The function of the Advisory Board is threefold: It serves as a primary external review of the Counseling and Rehabilitation program. In addition to this vital program-evaluation function, the Advisory Board is intricately linked to two program objectives. Specifically, the presence of students and professional representatives from private, government, and public agencies helps the program achieve effective and responsible participation in changing state and national environments related to counseling and rehabilitation. In addition to advising the program, the Advisory Board also provides consultation and identifies training needs as they arise. During AY 2025-2026, the Advisory Board met in January 2026 and June 2026.

Highlights of the 2025-2026 Advisory Board process included:

- Workforce and service delivery needs. Board members identified growing demand for behavioral health, substance use, vocational rehabilitation, disability, and youth transition services. Partners also noted increased attention to integrating primary care and behavioral health services, particularly in rural communities.
- Disability advocacy and school transition concerns. Members discussed parent concerns related to implementation of IEPs and Section 504 plans, the importance of disability-led services and lived experience, and the need for clear, coordinated information about assistive technology.
- Technology in education and practice. The Board discussed the program's use of the RSA grant, virtual reality, artificial intelligence, learning-management systems, and assistive technology to strengthen student preparation and respond to evolving clinical and workforce environments.
- Student preparation and professional development. Site supervisors and agency partners reported that students are well prepared for practicum and internship experiences. Discussion identified continued opportunities to strengthen documentation skills, understanding of workplace expectations, cultural responsiveness, mentorship, and exposure to a range of community agencies and professional roles.
- Community engagement and clinical services. The Board discussed the continued development of the Center for Counseling and Assessment, community referrals, rural outreach, and student involvement in community events. Members emphasized the value of relationship building, trust, and increased visibility with community partners.

Ideas and action items from Advisory Board members included:

- Expanding Lunch and Learn events, including hybrid events and agency site tours, to increase student exposure to rehabilitation, behavioral health, assistive technology, and community-based services.
- Developing reciprocal field trips and agency tours to foster stronger partnerships and help students better understand available services, workplace settings, and career pathways.
- Exploring a podcast series featuring partner agencies to inform students and the broader community about agency roles, services, and professional opportunities.
- Continuing collaboration with SCVRD and other partners to support CRC credentialing, workforce development, and professional training opportunities.
- Incorporating feedback from individuals with lived experience and clients, when appropriate, to reduce stigma and strengthen advocacy.

Discussion: Overall, the Board highlighted the need for counseling and rehabilitation professionals who are prepared to work across changing clinical, community, and workforce contexts. Board members affirmed the program's strong student preparation and faculty responsiveness while identifying opportunities to expand technology integration, agency partnerships, professional development, and student exposure to diverse service settings. C&R faculty will continue to use Advisory Board feedback to guide curriculum, clinical training, community engagement, and professional development activities.

Section 2. Discussion of Findings

This year's Program Evaluation process yielded some key insights:

The AY 2025-2026 program evaluation identified continued strengths in student preparation, clinical training, professional dispositions, and faculty support, alongside opportunities to strengthen assessment processes, applied learning, and communication. Findings from student assessments, exit interviews, follow-up surveys, and Advisory Board discussions will guide continued program improvement.

Enrollment increased by 26% in AY 2025-2026. Despite this growth, student assessment results and stakeholder feedback continued to reflect strong preparation for professional practice.

Aggregate assessment findings supported attainment of all 12 common-core student learning outcomes following completion of the developmental assessment process. All course-embedded and clinical measures met their established benchmarks.

All 16 students successfully completed the comprehensive examination process, with first-attempt performance in ethics, lifespan development, and career development remaining an area for continued monitoring.

The 16 graduates who reported taking the National Counselor Examination passed on their first attempt. However, the small number of CRC examination participants limits interpretation of

certification outcomes. Faculty will continue to monitor examination participation and performance alongside other measures of student learning.

Specialty assessment results were also positive. Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling students met all reported specialty measures, and Clinical Addiction Counseling students achieved the established criteria on all reported measures. AY 2025-2026 also included the program's first Clinical Addiction Counseling graduate. Findings for this specialty remain preliminary because of small cohort sizes. Career Counseling assessment data were limited to students who had reached the initial assessed course; therefore, a complete evaluation of both specialty SLOs was not yet possible. Faculty will continue collecting and reviewing specialty practice area data as students progress through the curriculum.

Graduate feedback consistently affirmed the value of experiential learning, mock-client sessions, faculty feedback, the Learning Community, and practicum and internship. Exit-interview findings also identified opportunities for additional practice in career assessment interpretation, application of counseling theories with diverse clients, and addictions content across specialty areas. In response, faculty streamlined weekly assignments in NPSY 760: Addictions Rehabilitation; continued to offer NPSY 761: Dual Diagnosis and RCON 712: Addiction and the Family as electives for students seeking additional addictions preparation; and explored SimCare AI as a potential resource for expanding applied, case-based counseling practice during AY 2026-2027.

Field-experience findings reflected positive working relationships among students, faculty, and site supervisors. Supervisors reported high satisfaction with faculty access and documentation processes, while students rated their supervision experiences positively. Faculty will reinforce general clinical documentation competencies while recognizing placement sites' responsibility to teach their specific procedures.

Advisory Board recommendations and input from the larger Learning Community further supported expanding Lunch and Learn events, mentorship, and exposure to diverse service settings.

Professional dispositions remained consistent despite increased enrollment. Faculty will continue twice-yearly disposition reviews, annual student feedback meetings, and individualized Professional Development Plans when indicated.

Advisement (inaugural) and graduate feedback emphasized the importance of preserving faculty accessibility and individual connection as enrollment grows. Respondents valued faculty availability, emotional support, and assistance navigating program requirements. Survey participation remains a limitation, particularly for the site supervisor and employer surveys. Continued reminders and engagement with graduates and community partners will be used to encourage broader participation. Growth also reinforces the need for a data management system that can efficiently track SLOs, KPIs, dispositions, and individual student progression across full-time and part-time enrollment.

Section 3. Recent and Subsequent Program Modifications

The review of incoming data throughout the year resulted in several program actions and modifications.

3.1 Comprehensive Exam Comprehensive Exam

The program developed a formalized process for reviewing the oral comprehensive examination, including a standardized rating rubric and clear directions for students. This process was developed to promote consistency in evaluation and provides students with transparent expectations for preparation and performance.

3.2 Specialty Practice Areas

Following approval by the USC Board of Trustees on February 26, 2024, and the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education on April 10, 2024, the Counseling and Rehabilitation Program welcomed its first cohort of students in the Clinical Addictions Counseling and Career Counseling specialty practice areas in Fall 2024. The program welcomed a second group of students in AY 2025-2026.

3.3 New Course Offerings

When the C&R program initiated its two new specialty practice areas, clinical addiction counseling and career counseling, there were new courses added to the schedule. Academic Year 2025-2026 marked the first time RCON 735: Leadership in Rehabilitation and the Helping and Healthcare Professions was taught. It is hoped that this course will be considered as an elective for other Floyd School of Medicine students and those in the health professions. Efforts will be made to advertise it as an elective across the USC community the next time it is offered.

3.4 Field Placements and Partnerships Field Placements and Partnerships

This academic year, the C&R program implemented targeted revisions to the Practicum and Internship Information Packet. Key updates include refined field placement agreements that clearly delineate site operational protocols, emergency management procedures, expectations during university academic breaks, and operationalized placement evaluation.

The program continued to prioritize in-person site visits across placement locations, reinforcing vital relationships with regional clinical partners. Site supervisors consistently noted the value of these visits, which enhanced collaborative dialogue, streamlined midterm evaluations, and offered opportunities for facility walk-throughs that grounded supervisory consultation in students' daily clinical environments.

Our clinical training network expanded this year through the addition of 19 new partnership sites. These placements broaden experiential opportunities across private practices, inpatient hospital units, integrated outpatient behavioral health centers, and community agencies serving diverse, historically marginalized populations. Furthermore, the program successfully reestablished formal affiliations with key state agencies, including the South Carolina Vocational

Rehabilitation Department (SCVRD) and the South Carolina Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities' Office of Mental Health (BHDD/OMH).

The launch of the Clinic for Counseling and Assessment (CCA) expanded field-based training by providing students with supervised opportunities to participate in clinic development, client assessment, counseling, treatment planning, documentation, and community outreach (see Section 4.3).

Section 4. Other Substantial Program Changes

4.1 CACREP Accreditation

The program's accreditation was formally reviewed and determined at CACREP's January 2021 board meeting and accreditation was granted through March 2029 for the clinical rehabilitation counseling specialty. During AY 2024-25, the C&R program prepared the *2016 Standards Monitoring/Midcycle Report*, which was due to the CACREP Board September 2025.

Updates to the CACREP Standards were approved by CACREP Board February 2023 to go into effect July 2024. All accredited programs are expected to comply with the 2024 CACREP Standards by July 1, 2026. All course syllabi for core courses and specialty practice areas were reviewed and updated to reflect the 2024 CACREP Standards for implementation during the 2025-2026 AY. During AY 2025–2026, the program also completed and submitted its self-study to align all three specialty practice areas under a single accreditation cycle.

4.2 Visiting Professor

To support the program's continued growth and strengthen instructional capacity, a visiting professor was hired during AY 2024-25 and was continued for AY 2025-26. This appointment provided additional expertise in the program's specialty areas, enhanced course offerings, and contributed to student learning and faculty collaboration. The visiting professor brought expertise in counselor education and supervision as well as addiction counseling.

4.3 Development of the Clinic for Counseling and Assessment (CCA)

During Academic Year 2025–2026, the University of South Carolina Floyd School of Medicine Clinic for Counseling and Assessment (CCA) transitioned from the planning and development phase to an operational counseling clinic focused on expanding access to mental health services in rural and underserved communities throughout South Carolina. The arrival of the Clinic Coordinator in November 2025 marked a significant milestone in the clinic's development, with initial efforts focused on establishing operational procedures, strengthening administrative processes, developing community outreach strategies, and preparing for the delivery of counseling services. The CCA officially opened for referrals on January 20, 2026.

Clinic Development and Student Engagement

Graduate-level counseling interns played an integral role in the clinic's initial development and implementation. Working collaboratively with the Clinic Coordinator, the interns assisted in refining standard operating procedures, developing promotional materials, troubleshooting

operational and technological challenges, and establishing consistent messaging to communicate the clinic's mission and services to prospective clients and community partners.

Their involvement provided experiential learning opportunities beyond traditional clinical training, offering firsthand exposure to the development and implementation of a counseling clinic. Through these activities, interns strengthened their skills in problem-solving, professional communication, program development, collaboration, and clinical operations while contributing to the establishment of the clinic's operational infrastructure.

Community Engagement and Relationship Building

Beginning in December 2025, the CCA initiated an intentional, relationship-centered community engagement strategy focused on increasing awareness of available counseling services, establishing community connections, and developing referral pathways for individuals and families seeking mental health support.

Outreach efforts included direct telephone communication, in-person visits to community organizations, participation in community events, and ongoing engagement with local stakeholders. Emphasis was placed in Orangeburg County, where the Clinic Coordinator worked to establish a consistent and visible presence within the community.

Organizations engaged during this period included Rise Ministries, Samaritan House, Orangeburg County Council on Aging, Clemson Rural Clinic, Courage Center, and BOBC2, among others. Outreach also extended to healthcare providers, schools, social service agencies, senior-serving organizations, and local government entities.

Recognizing the importance of trust and familiarity in rural communities, the CCA prioritized sustained engagement rather than one-time outreach efforts. Through repeated interactions, participation in community activities, and relationship-building with local organizations, the clinic worked to establish credibility, increase awareness of its services, and strengthen connections with potential referral sources.

These efforts helped lay the foundation for a growing network of community relationships to support access to mental health services for rural residents.

Clinical Services and Access to Care

Following its official launch on January 20, 2026, the CCA began providing counseling services to individuals, couples, and families. The clinic's service delivery model incorporated in-person initial assessments followed by telehealth counseling sessions, helping reduce transportation and geographic barriers to mental health care for individuals residing in rural communities.

Between January 20 and June 30, 2026, the CCA received 26 referrals, completed 15 initial assessments, and provided counseling services to 12 clients.

In addition to providing mental health services, the clinic offered opportunities for counselors-in-training to develop and strengthen clinical competencies through supervised client interactions, assessment, treatment planning, clinical documentation, and therapeutic interventions.

Continued Growth and Development

Academic Year 2025–2026 represented a foundational period of growth for the CCA. Within the first several months of operation, the clinic established essential administrative and clinical processes, launched counseling services, initiated community outreach, and developed relationships with organizations serving rural and underserved populations.

Through the collaborative efforts of the Clinic Coordinator, student interns, and community stakeholders, the CCA established a foundation for continued service expansion, community engagement, and clinical training. These accomplishments advanced the clinic's mission of increasing access to mental health services while preparing future counseling professionals to address the diverse behavioral health needs of South Carolina communities.

Section 5. Student Professional Engagement and Accomplishments

5.1 Learning Community Saturday Event

The Counseling and Rehabilitation Program continued its tradition of hosting Learning Community Saturday (LCS) events during both the Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 semesters. These full-day events brought together students, alumni, faculty, community partners, counseling agencies, and presenters from across the state for professional learning, networking, and community building.

The Fall 2025 LCS included 13 presentations. Topics included “Acute Trauma, PTSD, and Complex Trauma,” “The Ethical Compass: Guiding Principles for Private Practitioners in Counseling,” and “Managing Difficult Conversations: Building Leadership Through Empathy, Confidence, and Collaboration.” Students also participated in personal and professional development activities designed to support professional identity development, reflection on current accomplishments, future planning, and preparation for professional interviews.

The Spring 2026 LCS included more than 20 presentations. Topics included “When the Body Speaks: Somatics in the Therapy Room,” “How Can PTs and Counselors Collaborate to Treat Patients/Clients?,” “Humor in Counseling,” “OCD and Virtual Reality Exposure Therapy,” and “The Effect of Live Music on Mental Health, Well-Being, and Community Connection.” Together, the Fall and Spring events provided students with opportunities to engage with current clinical topics, learn from peers and professionals, and strengthen their connections to the Counseling and Rehabilitation learning community.

5.2 Student Professional Development

Students, recent graduates, and alumni frequently express a desire for greater involvement in scholarly activities. In response, faculty and staff have developed initiatives to increase student engagement in these activities, offering a variety of opportunities that promote professional growth and participation within the program.

Orientation. On August 15, 2025, the Counseling and Rehabilitation Program hosted its annual New and Returning Student Orientation at the USC Floyd School of Medicine. Faculty, staff, students, and alumni participated in a full day of programming focused on academic resources,

professional development, and community building. New students participated in sessions led by School of Medicine Student Services and university partners, while returning students received information related to pre-practicum, practicum and internship, the comprehensive examination, and licensure preparation. The afternoon included alumni and peer networking, a personal and professional development workshop addressing counselor dispositions, ethics, professional planning, and the evolving role of artificial intelligence in counseling practice, as well as a Reflecting Team activity and Learning Community Forum.

Professional Conferences and Student Presentations. In April 2026, Counseling and Rehabilitation students joined faculty members at the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA) Pre-Conference Symposium in Columbus, Ohio. The event provided opportunities to engage with current professional issues, learn from rehabilitation counseling leaders, participate in the ARCA Annual Membership Meeting, and develop professional networks.

The Program was also represented at Discover USC for the third consecutive year. Three Counseling and Rehabilitation students presented their scholarship work to evaluators, visitors, faculty, and staff. Presentations included “Exploring VR Mindfulness Impacts on Cognitive Processing Speed and Biofeedback Measures: Informing Approaches for Cognitive Functional Recovery” and “Ethical Considerations for Rural Counseling: A Narrative Review,” which continued work developed through the 2026 ACA Ethics Competition.

5.3 Student Recognition, Leadership, and Service

Students and graduates were recognized for academic achievement, clinical skill, leadership, advocacy, and service during the 2025-2026 academic year. Allie Ledbetter received the Distinguished Rehabilitation Counseling Student Award in recognition of her academic performance, field experiences, leadership, and involvement in both CRSA and ARCA. Julia Moro and Aileen Pagán-Welch received the Award for Clinical Excellence in Counseling and Rehabilitation for their demonstrated growth and skill in practicum and internship settings. Dave Tussey received the Outstanding Contribution to the Counseling and Rehabilitation Program Award for his leadership, peer support, and continued service to the learning community.

Aileen Pagán-Welch was also recognized as the 2025 ARCA Master’s Student of the Year. Her leadership, scholarship, advocacy within the Deaf community, and professional engagement reflect the values of accessibility, inclusion, and rehabilitation counseling. In June 2026, Aileen’s paper, “Reframing Self Advocacy: A Global Inclusion Approach for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students,” was featured by CarterHears.com.

Community Engagement. Students and staff represented the Counseling and Rehabilitation Program at several outreach events during the year. Students shared information about graduate education and counseling careers at Lander University’s Fall Education Fair and the Orangeburg-Wilkinson High School Career Fair. Students also participated in the USC Community Health Fair, where they demonstrated virtual-reality applications related to mindfulness, breathing, and relaxation. These opportunities allowed students to practice communicating with diverse audiences while promoting counseling, rehabilitation, and wellness resources in the community.

5.4 Student Organization

The Counseling and Rehabilitation Student Association (CRSA) continued to promote student connection, professional development, and community service throughout the academic year. CRSA members participated in the Run with All Your Heart 5K, supported EdVenture Sensory Night, hosted a virtual Safe Space, and coordinated a Winter Clothing Drive benefiting individuals served by Transitions Homeless Shelter. Students also volunteered their time to assist with the distribution of donated clothing and winter essentials.

In addition, CRSA collaborated with alumni and faculty to establish a voluntary Alumni Mentorship Program. The initiative connects current students with program graduates who can offer guidance related to career exploration, clinical and professional development, licensure preparation, field experiences, work-life balance, and the transition into professional counseling roles. This program further strengthens relationships among students, alumni, and the larger Counseling and Rehabilitation community.

5.5 Student and Alumni News

The Program's learning community celebrated the professional accomplishments of students and recent graduates throughout the year. Spring 2025 graduate, Nic Collins, published *Advance: Discover Alignment and Authenticity Through Living in Concert with YOUR Situation*. Spring 2026 graduate, Aileen Pagán-Welch published an article focused on self-advocacy, inclusion, and accessibility for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students. These accomplishments reflect the scholarly engagement, advocacy, and professional identity development encouraged throughout the Counseling and Rehabilitation Program.

Section 6. Faculty Professional Engagement and Accomplishments

Research and Scholarship

In the academic year 2025-2026, C&R faculty engaged in several scholarly activities. A partial listing of those activities follows:

Grants and Awards:

Awarded

- Dr. Walsh and Dr. Richardson: Rehabilitation Services Administration: Home RLTT Award # H129B250036 $158,236 per annum/five years.
- Dr. Stackhouse: Center for Teaching Excellence: Provost's AI Teaching Fellowship. Award $2,500.

Ongoing work

- Dr. Dawson: Key personnel Proposal #180200-25-72378 Center for Clinical and Translational Research at USC (CLINTRUSC) - Admin Core - Year 2

- Dr. Dawson: Co PI Proposal #135400-25-72061 AI-Driven Burnout Detection in Nursing: A Pilot System Integrating Biometric Wearables, Geographic-Environmental Mood Tracking, and Real-Time Chatbot Interventions.
- Drs. Richardson and Sacco-Bene: Center for Rural and Primary Healthcare ($199,998; 2 years; Funded)
- Drs. Richardson and Sacco-Bene: Rural Resilience Clinic - To establish mental health and substance use field placements in nine student-led clinics, The Duke Endowment ($573,000; three years; Funded).
- Dr. Stackhouse (Part of Team): Garrett Lee Smith (GLS) Campus Suicide Prevention Grant: Together We Can Achieve More Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), (SM-22-004) Funded $302,442.

International, National, State, and Local Presentations:

Dr. Sacco-Bene presented:

- **Sacco-Bene, C.** (2026, March 27). *Mental health, culture, and public health.* Invited presenter. Lander University's Culture Matters: The Heart of Health, Healing, and Care Public Health Symposium.
- Walsh, M., & **Sacco-Bene, C.** (2025, October 11). *Pre-Practicum faculty meetings and student based reflective experiences as program evaluation and identity development tools.* ACES 2025 Conference Philadelphia, PA.

Dr. Stackhouse presented:

- Peterson, G., **Stackhouse, F.,** Webb, K., & Battle, T. (October 2025). The Role of an HBCU CACREP-Accredited Counselor Education and Supervision program in the Development of Counselor Education and Supervisors. Presentation for the Southeastern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES).
- **Kallis, E., & **F. Stackhouse** (2026). Exploring VR-Mindfulness Impacts on Cognitive Processing Speed and Biofeedback Measures: Informing Approaches for Cognitive Functional Recovery. *Graduate Student Mentor - Health Sciences Award at Discover USC.***

Dr. Walsh presented:

- **Walsh, M.** (2024, May). *Motivational interviewing in practice: Supporting recovery and community engagement in psychiatric disabilities*. Invited Presenter, ARCA 2026 Virtual Learning Institute.
- **Walsh, M.** (2026, March 20). *Psychiatric rehabilitation: Best practices for rehabilitation professionals*. Invited presenter. 2025-2026 ARCA Webinar Series.
- **Walsh, M.** (2026, March 19). *Are we getting wellness wrong? What professionals need to know about the science of happiness*. Floyd School of Medicine Counseling and Rehabilitation Program Lunch and Learn. Orangeburg, SC.
- Stavely, C, & **Walsh, M.** (2026, April 8). *psychedelics and meaning making: Working with veterans and first responders*. Education Session. 2026 ARCA Pre-Conference Symposium, Columbus, OH.

- **Walsh, M.,** & Sacco-Bene, C. (2025, October 11). *Pre-Practicum Faculty Meetings and Student Based Reflective Experiences as Program Evaluation and Identity Development Tools.* ACES 2025 Conference Philadelphia, PA.

Publications:

Sacco-Bene, C., Balva, D., Hunter, T., & Fadul, O. (2026). Best practice considerations for clinical supervision with supervisees with disabilities/disabled supervisees. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, doi.org://00343552261442917.

Stackhouse, F., Petee, H., & **Walsh, M.** (in progress). When the whistle blows: Using e-sports as a buffer to explore tragic optimism and transcultural competence among tailor-assisted adolescents.

Peterson, G., Webb, K., **Stackhouse, F.,** Battle, T. Mathews, S. (under review). The honest truth: An ethnographic study of racial and professional identity development among graduates of an HBCU CACREP-Accredited Counselor Education and Supervision. *Journal of Counseling and Multicultural Development*.

Wilson, K. B., Chao, S.Y., **Stackhouse, F.** (in press). Counseling LGBTQ+ Older Adults Mental Health Disorders and Case (pp. 1-51). Counseling and Human Service Delivery.

Walsh, M., Sacco Bene, C., & Cline-Kelly, D., Eds. (in press). *Family systems perspectives for helping professionals: Theory and applications for effective leadership, collaboration and change*. Routledge Taylor Francis.

Service

In the academic year 2025-2026, C&R faculty engaged in several service activities. A partial listing of those activities follows:

Dr. Dawson

In addition to professional memberships in ACA, APA, and ARCA:

- Co-Coordinates Rehabilitation Virtual Reality Lab
- Co-Director South Carolina Assistive Technology and Educational Research Center (SC-CATER)
    - Saturday and Sundays K-12 student drop in SC-CATER
- Able SC Board of Directors Meeting Quarterly
- Floyd School of Medicine Library Committee
- Floyd School of Medicine Information Technology Committee
- Contributing Investigator Institute for Rural Education and Development
- USC Digital Accessibility Network

Presentation and Training Service:

- Jubilee: Festival of Black History and Culture

- Ollie Johnson Annual Health Fair
- C.A. Johnson High School Annual Health Fair
- Healthy Blue Harvest Festival Health Fair
- Able SC Equipt Saturday exploration Monthly
- Liberty STEAM Charter School STEM Training
- STEM Expo 2026 at the Saluda Shoals River Center
- SC-CATER STEM awareness every Sunday
- SC CATER: McNair Scholar Program
- SC-CATER STEM training with Columbia Girl Scouts

Dr. Richardson

- Professional membership in American Counseling Association (ACA), American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA), Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), and South Carolina Counseling Association (SCCA)
- American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA)
    - Public Policy, Professional Preparation, and Standards Chair
- Editorial Reviewer for the
    - *Journal of Employment Counseling*
    - *Journal of Rehabilitation Counseling*
    - *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*
- Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC)
    - Standards and Exam Committee
- USC Floyd School of Medicine Culture & Climate Committee (CCC)
- Able South Carolina Board Member
- The Department of Neuropsychiatry and Behavioral Science, The University of South Carolina, Wellness Champion
- Patient Care- Private Practice and Floyd SOM

Dr. Sacco-Bene

- American Counseling Association
    - Conference Proposal Reviewer for 2026 Annual Conference
- American Rehabilitation Counseling Association
    - President, 2025-2026
    - President-Elect, 2024-2025
    - Conference Coordinator, Pre-Conference Symposium, Columbus, OH, 2026, April 8.
    - Coordinator and Moderator, Virtual Learning Institute, 2026, May.
    - Coordinator, Virtual 5K fund raiser, October 2025-January 2026.
    - Task Force, Co-Chair, Disability Related Clinical Supervision Competencies for Supervising Supervisees with Disabilities 2023-2026
- Professional member, South Carolina Counseling Association
- Professional member, Association for Counselor Education and Supervision
- USC Floyd School of Medicine Leave of Absence Committee, 2022-present.
- USC Floyd School of Medicine, Student Services Committee, 2025-present.

- Editing Board, *The American Journal of Family Therapy*

Dr. Sepulveda

- American Counseling Association (ACA), 2005-present
- Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), 2005-present
- Association for Counseling Sexology & Sexual Wellness, 2020-present
- Education and Training Committee Member (2022-present)
- Association for Creativity in Counseling (ACC), 2019-present
- Association for Humanistic Counseling (AHC), 2021-present
- Society for Sexual, Affectional, Intersex, and Gender Expansive Identities (SAIGE), 2014-present
- Chi Sigma Iota Counseling Academic and Professional Honor Society International (CSI), 2005 present
- North Central Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (NCACES), 2005-present
    - Webmaster (2022-present)
- Wisconsin Counseling Association (WCA), 2014-present.
- Wisconsin Counseling Journal Reviewer (2016-present)

Dr. Stackhouse

- Co-Developer of Clinical Addictions Track CACREP Specialty Degree Track
- Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling - Learning Community Saturday
- Counseling and Rehabilitation Advisory Board
- Graduate Assistant Research Education and Mentorship
- Professional Member, American Counseling Association (ACA)
- Professional Member, Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES)
- Professional Member, American Counseling Association, National Association for Multicultural Rehabilitative Concerns (NAMRC)
- Co-Coordinator of Counseling and Rehabilitation Virtual Reality Laboratory
- Coordinator of Virtual Reality Mindfulness Lab at USC Student Health and Well-being Center
- Coordinator of VREC: Virtual Reality Mindfulness + Movement Lab – STROM Wellness and Fitness Center at USC
- Graduate Council Committee of Humanities Social Sciences Education and Related Professional Programs
- Institute for Rural Education and Development (IRED) at USC - Faculty Affiliate
- SC Center for Assistive Technology and Educational Research (SC-CATER)- Faculty Affiliate
- Presentation and Training Service:
    - Jubilee Festival of Black History and Culture
    - Winston Salem State University - Occupational Therapy - Virtual Reality Workshop
    - Ollie Johnson Memorial Annual Community Health Fair - Virtual Reality Event
    - R.E.S.E.T at Swearingen Engineering Center of USC - Virtual Reality Tabling Event

    - USC "Wellness Week" at Joseph F. Rice School of Law - Virtual Reality Tabling Event
    - Women in Science and Medicine Panelist

Dr. Walsh

- Floyd School of Medicine Alumni Awards Committee, 2018-Present
- Floyd School of Medicine Alumni Board of Directors-Member, 2023-Present
- American Counseling Association
- Reviewer for *International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling*, 2021-Present
- Appointed Associate Editor for *International Journal for the Advancement of Counseling*, 2023-Present
- Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association
    - Invited Reviewer-Psychiatric Rehabilitation Competencies, 2022-Present
    - Invited Item Writer, Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner Examination, 2023-Present
    - Certification Commission (Appointed 2025)
    - Board of Directors (Appointed 2025)
- American Mental Health Counseling Association- Foundation
    - Re-Emergence Investigation Committee-Appointed Member
    - Vice Chair-Appointed 2025

Faculty Credentials

Dr. Dawson

- Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) 85454
- NSF ID: 000803911

Dr. Richardson

- 901985
- Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) 00119124
- Licensed Professional Counselor (SC-LPC) 12423

Dr. Sacco-Bene

- South Carolina Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) 11276
- Florida Licensed Mental Health Counselor (LMHC) and Qualified State Supervisor MH & MFT: MH8713
- Virginia Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) 0701003808
- National Certified Counselor (NCC) 85343
- Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) 36137

Dr. Sepulveda

- Wisconsin Clinical Substance Abuse Counselor (CSAC) 15861-132
- Wisconsin Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) 5482-125

Dr. Stackhouse

- Licensed Professional Counselor of Georgia (GA-LPC) 009419
- Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor of North Carolina (NC-LCMHC) 15443

Dr. Walsh

- Licensed Professional Counselor (SC-LPC) 4900
- Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) 95795
- Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner (CPRP) 10062150

Section 7. Program Engagement

7.1 Newsletter

The Counseling and Rehabilitation program continued publication of its monthly *C&R News* newsletter during the reporting year. Designed to keep the program community informed and connected, each issue highlights student involvement and accomplishments, faculty professional service and contributions, and key program events, including the LCS and invited speaker series. The newsletter also provides practical academic resources, such as writing tips, and includes a “Pet of the Month” feature that supports a welcoming sense of community. Overall, *C&R News* serves as a consistent platform for celebrating achievements, sharing information and resources, and fostering connections among students, faculty, and staff.

7.2 Lunch and Learn

The program hosts Lunch and Learn events that feature community agency speakers who introduce students to potential practicum and internship opportunities. These sessions also provide valuable insights on topics relevant to counseling, with emphasis focusing on rehabilitation, career, and addiction counseling. When topics are relevant to the greater learning community, the C&R program provides those sessions to community partners for NBCC CE credit.

July 2025 – Lunch & Learn Inside Alpha Behavioral Health; Pathways to Practice with presenter, Mara Jones, Alpha Behavioral Health Center.

August 2025 – Lunch & Learn Inside Counseling Services of Lancaster – Internships, Insights, and Impact with presenter, Ashlie Harder, Counseling Services of Lancaster.

September 2025 – Lunch & Learn Trauma Informed Care in Addiction Counseling with presenter, Audrey Phillips, LPC, CS, MAC, CTICP. This session was also open to C&R community partners for NBCC CE credit.

October 2025 – Lunch & Learn Strength in Systems: Counseling Within a Collaborative Care Model with Prisma Health.

November 2025 – Lunch & Learn Be the Difference: QPR Training for Suicide Prevention in Clinical Practice with presenter, Jean Ann Lambert, Mental Health America of South Carolina.

January 2026 – Lunch & Learn Pathways to Practicum and Internship: Navigating Opportunities with Counseling & Psychology Services at USC, with presenter, Jennifer Cross, Counseling & Psychology Services at the University of South Carolina.

February 2026 – Lunch & Learn Building Your Professional Identity in Private Rehabilitation: An IARP Member's Perspective with presenter, Hantac Chang, International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals (IARP).

February 2026 – Lunch & Learn Exploring Career Pathways with VA Veteran Readiness and Employment with presenter, Chantile Stovall, Department of Veterans Affairs Veteran Readiness and Employment (VR&E) Program.

March 2026 – Lunch & Learn Are We Getting Wellness Wrong? What Professionals Need to Know About the Science of Happiness with presenter, Dr Michael Walsh, University of South Carolina.

April 2026 - Lunch & Learn Be the Difference: QPR Training for Suicide Prevention in Clinical Practice with presenter, Jean Ann Lambert, Mental Health America of South Carolina.

June 2026 – Lunch & Learn Neurodivergence 101 with presenter, Christina Jones, the University of South Carolina Student Health and Well-Being and Counseling and Psychiatry. This session was also open to C&R community partners for NBCC CE credit.

7.3 Speaker Series

The C&R program continued to sponsor a Professional Speaker Series during the 2025-26 academic year to further engage students and the larger learning community in professional development. The 2025-2026 annual year's speakers include

October 2025 – The Counseling and Rehabilitation Program hosted presenter Dr. Courtney D. Stavely during the program's Fall Professional Speaker Series event. Dr. Stavely research interests are in the field of psychedelic studies with focus on the use of psychedelic medicines for improved well-being among veterans, and issues of safety and ethics in the field of psychedelics and mental health. She presented to those who attended virtually as well as in person the program "Exploring the Landscape of Psychedelic Healing in the United States."

February 2026 – The Professional Speaker Series Spring featured speaker was Dr. Judy Daniels from the University of Hawaii. Dr. Daniels is a counselor educator and leader in the counseling field. She is one of the original founding members and a past president of Counselors for Social Justice (CSJ). She has served on the Governing Council for the American Counseling Association (ACA) as the Parliamentarian. As a two-term member of the Governing Council, Dr. Daniels has also served as the Co-Chair of the ACA taskforce on Professional Identity and Membership Employment, the GC liaison to the ACA Human Rights Committee, and a member of the Executive Committee for two years. During the Spring semester, she

shared her presentation, “Your Passion, Your Voice, Your Impact: Integrating Self-Reflection, Advocacy, and Climate-Aware Practice.”

7.4 Virtual Reality

In the 2025-2026 academic year, the University of South Carolina counseling and rehabilitation program’s virtual reality (VR) lab provided students and faculty with opportunities to explore virtual reality and discuss implementation of virtual reality into clubs, studying, and coursework. The virtual reality lab was staffed and open for appointments or drop-in visits twice a week. Additionally, graduate assistants from the lab tabled in the University of South Carolina Floyd School of Medicine library once a week to provide students with study resources available in virtual reality or an opportunity for a relaxation break from studying. Throughout the year, graduate assistants met with professors in the school of medicine to discuss applications and simulations to enhance learning in general medical coursework, family medicine specialty areas, and surgical specialty areas. Graduate assistants also met with students from the medical VR club, simulation and skills interest club, and doctor of nurse anesthesia program to provide VR demonstrations and discuss applications to club meetings and research projects. Students in the counseling and rehabilitation program were able to meet with graduate assistants and use the VR headsets provided by the lab to complete course assignments. To extend VR resources to the greater South Carolina community, graduate assistants from the VR lab attended the Ollie Johnson Memorial Annual Health Fair and 2026 Columbia Black Expo to provide demonstrations of VR and information about VR technology.

Virtual reality continues to be integrated into RCON711 utilized VR to explore applications for anxiety management, mindfulness, and pain management, extending VR in classes beyond RCON 733. Faculty members extended their expertise by conducting VR training across various USC programs as well as other universities and community programs.

The South Carolina Center for Assistive Technology and Educational Research (SC-CATER) continues to foster interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty, professionals, students, and individuals with disabilities. Grounded in the core values of equality, equity, and access, the Center is dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities through education, assistive technology, and support for successful transitions to the workforce. SC-CATER is committed to ensuring that individuals are not denied services or opportunities because of disability.

SC-CATER provides Counseling and Rehabilitation (C&R) students with meaningful clinical and community-based learning opportunities. Through hands-on work with individuals with disabilities, students gain experience applying science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) concepts, including personalized applications of robotics and coding. C&R students also engage with K–12 students and their families through assistive technology programming and open house events, where children can explore technologies such as robotics.

During the academic year, C&R faculty with the assistance of C&R GAs continued to extend the Center’s reach by sharing their expertise in adaptive technology and STEM with undergraduate students and community partners. Faculty and students participated in outreach activities including the McNair Scholars Jubilee, Statewide Afterschool STEM Day, and educational

programs with schools in the Lexington and Richland districts. These efforts reflect SC-CATER's ongoing commitment to accessible learning, innovation, and community engagement.

7.5 Giving Back

Friendsgiving. For the third year, the C&R program hosted its Friendsgiving Open House. This event is a way to say thank you to supervisors, board members, students, adjunct faculty, and other community partners.

Community Outreach. Counseling and Rehabilitation faculty, staff, and students remained actively engaged in service, outreach, and professional development across the University and broader community. In addition to the events listed below, faculty participated in virtual workshop for the Occupational Therapy program at Winston-Salem State University, R.E.S.E.T. at USC's Swearingen Engineering Center, and USC Wellness Week at the Joseph F. Rice School of Law.

Dr. Stackhouse also served as a panelist for the Women in Science and Medicine event; and Dr. Richardson-Booth provided counseling services through the Floyd School of Medicine; and Dr. Walsh served as a hearing officer for disability benefits. These activities supported community connection, interdisciplinary collaboration, disability advocacy, student and public wellness, and the program's continued commitment to service.

Outreach and engagement:

- Aug 2025 – Ollie Johnson Memorial Annual Health Fair
- Sep 2025 – Lander University Education Fair
- Sep 2025 – Annual Jubilee Festival of Black History and Culture
- Oct 2025 – USC Community Health Fair
- Oct 2025 – ACES Conference
- Nov 2025 – Orangeburg Wilkinson Highschool Career Fair
- Feb 2026 – Allen University Spring Career 2026 Career and Graduate School Expo
- Mar 2026 – Tri-County Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Event; the Culture and Health with Lander's Public Health Symposium
- May 2026 – Orangeburg Mental Health Day Event

7.6 Digital Accessibility and ADA Compliance

In response to the U.S. Department of Justice's final rule under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Counseling and Rehabilitation program began efforts to ensure that course-related digital materials meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA standards. As a public institution, USC is required to achieve full compliance with its web content and mobile applications.

The program is reviewing Blackboard course shells and associated instructional materials to identify and address accessibility needs across syllabi, readings, presentations, videos, and other digital content. The C&R program's goal is for Blackboard course materials to achieve a

94% accessibility score using the Blackboard metric. Graduate assistants were assigned to assist faculty in reviewing and improving the accessibility of their Blackboard course shells. These efforts support equitable access to instructional materials for all students and advance the program's compliance with federal accessibility requirements.

Section 8. 2026-2027 Strategic Focus

- Expand Career Counseling outcome data.
- Implement SimCare AI clinical simulations.
- Improve survey response rates.
- Enhance Blackboard accessibility.
- Acquire and implement KPI/SLO data management system.
- Grow CCA collaborative partnerships and client services.

Appendices

1. *Summary and crosswalk of the overall assessment plan*

2. *Disposition Rating Form*

Appendix 1

MA-60, Counseling and Rehabilitation – Academic Assessment Plan

EVALUATION IN THE PROGRAM
&
ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING
(ALIGNED WITH CACREP AREAS and DATA COLLECTION POINTS)

Updated August 1, 2024

Educational Objective 1 – Students will demonstrate knowledge and competencies required for successful practice in the field of professional counseling. (Corresponds to CACREP's 8 common core elements)

Area 1 – Professional Counseling Orientation and Ethical Practice.

Curriculum: EDCE 510, RCON 704

Other measures: Pre-practicum assessment, Comprehensive assessment

			Measure
Area 1. Professional counseling orientation and ethical practice	SLO 1.1 Students will adopt a professional counseling orientation commensurate to beginning counselors. (KPI) (Type of KPI: Knowledge)	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on the Reflective Learning Paper in EDCE 510 (Intro. to Counseling).	Rubric
		Measure 2. Pre-practicum assessment. 100% of students will articulate a professional counseling orientation as measured by a rating of Satisfactory on the PPA.	PPA form
	SLO 1.2 Students will engage in ethical decision-making process that demonstrates an understanding of ethical principles and is beneficial to the client. (KPI)	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on the Final Ethics Case Presentation in RCON: 704 (Ethics)	Rubric
		Measure 2. Comprehensive assessment (CA). 90% of students will pass the ethics portion of	Comp question

	(Type of KPI: Skill)	the CA on the first attempt; 100% will pass on the second attempt.	

Area 2 – Social and Cultural Diversity

Curriculum: RCON 605 (Culture), RCON 711, RCON 883/884/885 (Internship)

Other measures: Pre-practicum assessment, Comprehensive assessment

			Measure
Area 2. Social and cultural diversity	SLO 2.1 Students will describe how student-centered and client-centered cultural factors may influence the counseling relationship across a variety of helping settings. (KPI) (Type of KPI: Knowledge)	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of Competent or better on the Stylistic Model (Self-Analysis Series) assignment in RCON 605: (Culture and Disability).	Rubric
		Measure 2. Pre-practicum assessment. 100% of students will demonstrate a Satisfactory understanding of their strengths and areas for growth as related to counseling diverse clients.	PPA form
		Measure 3. Comprehensive assessment (CA). 90% of students will pass the multicultural counseling portion of the CA on the first attempt; 100% will pass on the second attempt.	Comp questions
	SLO 2.2 Students will demonstrate the ability to work effectively with diverse clients in a counseling setting. (KPI) (Type of KPI: Skill)	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of satisfactory or better on the Diversity component of the video recording assignment in RCON 711 (Theories/Practice II).	Rubric
		Measure 2. 100% of students will receive a rating of Satisfactory or better on the final Site Supervisor evaluation in RCON	Evaluation form

		883/884/885 (Internship); specifically, the item related to working with diverse clients.	

Area 3 – Human Growth and Development

Curriculum: RCON 680 (or EDPY 705), RCON 711, NPSY 757

Other measures: Comprehensive assessment

Area 3. Human growth and development	SLO 3.1 Students will identify psychosocial and psychoeducational strategies for promoting resilience and optimal development and wellness across the lifespan. (KPI) (Type of KPI: Knowledge)	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn an overall grade of B or better in RCON 680 (or EDPY 705) (Human Growth & Development). [Edited in Fall 2024]	Data Warehouse
		Measure 2. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on the Adlerian Lifestyle assessment in RCON 711 (Theories and Practice II).	Need measure/ rubric
		Measure 3. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on the Capstone Project in NPSY 757 (Psychopathology for Counselors).	Rubric
		Measure 4. Comprehensive Assessment. 90% of students will pass the lifespan component of the CA on the first attempt; 100% will pass on the second attempt	Comp question

Area 4 – Career Development and Decision-making

Curriculum: RCON 725, RCON 883/884/885

Other measures: Comprehensive assessment

Area 4. Career development and career	SLO 4.1 Students will accurately describe theories and models of	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on the Capstone Project in RCON	Rubric

decision-making.	career development and career decision-making. (KPI) (KPI) (Type of KPI: Knowledge)	725 (Career Theories and The World of Work)	
		Measure 2. Comprehensive Assessment (CA). 90% of students will pass the career theory portion of the CA on the first attempt; 100% will pass on the second attempt	Comp question
	SLO 4.2 Students will apply a theory and/or model of career development to a client. (KPI) (Type of KPI: Skill)	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of Satisfactory or better on the capstone presentation (previously: role-play assignment) in RCON 725 (Career).	Rubric
		Measure 2. 90% of students will earn a grade of Satisfactory or better on the Career Development Project/Parts 4 and 5 in RCON 883/884/885 (Internship)	Rubric

Area 5 – Counseling and Helping Relationships

Curriculum: RCON 601 and RCON 880; RCON 711 and RCON 883/884/885

Area 5. Counseling and helping relationships.	SLO 5.1 Students will demonstrate the intentional use of interviewing and basic counseling skills. (KPI) (Type of KPI: Skill)	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of Satisfactory or better on the final video in RCON 601 (Helping Relationships).	Rubric
		Measure 2. 100% of students will earn a grade of Satisfactory or better on the final audio recording in Practicum.	Rubric
	SLO 5.2 Students will discuss and demonstrate counseling theories and	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of Satisfactory or better on the final video in RCON 711 (Theories and Practice).	Rubric

	related techniques. (KPI) (KPI) (Type of KPI: Skill)	Measure 2. 100% of students will earn a grade of Satisfactory or better on the audio recording in Internship.	Rubric

Area 6 – Group Counseling and Group Work

Curriculum: RCON 720, RCON 880

Area 6. Group counseling and group work	SLO 6.1 Students will demonstrate group leadership skills by planning and carrying out purposeful group counseling activities. (KPI) (Type of KPI: Skill)	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on the group co-leadership paper in RCON 720 (Group Counseling).	Rubric
		Measure 2. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on the group leadership assignment in RCON 880 (Practicum).	Rubric

Area 7 – Assessment and Testing

Curriculum: RCON 714, NPSY 758

Area 7. Assessment and testing	SLO 7.1 Students will select and describe assessment and testing techniques with specific counseling populations. (KPI) (Type of KPI: Knowledge)	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on the “Become the Expert” assignment in RCON 714 (Assessment).	Rubric
		Measure 2. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on the Basics of Assessment assignment in NPSY 758 (Classification/Assessment of Mental Disorders).	Rubric

Area 8 – Research and Program Evaluation

Curriculum: RCON 700, RCON 702

Other measures: Comprehensive assessment

Area 8. Research and program evaluation	SLO 8.1 Students will utilize the results of scholarly research to inform and adapt counseling practice. (Type of KPI: Knowledge)	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on the Journal critiques assignment in RCON 700/701/703 (Foundations classes in specialty practice areas)	Rubric
		Measure 2. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on the final project in RCON 702 (Research and Program Evaluation)	Rubric
		Measure 3. Comprehensive assessment (CA) 90% of students will receive a passing score on the research section of the CA on the first attempt; 100% of students will pass on the second attempt	Comp question

CLINICAL REHABILITATION SPECIALIZATION

Educational Objective 2 – Students will be able to demonstrate specialized knowledge in working with individuals with disabilities to achieve their personal, social, psychological, and vocational goals.

Curriculum: RCON 734, RCON 733, RCON 883, NPSY 760, NPSY 757, NPSY 758

SA SLO 1 Students will identify and strategically utilize community services and resources related to the provision of individualized rehabilitation services. (KPI) (Type of KPI: Knowledge)	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on the final presentation in RCON: 734 (Professional Issues in Rehabilitation Counseling).	Rubric
	Measure 2. Comprehensive Assessment (CA). 90% of students will pass the community resources portion of the CA on the first attempt; 100% of students will pass on the second attempt.	Comp question
SA SLO 2 Students will develop and implement individualized	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on the Case Conceptualization and	Rubric

service plan for a person with a disability that reflects principles of client choice and self-determination and include theory-based and evidence-based counseling and rehabilitation services. (KPI) (Type of KPI: Skill)	Rehabilitation Plan (previously: final exam) in RCON 733 (Medical and Psychosocial Aspects of Disability).	
	Measure 2. 90% of students will earn a grade of Satisfactory or better on the Case Conceptualization project in RCON 883 (Internship).	Rubric
SA SLO 3 Students will demonstrate fundamental competencies in Addictions and Mental Health counseling (Type of KPI: Knowledge)	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of Satisfactory or better on the Unit 3 Blackboard assignment in NPSY 760 (Addictions Rehabilitation), in which they describe the neurobiological basis for addiction and co-occurring disorders.	Rubric
	Measure 2. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on the Case Study assignment in NPSY 757 (Psychopathology for Counselors). Identify and address the functional effects of the symptoms of mental disorders on holistic life areas.	Rubric
	Measure 3. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on the Capstone project in NPSY 758 (Classification & Assessment of Mental Disorders) in which they conceptualize and write up a formal diagnosis using current classification systems (i.e., the DSM-5-TR).	Rubric

CLINICAL ADDICTION SPECIALIZATION

Educational Objective 2 – Students will be able to demonstrate specialized clinical and technical knowledge in working with individuals with and without disabilities who experience substance-use disorders and addictions to achieve their personal, social, psychological, and vocational goals.

Curriculum: RCON 701, RCON 712, RCON 880, RCON 884, NPSY 758, NPSY 760, NPSY 761

SA SLO 1 Students will identify and strategically utilize community services and resources related to the provision of substance-use disorder and addiction services. (KPI) (Type of KPI: Knowledge)	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of Satisfactory or better on their Community Agency Visit and Interview assignment in RCON 701 (Foundations in Addictions and Treatment in Counseling).	Rubric
	Measure 2. 90% of students will earn a grade of Satisfactory or better on their first Case Conceptualization project in RCON 880 (Practicum) in which they community-based resources or service delivery systems that could be applied to their clients	Rubric
	Measure 3. Comprehensive Assessment (CA; Sec 1, Ques #). 90% of students will pass the community resources portion of the CA on the first attempt; 100% of students will pass on the second attempt.	Comp question
SA SLO 2 Students will develop and implement individualized strategies and treatment modalities relative to substance use disorder severity, stages of change, or recovery and include theory-based and evidence-based counseling and	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on the Capstone Behavior Reduction Exercise and Report Paper and Presentation in RCON 701 (Foundations in Addictions and Treatment in Counseling).	Rubric
	Measure 2. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on both Observation Series and Applying	Rubric

substance-use disorder and addiction services. (KPI) (Type of KPI: Skill)	Theory assignments in RCON 712 (Addiction and the Family).	
	Measure 3. 90% of students will earn a grade of Satisfactory or better on the Case Conceptualization project in RCON 884 (Internship).	Rubric
SA SLO 3 Students will demonstrate fundamental competencies in Addiction and Mental Health counseling. (Type of KPI: Knowledge)	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of Satisfactory or better on the Unit 3 Blackboard assignment in NPSY 760 (Addictions Rehabilitation), in which they describe the neurobiological basis for addiction and co-occurring disorders.	Rubric
	Measure 2. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on Best Practices Dual Diagnosis Assessment, Treatment, and Rehabilitation Project assignment in NPSY 761, which they examine options of assessments and use their findings to inform intervention strategies and the rehabilitation process when working with addiction and co-occurring disorders.	Rubric
	Measure 3. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on the Capstone project in NPSY 758 (Classification & Assessment of Mental Disorders) in which they conceptualize and write up a formal diagnosis using current classification systems (i.e., the DSM-5-TR).	Rubric

CAREER SPECIALIZATION

Educational Objective 2 – Students will be able to demonstrate specialized clinical and technical knowledge in working with individuals with and without disabilities to build life skills and achieve their career goals and with businesses to promote workplace health and wellbeing.

Curriculum: RCON 703, RCON 780, RCON 885

SA SLO 1 Students will identify influences that impact careers and the workplace and strategically utilize current and appropriate education and labor market information and resources in the provision of career planning and counseling services. (KPI)	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of Satisfactory or better on their Capstone Career Counseling and Organization Behavior Report project assignment in RCON 703, in which they explore influences that impact careers and the workplace to develop strategies for career counseling.	Rubric
	Measure 2. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on their Capstone Mock Client – Career Counseling assignment in RCON 780, in which, as part of the assignment, they develop a comprehensive Career Counseling Plan and Labor Market Report.	Rubric
	Measure 3. Comprehensive Assessment (CA; Sec 1, Ques #). 90% of students will pass the information and resources portion of the CA on the first attempt; 100% of students will pass on the second attempt.	Comp question
SA SLO 2 Students will develop and implement individualized strategies and approaches relevant to the unique needs and characteristics of businesses and employers and diverse clients in the provision of career counseling services. (KPI) (Type of KPI: Skill)	Measure 1. 90% of students will earn a grade of B or better on their Organization Behavior Interview and Career Development Program assignment in RCON 780.	Rubric
	Measure 2. 90% of students will earn a grade of Satisfactory or better on the Career Development Project in RCON 885 (Internship).	Rubric

		CACREP core areas Specialization (CRC, CAC, CC)										
#	**SLO Area#** **Course**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**1**	**2**	**3**
1	EDCE 510	X										
1	RCON 601					X						
1	RCON 605		X									
1	RCON 680 (or EDPY 705)			X								
1	RCON 700								X			
1	RCON 701								X			
1	RCON 702								X			
1	RCON 703								X			
1	RCON 704	X										
3	RCON 711		X	X		X						
1	RCON 712										X	
1	RCON 714							X				
1	RCON 720						X					
2	RCON 725				XX							
1	RCON 733										X	
1	RCON 734									X		
2	RCON 780									X	X	
2/1/1	NPSY 757			X								X
2/2/1	NPSY 758							X				XX
1/1	NPSY 760											XX
1	NPSY 761										X	
2	RCON 880					X	X					
4	RCON 883/884/885				X	X					X	
	RCON 883/884/885 (Site Sup Eval)		X									
	Other skill, knowledge measures											
2	PPA	X	X									
6/6/6	Comps	X	X	X	X				X	X		
	Dispositional evaluation											
2	Dispositions	X	X									

Appendix 2

Assessment of Dispositions (Adapted from Spurgeon, Gibbons & Cochran, 2012)			
Commitment:			
Investment in learning; development of counselor identity; advocacy; professional excellence; civic engagement; collaboration; scholar/practitioner; acting on feedback.			
Rating:	Growth Needed	Developing Well	Exceptional
Comments:			
Interpersonal Competence:			
Ability to deal with conflict, express thoughts and feelings effectively, presence			
Rating:	Growth Needed	Developing Well	Exceptional
Comments:			
Openness:			
Openness to ideas, learning, and change; openness to giving and receiving feedback; openness to growth; openness to others; openness to self-development, flexibility and tolerance of ambiguity			
Rating:	Growth Needed	Developing Well	Exceptional
Comments:			
Respect:			
Perceives and honors diversity; appropriate self-care; adherence to the wellness philosophy; curiosity about, and respect for, the experience and selfhood of others.			
Rating:	Growth Needed	Developing Well	Exceptional
Comments:			
Integrity:			

Personal responsibility; personal and professional maturity; honesty; courage; congruence			
Rating:	Growth Needed	Developing Well	Exceptional
Comments:			
Self-Awareness:			
Integrity; humility; self-reflection and exploration of self; understanding of place in history, awareness of personal identity, awareness of influence on others			
Rating:	Growth Needed	Developing Well	Exceptional
Comments:			

FACULTY SIGNATURE and DATE	STUDENT SIGNATURE and DATE