

C&R NEWS

Counseling & Rehabilitation Program Newsletter

(Red brick pathways leading to a metal and brick gate. Behind the gate lie trees and a red brick building)

Learning Community Saturday

Each major semester, the Counseling and Rehabilitation Program hosts community partners, student and alumni presenters, faculty, counseling agencies from all over the state as well as our entire student population for a 1-day learning community event. The most recent LCS event was held here on the School of Medicine - Columbia Campus on February 22nd and included presentations such as **“Eating Disorder Assessment and Treatment,” “QPR Suicide Prevention,” “Cultural Competency: Supporting Veteran Populations through Rehab Counseling,” “The Bidirectional Relationship of Opioid Overdose and Brain Injury,”** and **“Compassion and Multicultural Perspectives on Wellness”** just to name a few of the 22 total presentations.



(A large, diverse group of folks posing in front of a red brick building with white columns and arched entryways. They are dressed casually, smiling, and arranged in rows.)

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(Students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

Save the Date

March 7th, 2025:
SOM Semi Formal
Tickets

March 18th, 2025:
Lunch & Learn
RSVP HERE

March 25th, 2025:
SC Assistive Technology
Expo
Registration is open for
the 2025 AT Expo

CHECK OUT OUR SOCIALS



Learning Community Saturday



Three smiling women sit at a desk in a lecture hall, eating and chatting.

This year's event provided a multitude of valuable presentations and experiential learning opportunities to attendees. Students engaged in personal and professional development activities designed to promote professional identity, organize thinking regarding present professional status and accomplishment, solidify future academic and professional plans, and aid in professional presentation during interviews

Should you or a colleague wish to present at our next Learning Community Saturday event during the Fall 2025 semester on October 24th, feel free to reach out to Patrick Demery at patrick.demery@uscmed.sc.edu for additional information.



Four students smiling in a classroom setting as they await the next session of LCS.



Shaunarey Harris-Amos pictured in a black shirt presents to students in a seminar setting.



(students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

Faculty & Students Attend LIFT Conference

The University of South Carolina - Beaufort (USC-Beaufort) hosted a campus-wide leadership conference on Friday, January 31st, centered around the theme of “Finding Joy in Leadership.” The event featured Joy Baldrige as the keynote speaker. Ms. Baldrige, a renowned TEDx presenter and a prominent figure in motivational speaking, is recognized among the top 41 motivational speakers globally and delivers leadership training to business executives around the world.

The conference offered sessions that explored critical topics such as financial literacy, personal resiliency, and authenticity in leadership.

This year, USC-Beaufort was proud to include contributions from esteemed community leaders, including graduate professor, Dr. Michael Walsh, and Counseling and Rehabilitation student, Nic Collins, who joined the distinguished lineup of speakers. In their sessions, Dr. Walsh presented students with valuable tips on overcoming burnout and achieving personal resiliency and Nic Collins provided students with valuable insights into cultivating joy through authentic leadership.



Nic Collins, bearded and wearing a hat, is indoors against a wall with text promoting “USCB.”

True Grit Rabbitry

True GRIT Rabbitry was founded in November of 2024, by Cheri Braswell, a 2019 graduate of the Counseling and Rehabilitation Program after her adoption a rabbit that she named, River. Through spending time with River, Cheri noticed her anxiety and PTSD symptoms improving without increasing medication which led her to establishing her Rabbitry.

Cheri has supported the C&R Program as a presenter during previous Learning Community Saturday events and invites visitors to visit, volunteer, donate or adopt a rabbit from True Grit Rabbitry through their brand new website, truegritrabbitry.com.



Cheri Braswell presents at LCS. She stands with a rabbit in the foreground and a projected presentation behind her.



(students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

C&R Student Presents at Hands & Voices Conference



Aileen Welch, in glasses and a black jacket, smiles in a classroom setting as she prepares to present at the conference.

I had the honor of presenting on Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) transition services at the second annual Hands & Voices Building Bridges Family Conference on February 22, 2025, at Brookland Baptist Church in Columbia, SC. This event connects families affected by hearing loss with vital resources, including the South Carolina Association of the Deaf (SCAD), Carter Hears!, the SC School for the Deaf and Blind, and Beginnings SC.

This year, I presented in a small auditorium with two ASL interpreters, reaching many families learning about VR services for the first time. I covered Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS), which support high school students through job exploration, self-advocacy skill development, post-secondary education counseling, workplace readiness training, and work-based learning experiences. I emphasized that Pre-ETS classes

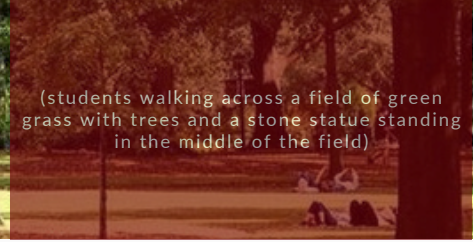
are available without an open VR case, requiring only parental consent. Additionally, I outlined VR services for individuals pursuing employment, including occupational training, post-secondary education support, and job search assistance.

Families were particularly interested in how VR helps remove employment barriers, such as providing ASL interpreters for interviews and training, work attire, transportation assistance, benefits counseling, and assistive technology like hearing aids. I also highlighted VR's two-week summer camp for high school students, which offers a hands-on experience with available services, and discussed VR's comprehensive evaluation centers in Lyman and West Columbia, as well as the Palmetto Center's substance abuse recovery program.

Beyond my presentation, I networked with vendors, assisted at the VR table, and engaged in one-on-one conversations with families, answering questions and distributing business cards.



Agenda for room at the DHH Building Bridges Family Conference

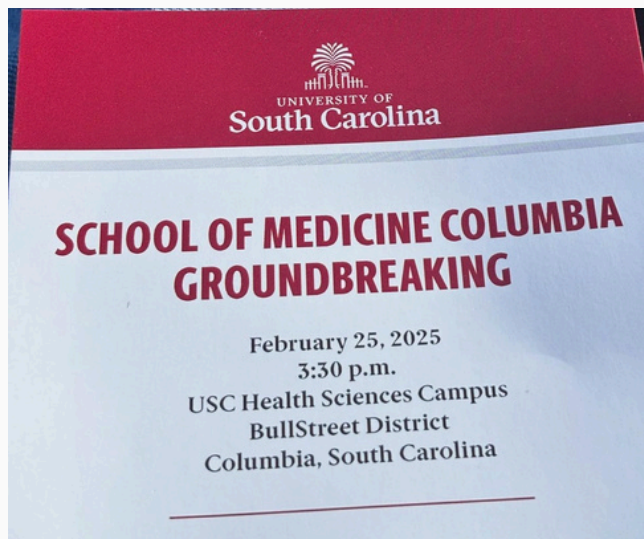


(students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

~Continued

By Monday, I had received six follow-up emails from attendees seeking more information. This experience reinforced the importance of connecting families with life-changing resources and further strengthened my confidence in public speaking. I look forward to continuing this important work in the future.

New SOM Breaks Ground



The image shows a red and white University of South Carolina program for the "School of Medicine Columbia Groundbreaking"

The University of South Carolina (USC) broke ground on its new School of Medicine in Columbia's BullStreet District on February 25, 2025. The 300,000-square-foot facility, set to open in August 2027, will be the centerpiece of USC's new Health Sciences Campus, which will also include South Carolina's first standalone neurological hospital and a Brain Health Center.

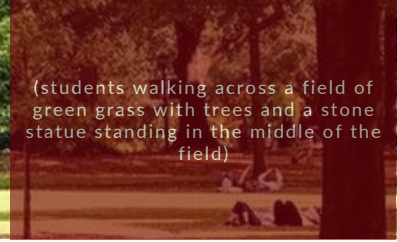
The new medical school will train professionals in high-demand fields such as physician assistants, nurse anesthetists,

genetic counselors, and rehabilitation specialists. Designed with modern classrooms, research labs, medical simulation spaces, and a health sciences library, the facility aims to enhance clinical training and research collaborations with Prisma Health. USC President Michael Amiridis compared the move from its current VA hospital location to "owning a home after years of renting," emphasizing the importance of a dedicated space.

With funding secured through state support and university resources, the project is moving forward without debt. This expansion reinforces USC's commitment to advancing medical education and addressing South Carolina's growing healthcare needs.



Madison and Lauren pictured in black shirts stand at the groundbreaking construction site.



(students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

Student Spotlight: Allie Ledbetter Accepts ARCA Student Representative Role



Allie Ledbetter, ARCA Student Representative pictured in a green shirt with a black background

About ARCA

The American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA) is a division of the American Counseling Association (ACA) dedicated to advancing rehabilitation counseling through research, education, and professional development. ARCA provides resources, networking opportunities, and advocacy efforts to support professionals working with individuals with disabilities. The organization is committed to promoting best practices, fostering inclusion, and equipping rehabilitation counselors with the tools they need to succeed in their careers.

About the ARCA Student Representative Role

The ARCA Student Representative is an elected three-year board position that serves as a bridge between students and ARCA leadership. The role is designed to ensure that student voices are represented within the organization while also promoting student engagement and professional development. As the ARCA Student Representative, I aim to strengthen student connections, facilitate collaboration with other organizations in the field, and highlight important topics that impact students pursuing careers in rehabilitation counseling.

Goals as Student Representative

One of my main priorities is to increase student membership and engagement within ARCA. Many students may not realize the incredible benefits ARCA offers, including access to a wealth of professional resources, networking opportunities, and monthly webinars covering critical topics in rehabilitation counseling. These webinars are recorded and available in a webinar library, making them an invaluable resource for students seeking to expand their knowledge at their own pace.

Additionally, I want to foster more collaboration between ARCA and academic programs to help students gain exposure to the professional world early in their careers. By creating opportunities for mentorship, networking, and learning, we can build a stronger, more connected student community within ARCA.



(students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

Student Spotlight: Allie Ledbetter

Why I Got Involved with ARCA

I became involved with ARCA because I truly believe in its mission to support rehabilitation counselors and advocate for individuals with disabilities. Being a part of this organization has allowed me to learn from experts in the field, stay informed about emerging trends, and connect with professionals who share a passion for this work.



I hope to inspire more students to get involved and see firsthand how ARCA can provide invaluable support for their professional growth. By increasing student participation, we can make sure our voices are heard and actively contribute to shaping the future of rehabilitation counseling.

Join Me in Strengthening Our Student Community

If you are interested in learning more about ARCA’s student resources, webinars, or ways to get involved, I encourage you to reach out. Together, we can build a stronger student presence within ARCA and take full advantage of the opportunities this organization has to offer.

Professional Speaker Series:

On February 21st, the Counseling and Rehabilitation Program welcomed Dr. Paige Shaffer as the most recent presenter to be featured during the program’s Professional Speaker Series event. The C&R Program was able to extend NBCC Continuing Education Credits to qualifying attendees of the presentation.



Dr. Paige Shaffer, PhD., MPH pictured in a black shirt with white stairs in the background

Paige Shaffer, PhD., MPH, is an Assistant Professor of Medicine at the UMass Chan Medical School Department of Medicine, Division of Health Systems Science. Paige is an Epidemiologist with expertise in psychiatric epidemiology, the etiology of addiction, and biostatistics, and focuses on populations with co-occurring mental health and addiction.

Attendees gained valuable information about the epidemiology of co-occurring mental health and substance use issues, the impact of co-occurring disorders on people, and future directions on how to improve the health of people with co-occurring disorders. Stay tuned for details regarding our next featured guest speaker, who will be delivering a presentation on October 24th!



(students walking across a field of green grass with trees and a stone statue standing in the middle of the field)

CRSA

The Counseling and Rehabilitation Student Association (CRSA) has a ton of exciting events coming up over the next few months and is actively accepting new members to the organization. Not a member of CRSA yet? Joining is simple—just Venmo LaurenMichaels17 the \$20 annual fee for your membership and send her a quick email with your full name to lauren.michaels@uscmcd.sc.edu.



People gathered chatting and eating. Some stand while others sit at tables. The room has large windows and gray seating.

Spring LCS

Thank you to all the CRSA members who joined us after LCS! It was a fantastic time filled with great food, smiles, and laughter. We're excited to continue building our community, so keep an eye out for more details on membership and another merch order by joining our [GroupMe](#).

Safe Space

Thank you to everyone who joined our Safe Space meeting. We appreciate you being part of the conversation and creating a supportive environment. Our next meeting will be on **April 22**, facilitated by Nic Collins, where we'll discuss the stress surrounding finals. We hope to see you there!

Event Opportunity:

For those in the Columbia, SC area, join the Brain Injury Association of South Carolina for an exciting kickoff event on March 23 at Bierkeller Columbia! The event includes a group Walk, Run & Roll along the beautiful Columbia Canal, plus a lively reception with food, drinks, a DJ, and family-friendly fun. Gather a team, get moving, and help raise awareness and reach the \$10,000 goal for this vital cause. [Sign up for the Walk, Run & Roll, buy tickets for the reception, or both!](#)





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Wellness Corner

Down Dog is a highly customizable fitness app that offers guided yoga, meditation, HIIT, barre, and Pilates workouts. With its user-friendly interface, high-quality instruction, and endless workout variations, it caters to all levels—from beginners to advanced practitioners. The app allows users to personalize their experience by choosing practice lengths, difficulty levels, music, and instructor voices, making every session unique. Whether you're looking to build strength, improve flexibility, or find a moment of relaxation, Down Dog provides a convenient and engaging way to support your wellness journey.



The image features a white dog set against a vibrant blue background.

APA Writing Tips: Avoiding Plagiarism

To avoid plagiarism in APA writing, it's essential to properly attribute all sources through accurate citation and referencing. This includes using signal phrases to introduce sourced material, enclosing direct quotes within quotation marks, and providing in-text citations with corresponding entries in the reference list. Additionally, when paraphrasing or summarizing, ensure that the original meaning is preserved while expressing the ideas in your own words, accompanied by appropriate citations. Maintaining meticulous notes and adopting consistent citation habits during the research process can further help prevent unintentional plagiarism.

Check out [Owl|purdue](#) for more writing tips!



Pet of the Month

Show us your pet by filling out the form below:

[Pet of the Month](#)

Save the Date

3/7 - School of Medicine Semi Formal Event

This year's semi-formal event will be hosted at the South Carolina State Museum on Friday March 7th starting at 7 pm. Have a blast with your friends, classmates and plus ones at our very own masquerade ball! Heavy appetizers and drinks are included in your ticket.



Please scan the QR code or click [here](#) to purchase your ticket online. For cash purchases, please contact Courtney Smith, courtney.smith@uscmed.sc.edu or Stephanie Wilczynski, wilczyns@uscmed.sc.edu.

3/18- Lunch and Learn

Join us on Tuesday, March 18, at noon for Unlocking Opportunities: Exploring Career Pathways with SC Vocational Rehabilitation. This Lunch and Learn will feature Sylvia Kenley, Kendall Armstrong, Tara Bluford-Thigpen, and Jason Jones from SCVRD, who will share insights into their services, career opportunities, and how they support individuals with disabilities in achieving employment.

This session is part of our Career Discovery Dialogue series, designed to connect students with professionals, explore real-world applications, and prepare for practicum, internships, and careers. Don't miss this opportunity to learn from experts and expand your professional network!

3/25- SC Assistive Technology Expo

This event is free and open to the public. Our target audience includes those with disabilities, their families, seniors, educators, veterans and health care professionals.

Join us on March 25th, 2025 from 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. for a full day of exhibits and workshops showcasing assistive technology demonstrations and information about the latest products and services for people with a wide range of disabilities. Attend workshops which address pressing disability issues.

Registration is open for the 2025 AT Expo.

WHERE:

Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center
1101 Lincoln St., Columbia, SC 29201