

---

## Advisory Council Members

**Wade Bishop**, *Beaufort County Alcohol and Drug Abuse Department*

**Tara Bloom**, *Coastal Carolina Hospital*

**Melissa Dalton**, *Memory Matters*

**Kristin Dubrowski**, *Citizens Opposed to Domestic Abuse*

**Kimberly King**, *USCB Human Services Faculty Member*

**Fred Leyda**, *Beaufort County Human Service Alliance*

**Dr. Gregory McCord**, *Beaufort County School District*

**Ni'Asia Hazelton**, *Human Services Student Organization*

**Chris Protz**, *Boys and Girls Club of the Lowcountry*

**Lois Richter**, *Beaufort County Department of Social Services*

**Dr. Lorrie Spencer**, *Autism, Inc.*

**Solicitor Duffie Stone**, *Fourteenth Circuit Solicitor's Office*

**Lorain Tascoe-Bey**, *USCB Nursing and Health Professions Staff Member*

## Program Evaluation Taskforce Members

**Najmah Thomas**, Ph.D., Taskforce Chairperson

**Randy Lamkin**, Ph.D., Program Coordinator

**James Glasson**, Internship Coordinator



UNIVERSITY OF  
**SOUTH CAROLINA**  
BEAUFORT

# University of South Carolina Beaufort DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

## Human Services Program *Program Evaluation Report*

Program Evaluation Taskforce  
October 2016

---



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**Human Services Program**

---

PROGRAM EVALUATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. [Executive Summary](#)
- II. Introduction:
  - i. [Program description](#)
  - ii. [Collaborative efforts](#)
  - iii. [Course learning objectives](#)
  - iv. [Faculty and staff](#)
  - v. [Enrollment and degrees awarded](#)
- III. Evaluation Objectives:
  - i. [Evaluation questions](#)
  - ii. [Data collection methods](#)
- IV. Statement of Evaluation Findings:
  - i. [Research question results](#)
  - ii. [Findings and discussion](#)
  - iii. [Issues affecting evaluation findings](#)
- V. [Recommendations](#)
- VI. [References](#)
- VII. Appendix
  - i. Human Services Program Evaluation Plan
  - ii. Human Services Program Enrollment Data, 2013-2017
  - iii. Human Services Program Institutional Effectiveness and Outcome Assessment (IE-OA) Reports, 2013-2016

## Executive Summary

The Department of Social Sciences at the University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) is preparing to submit an application for accreditation of its Human Services Program to the Council on Standards for Human Services Education (CSHSE). A review of the CSHSE standards revealed a need to strengthen the Human Services program evaluation procedures. In 2014 the Department organized the Program Evaluation Taskforce to oversee the design of a CSHSE-compliant evaluation plan. This plan was developed and approved in 2015, with implementation scheduled for the following academic year. Six questions guided the evaluation process and are discussed herein:

1. How well is the program meeting its stated goals and objectives?
2. How well does the program prepare its graduates to work in the Human Services sector?
3. How does the program's online learning experience compare with the program's traditional classroom learning experience?
4. What are the most viable concentrations or minors for the program?
5. What new course offerings are needed for the program?
6. What is the potential benefit of the Human Services Board Certified Professional (HS-BCP) credential for graduates and the local/regional Human Services sector?

This report provides a detailed response to the evaluation questions and shares a few of the Human Services program accomplishments achieved during the 2013-2015 evaluation period, including the following:

- Steadily increasing enrollment in the online degree completion component, Palmetto College (670% increase between Fall 2013 and Fall 2015);
- Maintaining strong levels of student satisfaction with the online learning experience when compared to the in-class learning environment;
- Exceeding student satisfaction and internship outcome goals, as well as employer satisfaction goals for two consecutive years; and,
- Obtaining 3<sup>rd</sup> place ranking in number of degrees awarded by USCB programs.

The report also outlines suggestions for the program's continued improvement, such as:

- Offering additional courses and renewing the use of program concentration options;
- Sharpening focus on alumni engagement through professional development;
- Enhancing administrative data collection processes; and,
- Increasing outreach to students of Hispanic ethnicity or background.

Special appreciation is extended to the members of the Human Services Program Evaluation Taskforce, the USCB Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research, the Human Services Student Organization, and program majors and alumni who contributed to the success of this evaluation effort. We also wish to thank Paris Brown, a student in the John Tyler Community College Human Services Program, for proofreading and editing services.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Program Description**

The Human Services (HMSV) program at the University of South Carolina Beaufort (USCB) is an interdisciplinary liberal arts degree, drawing heavily from the disciplines of psychology and sociology. Graduates of the HMSV program gain the attitudes, values, knowledge, and skills for employment or advanced study in *the art and science of care*. Program graduates will also be able to more effectively manage non-profit organizations, deliver direct care as a human service professional and have the skills to assist in building informal networks of care.

The HMSV program at USCB is guided by the principles of the national Council on Standards for Human Services Education (CSHSE). The HMSV program has been in operation since fall 2004; since then the program experienced significant increases in student enrollment, addition of an online degree component, hiring of new faculty members, a revamped Advisory Council, and expansion of the Human Services Student Organization. This evaluation report, which covers the 2013-2015 academic years, will support the program's next step towards securing CSHSE accreditation.

### **Collaborative Efforts**

One of the most distinctive and valuable features of the Human Services Program is the experience-based internship component. Each of the three internship courses requires students to complete at least 120 clock-hours in a supervised human service setting. The program has established strong collaborations with human service agencies in the locality as a result of its internship placements over the years.

The program recently developed a partnership with the South Carolina Department of Social Services to address a critical shortage in the number of available foster and adoptive families in Region III, which includes the localities of Allendale, Beaufort, Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, Hampton and Jasper. HMSV coordinators selected to intern from among the program's top majors, and SCDS local and regional staff members, work together on the Community Outreach and Recruitment Team (CORT). The CORT is responsible for conducting in-person recruitment events, information sessions, and overall outreach in the region.

The Human Services Program at USCB maintains beneficial relationships with several technical colleges in the Region. Program representatives have established matriculation agreements that help students make a smooth transition between Associate in Human Services programs to Human Services Bachelor's degree completion. These agreements are reviewed on a regular basis and updated as needed to ensure maximum transferability between the various 2-year programs and USCB's 4-year program.

The following groups provided valuable input during the implementation of recommendations from this report: the HMSV Advisory Council, HMSV students and alumni, faculty members, the USCB Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research, the Beaufort County Human Services Alliance and representatives of the regional HMSV sector.

### **Description of Learning Objectives**

USCB seeks to ensure students who complete the Bachelor of Science in Human Services are able to achieve the following learning objectives (this list does not include general education objectives):

1. Demonstrate an awareness of their own values, personalities, reaction patterns, interpersonal styles and limitations;
2. Demonstrate knowledge about and skills in applying human services values and attitudes and promote understanding of human services ethics and their application in practice;
3. Demonstrates knowledge of and ability to apply the assets based approach in individual, group and community settings;
4. Demonstrate knowledge and skills in the administrative aspects of the services delivery system;
5. Demonstrate effective interpersonal skills;
6. Demonstrate knowledge and skill in the evaluation of program outcomes;
7. Demonstrate knowledge and skill in the selection of appropriate strategies, services, or interventions;
8. Demonstrate knowledge and skill in the systematic analysis of service needs;
9. Demonstrate knowledge and skills in information management;
10. Demonstrate knowledge of human systems theory, including individual, interpersonal, group, family, organizational, community and society;
11. Demonstrate knowledge of the conditions that promote or limit human functioning; and
12. Demonstrate cultural competency in planning, delivery and evaluation of services and programs.

## Faculty and Staffing

The Human Services Program is supported by full time and adjunct faculty with deep experience in Human Services as well as relevant academic credentials.

### Program Leadership

- Jayne Violette, Ph.D., Social Sciences Department Chair; University of Kentucky
- Randy Lamkin, Ph.D., Human Services Degree Program Coordinator; University of Connecticut

### Faculty Members

- Deborah Cohan, Ph.D., Brandeis University
- Carey Fitzgerald, Ph.D., Central Michigan University
- Summer McWilliams, Ph.D., Florida State University
- Najmah Thomas, Ph.D., Virginia Commonwealth University

### Adjunct Faculty Members

- Dawn Freeman, M.S.W., Boston College
- James Glasson, M.A., University of Rhode Island
- Gregory Hollis, Ph.D., United States International University
- Jan Holt, Ed.D., University of Houston
- Melodie Hunnicutt, M.Ed., University of South Carolina
- Kim King, M.A., California State University, Sacramento
- Carolina Rich Reed, M.S., Vanderbilt University
- Cheryl Shookman, Ph.D., Tulane University
- Millette Tucker, M.Ed., Cleveland State University
- Ellen Williams, Ph.D., University of Tennessee
- Linda Wilson, Ph.D., Boston College

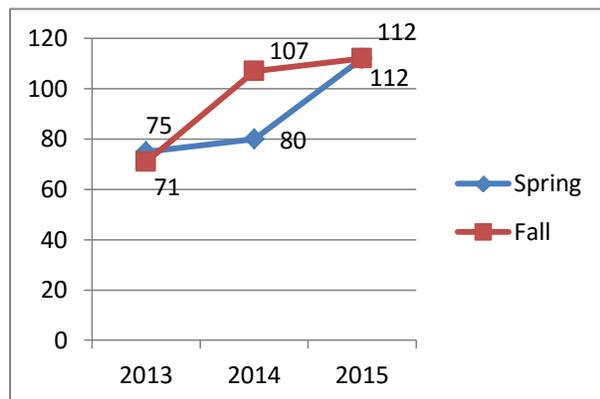
## Enrollment and Degrees Awarded

Enrollment figures for the Human Services Program increased consistently during the evaluation period. The program reported an average of 73 majors during the 2013 academic year, an average of 94 during 2014, and 112 students during 2015. Internal data shows little variation between terms, with the exception of spring and fall 2014, when the program had a noticeable increase of 27 students from the spring to the fall term. Enrollment in the program’s online component, Palmetto College, also increased steadily during the evaluation period. The program began offering an online option in Fall 2013 and Palmetto College students represented over 47% of total enrollment by Fall 2015.

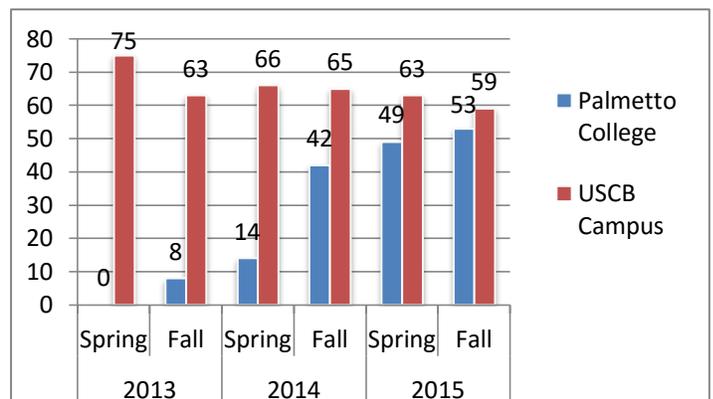
In terms of demographics, internal data shows the program enrolled students of multiple age groups; 18-22 year olds made up approximately 40% of enrollment on average, the 23-25 and 30-39 age groups represented about 25% of total enrollment each, the 26-29 and 40-49 age groups represented about 21% and 18% respectively, and the 50+ age group represented about 11% of total enrollment during the evaluation period. The majority of Human Service program majors were women; men made up approximately 12% of the program enrollment on average during the evaluation period. Internal data regarding ethnicity shows the program maintained a relatively diverse student enrollment; however, enrollment among students reporting Hispanic backgrounds declined between Fall 2013 and Fall 2015, from 5 students to 1 student.

In terms of degrees, the Human Services program has awarded a total of 253 bachelor’s degrees (data includes Spring and Summer 2016). The program ranks third in terms of number of graduates from degree programs at USCB. Tables 1-6 on the following pages provides further illustration of enrollment patterns and degrees awarded for the Human Services program.

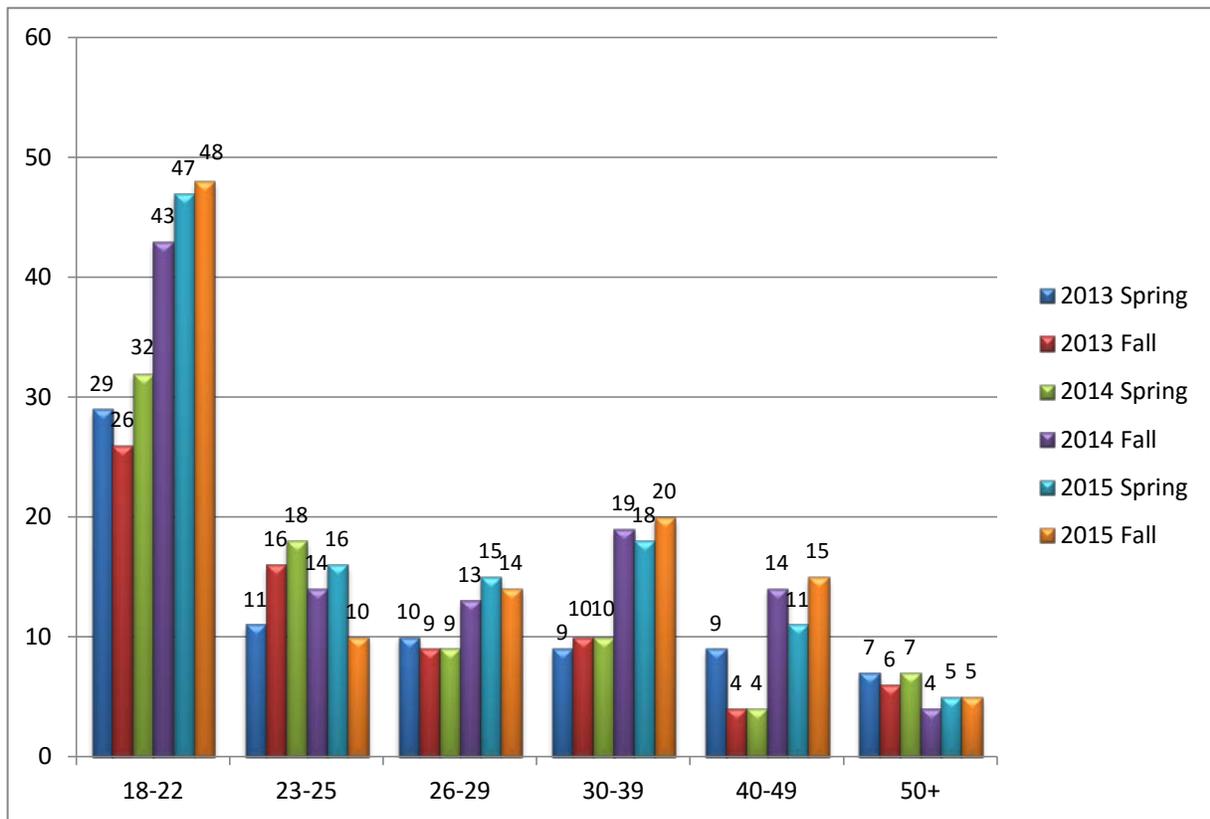
**Table 1 - Enrollment by Term**



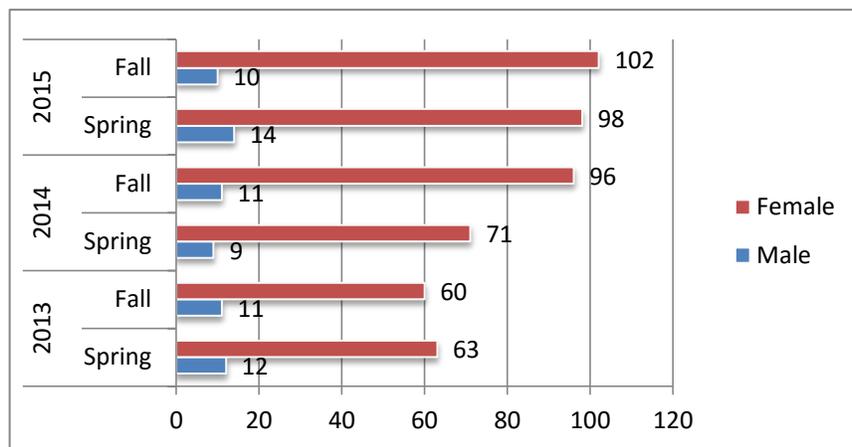
**Table 2 – Palmetto College Enrollment**



**Table 3 – Enrollment by Age**

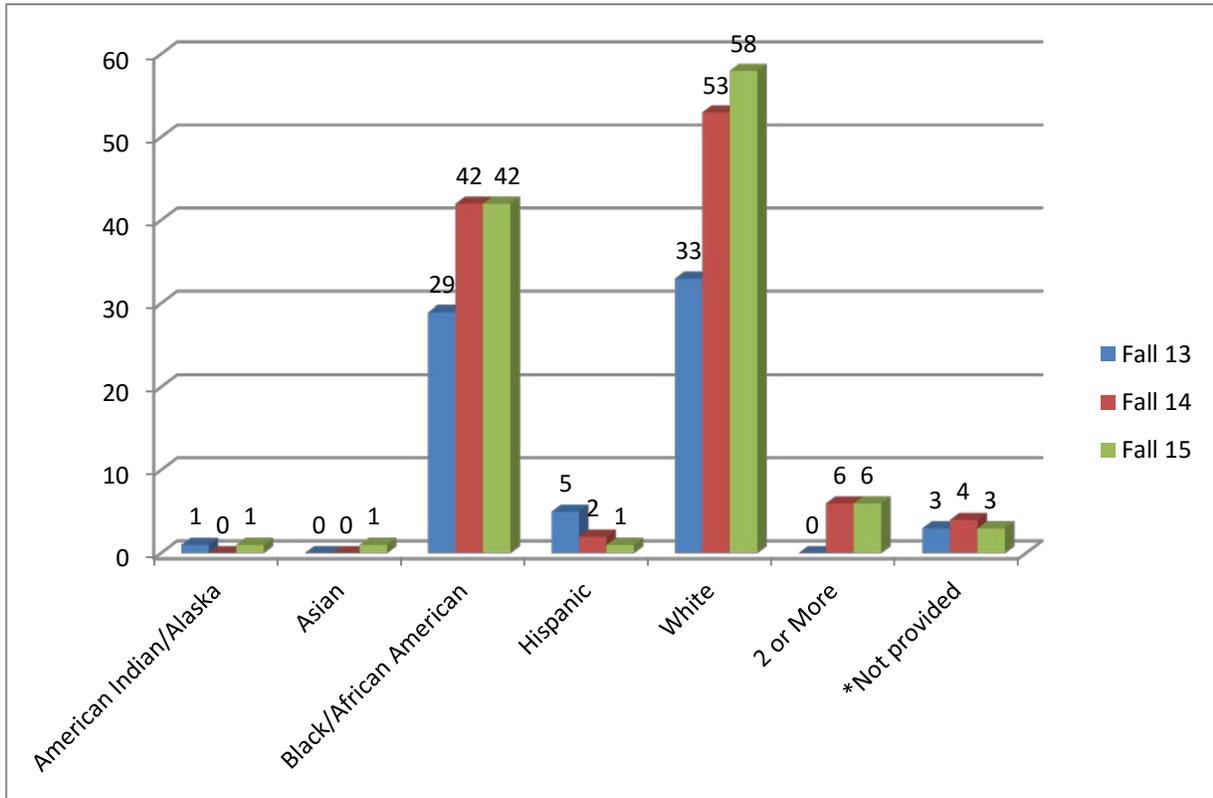


**Table 4 – Enrollment by Gender**

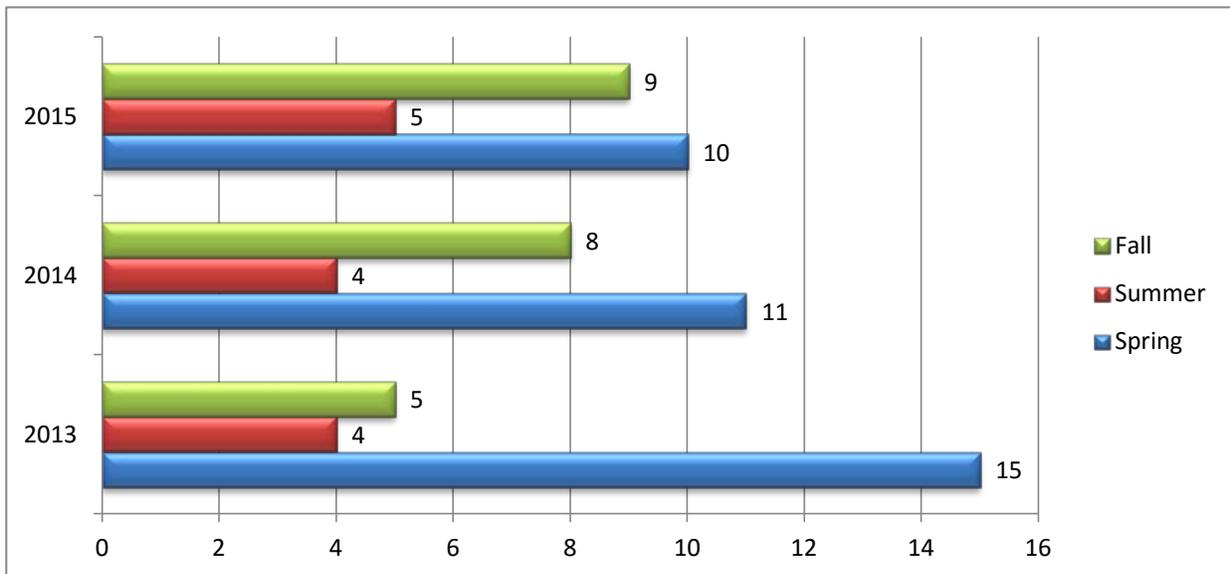


*\*option not currently provided for transgender or 'prefer not to respond'*

**Table 5 – Enrollment by Ethnicity**



**Table 6 – Degrees Awarded by Term**



## EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

### Evaluation Questions

The primary purpose for this evaluation of the HMSV Program is accountability. The findings from this evaluation help demonstrate the extent to which the program is meeting its previously established goals and objectives. The outcomes from this evaluation also allow USCB to demonstrate accountability to various stakeholders in the HMSV program. A secondary purpose for the 2016 evaluation is program enhancement; the recommendations section outlines several actions the program can take to build upon its past and current successes.

The following evaluation questions were investigated during the review period:

1. How well is the HMSV program meeting its stated goals and objectives?
2. How well does the HMSV program prepare its graduates to work in the Human Services sector?
3. How does the HMSV program's online learning experience compare with the program's traditional classroom learning experience?
4. What are the most viable concentrations or minors for the HMSV program?
5. What new course offerings are needed for the HMSV program?
6. What is the potential benefit of the Human Services Board Certified Professional (HS-BCP) credential for HMSV graduates and the local/regional Human Services sector?

### Data Collection Methods

A mix of qualitative and quantitative data was collected in order to answer the evaluation questions. The USCB Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Research provided data related to student enrollment and demographics. Secondary data sources also included HMSV internship evaluation surveys and graduate exit surveys for the evaluation period. In addition to internal records, two surveys were deployed to collect primary data from students and alumni, as well as a sample of organizations in the region that employ graduates of the HMSV program. This data was supplemented with focus groups to further contextualize findings.

Both surveys were deployed using the Survey Monkey platform. A direct email invitation containing the survey link was sent to the target population, and three separate reminders were provided over a four week data collection period. Notice of the student survey was posted on Blackboard for online courses and an announcement was also posted in Human Services program newsletter; Advisory Council members were encouraged to follow-up with their peers and colleagues to increase the response rate among employer agencies. The average response rate for online surveys is 10-15% for an external audience and 30-40% for internal audience (Nulty, 2008). This program evaluation exceeded average response rates for both online surveys.

Survey data was analyzed using descriptive statistics; focus group data was transcribed and analyzed using code sheets. The student survey was sent to 241 alumni and 54 current students for a total of 295 potential respondents. Within the four week survey period, 55 alumni and 49

current students answered the survey for a response rate of 22.82% and 90.74% respectively. The employer survey was sent to a total of 183 potential respondents. These organizations are listed as human service or related organizations in the local United Way community directory. Within the four week survey period, 34 agency representatives answered the survey resulting in an 18.58% response rate. Tables 7-8 provide some descriptive information about the survey respondents.

**Table 7 – Student Survey Respondents**

N=104

Characteristic	%
Alumni	10.58
Seniors	55.77
Online only	57
Currently employed	81.82
Employed in Human Services	44.44
Aware of Human Services Board Certified Professional (HS-BCP) credential	40.7

**Table 8 – Employer Agency Survey Respondents**

N=34

Characteristic	%
Expect hiring to increase in next 3 years	40
Currently employ graduates of study program	20
Aware of HS-BCP	27
Would consider HS-BCP in hiring	50

## STATEMENT OF EVALUATION FINDINGS

### Research Question Results

#### How well is the HMSV program meeting its stated goals and objectives?

Survey Data - Survey respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with how well students achieved the Human Services program learning objectives. There was consensus among students, alumni and employer agencies regarding attainment of learning objectives, with a majority of respondents indicating ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’. Variation does exist when comparing some of the specific objectives. For example, current majors did not appear to be as confident about attaining the ‘systematic analysis of service needs’ (objective 8), ‘administrative aspects of services delivery system’ (objective 4) and ‘cultural competency’ (objective 12) learning outcomes. Similarly, program alumni responses indicate less confidence regarding attainment of the ‘evaluation of program outcomes’ (objective 6) and ‘conditions that promote or limit human functioning’ (objective 11) learning outcomes. Employer agency respondents were less likely to strongly agree with attainment of a few of the learning outcomes

when compared to the student and alumni respondents. Five learning outcomes in particular received lower ‘strongly agree’ responses on average from employers: ‘evaluation of program outcomes’, ‘selection of appropriate strategies, services, or interventions’, ‘systematic analysis of service needs’, ‘demonstrates effective interpersonal skills’, and, ‘knowledge and skills in information management’. Table 9 summarizes the survey responses.

**Table 9 – Achieving Learning Objectives**

Learning Objective	Current Students		Alumni		Employer Agencies	
	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Strongly Agree	% Agree
1. Demonstrate an awareness of their own values, personalities, reaction patterns, interpersonal styles and limitations.	70.89	25.32	70	30	50	50
2. Demonstrate knowledge and skills in applying human services values and attitudes and promote understanding of human services ethics and their application in practice.	64.56	29.11	50	50	50	50
3. Demonstrates knowledge of and ability to apply the assets based approach in individual, group and community settings.	60.76	32.91	60	40	50	50
4. Demonstrate knowledge and skills in the administrative aspects of the services delivery system.	53.85	32.05	60	40	100	-
5. Demonstrates effective interpersonal skills.	68.35	26.58	70	30	33.33	33.33
6. Demonstrates knowledge and skill in the evaluation of program outcomes.	59.49	34.18	40	60	-	100
7. Demonstrates knowledge and skill in the selection of appropriate strategies, services, or interventions.	59.49	34.18	50	40	25	75
8. Demonstrates knowledge and skill in the systematic analysis of service needs	52.56	41.03	70	30	25	75
9. Demonstrates knowledge and skills in information management.	60.76	31.65	50	50	33.33	66.67
10. Demonstrates knowledge of human systems theory, including individual, interpersonal, group, family, organizational, community and society.	62.03	29.11	50	50	50	50
11. Demonstrates knowledge of the conditions that promote or limit human functioning.	60.76	35.44	40	60	75	25
12. Demonstrates cultural competency in planning, delivery and evaluation of services and programs.	58.97	33.33	50	50	75	-

How well does the HMSV program prepare its graduates to work in the Human Services sector?

Internship Evaluation Data - Human Services program majors are required to complete at least three separate internship courses, and 120 clock hours of work in the field. The Program measures its success in preparing human services professionals to serve individuals, families, groups, communities and/or other supported human services organization functions in part by evaluating student and employer internship survey results. Internal data reported on the Institutional Effectiveness and Outcome Assessment (IE-OA) reports show the program met or exceeded goals for internship program outcomes during the evaluation period. Table 10 illustrates the results.

**Table 10 – Internship Evaluation Data**

Year	Student Outcomes				Employer Outcomes	
	Satisfaction Goal	Satisfaction Outcome	Grade Goal (C or better in Internship III)	Grade Outcome	Satisfaction Goal	Satisfaction Outcome
2014-2015	75%	94%	80%	100%	75%	94%
2015-2016	90%	100%	80%	100%	90%	90%

Focus Groups Themes - Two focus groups were conducted as a part of the evaluation process. The first focus group included members of the local human service sector who also serve as advisory council members for the study program. A total of 12 participants were asked to discuss local and national trends in the sector from their perspective; they were then asked to discuss expectations for entry-level human service professionals in their field. Four key themes from this discussion are (1) the need for skills related to the asset or strength based approach; (2) the need for stronger cultural competence skills; (3) improved written communication skills; and, (4) additional attention on soft skills or basic skills such as proper attire, appropriate phone use, interview skills, and maturity level.

How does the HMSV program’s online learning experience compare with the program’s traditional classroom learning experience?

Survey Data - The student survey included three questions about the level of satisfaction with the program’s online learning environment. One question was a broad assessment, another focused on specific elements such as content, technology and instructors. A third question asked students to compare their online experience with their traditional in-class experience. For each question a majority of the respondents indicated they were ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’; 53% of the respondents ranked their online learning experience as ‘above’ or ‘significantly above’ their experience in traditional classroom settings. Charts 1 and 2 illustrate a comparison of satisfaction with course content, instructors and technology for all student respondents and Palmetto College student respondents.

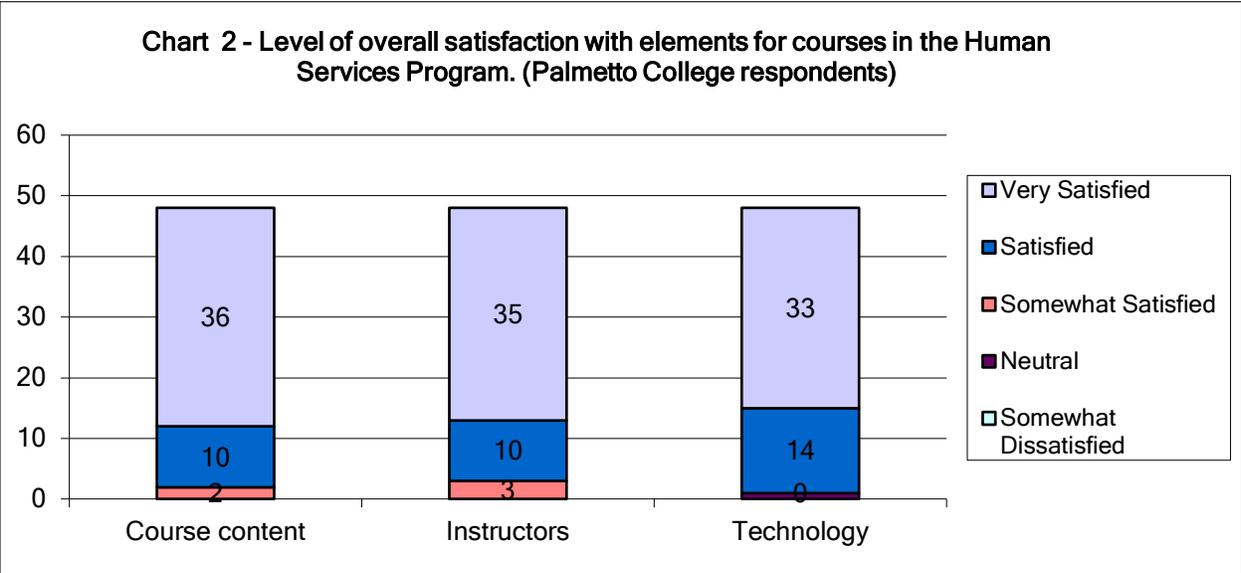
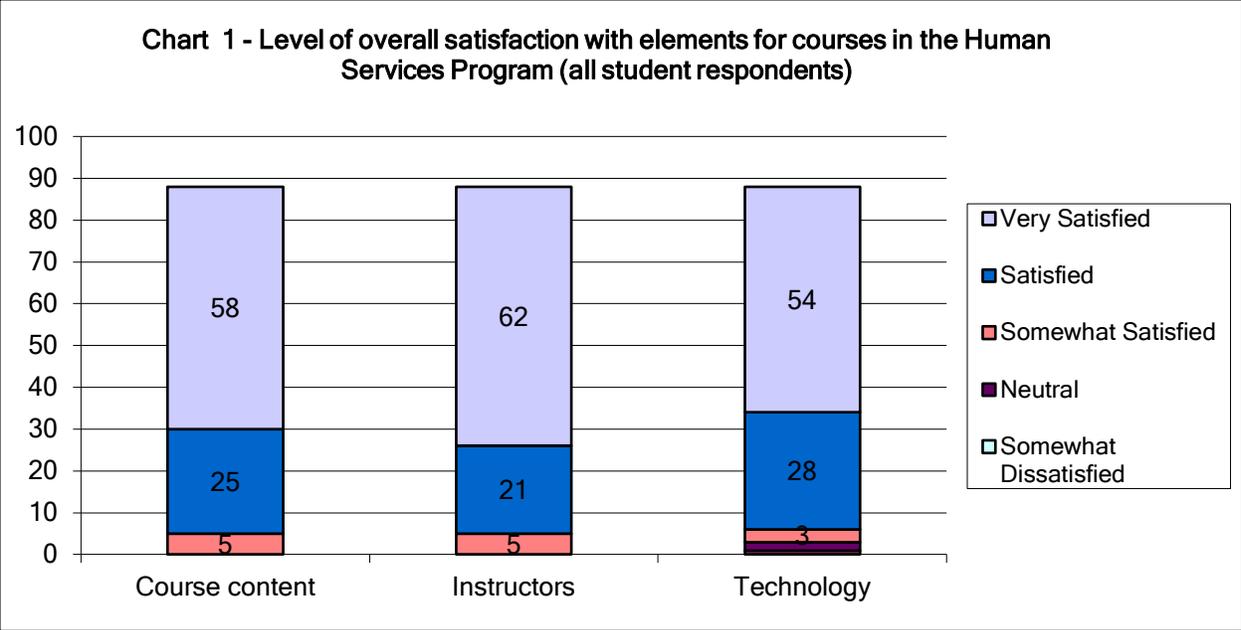
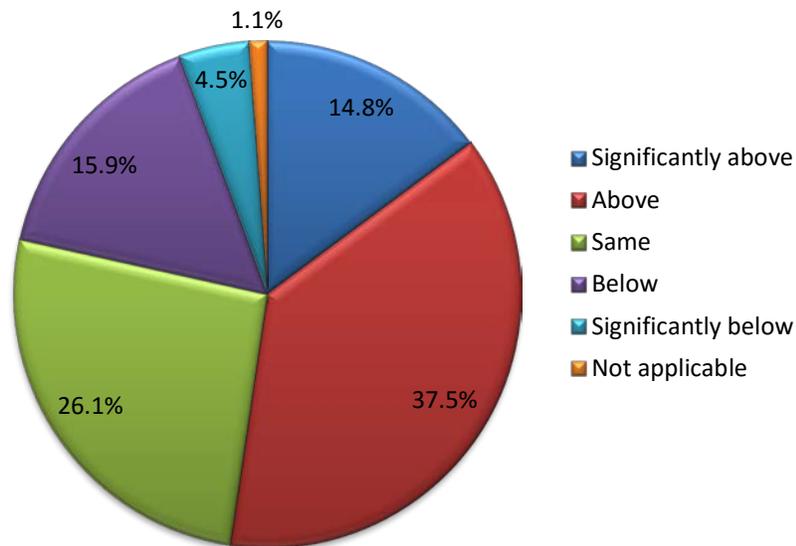


Chart 3 illustrates student perceptions of how the program’s online learning experience compares to the traditional or face-to-face learning experience. Students were more likely to rate their online learning experience as ‘significantly above’ or ‘above’ their traditional learning experience at 14.8% and 37.5% respectively. Approximately 20% of students ranked their online learning experience as “below” or “significantly below” their traditional learning experience at 15.9% and 4.5% respectively.

**Chart 3 - How does the Human Services Program's online learning experience compare to the traditional/face-to-face learning experience?**



Focus Group Data - A second focus group was conducted with current students and program alumni as a part of a graduation reflection and celebration session sponsored by the HSSO. A total of 22 participants, including 4 faculty members, were present for the session. A faculty facilitator asked the group questions about their overall experience in the Human Services program, specific questions about course topics, textbooks and online learning, and concluding questions about the Human Services student organization on campus. In comparing the online and in-class experience, some students did indicate a difference in the level of course difficulty. While a few participants stated they felt more challenged in the classroom versions of core courses, others noted the online course work seemed to be more challenging. This may be explained by differences in instruction style, as well as course level and content. Flexibility and availability of professors was a key theme from the discussion about the online experience.

*“I work weird hours – being able to do it at my leisure was better – I was not as tired as I would have been in a class after work.”*

*“I would not have been able to complete this major without online.”*

*“I thought there would not be a professor behind the screen, but they were – there were actual people behind the videos!”*

*“Really enjoy that I could pick up the phone and call whenever I needed.”*

The textbooks for core courses in human service major were discussed, and participants were asked to provide a rating for the books. The lowest average rating (3.3/4.0) given for the Interventions II course text, and highest average rating (3.69/4.0) for the Leadership and Ethics

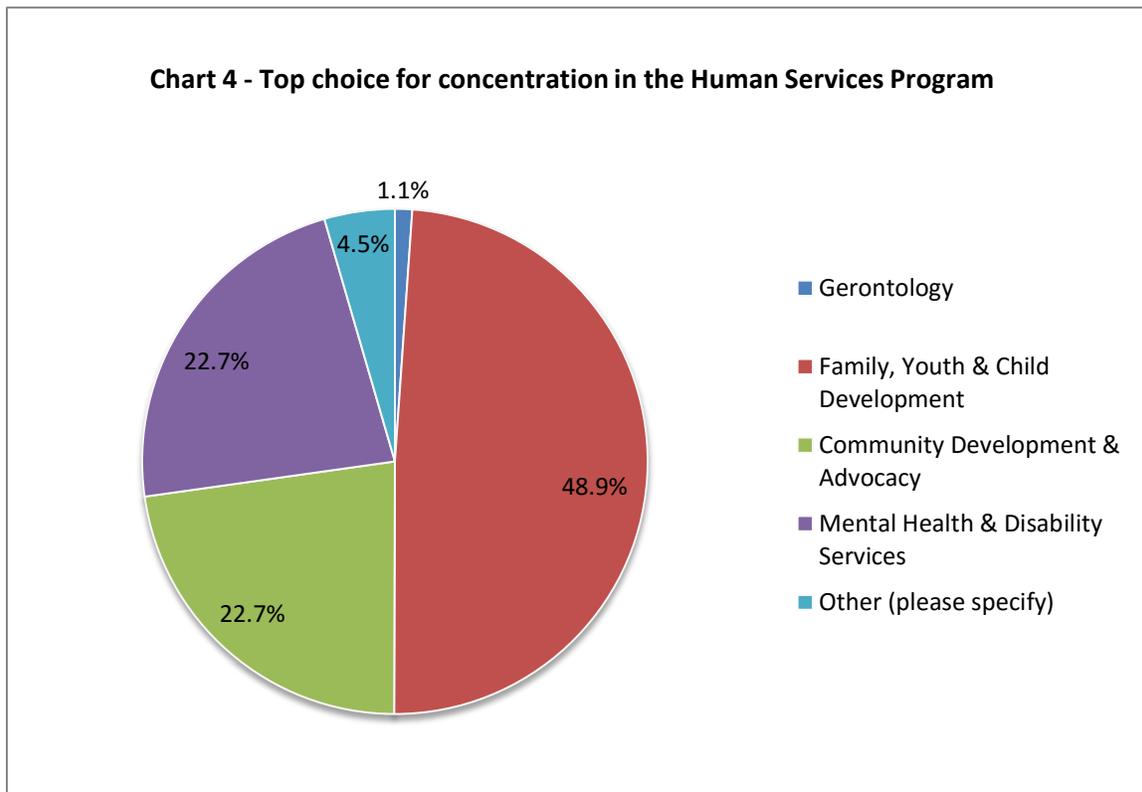
text. Some of the comments suggest satisfaction with a majority of the core program course texts:

*“Very useful tools. I was able to use information from this book in my internships as well as my job as a manager.”*

*“I’m still using this book; when I encounter a situation that I’m stuck I go back and look into this book.”*

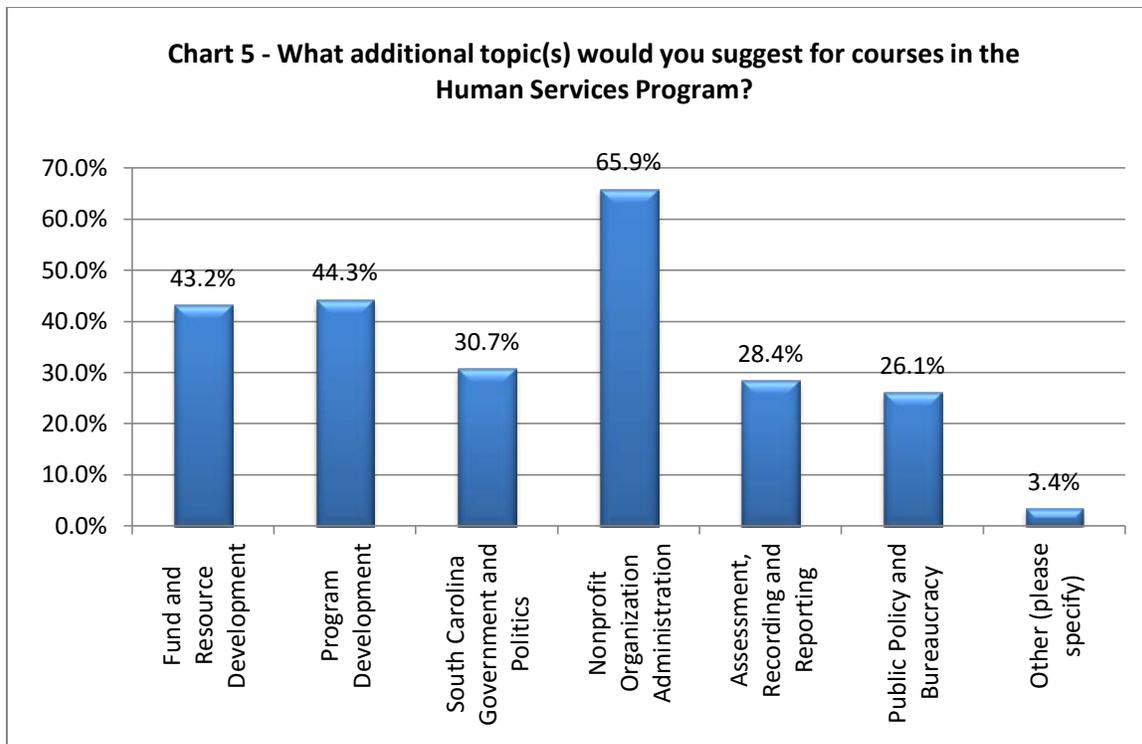
#### What are the most viable concentrations or minors for the HMSV program?

Survey Data - Students were asked to identify their top choices if they could choose a particular concentration in the Human Services Program. Responses indicate Family, Youth and Child Development as the most desired concentration, with 48% of all respondents selecting this option as a concentration. The second most desired options were Community Development & Advocacy and Mental Health & Disability, with 22.7% of respondents selecting each option. Chart 4 illustrates the responses for the program’s current concentration options.



#### *What new course offerings are needed for the HMSV program?*

Survey Data – Students were also asked to select from a list of topics for potential new course topics (or provide an alternate option). Responses to this question suggest the topic Nonprofit Organization Administration is most desired among current and former students, with a total of 65.9% selecting this option on the survey. The other top new course topics selected were Program Development and Fund & Resource Development, with respondents selecting these choices at 44.3% and 43.2% respectively. Chart 5 illustrates the course offering responses.



Focus Group Data - There was strong consensus about the need for new course topics in the area of 'nonprofit organization administration as well as funding and resource development during the student focus group. Participants also indicated a need for additional focus on intervention strategies.

What is the potential benefit of the HS-BCP credential for HMSV graduates and the local/regional Human Services sector?

Survey Data – As noted previously, individuals responding to the employer survey appeared to have a high awareness of the Human Services board Certified Professional Credential (HS-BCP). In terms of potential benefit, 50% of the respondents to the employer survey indicated ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ with the statement ‘my organization would consider an individual with the HS-BCP credential as a more qualified candidate for Human Services.’ Students responding to the survey indicated some awareness of the HS-BCP (40.7% were ‘aware’ or ‘somewhat aware’) and felt employers would deem a candidate more qualified if they had this credential (67.5% ‘strongly agree’ or agree’).

Focus Group Data - There appeared to be consensus around the idea of staying connected to the program via its student association. Participants also placed value on maintaining some level of communication as an alumni, particularly regarding professional development opportunities such as the HS-BCP.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### Learning Outcomes Attained

Overall, the program is meeting its stated goals and objectives for student learning outcomes. Responses on both the student and employer surveys support this finding. It is important to note some of the variation between student responses to specific learning outcomes (objectives 4, 8, and 12) is likely due to levels of progression in the program. Students reporting as freshmen and sophomores were more likely to express lower confidence with specific learning objectives than juniors and seniors, which is to be expected. Given that 45% of current student respondents reported freshman, sophomore, or junior status, it is likely they were still enrolled in major coursework and would therefore be less likely to report strong agreement with attainment of learning objectives. However, alumni responses to some of the learning objective questions indicate a potential area for improvement. The professional development and alumni engagement section below discusses this matter in greater detail.

### Strong Preparation for Work in the Human Services Sector

The internship evaluation data suggest graduates of the Human Services program at USCB are well-prepared for work in the sector. The student satisfaction and grade outcomes for the 2015-2016 period were met at 100% and employer satisfaction goals for this period were met at 90%. Preparation might also be evaluated based on attainment of learning objectives. Again, alumni responses to some of the learning objective questions indicate a potential area for improvement.

### High Satisfaction with Online Learning Experience

The internship evaluation data, as well as responses to survey questions, and focus group themes suggest a high level of satisfaction with the online learning experience. Given the structure of the Human Services program's degree completion option, it is possible to compare satisfaction of on-campus students with that of online-only (Palmetto College) students. Responses between survey respondents who identified as current or former Palmetto College students were more likely to be 'very satisfied' with the course content, instructors and technology when compared to overall survey respondents (75% and 65.91% for course content; 73% and 70.45% for instruction; 69% and 61.36% for technology).

### Viable Program Concentrations & New Course Topics

The program currently maintains a listing of four possible program concentrations. However, these options have not been widely advertised or utilized in the past. Given the high response rate of current students (more than 90%) it is reasonable to suggest the responses regarding program concentrations and new course topics indicated a high potential for student selection of the Family, Youth & Child Development concentration. Likewise, students are likely to support an additional course in Nonprofit Management as well as an added Interventions Strategy course.

## Potential Benefit of the HS-BCP

Representatives of agencies responding to the employer survey indicated a moderate level of awareness regarding the HS-BCP, and some willingness to consider this credential in hiring for entry-level human service professionals. Similarly, student responses to the survey in the focus group suggest a strong level of interest in this credential. It is also possible that the credentialing process will reinforce some areas of need identified by employers such as cultural competence and soft skills.

## **Issues affecting Evaluation Findings**

A few items should be noted regarding the findings contained in this report. In terms of planning to actual, the Evaluation Plan initially included a review of Servant Leadership in the Human Services Program. However, due to resource limitations, this question will be investigated during the 2016-2018 program evaluation. Regarding the survey responses, it is important to note survey response from local agencies that currently employ graduates from USCB's Human Services program made up a small percentage of overall employer respondents. Also, operationalization of learning outcomes may vary across respondents in the student and employer survey. Survey results were not tested for statistical significance and as such, the findings here in apply only to the sample population.

Self-selection bias may further limit the evaluation, particularly with regard to findings related to data collected from the employer surveys, and the student and employer focus groups. A final limitation is related to the relative position of the authors within the program included in this research. As a faculty member within the study program, the authors have a level of expertise and access to institutional information which provides important context for the study; however, this proximity necessarily raises concerns about objectivity. These limitations are comparable to those encountered in similar research efforts.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on analysis of the findings and subsequent discussions, the following recommendations offer potential ways to further enhance the Human Services program at USCB:

### *Concentrations and New Courses*

As noted previously, the program has a list of four possible concentrations for the Human Services degree. The program should consider focusing on at least one of the concentrations (Family, Youth & Child Development) in the future, provided that additional elective course options are available. In terms of new courses, the survey responses to learning objectives, as

well as data from the focus groups suggest a need to provide additional content in the existing Human Services Interventions courses. A recommendation is to separate and expand the content in the current Human Services Interventions I course, which would create a total of three full interventions courses. This should be accompanied with a moderate reduction in the number of required sociology and psychology courses required for degree completion. The program should also consider the addition of a nonprofit management and fund development course, given the high level of interest in this particular topic.

#### *Alumni Engagement and Professional Development*

The program should consider sharpening its focus on alumni engagement. This can be accomplished through increased professional development opportunities for recent graduates, such as support for conference attendance. Another potential strategy to increase alumni engagement is to target recent graduates for HSSO membership. The program might also consider a pilot to support alumni attainment of the HS-BCP credential.

#### *Student Recruitment and Retention*

Additional information is needed regarding the sharp reduction in the percentage of Human Services program majors who indicate Hispanic ethnicity or background. However, considering the available enrollment data, it is likely that increasing outreach in this area is needed. A possible strategy could be to combine alumni engagement activities with a specific focus on reaching the Hispanic population.

#### *Administrative Data Collection*

The Program Evaluation Taskforce intends to implement an ongoing program evaluation process for the Human Services program. As such, it is important to ensure the consistent availability of data in electronic form for all surveys and assessments. This should also include electronic collection and aggregation of data from internship sites and agencies employing USCB HMSV graduates. Based on a review of the student focus group data, there appears to be value in capturing recent program graduate perspectives immediately upon program completion. This approach may also help to establish a potential network of support for entry-level professionals, provide a pool of potential mentors for program majors, and have a positive impact on general alumni relations in the future. Finally, the Office of Research and Institutional Effectiveness might consider the addition of a transgender option for gender data question during demographic data collection.

## References

USCB Human Services Program Evaluation Plan, December 2015

USCB Human Services Program Institutional Effectiveness Outcomes Assessment (IEOA) Reports, (2012-2015)

USCB Bachelor of Human Services Degree, retrieved from [http://www.uscb.edu/academics/academic\\_departments/social\\_sciences/human\\_services/index.html](http://www.uscb.edu/academics/academic_departments/social_sciences/human_services/index.html) on August 1, 2016.