



New Mexico Highlands University Counseling Department Annual Fall Report on Academic Year 2023- 2024

New Mexico Highlands University's Counseling Department Annual Report is completed yearly to ensure that the program is frequently evaluated, enhanced, and maintained. CACREP, the NMHU Counseling Program accrediting body, section 4, requires that accrediting programs evaluate and disseminate information related to evaluation to all its constituents. This evaluation process consists of institutional data, data from current and former students, supervisors and employers, and data that documents students' professional dispositions and growth. Additionally, the report outlines some of the program modifications which followed the evaluation of all graduate programs.

The annual report utilizes research and assessments to evaluate the skills, theories, and comprehensive counseling knowledge that the students gain to embody in their practice as counselors. This report contains data which includes number and demographics of current students, number of graduates during the past academic year, pass rates on licensure/credential exams, program completion rates, and job placement rates.

This report includes information from institutional and programmatic data which is part of the counseling program's comprehensive evaluation plan. Data for this report has been compiled from different sources over the academic year. Information in this report will include:

- Overview
- Demographics and Vital Statistics
- Current Student Annual Survey
- Recent Graduate Survey
- Counseling Alumni Survey
- Employer Survey
- National & State Data
- Program Modifications

The counseling department utilizes all the data gathered through this report to improve the counseling program as suggested by feedback and research.

Program Overview

The main campus of New Mexico Highlands University (NMHU) is in Las Vegas, NM. In addition to the main campus, there are four centers. The four centers are located in Farmington, NM, Santa Fe, NM, Albuquerque, NM, and Rio Rancho, NM. The Rio Rancho center serves

most of the students in the counseling program. The counseling program at New Mexico Highlands University offers several concentrations for the Master of Arts Counseling degrees. The program offers three concentrations that require 60 credit hours: clinical mental health counseling, clinical rehabilitation counseling, and school counseling. The counseling program utilizes CACREP and state licensing guidelines as the foundation of the program. The counseling program also offers certifications for those who already possess a master's in counseling. Offered certifications include Professional Counseling Certificate (LMHC), Rehabilitation Counseling Certificate (CRC, PED K-12) and a School Counseling Certificate Program (PED K-12). The counseling department is primarily a distance program with most courses offered either asynchronously or synchronously through zoom. A few on ground, in person classes are offered in the main campus in Las Vegas, NM, as a primary source to meet the needs of our international students.

Program Objectives

“The Highlands’ Counselor Education Program is designed to prepare students to be effective, proactive professionals who can develop, organize, and implement outstanding and comprehensive counseling services and programs. The program prepares students who:

1. demonstrate the ethical practice of counseling aligned with a professional counseling orientation in accordance with the standards and credentials of the counseling profession;
2. understand multicultural and pluralistic characteristics within and among diverse groups nationally and internationally while developing strategies for identifying and eliminating barriers, prejudices, and processes of intentional and unintentional oppression and discrimination;
3. demonstrate knowledge of factors associated with human growth and development across the lifespan;
4. understand career development theories and strategies for personal growth and vocational opportunities in a global economy;
5. utilize theoretical foundations of individual counseling, and skills in essential interviewing, counseling, and case conceptualization to promote client understanding of and access to a variety of community-based resources;
6. utilize theoretical foundations of group counseling and group work to plan ethical and culturally relevant strategies for designing and facilitating groups;
7. utilize methods of effective assessment relevant to academic, educational, career, personal, and social development;
8. understand the importance of research in advancing the counseling profession, including how to critique research to inform counseling practice; and,
9. exhibit a capacity for self-reflection and an openness to feedback to
10. evaluate and improve personal and organizational practices.”

Program Mission and Vision Statements

Vision: “To be a premier counselor education program that prepares counselors as agents of social change who transform the lives of individuals and communities they serve.”

Mission: “The mission of the Highlands’ Counselor Education Program is to train entry-level counselors who are prepared for positions in the community service agencies as mental health counselors, in school systems as school counselors, and in rehabilitation settings as rehabilitation counselors. We are committed to continuous improvement of quality and excellence that fosters critical reflection, integrates theory and practice, and promotes advocacy through a culturally responsive and inclusive approach.”

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Counseling Program Accreditation, Demographic, Academic, and Outcome Measures Summary

Counseling Program Accreditation

The NMHU Counseling Program is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), a specialized accrediting body recognized by the Council of Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). CACREP has granted accreditation to the following programs in the Department of Counseling at New Mexico Highland University through March 31, 2029: Clinical Mental Health Counseling (MA), 60 hours; School Counseling (MA), 60 hours; Rehabilitation Counseling (MA), 48 hours; and Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling (MA), 60 hours.

Counseling Program Enrollment and Demographic Data

When comparing academic years, new student enrollment for the 2023- 2024 academic year of 92 students has steadily increased when compared to the 2022- 2023 academic year of 75 students. In the 2023- 2024 academic year, the clinical mental health counseling concentration had an increase in enrollment from 54 students in 2022-2023, to 62 in 2023-2024. Other concentrations also had an increase in new enrollment: Clin Rehab (+ 3 students), Rehab (+ 1 student). The school concentration remained the same. The certificate programs had an increase in enrollment from 6 students in 2022-2023 to 11 students in 2023-2024. Overall, there was an increase in total number of student enrollment in 2023-2024, of 17 students.

Applications Counseling Department 2023- 2024

FA 23- SU 24	Applicants	Accepted	Provisionally Accepted	Denied	Withdrew Application	VISA Issues- did not start	Accepted and Started Program
CMHC	94	48	29	3	14	15	62
Clin Rehab	8	1	5		2	2	4
Rehab	7	1	4	2		2	3
School	22	6	6		4	6	12
Certificate	11						11
Total	142		44	5	20	25	92

Current Student Enrollment and Demographics-Fall 2024

Fall 2024 Enrollment

The current student enrollment in the NMHU Counseling Program for the Fall 24 semester is 198 students across all concentrations and certificate students- CMHC (145), CIRC (8), RC (3), SC (21), and Certificates (19). Fall 24 enrollment had an increase compared to Fall 2023 enrollment- CMHC (129), CIRC (8), RC (18), SC (40), and Certificates (11). This comparison of student numbers between the two fall semesters shows there was an overall increase in CHC students and Certificate students, and decreases in SC, RC, while CIRC remained the same. The mean age of students enrolled in the Fall 24 semester is 39. This includes 170 students who identified as female and 28 who identified as male. The reported ethnicity/race of current students is as follows: African American (2), American Indian (18), Asian (1), Hispanic (72), Non-Resident Alien (5), Two or More (4), Unknown (64), White (30).

Clinical Mental Health Counseling Total: 145 students	Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling Total: 9 students	Rehabilitation Counseling Total: 3 students	School Counseling Total: 22 students
Female: 122 (84.1%) Male: 23 (15.8%)	Female: 8 (88.8%) Male: 1 (11.1%)	Female: 2 (66.6%) Male: 1 (33.3%)	Female: 20 (91%) Male: 2 (9%)
Ethnicity: American Indian: 9 (6.2%) Hispanic: 49 (33.8%) White: 24 (16.5%) Non-Resident Alien: 3 (2%) Asian: (1%) Hawaiian: 0 Unknown: 56 (38.9%) Two or More: 3 (2%) African American: 0	Ethnicity: American Indian: 2 (22.2%) Hispanic: 3 (33.3%) White: 3 (33.3%) Non-Resident Alien: 0 Asian: 0 Hawaiian: 0 Unknown: 0 Two or More: 0 African American: 1 (11.1%)	Ethnicity: American Indian: 0 Hispanic: 3 (100%) White: 0 Non-Resident Alien: 0 Asian: 0 Hawaiian: 0 Unknown: 0 Two or More: 0 African American: 0	Ethnicity: American Indian: 5 (23%) Hispanic: 11 (50%) White: 2 (9%) Non-Resident Alien: 3 (14%) Asian: 0 Hawaiian: 0 Unknown: 0 Two or More: 1 (5%) African American: 0

Certificate Program Enrollment and Demographics-Fall 2024
(Total Enrollment-8 Students)

Professional Counseling Total: 3	School Counseling Total: 4	Rehab Counseling Total: 1
Female: 3 (100%)	Female: 3 (75%) Male: 1 (25%)	Female: 1 (100%)
Ethnicity: American Indian: 1(33.3 %) Hispanic: 1 (33.3%) African American: 1 (33.3%)	Ethnicity: Hispanic: 2 (50%) White: 1 (25%) African American: 1 (25%)	Ethnicity: American Indian: 1 (100%)

Current Student Enrollment and Demographics-Comparing Fall 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024

Demographics	2021	2022	2023	2024
Female	174 (87%)	181(88%)	167 (85%)	170 (86%)
Male	26 (13%)	25 (12%)	29 (15%)	28 (14%)
American Indian or Native Alaskan	13%	12%	13%	9%
Asian	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
African American	3%	1%	1.5%	1%
Hawaiian Native or Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	0%	0%
Hispanic	37%	36%	40%	37%
Two or More –	4%	3%	1%	2%
Unknown/Other	5%	9%	13%	33%
White	36%	37%	27%	15%
International	1%	1%	3.5%	3%

Student Learning Outcomes, and CACREP Vital Statistics

The number of graduates in the academic year 2023- 2024increased for clinical mental health students, but decreased across clinical rehabilitation, rehabilitation counseling and school counseling concentrations. However, completion of program rates have remained steady for most of the concentrations, except rehabilitation counseling. Pass rates of clinical licensure exam and certifications have increased since prior years for most concentrations, except rehabilitation counseling. Job placement rates have remained steady across all four concentrations. The use of evaluations and assessments provide information on student learning outcomes and CACREP vital statistics key performance indicators (KPIs). Evaluations provided by practicum and internship site supervisors indicate that students from all four counseling concentrations are meeting or exceeding dispositional expectations.

Clinical Mental Health 60 hours

Year	Fall Enrollment	# Of Graduates	Completion Rate	Pass Rate (NCE)	Job Placement Rate
2020-2021	110	27	65%	69%	78%
2021-2022	121	20	80%	80%	90%
2022-2023	129	20	60%	79%	91%
2023-2024	145	22	78%	86%	90%

Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling 60 hours

Year	Fall Enrollment	# Of Graduates	Completion Rate	Pass Rate (CRC/NCE)	Job Placement Rate
2020-2021	10	4	80%	79%	85%
2021-2022	12	0	80%	80%	91%
2022- 2023	8	5	80%	80%	80%
2023- 2024	8	2	50%	80%	85%

Rehabilitation Counseling 48 hours

Year	Fall Enrollment	# Of Graduates	Completion Rate	Pass Rate (CRC)	Job Placement Rate
2020-2021	17	5	78%	75%	85%
2021-2022	14	5	75%	85%	90%
2022- 2023	18	14	50%	80%	90%
2023- 2024	3	2	73%	60%	90%

School Counseling 60 hours

Year	Fall Enrollment	# Of Graduates	Completion Rate	Pass Rate (PRAXIS)	Job Placement Rate
2020-2021	54	9	76%	85%	90%
2021-2022	55	7	75%	87%	95%
2022- 2023	40	22	64%	86%	95%
2023- 2024	21	8	83%	90%	95%

Site Supervisor Evaluations of Practicum/Internship Students' Counselor Dispositions

The following chart displays the ratings site supervisors gave their practicum students at the end of their placements during the 2023- 2024 academic year. The following scale was used:

1-Does Not Meet Expectations, 2-Approaching Expectations, 3- Meets Expectations, 4-Exceeds Expectations

Annual Fall Surveys

Each fall semester, surveys are sent to current students, recent graduates, alumni, and employers. These surveys provide the counseling program valuable insights that are used to inform programmatic changes, as well as reinforce current practices. The results of these surveys are part of regular discussions during faculty meetings regarding program and curriculum development and needs. The Student Survey responses provide feedback on key elements of the counseling curriculum (ex. class modalities and course content, offerings, and scheduling.) The Graduate Survey responses provide information on graduate employment preparation, strengths/needs of curriculum and instruction, and advisement. The Alumni Survey results provide similar content as the Recent Graduate Survey, but from the seasoned perspective of those practicing in the field for a longer period. The Employer Survey gives employers an opportunity to share their perspectives on the level of preparedness of graduates entering the profession. The Employer Survey questions focus on curriculum content areas and counselor dispositions.

Current Student Survey

Data for the annual report on current students was retrieved from various sources, including survey responses. The Current Student Counseling Program Survey for Fall 2024 received a 46% response rate with 91 out of 198 currently enrolled students having responded. Below are some of the questions/responses.

Of the 91 current students who responded to the survey, most respondents identified as female-80%, 12% -male, 1.1% -genderqueer, 1.1% -transgender female, 2.2% -non-binary, 1.1% -ungendered, and 2.2% -preferred not to answer.

Most students stated their ethnicity as White or Caucasian (46%), others responded their ethnicity as Hispanic or Latino (20.2%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (9%), Mixed ethnicity (0%), Black or African American (3.3%), or preferred not to say (7.9%).

Most students, 48.3%, reported they began the counseling program in 2024, 23% began in 2023, 14.2% in 2022, 11% in 2021, 1.1% in 2020, 1.1% in 2018, and 1.1% in 2015.

Most students, 34.8%, reported their home site in Rio Rancho, followed by Las Vegas (includes distant students) at 26.9%, 14.6% in Santa Fe, 11.2% in Albuquerque, 8.9% in Farmington and 3.3% did not know.

Of those students who responded to the survey, they reported the following counseling concentrations: Clinical mental health 78%, Clinical rehab counseling 5.4%, school counseling 11%, Clinical mental health and school 4.4%.

Current Advisor- Geri Glover 28%, Sulema Perales 19.1%, Heather Smith 13.4%, Lori Miller 10.1%, Anna Koch 10.1%, Chia Vang 7.8%, Doug Main 4.4%, Cindy Black 1.1%, and did not know 5.6%.

Did you find your advisor to be easily accessible? No-11% Yes-89%

Has a professor or instructor discussed the importance of professional development and/or provided information on professional development opportunities in your classes?

-Yes 59.5%

-No 40.4%

Selected Current Student Survey Questions/Reponses			Total Students 91
	Answer Options	Percent	# of Students
How long will it take you to complete your counseling degree?	2 years	12	11
	2.5 years	19.7	18
	3 years	31.8	29
	3.5 years	9.8	9
	4 years	6.5	6
	4.5 years	1.1	1
	5 years or more	4.4	4
	unsure	14.2	13
Were you able to get into the classes you needed for Fall semester 2024?	No	5.4	5
	Yes	94.5	86
If classes were not available to you, what was the reason. (choose all that apply)	Class was full.	6.7	6
	Day option didn't work.	3.2	2
	Not offered.	4.4	4
	Time didn't work- too early.	3.2	2
	Time didn't work- too late.	3.2	2
	Not applicable	74.1	66
On average, how many classes do you take a semester.	1	5.4	5
	2	27.4	25
	3	61.5	56
	4	5.4	5
Do you take summer classes?	Every summer.	76.4	68
	Never	2.2	2
	Occasionally	21.3	19
Do you prefer to take semesters with a combination of 16 and 8-week courses?	No	19	21.3
	Unsure	30	33.7

	Yes	40	44.9
Would you take a weekend intensive course? 4 Saturdays (6 hours) plus some asynchronous class activities?	Maybe	29.2	26
	No	25.8	23
	Yes	44.9	40
How many classes do you plan to take while enrolled in 3 credit (20 hours/week) internship?	0	14.2	13
	1	37.3	34
	2	43.9	40
	>2	4.4	4
Do you plan to work in addition to your internship?	Maybe	15.3	14
	No	15.3	14
	Yes	69.2	63
Have you completed a program of study?	I have not contacted my advisor to create one.	5.4	5
	No	13.1	12
	Yes	81.3	74
Do you follow your program of study?	No	3.3	3
	Yes, always.	28.5	26
	Yes, with adjustments, depending on class availability.	68.1	62
Do you receive financial support?	No	47.1	42
	Yes	52.8	47
Would you apply for financial support?	No	16.4	15
	Yes	83.5	76
Do you know how to look for financial support?	No	24.7	22
	Yes	75.2	67
How many hours a week do you work?	Full-time	38.4	35
	Part time	38.4	35
	>40 hours	12	11
	I don't work	11	10
Are you currently a member of a professional organization?	No	69.6	62
	Yes	30.3	27
Has a professor/instructor discussed the importance of professional development and/or shared professional development opportunities in a course you have taken?	Yes	59.5	53
	No	40.4	36

Are you currently a member of any of the following professional counseling organizations? ACA, ASCA, AMHCA, Association of Play Therapy, NBCC, NMCA, NCRE	Yes	30.3	27
	No	69.6	62
How many professional development opportunities have you participated in this past year (Fall 2023- Fall 2024) (i.e. trainings, summits, seminars, presentations, certifications)?	0	56.1	50
	1-3	30.3	27
	4-6	7.8	7
	7 or more	5.6	5
Do you feel your classes adequately reflect current knowledge and projected needs concerning counseling practice in diverse, multicultural, and global society with currently and historically marginalized populations?	Yes	84	76
	No	16	15
Do you think your classes adequately address the topic of self-care for counselors and counselors-in-training?	Yes	70	64
	No	30	27
What are your future plans? (select all that apply)			
	Apply to doctoral program.	10	22
	Certifications	15	32
	Licensure	38	83
	Work in the field of your counseling concentration.	35	75
	Other	2	4

Recent Graduate Survey

The survey was sent to Fall 2023- Summer 2024 Counseling program graduates. The scale for this survey is as follows: (1-poor, 2-weak, 3-good, 4-very good, 5- excellent)

	Min	Max	Mean	SD	var	n
How helpful was your academic advisor?	2	5	4.13	0.90	0.81	21
Preparation you received for your position or intended position within your field.	1	5	3.89	1.12	1.26	21
Preparation you received for your comprehensive exam (CPCE or CRCE)	1	5	3.66	1.19	1.43	21
The coverage of counseling theories	1	5	3.90	1.22	1.49	21
The clarity of course objectives	2	5	4.47	0.98	0.96	21
The comprehensiveness of courses	1	5	3.95	1.11	1.24	21

The integration of multicultural perspectives throughout the curriculum	1	5	4.19	1.28	1.66	21
Learned effective strategies for application in the field	1	5	3.61	1.49	2.24	21
Ease of communication with the main campus office (ex. financial aid, registrar's office)	1	5	4.14	1.01	1.02	21

Alumni Survey

Alumni provide a valuable resource for counseling program development by sharing their perspectives on the quality of the education they received and how well it prepared them to enter their chosen profession.

Of the 20 alumni respondents, 85% reported obtaining their first job within their field of study in 0-4 months followed by 10% in more than 12 months, and 5% indicated other.

Alumni Survey Responses

Alumni were asked to use the following scale to rate their level of satisfaction regarding elements of the counseling program and coursework: 1-very poor, 2-poor, 3-adequate, 4-good, 5-excellent. The following table summarizes the scores on the Alumni Survey.

	Min	Max	Mean	SD	var	n
Professionalism (i.e Ethics, Laws, Practice Standards)	2	5	4.55	0.75	0.57	20
Research Foundations	3	5	4.35	0.67	0.45	20
Counseling Individuals	3	5	4.6	0.59	0.35	20
Counseling Groups	4	5	4.6	0.50	0.25	20
Knowledge of Vocation and Career Development	3	5	4.35	0.67	0.45	20
Planning, Case Conceptualization and Case Management	3	5	4.3	0.65	0.43	20
Job Development, Placement, and Retention (Rehab and Clin Rehab only)	1	5	4.15	1.13	1.29	20
History, Philosophy and Structure of Counseling	3	6	5.1	0.96	0.93	20
Knowledge about Utilization of ASCA (School Counseling students only)	1	6	5	1.41	2	20
Program Development and Consultation Skills	2	6	4.9	1.11	1.25	20
Identification and Utilization of Assessment Information	2	6	4.85	1.22	1.50	20
Counseling Families	3	6	4.85	1.03	1.08	20
Trauma work	3	6	5.05	1.05	1.10	20
Practicum/Internship	4	6	5.45	0.60	0.36	20
University Services	3	6	4.95	0.99	0.99	20
Info provided about the specific steps in obtain license(s) and/or certification(s)	2	6	4.95	1.19	1.41	20
Adequacy of academic advisement provided by NMHU Counseling faculty	3	6	5.15	1.08	1.18	20

Availability of NMHU Counseling faculty	3	6	5.35	0.93	0.87	20
Overall quality of teaching by NMHU Counseling faculty	4	6	5.45	0.60	0.36	20
Relevance of the counseling courses in your specific concentration	4	6	5.15	0.74	0.55	20

Employer Survey

As part of our continuing efforts to improve the Counseling Program at NMHU, employer feedback is critical. Employers were sent a 12-question survey in Fall 2024. Employers were asked to rate the preparation of our graduates in their employment setting. The following scale was used for Questions 1-8:

- 1 star-beginner
- 2 stars-advanced beginner
- 3 stars-competent
- 4 stars-advanced
- 5 stars-expert

Of the 7 employer respondents, 100% reported that the NMHU program adequately prepare the individual to be an entry-level counselor.

The following table summarizes the scores on the Employer Survey for Questions 1-8.

Employer Survey Responses

	Min	Max	Mean	SD	var	n
1. Applies ethical principles and standards in counseling.	3	5	4.14	0.69	0.47	7
2. Applies counseling theories.	3	5	3.85	0.89	0.80	7
3. Follows administrative policies and procedures.	3	5	4.42	0.78	0.61	7
4. Practices cultural humility in counseling.	4	5	4.42	0.53	0.28	7
5. Uses multiple methods of assessment.	3	5	4	0.81	0.66	7
6. Implements interpersonal relationships with colleagues and clients.	4	5	4.71	0.48	0.23	7
7. Aware of community resources.	3	5	4	0.81	0.66	7
8. Advocates for others.	4	5	4.85	0.37	0.14	7

What else can the NMHU program do to prepare its counseling graduates for the profession?

Employer Feedback

- Build an integrated workforce pipeline with our organization
- internship?
- To focus on a couple different counseling approaches...
- I would suggest initial instruction in the "Golden Thread" concept which knits together a) the presenting problem, b) symptoms which are interfering with daily activities, c) these symptoms describe a diagnosis in the DSM V which can be observed and criteria chosen, d) the diagnosis thus describes the etiology, course, and treatment outcomes expected.

With the diagnosis delineated, treatment interventions according to different counseling theory could be described. Thus, transitioning into the development of a beginning treatment plan. If this is taught at the graduate level to students, they would be well positioned to enter the field, immediately employed, and be a successful clinical practitioner.

- Facilitation with groups, engaging when small groups
- No comment
- Help them to develop a deeper understanding of Theoretical approaches; what they are and why they are important.

Graduate Degree of employee (choose all that apply) (7 responses)

Degree	Responses
CMHC	6
School Counseling	1
SC, CMHC, RC, and Clinical Rehab Counseling	0

National & State Counselor Employment Data

The demand for licensed counselors continues to grow in the U.S. According to O*NET Online, there is a “Bright Outlook” for Mental Health Counselors and School Counselors. This designation, according to the website means “occupations are expected to grow rapidly in the next several years, will have large numbers of job openings, or are new and emerging occupations”.

Wage Statistics for Counseling Fields

Location	Mental Health Counselors	Rehabilitation Counselors	School Counselors
U. S. Average	\$53,710/year	\$44,040/year*	\$61,710/year
Albuquerque, NM Average	\$62,320/year	\$44,220/year*	\$66,960/year
New Mexico Average	\$62,120/year	\$45,780/year*	\$66,960/year
		*This data includes those with bachelor’s and master’s degrees. Positions that require a master’s and CRCC certification tend to pay more.	

NMHU Counseling Program Modifications

With the continued steady enrollment of the NMHU Counseling Program, along with data collection and monitoring requirements of being CACREP accredited, the Counseling Program has implemented a new education management system. The new education management system, Tevera, launched in Spring 2024 and is utilized to collect and assess student and program outcomes.

Other noteworthy changes made to the program data collection progress include the timeframe to complete a degree. Previous NMHU timeframe used was 5 years to complete a degree and that has changed to 7 years to complete a degree. These changes were implemented to the completion rate percentage.

Section 4 of the CACREP standards require that accredited programs evaluate and disseminate information related to evaluation to all its constituents. This evaluation process consists of institutional data, data from current and former students, supervisors and employers, and data that documents students' professional dispositions and growth.

References

National Center for O*NET Development. *O*NET OnLine*. Retrieved December 11, 2024, from <https://www.onetonline.org/>