

Rehabilitation Counseling Program – Year in Review for Academic Year 2024-2025

Faculty and Staff, Brief Bios:

Dr. Michael Gerald, Ph.D., CRC., LMHC-Iowa, CMHC-Utah (Assistant Professor) in rehabilitation counseling and began his appointment in the Fall 2020 semester and has been a key player in helping finalize efforts related to counselor licensure. He is the director of the Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling Clinic (CRCC Service Line) in the Sorenson Legacy Foundation Center for Clinical Excellence (SCCE) and currently serves as the president of the Utah Mental Health Counselors Association. Dr. Gerald is submitting his tenure materials this coming academic year for review.

Jennifer Hunsaker, MRC, CRC, A-CMHC-Utah (Professional Practice Assistant Professor) teaches a variety of courses in the MRC program. After completing her Master's in HR in 2000, she spent the better part of 20 years in organizational development consulting in the small business healthcare space before deciding to pivot into clinical rehabilitation counseling. In addition to teaching, Professor Hunsaker serves clients in the SCCE CRC Service Line. Professor Hunsaker serves on multiple committees with the Utah Mental Health Counselor's Association.

Dr. Trenton Landon, Ph.D., CRC., A-CMHC-Utah (Associate Professor) has been with Utah State since the Fall 2016 semester. Dr. Landon presently serves as the program chair for the Master's in Rehabilitation Counseling. Dr. Landon has authored/coauthored over **40 peer reviewed publications** and **7 book chapters**. He presently serves on the Board of Directors the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA), and on the board for the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) and chairs the CRCC Ethics Committee. Dr. Landon serves clients in the SCCE CRC Service Line.

Dr. Michelle McKnight, Ph.D., CRC, LPC-Idaho (Associate Professor) and has been with Utah State since the Fall 2018 semester. Since that time, Dr. McKnight-Lizotte has authored/co-authored **over 20 peer reviewed publications** and **multiple book chapters**. In partnership with the Institute for Disability Research Policy and Practice, Dr. McKnight presently serves as the PI on a research project examining mental health needs of persons with neurodevelopmental disabilities and is the director of Aggies Elevated.

Dr. Kathleen (Kat) Oertle, Ph.D., CRC (Associate Professor) began her employment at USU in Fall. Since arriving, Dr. Oertle has secured external funding of nearly \$6 million of which is a **\$600,000 3-year grant for her latest project, called "Collaborate for Change (C2)"** (one of five funded out of 134 total projects). Dr. Oertle has authored/co-authored **24 peer-reviewed publications** and **3 book chapters** and given **numerous presentations** at the national, state, and local levels.

Dr. Brian Phillips, Ph.D., CRC (Associate Professor) joined the Rehabilitation Counseling faculty at USU in Fall of 2019. His research focuses on two primary strands, namely (a) understanding and predicting workplace social effectiveness and its outcomes and (b) measuring the influence of individual strengths on adjustment, well-being, and employment outcomes of people with disabilities. He has worked on multiple federally funded research projects and serves as an editorial board member for several journals. Dr. Phillips has **over 60 publications** and is submitting his packet to be considered for promotion to Full Professor in the coming academic year.

Kris Wengreen, Graduate Program Coordinator, is a full-time departmental employee. Her degree in Business Information Systems has served the USU RCM program well because she is able to develop databases which record and monitor many aspects of the program including RSA Scholar Payback, Student Progress, Graduates, and much more. Mrs. Wengreen has been with USU for more than 18 years.

Tracy Woolstenhulme, MRC., CRC, (Professional Practice Assistant Professor) serves as the practicum/internship coordinator in the Special Education and Rehabilitation Counseling Department at Utah State University. Her work with practicum/internship students is invaluable to the core faculty as her work with practicum internship students allows core faculty to focus on research and grant writing.

General Program Information

July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

Number of Students

Current Doctoral Students: 5

Newly Admitted Doctoral Students: 2 – Fall 2025 start date.

Current Master's Degree Students: 36

Newly Admitted MRC Students, Fall 2024: 19 (23 admitted, 4 declined the offer of admissions)

Current Alternative Certification Students:

- Certificate in Rehabilitation and Disability Studies: 11 (2 admitted for Fall 2025)
- CRCC Category 3, non-degree seeking: 5 (1 admitted for Fall 2025)

Projected Spring 2025 MRC Graduates: 18

Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Long Term Training Grants: The current grant we have will be entering the sixth and final year of the grant beginning in the Fall 2024 semester. To date, no RFP has been distributed for the Federal Fiscal Year beginning October 1, 2024. We remain hopeful that we'll be able to pursue another RSA long-term training grant in the summer of 2025.

Students Supported with Scholarship Funds

| Semester | Number of Students | Scholarship Money Dispersed |
|--|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| Fall 24 | 12 | \$53,182 |
| Spring 25 | 12 | \$47,912 |
| Summer 25 | 7 | \$22,612 |
| Fall 25 | 8 | \$25,916 |
| Total Scholarship Money Dispersed: \$149,622 | | |

Faculty Scholarly Works from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

The following are the scholarly products and grant applications/managed grants produced from July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. Products are listed in alphabetical order.

| Published/In press | # of Publications with Student Co-Authors or by Student Authors | Book Chapters | Manuscripts Under Review |
|--------------------|---|---------------|--------------------------|
| 15 | 9 | 1 | ~4 |

Published/In Press

An asterisk (*) denotes authorship with a graduate student.

Journal Articles:

1. Brehmer, C. E., Strauser, D. R., O'Sullivan, D., **Phillips, B. N.**, & Shen, S. (2025). Functioning Mediates the Relationship Between Childhood Trauma and Work Adjustment in a Sample of Adults With Disabilities. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00343552251320954>

2. Bobroff, S., **Oertle, K. M.**, McCall, C., Mendoza-Sahagun, S., Yerelian, S., Miller, J., Voitzwinkler, C., Clark, M. L., & Cardones, J. (2025). Person-driven planning benefits everyone: dispelling myths with practice-based evidence and outcomes. [*Special Issue*] *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 56(2).
3. *Culbreath, E. & Oertle, K. M. (2024). Tough as they come: A life-altering perspective by Staff Sergeant Travis Mills, *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 55(4), 323-324. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1891/JARC-2024-0012>
4. D'Agostino, S. R., **Landon, T. J.**, *Roylance, A., *Briggs, A., & Bhana, Lopez, N. (2025). Exploring the social validity and diffusion potential of common Naturalistic Developmental Behavioral Intervention strategies implemented in community preschools. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health* (Special Issue), 15(3), 357, <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15030357>.
5. Fleming, A. R., Kristoff, C., & **Phillips, B. N.** (in press). Changes in self-determination among college students with physical disabilities completing professional internships: A pilot study. *Journal of Rehabilitation*.
6. Fleming, A. R., **Phillips, B. N.**, & *Lockett, M. (2025). Continuous improvement in state vocational rehabilitation: A Demonstration and call to action. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 62(1), 16-26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10522263241300870>
7. Fleming, A. R., **Phillips, B. N.**, Riesen, T., & Langone, A. (2024). Enhancing transition outcomes: A toolkit to facilitate data-driven pre-employment transition services. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 60(2), 197-209. <https://doi.org/10.3233/JVR-240006>
8. Hawley, C. E., Armstrong, A. J., **Oertle, K. M.**, Aldrich, W., & 'Davis-Walton, J. (2025). When addiction is not a disability: the exclusion of individuals with Gambling Disorder as a protected class. [*Special Issue*] *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 56(2).
9. **Landon, T. J.**, **Phillips, B. N.**, **McKnight, M.**, Sabella, S. A., Kline, K. M., *Poe, M., & Lockett, M. (2025). Insights on turnover intent in state vocational rehabilitation agencies. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 62(1), 82-87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10522263241302256>
10. **Oertle, K. M.**, McCall, C., & Hawley, C. E. (2025). Using knowledge to broker change based on 50 years of Rehabilitation Act implementation [*Special Issue*] *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 56(2).
11. **Oertle, K. M.**, McCall, C., Dozier, L., Marrero-Irizarry, J., O'Toole Hall, M., Pierson-Bacon, S., Reed, T., Williamson, R., Randle, J., & Hawley, C. E., (2025). Beyond webinars: Boosting transition employment outcomes through advanced training. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 56(2).
12. **Oertle, K. M.**, McCall, C., Smith Hill, R. B., Hawley, C. E., Marrero-Irizarry, J., & Corbin II, J. E. (2025). "She said my name": Reconstructing agency, identity, and disability with Judith (Judy) E. Heumann. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 56(2).
13. Reyes, A., **Phillips, B. N.**, & Kriofske Mainella, A. (2024). Applications for Interpersonal Theory in Rehabilitation Counseling. *Rehabilitation Research, Policy, and Education*.
14. Sabella, S. A., **Landon, T. J.**, & Schultz, J. C. (2025). Supervision impact on rehabilitation counselor job satisfaction and intent-to-quit. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin*, 68(4), 275-286. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00343552241265315>

15. Smith Hill, R. B., Carlson, S. R., Hawley, C. E., **Oertle, K. M.**, McCall, C., Armstrong, A. J., & Plotner, A. J. (2025). Embracing family collaboration: Considerations and practices to enhance outcomes for individuals with disabilities across the lifespan. [*Special Issue*] *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 56(2).

Book Chapters

1. **Phillips, B. N.**, Fleming, A. R., Poppen, M., & Riesen, T. (in press). More than just a job: Helping students build their future careers. In *Life Beyond the Classroom: 6th Edition*. Brookes Publishing Company.

Manuscripts Under Review:

1. D'Agostino, S., **Landon, T. J.**, Roylance, A.*, & Briggs, A.* (Under review). Examining the social acceptability of naturalistic developmental behavioral intervention strategies implemented in preschool classrooms: A pilot study.
2. **Landon, T. J.**, **Gerald, M. E.**, & **Hunsaker, J.** Person-centered approaches for persons with disabilities in refugee and displacement status.
3. Stay, L. V.*, **Landon, T. J.**, D'Agostino, S., Pinkelman, S. E., McKnight, M., & Southwick, J. (Under review). Autistic adults perspectives and experiences of ABA.
4. McCarthy, A., Baumunk, M. J., Bernachio, C., **Landon, T. J.**, Matkin, K., Solner, J. A., and Taylor, A. (Under review). A content analysis of rehabilitation counseling supervision literature.

Student Publications with Support from Faculty*:**

These student publications came from projects in Dr. Oertle's REH 6120 Psychosocial Aspects of Disability course. Dr. Oertle worked with these students to refine some writing projects from coursework and submit them for publication.

1. Kendall, K. (2024). Disability visibility. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 55(1), 76. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/JARC-2023-0009>
2. Kay, H. (2024). Discovering why by borrowing "How:" 10 lessons for vocational rehabilitation counselors in Viktor Frankl's Man's Search for Meaning. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 55(3), 235-238. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1891/JARC-2024-0008>
3. Jenson, M. (2024). I'll figure it out: How ableism impacts disabled people's lives. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 55(3), 239-240. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1891/JARC-2024-0010>
4. Randall, D. (2024). Not different enough: A 30-Year journey with Autism, Asperger's, and Intellectual Disabilities by Gloria Doty. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 55(4), 320-322. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1891/JARC-2024-0007>

Undergraduate Student Research Recognition with Support from Faculty:

Professor Jennifer Hunsaker was the faculty mentor for a team of undergraduate students competing in the USU Year of Undergraduate Research Horizons Pitch Competition. Her team won “Outstanding Presentation” and a \$1,500 prize.

Presentations

| Refereed Presentations | Invited Presentations | Poster Presentations | Virtual Summit |
|------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 15 | 1 | 2 | 1 |

An asterisk (*) denotes a presentation with a graduate student.

Refereed Presentations

1. Andersen, S., **Hunsaker, J.**, & Stevens, J. (2025, May 19-20). *Ideas for creating final projects*. eLearnX, Logan, UT.
2. Cohn-Geltner, H., & **Oertle, K. M.** (2025). *Collaborate for change master’s student research: Worth the price of admission*. Association of Rehabilitation Research, Policy, and Education (ARRPE) Inaugural conference. Poster presentation. Savannah, GA.
3. Dunlap, P., Nerlich, A., Levine, A., & **Landon, T. J.** (May 2025). *Rehabilitation counseling: Building on history and moving forward*. American Rehabilitation Counseling Association Pre-Conference Seminar, Madison WI, United States.
4. Fernandez, S., Shlemon, P., **Landon, T. J.**, & Bradham-Cousar, M. (May 2025). *Town hall with CACREP and CRCC: Better understanding accreditation and certification*. National Symposium on Quality Employment 2025, Madison, WI, United States.
5. Fleming, A. R., **Phillips, B. N.**, & Riesen, T. (2024, October 16-19). *A Model of Data Informed Collaboration: Aligning Transition Planning and Service Delivery Through Shared Data and Outcomes* [Conference presentation]. Division on Career Development and Transition Conference 2024, Chantilly, VA, United States.
6. **Gerald, M., Hunsaker, J.**, & Newlon, J.* (2025, May 29-30). *6 Vital Truths of Clinical Supervision*. UMHCA Spring Conference, Salt Lake City, UT.
7. **Gerald, M., Hunsaker, J.**, & **Landon, T. J.** (March 2025). *Adjustment to chronic disability counseling for persons with chronic illness and disability: A culturally inclusive framework for practice*. American Counseling Association Annual Conference, Orlando, FL, United States.
8. **Hunsaker, J.** (2025, March 5-6). *The secret to self-care: Lessons from a therapist*. 2025 Idaho State HOSA Conference, Pocatello, ID.
9. **Hunsaker, J.**, & **Gerald, M. E.** (2025, March 21). *Launching a university-based teaching and learning clinic: 4 critical lessons for clinical rehabilitation counselors*. ARCA Virtual Symposium. Online.
10. **Landon, T. J.** (April, 2025). *Autistic adults’ perspectives of ABA and related experiences: A mixed-method approach*. Pac Rim International Conference on Disability, Honolulu, HI.
11. **Landon, T. J.**, *Poe, M., & *Martinez, M. (May, 2025). *Clinical supervision and gatekeeping: Ethical dilemmas and concerns*. National Symposium on Quality Employment 2025, Madison, WI, United States.
12. Marrero-Irizarry, J. Dozier, L., Williamson, R., McCall, C., **Oertle, K. M.**, O’Toole Hall, M., Pierson-Bacon, S., Randle, J., & Reed, T. (2025). *Investing in professionals to*

- improve transition outcomes.* Association of Rehabilitation Research, Policy, and Education (ARRPE) Inaugural conference. Concurrent session, Savannah, GA.
13. **Phillips, B.** & Fleming, A. (May, 2025). *Data-informed transition collaboration: A new solution to old problems.* National Symposium on Quality Employment 2025, Madison, WI, United States..
 14. Soldner, J. L., McCarthy, A. K., **Landon, T. J.**, Matkin, K., Baumunk, M. J., Bernacchio, C., & Taylor, A. (May, 2025). *A 50-year content analysis of the rehabilitation counseling supervision literature.* National Symposium on Quality Employment 2025, Madison, WI, United States.
 15. Tansey, T. N., Jaeyoung, K., **Phillips, B. N.**, Brehmer, C., Weathers, M., & Brinck, E. (2025, May 21-22). *Identification and Vocational Rehabilitation Needs of Persons in Custody* [Conference presentation]. National Symposium on Quality Employment 2025, Madison, WI, United States.

Invited Presentations

1. McCall, C., Cohn-Geltner, H., & Oertle, K. M., (2025). *Creating your own ecosystem: Transition engineered collaborative (TEC) for people with disabilities pursuing STEM careers.* Association of Rehabilitation Research, Policy, and Education (ARRPE), Invited, 2-hour Workshop, Savannah, GA.

Poster Presentations

1. Austin, B., Lee, C., Fleming, A., & **Phillips, B. N.** (2025, May 21-22). *A Study of State Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors' Perceived Importance and Competence in Providing Career Counseling.* National Symposium on Quality Employment 2025, Madison, WI, United States.
2. *Poe, M., *Hernandez, M., **Landon, T. J., Phillips, B.** (May, 2025). *Unlocking retention: Key factors shaping rehabilitation counselor commitment to the VR agency.* National Symposium on Quality Employment 2025, Madison, WI, United States.

Virtual Summit

June 18, 2025: Heumannizing Transition – A Collaborate for Change (HTC2). At **HTC2 Summit III** were 26 in 18 U.S. states and Puerto Rico. Highlighting the 2025 Certificate Cohort Ashley Christensen, Becky Clarke, Christopher Cleveland, and Myra Tuttle. Three USU Transition Education and Services Certificate students presented a summary of their learning and plan and McCall led a presentation as did Bobroff on papers from our special issue for JARC *Paper Presentations*

- McCall, C, Corbin III, J. E., Marrero-Irizarry, J., & Oertle, K. M. (2025). *Rolling on: Reconstructing individual and collective narratives with Judy Heumann.*
- Bobroff, S., Miller, J., Clark, M. L., Yerelian, S., Cardones, J., Voltzwinkler, C., Oertle, K. M., & McCall, C. (2025). *Nothing about us without us: Person-Driven planning is for everyone.*
- Hawley, C. E. & Oertle, K. M. (2025). *When gambling disorder is excluded as a disability* (also refer to publications Bobroff et al. 2025, Hawley et al., 2025, and Oertle, McCall et al., 2025).

Grants

| Grants Submitted | Total Funding Requested |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| 4 | ~\$3.5 million |

Grant Submissions

1. Unfunded: Principal Investigator. **Phillips, B.**, Fleming, A., Riesen, T., & Kwiatek, S. M. (2024). Elevating transition services through data-informed collaboration using advanced technology. Rehabilitation Services Administration [Co-Investigator, CFDA 84.421F, 10,817,312.74].
2. Under Review: Principal Investigator. **Phillips, B.**, Fleming, A., & Riesen, T. Coordinated Assessment and Resources for Enhanced Post-School Outcomes (CARES). Sponsored by National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, Federal, (September 1, 2025 – August 31, 2028). Amount: \$600,000
3. Under Review: Co-Investigator. Fleming, A., **Phillips, B.**, & Riesen, T. State University Collaborating with Communities to Ensure Student Success (Project SUCCESS). Sponsored by Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education, Federal, (September 1, 2025 – August 31, 2030). Amount: \$1.25 million
4. Under Review: Oertle, K. M. (PI), & McCall (Co-PI) (2025-2030). *Transition Engineered Collaborative (TEC) Leveraging Envoys' Activities Demonstrating Employment Results Synergistically (LEADERS)*, Funding requested from the Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Community Living, National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) DPKT; Primary CFDA 93.433 Outcome Domain: Employment. This is to implement Collaborate for Change (ACL-NIDILRR-FIP Grant Number: 90IFDV0011) to meet the Absolute Priority. Amount Requested: \$1,245,139.97; submitted on March 17, 2025.

Current Funded Grants and Contracts

As rehabilitation counseling faculty, 7 projects (representing \$3.8 million in funding) were managed from July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. This funding helps supports a combination of research and teaching projects.

1. **Landon, T. J. (PI)**, McKnight-Lizotte, M. (Co-PI), Oertle, K. M. (Co-PI), and Riesen, T. (Co-PI). (2019-2024). *Rehabilitation Training: Rehabilitation Long-Term Training Program: Rehabilitation Counseling CFDA Number 84.129B*. Funded by U.S. Department of Education, The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). **\$1 million**.
 - a. Granted a 6th year of funding by RSA for an additional \$130,000 (end of funding in Spring 2025).
2. **McKnight-Lizotte, M. (PI)**, & **Landon, T. J. (Co-PI)**. Improving Access to Mental Care Services for Autistic People in Utah. Interagency Outreach Training Initiative, (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2025). *Amount Requested: \$150,000*. Current Status: **Funded**.

3. **Phillips, B. N.** (Co-PI), Fleming, A. (Co-PI), and Riesen, T. (Co-I). Transition Readiness Toolkit: Filling a gap in assessing Pre-ETS. Sponsored by National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, Federal, (September 1, 2022 - September 30, 2025). Amount: \$600,000
4. Riesen, T., **Phillips, B. N.** (Co-Investigator) and others. *Partnerships for Progress in Colorado* (H421E230017). Sponsored by Rehabilitation Services Administration and awarded to the state of Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (September 1, 2023 - September 30, 2028). Total Funded: \$14,116,234.89 - Subaward to USU: \$5,467,582.00.

Grant Applications

Status Pending: Oertle, K. M. (PI), & McCall (Co-PI) **(2025-2030)**. *Transition Engineered Collaborative (TEC) Leveraging Envoys' Activities Demonstrating Employment Results Synergistically (LEADERS)*, Funding requested from the Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Community Living, National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) DPKT; Primary CFDA 93.433 Outcome Domain: Employment. This is to implement Collaborate for Change (ACL-NIDILRR-FIP Grant Number: 90IFDV0011) to meet the Absolute Priority. **Amount Requested: \$1,245,139.97; submitted on March 17, 2025.**