

Professional Advocacy Agent: Dr. Stacey Litam

by Kenya Bledsoe
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I welcomed the opportunity to interview Stacey Diane A. Litam, PhD, NCC, LPC, who is making her mark within the counseling profession through her advocacy at the state and national levels. Dr. Litam completed her PhD in Counselor Education and Supervision at Kent State University and is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at Cleveland State University. Dr. Litam believes, “We can’t expect change in our world if we don’t take the lead.” Dr. Litam was inspired to get involved in advocacy by her mentor, Dr. Victoria Kress. According to Dr. Litam, counselors possess a unique opportunity to differentiate from other mental health professionals by advocating for who we are, our scope of practice, and issues such as licensure portability.

Dr. Litam’s roots in advocacy began with her involvement in the Ohio Counseling Association (OCA). In 2016, Dr. Litam served as the event task chairperson for the OCA Legislative Advocacy Day, where counselor educators, counseling students, and practitioners received training on legislative advocacy and met with legislators to promote counselor identity and to advocate for relevant topics. Drs. Litam and Kress also created a Legislative Advocacy Day. Under Dr. Litam’s leadership, event attendance increased 300% and over \$2000 in revenue was generated for the state branch.

The following year, Dr. Litam served on the ACA governing council as the elected student representative. In July 2017, Dr. she attended ACA’s Institute Leadership Training (ILT) Day on the Hill. She used this opportunity to meet with Ohio legislators and senators to talk about the importance of funding current mental health counseling initiatives such as the vitality of school counselor presence in PK-12 schools. This was an amazing experience that provided Dr. Litam with another opportunity to advocate on behalf of counseling.

When asked about the most urgent issues facing the counseling profession, Dr. Litam identified establishing a strong professional counselor identity and licensure portability. As a member of the ACA Governing Council, Dr. Litam can attest to our profession’s commitment toward navigating these important issues. Advocacy has highlighted that change does not happen overnight; in fact, change takes time. Change is multi-systemic so counselors must advocate on state and national



Dr. Stacey Diane A. Litam
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and national levels to address issues from all sides. Dr. Litam believes it important for counselors and counselor educators to possess a shared vision of our profession and to be willing to take the necessary steps to pursue change. She often reminds herself that baby steps are still steps.

Dr. Litam is driven to leave the world better than how she found it, and advocacy provides one platform to do just that. She is passionate about creating a space where counselors are recognized for all of our contributions to the helping profession. She believes that counselors and counselor educators in positions of leadership are uniquely positioned to serve as role models for counseling students. Dr. Litam conveyed that it is essential to continue highlighting emerging issues while simultaneously strengthening our professional counselor identity.

View Dr. Litam's interview, along with other professional advocacy agents, at CSI's [Professional Advocacy Agent page](#).

Call for Student Reflections

2018 Fall Exemplar

Part of CSI's mission is to promote leadership, and we often see this when leadership is mentored.

How does CSI promote mentoring that fosters leadership?

What is your personal story of how CSI has supported your leadership development with the help of a mentor?

What is the future of mentoring programs in CSI?

Graduate students are invited to submit a 1000-word reflection addressing one or more of these points by September 1, 2018, to: Dr. Donna Gibson, *Exemplar* Editor, exemplar@csi-net.org