

2024-2025 CMHC Program Annual Report
Wheaton College Clinical Mental Health Counseling (CMHC) Program
CMHC Program Director: Dr. Ki Chae

1. PROGRAM GOALS 2023 – 2024

1. Complete CACREP Site Visit

The CACREP virtual site visit took place from November 4 to 6, 2024. Subsequently, on March 11, 2025, CACREP reaffirmed the accreditation, extending it until March 31, 2033.

2. Increase CMHC faculty collaboration and unity.

The CMHC program welcomed its newest faculty member, Dr. Smyrna Khalaf. The program met weekly to celebrate collective achievements and provide mutual support during various challenges. Additionally, the program has organized a series of lunch meetings focused on professional development and meaningful discussions.

3. Incorporate spiritual formation and practices and character development into the curriculum.

Led by Dr. Chae and Dr. Watson, a program proposal has been developed to integrate virtue and character development into the curriculum. During the summer of 2025, the team will focus on refining the details of the virtue development implementation plan, aiming for the successful introduction of the new curriculum in the 2025–2026 academic year.

4. Include neurodivergent content and literature into the curriculum, increasing awareness and resources for students.

This initiative, led by Dr. Baraka, will continue in AY 2025 – 2026.

2. PROGRAM AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENTS RESULTS AND APPLICATION

Student Learning Outcome (SLO) and Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

After each course, the faculty conducted the Student Learning Outcome (SLO) Assessment Survey and reviewed the Key Performance Indicators (KPI). Instructors reported the percentage of students meeting or not meeting the learning objectives for each class. Additionally, instructors outlined a plan to enhance student mastery of the SLO if fewer than 84% of students fulfilled the requirement. During the AY2024 – 2025 period, all courses effectively achieved the SLO and KPI goals.

The Counselor Preparation Comprehensive Examination (CPCE)

CPCE is a nationally standardized exam administered to graduating CMHC students each spring semester. This comprehensive exam is a broad assessment measure utilized at many CACREP-accredited schools. To pass this exam, students must score one point higher than one standard deviation below the national mean.

In 2025, all 24 students from Wheaton CMHC achieved a **100% pass rate** in the examination. Their average score of **102.17** surpassed the national average of 87.1, indicating exceptional performance. The average score was also noteworthy, standing at one standard deviation above

the mean. This outcome reflects positively on the quality of education and the caliber of students at Wheaton CMHC Program. Furthermore, the CPCE results indicate that the program successfully addressed the first three Program Outcomes, encompassing Professional Orientation and Ethics, Individual and Systemic Diversity, and Knowledge and Skills for Competent Practice.

Student Portfolio Data

The student portfolio is collected across multiple domains and at various points throughout students' two-year tenure in the CMHC program to evaluate their professional preparedness, clinical acumen, and skills in Christian integration. A review of all student portfolios indicated that students are progressing as expected through the CMHC program. No other changes are recommended for the Student Portfolio.

Course Evaluations

All the courses received positive evaluations (e.g., strongly agree and agree).

Survey of Current Graduating Students

The CMHC Program surveyed graduating students in Summer 2025 and received 13 responses. Of the respondents, 10 were female, two were male, and one preferred not to identify their gender. They identified as follows: five White/Caucasian, four Asian, three Black or African American, and one preferred not to identify their ethnicity. The majority of the students were between 20 and 30 years old (N=9).

Among the 15 Program Outcomes, the majority received either 'agree' or 'strongly agree' ratings. Students reported positive experiences with faculty who intentionally integrated multicultural perspectives into all aspects of teaching, fostering personal growth and broadening worldviews. They also highlighted strong relationships with professors and classmates, a supportive cohort model, and faculty intentionality as key strengths of the program. Other notable aspects included the two-day class schedule, PIE day, collaborative licensing preparation, and focus on Christian ethics.

Students suggested placing more focus on practical skills, including role-play demonstrations, working with couples and parents of minors, and implementing self-care strategies to prevent burnout and compassion fatigue. Recommendations included changing course schedules (such as moving Family Systems to a regular semester and extending time for Psychopathology and Theories), starting exam preparation earlier, and offering more choices in supervision groups. Other ideas involved adding exit interviews with advisors, faculty support in theology courses, and open discussions about self-care challenges. Some students felt that the program was too compressed, resulting in broad coverage without sufficient depth, and a sense of being overwhelmed.

Students expressed a strong inclination to recommend the CMHC Program to others but mentioned the demanding nature of the curriculum and high expectations.

To address the survey results, the CMHC program faculty and staff have been engaged in the following discussions:

1. Considering team teaching for BITH 561.
2. Providing more case studies and demonstrations of counseling techniques.
3. Moving courses to provide an improved educational experience.

3. SIGNIFICANT CURRICULAR CHANGES AND PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATIONS

The CMHC Program continued to redesign the CMHC 611 Foundation 1 and CMHC 612 Foundation 2 courses, incorporating feedback and suggestions to enhance the learning experiences and opportunities for faith integration. The Program organized a one-day retreat for first-year students with the theme 'Preparing for the CMHC program pilgrimage: Guideposts for the journey' on 8/30/24. The retreat focused on topics such as the program and its mission, whole person formation, community context for learning, and hopes and aspirations. The retreat provided new students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the program and interact with faculty, staff, and cohort members.

The CMHC 614 Group Counseling and CMHC 614L Group Lab continued to make revisions to incorporate a structured spiritual formation component, experiential learning, and peer-led group experience. A unique aspect of this class is that it allows second-year students to provide peer supervision to the first-year students under the training and supervision of Drs. Chae and Watson. This approach fosters a sense of community and promotes peer learning and development.

Additionally, numerous distinguished guest lecturers and speakers were invited to engage with students during classes and events, sharing their diverse experiences and expertise.

4. PROMOTIONS, TENURE, POST-TENURE REVIEW, AND RETIREMENTS FOR 2024 – 2025

N/A

5. ENROLLMENT TRENDS AND STUDENT/FACULTY RATIOS

Ratio of Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Students to FTE Faculty

During AY 2024-2025, five full-time CMHC faculty members (Drs. Baraka, Chae, Khalaf, Schultz, and Watson) hold faculty lines dedicated to the CMHC program. Four adjunct faculty members contribute to the CMHC program by teaching required classes in their areas of expertise. Other faculty members in the psychology department teach elective courses that are available to CMHC students.

Wheaton College defines a full-time teaching load as 24 credits per year. A full-time graduate student is enrolled for a minimum of 12 credits. Institutional enrollment statistics from Fall 2023 identified the Student FTE for the CMHC program as 44 students (25 first-year and 24 second-year students). Student FTE student statistics are calculated from the number of credit hours that students are enrolled and not the actual number of students (i.e., every 12 enrolled credits = 1 FTE). Thus, the actual number of students enrolled is typically lower than the FTE number

since all CMHC students take 13 credit hours per semester during the first year of the program, utilizing a cohort model. A calculation of faculty FTE based on the 2024-25 teaching load (see table below) reflects a current student-faculty ratio of 9.17 to 1. The CACREP Standard 1.T. requires FTE students to FTE faculty ratio not to exceed 12:1.

Academic Term	Faculty FTE	Student FTE	FTE Student: FTE Faculty Ratio
AY 2024 – 25	5.375	49	9.17:1

Demographic Data Denoting Applicant and Student Characteristics

The CMHC faculty convened in December 2024 to discuss early admissions decisions and reconvened in February 2025 to review applicant files and select a diverse cohort that meets the admission requirements. These meetings provide essential insights for necessary program modifications in recruiting and admissions procedures. Data on graduates' characteristics, including job placement and professional licensure status, are collected annually.

Characteristics of Applicants and Graduates

For the AY 2024-2025, the CMHC program enrolled 25 new students, 22 returning students, and two transfer students, totaling 52 students. Demographic characteristics of the CMHC student body are summarized in the following chart:

Gender	Number of Students	Percentage
Male	13	25%
Female	29	75%
Total	52	100%

Nationality	Number of Students	Percentage
Domestic Students	42	81%
International Students	10	19%
Total	52	100%

Race/Ethnicity	Number of Students	Percentage
Black/African American	5	10%
Asian/Asian-American	9	17%
Latino/a American	4	8%

Native American	-	-
White Non-Hispanic American	34	65%
Unknown/ Not Reported	-	-
Total	52	100%

Demographic data on student racial and ethnic identification indicates that 65% of the CMHC student body identify as White Non-Hispanic and 19% self-identify as international. The percentage of White Non-Hispanic students in the CMHC program (65%) is lower than the national U.S. statistic reported by the most recent U.S. Census (2010), which noted that 72% of the population identifies as White Non-Hispanic. Evaluated together, these demographic characteristics are encouraging and reflect the CMHC program's efforts to attract and retain a diverse student body. The CMHC faculty and the Office of Graduate Admissions staff recognize that intentional efforts to maintain diversity in the CMHC program require continual planning and engagement. In particular, a greater effort would be well spent toward attracting and enrolling Native American, Latino, and Black/African American students.

The program received 85 total new student applications, and 30 applicants confirmed admissions for the 2025 – 2027 cohort. Retention rates and program completion rates are noted in the chart below:

	Number of Students	Retention Rate: Year 1–Year 2	Graduation Rate (May & Aug. grads)
2013 – 2015 cohort	27	96%	89%
2014 – 2016 cohort	25	96%	96%
2015 – 2017 cohort	25	96%	96%
2016 – 2018 cohort	27	93%	85%
2017 – 2019 cohort	26	88%	88%
2018 – 2020 cohort	29	100%	97%
2019 – 2021 cohort	19	100%	95%
2020 – 2022 cohort	26	100%	100%
2021 – 2023 cohort	34	97%	97%
2022 – 2024 cohort	22	91%	91%
2023 – 2025 cohort	24	96%	96%
2024 – 2026 cohort	25	100%	-

6. THE IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEMS LIMITING DEPARTMENT EFFECTIVENESS AND SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

Significant Curricular Changes & Teaching Innovations

The CMHC 611, CMHC 612, CMHC 614, and CMHC 614L courses were redesigned. CMHC 653 Lifestyle and Career Development was moved to the Fall semester, and CMHC 636 Family Systems Theory and Counseling was offered in the summer semester. CMHC 647 Foundation of Play Therapy was offered in the summer semester as an intensive course.

Program Administration

In Fall 2024, Dr. Smyrna Khalaf joined the CMHC Program as a tenure-track assistant professor. The Program has decided to eliminate the general program fee for the Professional Growth and Development (PGD) experience. Henceforth, students will be accountable for covering the cost of the PGD activity.

Program Morale

The CMHC program remained strong, as shown by the positive program survey results, 100% SLO and KPI goals achieved, a 100% pass rate for the CPCE and NCE, high application numbers, and a successful internship experience. Dr. Smyrna Khalaf joined the program in the Fall of 2024.

The CMHC Program had 25 new students, who all participated in the program orientation and first-year retreat. In Spring 2025, CMHC students joined Dr. Baraka on the Civil Rights Tours, allowing them to engage in racial and social justice issues. In May 2025, the graduating CMHC students had the CMHC Graduating Banquet, where they celebrated their accomplishments with faculty, staff, and cohort mates.

7. SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT

Job Placement and Professional Licensure Rates

The survey is currently in progress.

Significant Student Internships

100% of CMHC students seeking summer practicum were successful in their endeavors. 100% of students seeking fall and spring internships were successfully placed.

Notable Faculty Activities

Dr. Mandy Baraka
Publication

- Baraka, M.K., & Hart, K.A. (2025) Teaching cognitive complexity with six thinking hats in counseling coursework. ACES Teaching Practice Briefs, 5, 47-58.
<https://acesonline.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/TPB-iss5-Teaching-Cognitive-Complexity-with-Six-Thinking-Hats-in-Counseling-Coursework.pdf>

- Baraka, M.K., Schultz, T., Lendy, S., & Qing Miller, H. (2024) Clinical mental health counseling student session recording and storage best practices. *Journal of Counseling in Illinois*, 9(1), 17–30

Presentation

- Osteen, S. A., Davis, E. B., **Baraka, M. K.**, & Van Reken, R. (2025, April 25-27). *Exploring the impact of social support and sociocultural adaptation on the psychological wellbeing of U.S.-sent adult missionary kids* [Poster session]. Georgia Psychological Association Annual Conference, virtual conference.
- Watson, T.S., Schultz, T., **Baraka, M.K.**, & Khalaf, S. (March, 2025). *The clinically competent integrated professional: Innovations in counseling and supervision skills to promote clinical excellence*. Education Session at the Christian Association for Psychological Studies International Conference.
- Gonzalez, L., Pate, R., Donavan, T., Méjico, A., & Baraka, M.K. (March, 2025). *Self-compassion as a mediator of machismo and attitudes toward seeking psychological help*. Education Session at the Christian Association for Psychological Studies International Conference.
- Harris, A., Huffman, A., & **Baraka, M.K.** (March, 2025). *Let's stir the pot: The secret societies of disordered eating amongst African American adolescents*. [Poster]. Presentation at the Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling Illinois (ACACI) Bi-Annual Conference.
- Raykova, B., Swoap, S., & **Baraka, M.K.** (March, 2025). *Multicultural identity development in children and adolescents*. [Poster]. Presentation at the Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling Illinois (ACACI) Bi-Annual Conference.
- Hayden, K., Landis, M., & **Baraka, M.K.** (March, 2025). *Trauma-informed care for refugee youth: Future implications for counselors*. [Poster]. Presentation at the Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling Illinois (ACACI) Bi-Annual Conference.
- Bracken, I., Landeros, D., & **Baraka, M.K.** (March, 2025) *Progress for our future: Comprendiendo abuso sexual infantil desde la perspectiva de inmigrantes latinos*. [Poster]. Presentation at the Association for Child and Adolescent Counseling Illinois (ACACI) Bi-Annual Conference.
- **Baraka, M.K.**, & Hiestand, K. (November, 2024). *Enhancing post-traumatic growth across the lifespan using the therapeutic powers of play*. Presentation at the Illinois Counseling Association Conference.
- Bednarz, S. & **Baraka, M.K.** (November, 2024). *Who does what? Supervision gatekeeping roles for counselors-in-training*. Presentation at the Illinois Counseling Association Conference.
- Hayden, K., Landis, M., & **Baraka, M.K.** (November, 2024). *Trauma-informed care for refugee youth: Future implications for counselors*. [Poster]. Presentation at the Illinois Counseling Association Conference.
- Bracken, I., Landeros, D., & **Baraka, M.K.** (November, 2024) *Progress for our future: Comprendiendo abuso sexual infantil desde la perspectiva de inmigrantes latinos*. [Poster]. Presentation at the Illinois Counseling Association Conference.

Dr. Ki Chae

Publication

- Woo, H., Chae, K., Lee, J., Henry, M., & Mathew, A. (submitted). Pretenured faculty of color in counseling: A qualitative study of their mentoring experiences. *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*.

Grant

- Wheaton College Mental Health Collective (WMHC) Grant: Parental Support in Asian American Families: A Qualitative Study of Second Generation Asian American Parents of Adolescents, Co-Principal Investigator, Awarded for \$20,000

Presentations

- Park, Y., & **Chae, K.** (April 6, 2025). *Job search in the United States* [Workshop]. Korean Counseling Association – International Chapter, Virtual.
- **Chae, K.** (March 28, 2025). 10th Korea Counseling Association International Chapter Conference [Moderator], New Orleans, LA.
- **Chae, K.** (March 9 -12, 2025). *Gender, sexuality, & faith 2.0: Applications to pastors, elders, and those in ministry contexts*. [Group Facilitator] Central and Eastern Europe Mental Health Advisory Group Conference, Prague, CZ.
- **Chae, K.**, Kang, Y., & Manful, A. (November 9, 2024). *Conceptualizing online sports betting*. Illinois Counseling Association, Naperville, IL.

Dr. Smyrna Khalaf

Publications

- Khalaf, S. (2025). Introduction. In Mikolon, T. M., & Perez, D. (Eds). (In Progress). *Counseling children and adolescents: Diagnostic and treatment considerations for specialized issues*. Cognella Academic Publishing.

Presentations

- Abi Hashem, N. & Khalaf, S. (2025, March). Whatever Happened to the Concept of Peace in an Age of Polarization, Radicalization, and Militancy. Presented at the CAPS Annual Conference, Denver, CO.
- Watson, T., Shultz, T. Baraka, & Khalaf, S. (2025, March). The Clinically Competent Integrated Professional: Innovations in faith-informed counseling and supervision skills. Presented at the CAPS Annual Conference, Denver, CO

Dr. Tammy Schultz

Publications

- Schultz, T., Estabrook, H., & Dell, A. (2025). *Freedom to heal: A Christian clinician's guide to treating child sexual abuse*. InterVarsity Press.
- Worthington Jr, E. L., McConnell, J. M., Cowden, R. G., Walter, S. L., Palmer, M. E., Schultz, T., & Hill, H. (2024). Assessing healing of traumas in Christians: A multistudy psychometric evaluation of the Trauma Healing Institute–Impact Survey. *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*, 11(3), 250-268. <https://doi.org/10.1037/scp0000360>
- Worthington Jr, E. L., Walter, S. L., Schultz, T., McConnell, J. M., Palmer, M. E., Cowden, R. G., & Hill, H. (2024). Treating traumas among Christians in Nigeria: A randomized controlled field study of the Healing the Wounds of Trauma program. *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*, 11(3), 269-283. <https://doi.org/10.1037/scp0000368>

- Kellums-Baraka, M., Schultz, T. Lendy, S., & Qing Miller, H. (2024). Clinical mental health counseling student session recording and storage best practices. *Journal of Counseling in Illinois*, 9, 17-30.

Presentations

- Watson, T., Schultz, T., Baraka, M., & Khalaf, S. (2025). The Clinically Competent Integrated Professional: Innovations in counseling and supervision skills to promote clinical excellence. Christian Association at the Christian Psychological Studies. Denver, CO.
- Schultz, T. (2024, July). Unpacking Trauma. Trauma and transformation, Columbo Theological Seminary, Columbo, Sri Lanka.
- Schultz, T. (2024, July). Holy Healing: Pain and Possibilities. Trauma and transformation, Columbo Theological Seminary, Columbo, Sri Lanka.
- Schultz, T. (2024, July). Neurobiology of Trauma. Trauma and transformation, Columbo Theological Seminary, Columbo, Sri Lanka.
- Schultz, T. (2024, July). Sexual Assault. Trauma and transformation, Columbo Theological Seminary, Columbo, Sri Lanka.

Awards:

- 2025-2026 Senior Teaching Achievement Award, Wheaton College and Wheaton College Alumni Association

Dr. Terri Watson

Publications

- Watson, T.S. (2025). *The Client's Guide to Therapy: How to Get the Most out of Your Counseling Experience*. IVP Academic.

Grant

- Received a Faculty Travel Grant (\$1500) to present at the Illinois Counseling Association conference and at the Christian Association for Psychological Studies conference.
- Received an Aldeen grant (\$3500) to fund teaching and research in Sri Lanka, summer 2025.

Presentations

- Watson, T., Schultz, T., Baraka, M. & Khalaf, S. (2025). The clinically competent integrative professional: Innovations in faith-informed counseling and supervision skills. Symposium presentation at the Christian Association for Psychological Studies annual conference.
- Gordon, L.* & Watson, T. (2024). The spiritual side: Using a holistic approach. (2024). Illinois Counseling Association Conference, Lombard, IL.
*denotes MA program alum

Podcast Interviews

- The Women Scholars & Professionals Podcast with Ann Boyd, interview released on April 8, 2025.
- More with Nikki Dutton Podcast, interview release date in May 2025.

Faculty Activity Report

All core faculty met the requirements for participating in counseling-related activities as noted on individual Faculty Activity Reports. The CMHC faculty continue to contribute to counselor education and professional counseling through publications, professional presentations, and service to professional counseling organizations.

8. PROGRAM OBJECTIONS AND GOALS 2025 – 2026

- 1) Revise and update the program curriculum to align with the 2016 CACREP Standards.
- 2) Integrate virtue and character development into the curriculum.
- 3) Develop the play therapy certificate program.
- 4) Hire a new CMHC faculty member.

9. SUMMARY

During the AY 2024-2025, the CMHC program conducted a comprehensive assessment of the CMHC program. Data was collected from multiple sources, including the Office of Graduate Admissions, SLO and KPI surveys completed by course instructors, an anonymous survey given to graduating students, and Course Evaluations completed by students. Data indicate that the CMHC program is fulfilling its overarching mission to train competent Christian counselors committed to serving the underserved.