Greetings Sigma Alpha Chi members of Chi Sigma Iota! I am excited to start our 2013-2014 school year! As members in an international counseling honor society we have an awesome opportunity to learn, network, grow, and become an educating force within the mental health world. I first want to tell you a little bit about me and my research interest. I attended Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, TX where I received my Bachelor’s degree in Psychology and Hearing Impairment. After graduation I worked as a Deaf Education interpreter while getting my teaching certificate in English. In 2006 I moved back to my hometown of Texarkana, TX to teach American Sign Language and get my Masters in Counseling Psychology. I graduated in 2009, worked at a substance abuse recovery center to finish my 3,000 internship hours, and became a licensed professional counselor in 2012.

My experience, knowledge, and curiosity ignited a desire to work with and for deaf clients, research how counseling can be modified to help the deaf community more efficiently, and to educate fellow counselors about this underserved population. In my research efforts I realized that what I know is only the surface of what members of the deaf community need from mental health and substance abuse programs. I want to make sure that I take advantage of opportunities that are provided to enhance my knowledge and ability for working with the deaf community. It is my hope that each of you, the members, have an interest that is close to your heart and are willing to share your knowledge to encourage the growth of our organization.

The Sigma Alpha Chi chapter of Chi Sigma Iota is made up of a master and doctoral students from diverse backgrounds and there is a wealth of knowledge to be shared between us. I believe that there are many underserved populations and under-researched topics that can be highlighted by members being active, writing and submitting stories to the newsletter, participating in meetings and advocacy events, and working to become leaders in this field. There are many underserved or under-researched populations that could benefit from more mental health professionals and agencies taking an interest. Those populations include women in prison for nonviolent crimes, military spouses and children, people who are deaf, people with rare disabilities, people who suffer from severe allergies, people who are homeless, refugees, and so many more. My goal for this year is to write an article for each newsletter about an underserved population and discuss what we can do as mental health professionals and counselors-in-training to help bring awareness to the public and hopefully provide a positive change.

I am looking forward to an awesome year and I want to challenge each member of Chi Sigma Iota, Sigma Alpha Chi Chapter, to be active, attend meetings and events, advocate, and be a voice for something you are passionate about.
Learning to Love Research: One Student’s Journey

Yuliya Zholu
President Elect

As I am finishing up the third semester in the community counseling program and embarking on the second year of education, I wanted to take a moment and reflect on the diverse and enriching educational experience of this past year. It is hard to imagine that only a year ago I began the journey of a graduate student not knowing what opportunities lay ahead. This past year was full of new endeavors, meetings with new people, forming friendships, studying new subjects, and developing new interests. I can’t wait to see what happens next year!

From the beginning of the program, I wanted to have an opportunity to work under the supervision of a faculty member and engage in some sort of research project. My goal was to hone my research skills and prepare for the next step in my educational trajectory, the doctoral degree. I understood that a better understanding of academic research would allow me to consider a wider range of careers upon the graduation from the program, as well as prepare me for a doctoral program. At that time my interest was aligned with a clear understanding of what I needed to accomplish and what credentials I needed to accrue in order to move forward successfully. In a way, I was going through a checklist of academic experiences I was required to obtain. Undoubtedly, I was determined to stay on course and satisfy all the requirements. If I only knew that my calculated resolute and business-minded pragmatism would blossom into a full-fledged passion in academic research just a year later, I probably wouldn’t believe it myself. But it did! And here is how it happened!

In the first semester of the program, I approached Dr. Karcher, the professor who was teaching the counseling theories class at the time, and shared with him my aspirations of pursuing a doctoral degree. I expressed interest in helping him with any type of a research project that he was working at the time or considering in the future. I explained that I needed to gain experience in research in order to be a more marketable applicant. I found out that another peer from the program, Joe Avera, had similar interests in acquiring research skills in the counseling field. Based on our active participation in class and excellent grades Dr. Karcher invited us, along with two other peers, to help him with his book. Around the same time, Dr. Karcher learned of a longitudinal study begging to be conducted on a seminal research project done in the 1970s. This discovery coincided with an announcement for a grant proposal from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs (OJJDP) that was looking to fund a study on at-risk behavior.

As soon as we learned of Dr. Karcher’s interest in submitting a proposal for the OJJDP grant, Joe and I jump at the chance to help him with the proposal. Luckily we had little idea what grant proposal meant entailed or what type of commitment it would require; we were just eager to learn. Both of us spent several weeks assisting Dr. Karcher writing the proposal while attending to the full load of graduate school. Needless to say, we had to juggle a lot in order to stay on track, maintain our grades and attend to lives outside of school. I recall that we had to stay up late many nights pulling together all the pieces for the proposal and conducting countless conference calls. Working on the proposal allowed us to become familiar with Dr. Karcher’s extensive work in the mentoring field. We communicated with Dr. Gerald Goodman, an emeritus professor at the University of California, and the author of the mentoring program conducted in 1970s that Dr. Karcher wanted to follow up on. Reading about Dr. Goodman’s study and the two studies conducted by Dr. Karcher, we grew increasingly interested in the longitudinal research on youth mentoring; we were personally interested in winning the grant so we could continue the study.

As soon as we submitted the proposal, Dr. Karcher received the e-mail from the OJJDP informing of the nascent government cuts that could potentially seize the funding of the research. Understanding the implication of this follow up research, we started thinking of the alternative ways to move forward. Around the same time Dr. Karcher informed us of the UTSA’s Provost Summer Research Mentor Program. It is a seven-week program organized by the Provost office of the UTSA that aims to prepare students for the competitive graduate school admission and to build skills in research, which could help them succeed in the program. We clearly understood the value of this program for us: it was an opportunity to start Dr. Karcher’s longitudinal study on a smaller scale. We submitted our applications stating why we want to be accepted and what type of research we intend to conduct and about few weeks later were accepted in the program.

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Learning to Love Research Continued

Dr. Karcher had access to some data from two large-scale mentoring studies he conducted 10 and 13 years ago: the Cross Age Mentoring Program (CAMP) peer mentoring study and the Study of Mentoring in the Learning Environment (SMILE) adults in schools youth mentoring study. Because of my interest in peer mentoring and in order to differentiate research work in the summer program, I focused on the CAMP study and Joe, on the SMILE study. Our goals were to evaluate the long-term effects of the cross-age and school-based mentoring relationships on at-risk behaviors of mentees who participated in both studies.

Parallel to the ongoing research, we both attended weekly professional development seminars and presentations. The content of the seminars centered on the information about graduate school admission, as well as the tools we needed to succeed in the program. Weekly, we had an opportunity to meet up with the peers who were enrolled in the Summer Research Program and check on the status of their research projects. With only seven students in the program, each one of us received a great level of attention from PSRMP staff and especially two people who were highly involved in the program, Lisa Palacios and Dr. David Romero.

During this summer program, Dr. Karcher guided our research, provided us with necessary tools, and monitored the data collection. As a result, we have been able to collect publicly available criminal data for both studies and run some preliminary analysis. We are hoping that in the next several weeks we can start reporting the findings of our work. On the last day of the program, each participant had to present the findings of his or her research in front of several faculty members of the university, their mentors, as well as friends and families.

This experience in UTSA’s Provost Summer Research Mentor Program allowed me to hone my research skills, it equipped me with knowledge I will need in the doctoral program, and most importantly it invigorated a genuine interest in conducting research in the field of counseling. I am grateful for the opportunity to be a part of this amazing program that UTSA offers to its students and to our mentor, Dr. Karcher, who recognized our aspirations and dedicated his time and energy to ensuring that we took the most out of the program and the research. His passion for mentoring and profound knowledge of quantitative research afforded for a truly wonderful educational experience. And this is just the beginning of the research journey!

CSI Webinars

CSI members may receive free CEUs for participating in the webinars. For webinar descriptions, CEU instructions, and registration information, please visit the main CSI website at www.csi-net.org.

Your Supervision Question: Its Impact on Supervision Model Selection
Dr. Lori Russell-Chapin
Tuesday, September 3, 2013
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM EST

Infusing Intentionality and Reflection in Counselor Community Engagement Activities: A Model for Chapter Leaders
Dr. Cassie Storlie
Friday, September 13, 2013
12:00 PM - 1:00 PM EST

Strategies for Involving Alumni and Professional Members in CSI Chapter Activities
Mr. Stephen Kennedy, Dr. Barbara Mahaffey, and Dr. Jill Duba Sauerheber
Tuesday, September 24, 2013
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM EST
June Workshop Summary: Strategies to Prevent Counselor Burnout

Marlise R. Lonn, MS, LPC-S, NCC
Treasurer & Awards Chair

In June, Dr. Paul Carrola presented “Strategies to Prevent Counselor Burnout.” He discussed how counselor burnout is defined in the professional literature, the characteristics of burnout, and prevention strategies. Pay attention and seek consultation or personal counseling if you begin to feel emotionally exhausted, begin to depersonalize or devalue clients, have a stressful work environment, and see deterioration in your personal life. Awareness of counselor burnout is important because it can contribute to counselor impairment. To prevent burnout, maintain healthy boundaries around your work-life, be aware of vicarious traumatization and seek additional supervision when you experience it. Develop a supportive relationship with a supervisor, and utilize your counseling skills – treat yourself as you would your client – compassionately assess if you are you thinking clearly and if your goals and expectations realistic? Are you taking a solution focused approach with yourself? Dr. Carrola also provided examples and insight based on his experience working as a professional counselor in both the prison setting and as a contract counselor with an agency. Dr. Carrola received both his M.A. and his Ph.D. in counseling from UTSA where he served as secretary of CSI. He is currently a professor at the University of Texas at El Paso where he also serves as the Co-Faculty Advisor to their CSI Chapter.

CSI Fall Initiation

The deadline to apply for Fall initiation is September 27th. You must have completed a full semester (9 hours minimum) and have a 3.5 GPA. Both the local and national applications and fees must be done by September 27th.

Fall Initiation ceremony will be Saturday, November 2, 2013 at 7pm. Anyone who joined after the April 2013 initiation will be initiated during this ceremony.

Membership Committee

Reneé A. Foyou, MS, MAR, AFC
Membership Chair

Hi everyone, I will be serving as your 2013-2014 Membership Committee Chair. I am a second year Doctoral Student. While I call New York State “home”, I have lived in a few places through the years. Currently, my family and I have been happy to add the greater San Antonio area to our list of delightful alternate home bases.

As Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) embarks upon this academic year I am very excited about the direction our chapter (Sigma Alpha Chi) is moving towards. Two of the major goals for the Membership Committee this year are: (1) to increase our membership, and (2) to have our current members become actively involved in our chapter activities. Our committee is enthusiastically working on brochures and other outreach materials for our chapter. While we are awaiting these swanky items I encourage you to continue employing a timeless outreach method, word-of-mouth. Please begin to talk to your friends and peers about joining CSI; engage others through your relationships.

One of my Holland Codes is Social, so as you can imagine I enjoy working with and just being around people. If you are interested in working in conjunction with the Membership Committee please email me at: renee.foyou@gmail.com. I am very interested in your creative ideas as we collectively work towards our goals. We will be updating our membership roster in the coming months so please be on the lookout for an email with further instructions. I look forward to journeying with you all.
Sigma Alpha Chi
2013 TCA Conference
Scholarships

Our CSI chapter will offer 3 scholarships to cover the student registration fees (up to $75) for the upcoming TCA conference in San Antonio.

Students applying for the scholarship must meet the following requirements:

1. Show proof of registration for the TCA conference
2. Show proof of accepted presentation proposal
3. Submit a letter stating your involvement in CSI
4. Agree to submit an article for the next edition of the newsletter after the TCA conference

Please submit your letter and supporting documents by October 4th to Noreal Armstrong at dr.flowerchild.524@gmail.com.

Upcoming CSI Workshops and Socials

Please join us at the following CSI workshops and socials.

September 14 Welcome back social at the Cove 4-6 PM
606 W Cypress St.

September 21 Art Therapy Workshop 12-2PM
UTSA Downtown Campus Location TBD

October 12 Adolescent Workshop 12-2 PM
UTSA Downtown Campus Location TBD

October Social TBD

November 1 Social First Friday and Liberty Bar 5-7 PM
111 S Alamo St

November 16th Professional Development workshop 12-2 PM
UTSA Downtown Campus Location TBD

CSI Book Drive

CSI will have a book drive to donate books to SAReads. The book drive will run from September 16- November 15th. Boxes will be at both the main and downtown campuses. Be on the lookout for more info!

Stay Connected!

To join us on Facebook, search for the group Sigma Alpha Chi Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota.

You can also find us on RowdyLink at https://utsa.collegiatelink.net/organization/none.

Please join us at the 2013 TCA Conference which will be held in San Antonio at the Grand Hyatt Hotel on November 20-23, 2013. It's a great way to network and obtain professional growth experiences.

Graduate students registered for the TCA conference can earn $25 by volunteering or facilitating programs for at least three hours.

Sign-up at www.txca.org/faciliate or email Jennifer@txca.org for additional conference volunteer opportunities.
As someone who enjoys research, I sometimes feel like the odd man out. Often, I hear student counselors complain about the research course requirement. I would like to address three myths regarding research, and offer suggestions for successfully navigating your research methods class.

Myth 1: “As a counselor, I am only going to see clients and not do research, so I don’t really need to know about research.”

As a counselor, you may never develop and conduct research that is published in a professional journal. However, there may be times as a counselor when you will be expected to use the concepts and skills associated with research to perform your job duties. Many counselors who work for agencies are responsible for writing (and securing) grants to fund the agency, which require evaluations of clients or programs for reporting purposes. Finally, the critical thinking skills, logic, and reasoning associated with research will (hopefully) be used in every session and every aspect of your job.

Myth 2: “I am creative/right-brained/an artist/more linguistic, and therefore do not like/cannot do math/research/numbers.”

The majority of people have the capacity to use the linear, linguistic, logical cognitive processes partially associated with left-hemisphere cognitive functioning, and the non-temporal, spatial, non-verbal cognitive processes associated with the right hemisphere. People may have a preference for certain activities, but most activities involve a combination of left-hemisphere and right-hemisphere functions. With that said, if you know or suspect you have a learning disorder, there is help. Information for the UTSA Student Disability Services office can be found at http://utsa.edu/disability/. For most counselors, understanding the meaning of the results is more important that being able to calculate the statistics.

Myth 3: “I’ll just learn what works and use it, so I won’t have to keep learning new things.”

At this point, the field has some established ideas about what does and does not work in counseling. We do know that what works depends on many different contextual factors that change. Because of this, a single intervention or practice you might learn will probably not work in every situation. In the field of psychology, we have learned through research that “truths” the profession held about certain disorders were false. For example, mental health professionals no longer believe schizophrenia is caused by bad mothers, homosexuality is a mental disorder, and children with ADHD just need to work harder, sit down, and pay attention.

Advice for your research class:

A common problem I see is that students do not know the terminology associated with research, or they do not understand concepts these terms represent. In some ways, research has its own language, and if you want to do well in your research class, you need to understand the language. Here are some tips for learning the language of research.

- Make flashcards, and use them. If flashcards do not help you, try other memory devices for research vocabulary.
- Practice explaining research terms in both “research talk” and in everyday language.
- Keep working on the vocabulary throughout the semester. The ideas in research build on each other. You may understand a concept when you first encounter it, but not understand it in a later context.
- As you read new chapters/papers throughout the class, look up unfamiliar/forgotten words and write the definitions in the margins so you have a quick reference while reading. Otherwise, you may misunderstand the new concept, because you forgot the meaning of the terms used to describe it.

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In most research classes, you will have to develop a study. These projects are usually group projects and account for a substantial portion of your grade. They are time consuming, complex, and will challenge you to apply the concepts you have learned. At the same time, these projects are manageable. Below are some suggestions for successfully managing them.

- Select a research topic that interests you. If you are interested in the topic, you might have some ideas for the assignment, and may be motivated.
- Start early, and work consistently. Research projects consist of multiple interrelated components. When you (or your professor) change one component, it affects the other components. You will need time to make changes, so start early.
- Find articles on your area of interest early in the semester within the first week of class. Articles usually give ideas for future research, and identify instruments used to assess your constructs of interest.

Pick one, simple research question. A good research question is based in the literature and identifies the variables, design, and statistical analyses. Research questions can typically be divided into three categories: descriptive (How many people attend counseling?), relational (What is the relationship between a person’s age and number of counseling sessions attended), and difference (Do adults and adolescents differ in the number of counseling sessions they attend?). Relationship and difference questions are usually more informative and will most likely be what you do in a research class.

- Avoid picking a research design or statistical analysis first, and then try to develop a research question to fit the design. The question comes first, the research method follows.
- Make sure your research questions addresses what you want to answer. If you have to follow up your research question with “because I really want to know…” your research question may not address what you want to know.
- Keep it simple. Good research questions do not have to be complex.
- Draw out your research question. If you have a question about the relationship between to variables, draw a graph.

If you have a question about whether two groups differ on some construct that can be measured, draw the different distributions.

If these pictures don’t make sense with your question, your question may not be ready.
Hello CSI members! My name is Mercedes Vaughn (soon to be Mercedes Vaughn Ingram, as I just got married) and I am the new Webmaster for our Sigma Alpha Chi chapter of CSI. As the webmaster I have the opportunity to update our UTSA student activities website (RowdyLink), at https://utsa.collegiatelink.net/, our local chapter’s Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/#/groups/294167610676676/), and our chapter’s page on the National CSI website (http://www.csi-net.org/group/sigma_alpha_chi). All of the local chapter’s workshops and socials are posted on the Facebook page, so please request to join the group if you have not already! If you have news to share with fellow CSI members, please let me know and I can find the appropriate venue for getting the word out.

I was given the opportunity to introduce myself and figured I’d tell you about my path to the counseling field. Looking into the past, I can tell you that I was born in Alabama, grew up in South Florida and, following in the footsteps of my parents, moved to San Marcos, Texas for college. I majored in Psychology and minored in Biology at Texas State University, thinking I was going to go into Child Psychiatry. Little did I know upon entering college, I was not molding myself into going to medical school - I was instead molding myself to become a career student (you know, those people who go to school forever, never seeming to graduate?). I attended the Masters of Psychology program at UTSA as a stepping stone to medical school. After my first semester in the program I realized I truly loved experimental psychology and psychological research, as well as the clinical side of psychology. By the end of the first year into the program I also realized I wanted more face-to-face therapeutic experiences with people. Don’t get me wrong- I love research. I gained a ton of research experience in the Psychology program which has allowed me to get a full time job (finally!) conducting behavioral health research for the UT Health Science Center Division of Community Pediatrics. However, after taking one year off to work full time, I made the move to counseling. Now, after two years within the community counseling track at UTSA, I have confirmed that I do in fact love the counseling field. I hope to marry my first two master’s degrees within a doctoral program that will allow me to conduct research in the counseling field. Although I am in my last year of the Master’s program, my formal education is still far from over. I hope to see you all in classrooms, in the halls of the counseling department, at CSI events and socials, and anywhere else the road may take me. I am incredibly excited to have the opportunity to be a part of this wonderful Honor Society and am looking forward to the upcoming workshops that our local chapter is providing. I hope you all have a wonderful start to the Fall 2013 semester!

Let’s Meet Carrie Niva, Social Chair

Carrie has a creative spirit and is putting it to good use as the Social Chair for the Sigma Alpha Chi Chapter of Chi Sigma Iota here at UTSA. She loves music, photography, and crafting. As a student (starting internship in the fall), a Mom, and a substitute teacher for NEISD, she knows what it is like to juggle a busy schedule. Carrie has held a variety of jobs. After working with clients at the Community Family Life Center during practicum she feels confident that she is entering the right profession. She is passionate about helping people and knows that she can draw on some of her life experiences to be a good listener, remain non-judgmental, and to share empathy with her clients.

Carrie appreciates the variety of people she has met through CSI and hopes that members will take advantage of the monthly socials to continue to get to know each other and to welcome new students. One of the benefits of being part of CSI is having a chance to ask questions and share concerns with others who are going through the counseling program.

Our most recent social was at Green Restaurant near the Pearl Brewery. Please mark your calendar; we will kick-off the school year at the Cove on Saturday, September 14th from 4-6 p.m. The food is great and the atmosphere is relaxed and family friendly. Everyone is invited to join us; non-members are always welcome to attend our socials, so bring your partner, family, or a friend. We will also be hosting an Initiation ceremony in November for our new members, and attending First Friday in the arts district on November 1st.
Are you interested in writing an article for our next newsletter?

Our submission deadline is October 31, 2013.
Contact Angelica Tello, Newsletter Editor, at angelica.m.tello@gmail.com.