Counselor Education Stakeholder Report 2025–2026

CAPELLA UNIVERSITY®



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Introduction

This report contains highlights of recent activities, changes, and initiatives affecting Capella University's accredited counselor education programs.

In 2025–2026, the Counselor Education unit (CE) comprised the MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC), MS in School Counseling (SC), and PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) degree programs, which are accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The MS SC program is also part of the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)-accredited Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) unit.

The counselor education programs are designed to prepare students committed to leadership, advocacy, and service to become professional counselors or counselor educators. Through our competency-based curriculum and comprehensive assessment programs, the CE prepares students to have the knowledge and skills necessary to become practitioner-scholars serving a multifaceted population of clients across a variety of therapeutic settings and situations.

The programs continue to focus on academic excellence through curriculum, residency experiences, site-based learning, and student advising. A comprehensive assessment process guides course and program improvement.

Program Highlights: July 2025–June 2026 Reporting Period

MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) Key Program Results

- Approximately 94% of CMHC students successfully completed courses at proficient or distinguished levels on average.
- The average rate of continuous enrollment in the CMHC program period was approximately 89%.

MS in School Counseling (SC) Key Program Results

- Approximately 95% of SC students successfully completed courses at proficient or distinguished levels on average.
- The average rate of continuous enrollment in the SC program was approximately 88%.

PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision (CES) Key Program Results and Updates

- Sixty-two CES students graduated.
- The average proficient and distinguished rate was approximately 94%.
- The average rate of continuous enrollment in the CES program was approximately 92%.

As of June 6, 2025, Capella University no longer accepted new enrollments into the CES program. The CE submitted a substantive change report detailing the CES teach-out plan to CACREP in

November 2025. During the February 5–7, 2026 CACREP Board Meeting, CACREP approved Capella's request to continue accreditation of the PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision program through its current accreditation cycle, which ends March 31, 2028. CACREP also approved Capella's request that students who remain enrolled and complete their program between April 1, 2028, and June 30, 2030, whose names Capella shares with CACREP in alignment with the approved teach-out plan, will continue to be recognized as graduates of a CACREP accredited program.

CE Faculty and Organizational Leadership Structure

Full-Time Faculty

CE full-time faculty support all accredited programs regardless of their specialization and primary teaching assignments. The CE hired three new full-time faculty in the reporting period: Dr. Jamal Boudion, Dr. Kelsey Webb, and Dr. Rachel Ellenberger.

Administration

The CE is within the Department of Counseling and Family Therapy in the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SoSBS). This organization supports CE programs to provide a positive student experience and sustain the achievement of the programs' mission, goals, and outcomes. School and program leadership, with changes during the reporting period, are:

- **Dr. Irene Abrego Nicolet** serves as dean of the SoSBS.
- **Dr. Theresa Kascsak** serves as assistant dean overseeing Counselor Education and Family Therapy.
- **Dr. Nicole Holby** serves as academic program director (PD) for the counselor education programs and leader of the CE.
- **Dr. Randy Astramovich** serves as assistant academic program director of the CES program and CACREP program liaison.
- **Dr. Sara Pula** serves as assistant academic program director for clinical training and licensure.
- **Dr. Elizabeth Hatchuel** serves as assistant academic program director of the CMHC and SC programs.
- **Dr. Ashley N. Davis** serves as academic faculty director for the CE. Of the 80+ affiliate faculty (part-time and adjunct), half report to Dr. Davis and half report to Dr. Smith.
- **Dr. Rachelle Smith** serves as assistant academic faculty director for the CE and reports to the PD.

Full-time faculty report to three assistant program directors, all of whom report to the PD. Affiliate faculty report to assistant faculty directors who also report directly to the PD; the assistant faculty directors have a dual appointment as full-time faculty and fulfill their faculty workload expectations and their role as a faculty director.

Innovative Processes Supporting the CE

CE Program Assessment System

The CE maintains a written comprehensive evaluation plan that establishes guidelines for the program assessment process to identify the programs' strengths and areas of opportunity, and to assess the programs' effectiveness in meeting outcomes and professional standards. The CE plan aligns with the institution's Academic Program Review (APR) process, which follows a four-step assessment cycle over a 3-year period, with annual data-driven reviews of progress toward goals. The APR process relies on a collaborative approach with the active participation of the program directors, assistant program directors, faculty, and assessment specialist.

The Counselor Education Academic Leadership Team (CE-ALT)—comprising the program director, assistant academic program directors, academic faculty directors, assistant academic faculty directors, and CE faculty leads—evaluates and makes recommendations for continuous improvement and faculty governance of the assessment system. As part of the broader curriculum review process during the reporting period, counseling faculty conducted a comprehensive evaluation to identify and document where each CACREP standard was addressed throughout the curriculum. The review identified a small number of standards requiring additional alignment, as well as areas in which existing alignment could strengthen through minor revisions to course content, technology, learning activities, or instructional language.

Faculty Advising

Counselor education students are assigned faculty advisors who provide guidance and support throughout their program in the online Faculty Advising Forum (FAF) courserooms. The FAF provides important program information to support students' personal and professional development. Each FAF courseroom is structured by geographic region, which allows for the sharing of regionally specific information and resources and an opportunity for students to build their professional network. Faculty advisors conduct periodic Academic Learner Reviews (ALRs) when they review students' academic progress and development of professional dispositions.

Curricular Innovation

Several curricular enhancements were implemented to strengthen student engagement, collaboration, and applied learning. Discussion activities moved to the Yellowdig platform in select courses to promote more meaningful peer interaction and community building, while new Skillbuilder activities were introduced to provide students with additional opportunities to apply knowledge in practice-based settings. Instructional delivery models were also redesigned to support scalability and learner engagement through expanded faculty support. Additionally, interactive technologies were incorporated to enhance skill development and experiential learning, particularly in group-based learning environments. Curriculum updates were also made to better support students seeking to meet state-specific licensure requirements beyond the standard degree pathway.

Honor Society

Capella's Chi Sigma Iota chapter, Chi Upsilon Chi, is led by the Executive Committee composed of Capella students and guided by faculty advisors. Chi Upsilon Chi welcomes new members at biannual online induction ceremonies. During the reporting period, the Chi Upsilon Chi chapter inducted 182 students and alumni.

Licensure

The Academic Leadership team partners with the legal and operations teams to support and resolve the licensure questions and needs of students and alumni. Capella publishes professional licensure disclosures stating the university's determination of how its programs meet the educational requirements for licensure by state. Students can access resources to support comparison of program coursework to state required licensure content and may request assistance with state licensure concerns or questions via a digital webform.

National Certification

The CE supports students who wish to apply for the voluntary National Certified Counselor (NCC) credential through the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC). To earn the NCC credential, applicants must pass either the National Counselor Examination (NCE) or the National Clinical Mental Health Counseling Examination (NCMHCE). States may also require one or both examinations as part of the professional counselor licensure process. The CE's NBCC liaison works with students to register for the NCE during the final stages of their degree program. The CE receives students' NCE/NCMHCE results, which program leadership reviews annually to identify trends and determine whether curricular revisions may be needed.

CE Advisory Councils

The Clinical Mental Health Counseling/Counselor Education and Supervision (CMHC/CES) and the School Counseling (SC) Advisory Councils include key stakeholders, such as faculty, district partners, practitioners and site supervisors, students, and alumni.

- The CMHC/CES Advisory Council meets virtually biannually to review program and accreditation updates and explore topics relevant to the enhancement and development of the programs.
- The SC Advisory Council meets virtually biannually to offer advice and counsel to program and faculty leadership. Council members offer a relevant perspective on industry trends to facilitate improvements within the SC program. Because SC is dually accredited by CACREP and CAEP, its council also meets the necessary requirements of EPPs for CAEP.

The purpose of the advisory councils includes:

1. assisting the program in identifying current issues in clinical mental health counseling, school counseling, and counselor education and supervision;

2. identifying necessary entry-level skills, knowledge, competencies, and professional dispositions for entry-level professional counselors and counselor educators and supervisors; and
3. assisting in program evaluation by providing recommendations based on program data.

Reports from the advisory council meetings are shared with program and school leadership.

Professional Fitness Committees

The Counselor Education and Family Therapy Professional Standards Committee (PSC) continue to support a growth-based review of student needs, strengths, and academic and professional requirements. The PSC comprises full-time faculty members from the CE and Marriage and Family Therapy program.