

Counseling Center Annual Report 2006-2007 August 13, 2007

The primary mission of the Georgia State University Counseling Center is to support students in achieving their personal and educational goals. As a comprehensive, service-oriented agency, Center personnel strive to offer accessible, professional, and high-quality services in the areas of: 1) clinical services (personal and educational counseling, crisis intervention, psychiatric services, consultation, psycho-educational programming), 2) teaching (GSU 1010 courses, practica, seminars, mentoring and supervision) and 3) testing services. This mission serves the overarching purpose of student retention, facilitating graduation and the eventual success of the whole student.

Summary of Major Accomplishments

A total of 1,959 students were seen for individual, couples and group counseling services at the Counseling Center in FY'07. The figures indicate that approximately 7.5% of the 26,134 student population were seen for clinical services (compared to an average of 6.1% for institutions over 15,000 as listed in the 2006 National Survey of Counseling Center Directors). Clients were seen for 8,190 sessions (or 8,563 hours) at the Counseling Center for personal, educational or crisis counseling. One hundred fifty-nine (159) students were seen at the Counseling Center for 178 emergency sessions covering 188 hours during this past year. In addition, we assisted with another 21 emergencies outside of the counseling center.

Center faculty generated approximately 564 credit hours, teaching 11 courses, including 4 GSU 1010's focused on conflict resolution, stress management, career development, and exploring diversity, 4 practica and 2 adjunct courses (i.e., traumatology and conflict mediation). One hundred fifty-eight students were enrolled in these courses. This is a decrease of 55% from the previous year; reflecting the decrease in FTE devoted to instruction. The Counseling Center lost two teaching faculty in August 2006 and the other one in March, 2007. In order to devote more time to clinical services, there are no plans to expand the current teaching load for our senior staff. Instead, post-doctoral fellows and doctoral students will be teaching the GSU 1010 courses. Practica and traumatology will be taught by senior staff during the upcoming year.

The Center served over 17,161 students, including some redundancies, for a 2% increase over last year through outreach programs (e.g., workshops, classroom presentations, marketplaces, screenings, INCEPT) across campus. Out of this overall outreach work, Center staff presented at 184 separate class sessions to 6,742 students. The majority of these class presentations were on diversity, anxiety and stress, conflict resolution and study skills. Another ??? individuals (faculty, students, community) were served by the Center's Testing Office, which was awarded the nationally recognized Gold rating for each of the past 12 months for customer service by the faculty, staff, students and community users of testing services.

In support of retention, the Center assessed client satisfaction with randomly selected students seeking counseling services and found that: 1) 81% overall indicated that counseling helped them to stay enrolled at Georgia State and 2) 72% said they were more successful in their area of study.

In addition, the Center assessed 7 outcomes/objectives over the year and met most of our objectives.

Several retention based programs were continued this year, including programs targeted for the African American Male Initiative (e.g., the African American Step Up Program, continued liaison work with Tighter Grip). The Step Up Program was engineered to collaborate with a number of African-American Male student organizations (Tighter Grip, Black Student Alliance, and all the fraternities of the Pan-Hellenic council) in order to reach as many AA male students as possible,

including those AA students who are not in these organizations. The organizations worked together to market their collective initiatives and close the gap between circles or cliques of African-American men who are enrolled at Georgia State. The program offers mentors to AA men by pairing seniors and juniors with freshmen and sophomores who share the same majors or areas of academic interest. In addition, the Counseling Center continued to work with others on campus to provide Safe Zone trainings on LBGtQIQ issues to help students and staff support LBGtQIQ students and their allies. We also continued a research project aimed at acquiring needed data on student retention at Georgia State through telephone exit interview surveys for students seriously considering leaving Georgia State.

Personal and Educational Counseling Services

A total of 1959 students sought counseling services at the Counseling Center in FY'07. Although there are some redundancies in the data, approximately 7.5% of the student population was seen for an average of 4 sessions for personal, educational, emergency or psychiatric services. Although clinical services saw .5% fewer students this past year in counseling, the number of student who participated in the Center's Outreach programs increased by almost 600; reflecting the change in focus after 2 senior clinical services staff resigned.

Student Utilization of Clinical Services FY'95-FY'06

Category	FY95	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07
Individual & Group Clients (Personal, Educational)	918	1135	1586	1798	2758 9.7%	2066 7.8%	2003 8%	1959 7.5%
Total Individual Sessions	4297	5417	7175	7299	8060	8247	7740	8025
Average number of sessions	4.7	4.8	4.6	4.5	2.9	4.0	4.1	4.0
Number of Group & Couples Clients	22	55	59	76	106	110	152	165
Total Group Sessions	92	99		430	667	786	1514	421
Number of Psychiatric Clients	-0-	100	134	193	264	211	80	80
Total Psychiatric Sessions	-0-	263	276	280	440	319	255	232
Total Outreach Participants	2,605	9,994	7,858	13,042	13,396	13,644	16,762	17,161
Senior Staff FTE devoted to Direct Clinical Contact (excluding psychiatrist and trainees)	8.0	7.50	6.00	7.75	7.75	7.0	7.3	7.25

The Center had 11 therapy and support groups this year. One hundred nineteen students were seen for 291 group therapy sessions (436.5 hours). Additionally, 46 clients were seen for 130 couples sessions. The number of both group and couples clients seen for counseling has thus expanded significantly 2001.

Counselors saw 159 students for 178 emergency sessions during this past year. These sessions often

ran over normal session times of one hour, accounting for 188 hours devoted to these interventions. Emergencies can last 2-4 hours and require collaborations among two or more clinicians. More specifically, 33% of the 464 students who sought help for personal counseling at the Counseling Center from September 1, 2007-April 15, 2007 self identified as being in crisis. That's 1 in 3 students seeking help. The mean severity rating for these 153 students ranged from 1-6, averaging over 2.1, indicating significant distress and urgency but not life endangerment. However, 50% of the students who self-identified in crisis reported they were experiencing some threat of life endangerment or serious harm. Additionally, the most severe crises we handled were not captured by our severity scale, which obviously needs to be changed to capture students who have already attempted suicide. Our most serious crises included a student who jumped out of her 3rd floor dorm window, a student who threatened to hang herself and had already created the noose, and students who wrote threatening emails after the Virginia Tech massacre. None of these students were clients at the Center at the time we were contacted and were not always documented in our client data management system.

Student utilization of the Center's Psychiatric Services appears to have declined 55%-73% since FY'05 and '04 when the Center benefited from the addition of psychiatric residents who provided additional services. This past year the Center did not have the benefit of psychiatric residents and the hours of the part-time psychiatrist were reduced from 12 hours a week to 7 hours a week during highest utilization weeks in order to assign a merit raise to the position. More students were thus referred out for medication and other psychiatric services. Since we will have more psychiatric services this coming year with two psychiatrists and two psychiatric residents, we expect this number to increase.

Depression and stress, general anxiety and spouse/partner issues were cited as students' top 3 concerns upon presenting at the Center in FY'07. Depression and stress have typically been rated as one of the top three student concerns every year since 2001. This year they tied for first place.

Student Concerns

Year	#1 Concern	#2 Concern	#3 Concern
FY07	Depression/Stress	General Anxiety	Spouse/partner
FY'06	Stress	Unhappiness	Depression
FY'05	Depression	Depression	Stress
FY'04	Depression	Depression	Depression
FY'03	Depression	Relational Difficulties/ Study skills deficits	Loneliness/ Making Decisions
FY'02	Sexual Abuse/ Depression	Stress	Relationship Problems
FY'01	Depression	Career Choice	Stress

This past year the Counseling Center collected data on 526 Trauma Symptom Inventories (TSI-A) completed by students (ages 17-60; 362 females) seeking counseling services this past year. The Table below indicates the percentage of student endorsement of critical items, indicating their experience over the past 6 months before seeking services. While the results remain disturbing, with 38.1% of these students seeking personal counseling endorsing "wishing they were dead", 44.1% endorsing "feeling like life wasn't worth living" and over 30.4% endorsing "having thoughts of hurting someone else," the percentage of student endorsement has decreased over FY06 on 8 of the 10 critical items. The severity of student issues and the need for personal counseling is reflected in these self reports.

Trauma Symptom Inventory-A

Critical Items	% of student endorsement (N=526, FY'07)	% of student endorsement (N=506, FY'06)
Having thoughts about hurting someone else	30.4%	35.5%
Threatening suicide or attempting suicide	14%	18%
Wishing they were dead	38.1%	41%
Using drugs other than marijuana	12%	12%
Intentionally hurting themselves even though they were not trying to commit suicide	12.3%	14%
Getting into trouble because of their drinking	18.9%	18%
Hearing someone talk to them who is not really there	11.4%	16%
Feeling like life wasn't worth living	44.1%	48%
Seeing people from the spirit world	5.7%	6.5%
Thinking that someone was reading their mind	17.8%	16%

Student Demographics

Of the students coming in for individual personal counseling, approximately 68 % were female (compared to 60% in the university), 73% single (6% partnered, 11% married, 3% divorced, 1% separated). The average age of students seeking services was 24 years, with approximately 48% (compared to 53% the previous year) being under 25. Caucasian students constituted 52% of our clients (compared to 42% in the university), 28% were African-American/Black (compared to 27% in the university), approximately 5.5% were Asian (compared to 11% in the university), 5% Latina/o (compared to 3% in the university), 2% Native American, 1.5% Multiracial (compared to 2.5% in the university population), and 2% Other. Five percent of the students coming to the Center identified as International students. Thus, we see a higher percentage of Caucasian and Latina/o students than they represent in the university population and about the same percentage of African-American/Black and Native American students as in the population. We see a lower percentage of Asian and multi-racial students than in the university population.

Finally, clinical services saw 9.5% freshmen (compared to 14%), 12.8% sophomores (compared to 14%), 24.1% juniors (compared to 16%), 20.8% seniors (compared to 26%) and 25.9% graduate/professional students (compared to 25%). Thus, the students coming to the Center are more likely to be juniors, seniors and graduate/professional students. Additionally, 49.5% (compared to 44%) of the students seen through clinical services were from A&S, 13.7% from Business (compared to 28%), 12.4% from Education (compared to 12%), 11.5% from Health (compared to 10%), 1.9% from Law (compared to 2.5%), and 2.4% from Policy Studies (compared to 2.5%). We have higher percentages of students from A&S and lower percentages from Business. The percentages from other colleges seem to be similar to their

representation on campus.

Outreach/Psycho-education Workshops

Although once again there are some redundancies in the data, the statistics indicate that 6,879 students were seen through the Center's various outreach workshops, programs and class presentations. Some of our most common presentations included diversity (2244), anxiety and stress (850), Sexual Assault and Awareness (475), study skills (374), conflict resolution (384), crisis and trauma (224), relationships and communication (391), and careers/majors (244). In addition, over 9,332 students were offered outreach services such as Ask Me Booths and Marketplaces. That is an increase over last year. Thus, our educational programming and outreach efforts have remained a high priority. During Anxiety and Alcohol & Drug National Screening days, approximately 450 students had access to relevant assessment and referral information.

This past year the Center maintained critical collaborative and consultative relationships with other campus units such as FASA, Housing, the Office for African American Student Services (e.g., LAPP and CAPP programs) and Student Life and Leadership, especially through the intercultural dialogues and the development of Safe Zone programs.

Training Programs

The Counseling Center is the official practice site for the Department of Counseling & Psychological Services doctoral psychology graduate students. It is also a highly competitive and valued practice site for the Department of Clinical Psychology and collaboratively, with the Georgia School of Professional Psychology. The training programs receive high levels of regard from both academic departments on campus. In addition to training GSU graduate students, the Counseling Center training programs are also cost effective for the university in terms of the primary mission of service delivery.

- The training programs (2 postdoctoral fellows, 3 interns, 15 practicum students) provided approximately 5,436 clinical contact hours and 474 outreach hours this year, up from 4,133 and 195 respectively for FY'06.
- With faculty training/supervision time subtracted from this total, the training programs produce a net gain of 4,116 clinical contact hours per year.
- Trainees thus provide approximately 66% of the Center's clinical contact hours and 73% of the Center's Outreach hours, up from 35% and 43% respectively in FY'06. The difference in percentage of workload carried by trainees is due to the ratio of senior staff counselors to students. The Counseling Center when fully staff has a ratio of 1 counselor to every 2,364 students (compared to the national average of 1:1697). This past year two senior counselors left mid-year, leaving a ratio of 1:2889. We were unable to recover the 700 hours that these two counselors could have provided; thus shifting more of the direct service workload to trainees this year.
- Additionally, the training program serves as the primary practice site for psychology graduates the Department of Counseling and Psychological Services.

The Internship program is fully accredited by the American Psychological Association. Additionally, the Postdoctoral and Internship programs hold membership in the Association of Pre and Postdoctoral

Internship Programs.

Teaching/Instruction

Table 3
Credit-bearing Instruction

Category	FY'95	FY'02	FY'03	FY'04	FY'05	FY'06	FY'07
FTE assigned to instruction	.10	5.00	3.55	1.5	1.25 (GSU1010) .3 practica	1.25 (GSU 1010) .3 practica	.5 (GSU 1010) .2 practica
Number 1010/1050 Courses		29 GSU 1050s 3 GSU 1010s	13 GSU 1050s 6 GSU 1010s	1 GSU 1050 1 GSU 1010-1050 5 GSU 1010s	2 GSU 1010/1050 6 GSU 1010	2 GSU 1010 Katrina 10 GSU 1010	4 GSU 1010 classes
Number other courses	2 Practica	6 Practica	8 Practica	8 Practica 5 adjunct courses	5 Practica 7 adjunct courses	6 Practica 7 adjunct courses	4 practica courses 2 adjunct courses
Credit hrs.	15	2,323	1,902	990	1,318	1,248	564

For this past academic year (Summer 2006-Spring 2007), the Counseling Center generated a total of 564 credit hours through the instruction of approximately 158 GSU students in 11 courses. Specifically, the Center taught 97 students in 4 GSU1010 courses. The Center faculty taught 2 Clinical Practica to 10 students over 2 semesters, generating over another 120 credit hours for the Counseling & Psychological Services Department and the Clinical Psychology Department.

Adjunct courses included Traumatology (3 x 32 = 96 credit hours) and Conflict Negotiation and Mediation (3 x 19 = 57 credit hours for Maymester) through the Department of Counseling and Psychological Services.

Testing Services

The Testing Office is an open testing center and offers a large variety of local, state, and national standardized tests, serving the GSU student body, the Atlanta community, and the southeast region. Through both paper-based and computer-based formats, over 80 different testing programs are supported. The Office manages an 11-seat Thomson Prometric computer-based test site which operates 40-50 hours weekly. During the past year, approximately 5216 individuals were administered tests from the following programs: GRE, PRAXIS, TOEFL,

NBPTS, USMLE, CPA, MCAT, PMI, and several dozen additional admissions and certification programs. The decrease in the actual number of candidates tested (~20% decline) reflects more of a change in the programs being offered than a decline in “business”. In the past, many more short tests (1-2 hours in length, e.g. PRAXIS) were offered; currently, most tests offered are 4-6 hours. Thus, fewer individuals are being tested although the number of hours of utilization remains the same. Candidates taking tests with these programs use candidate evaluation of customer service, efficiency and accommodations to rate all test centers which is then used to award different levels of recognition using the following: Gold, Silver, Good, and Needs Improvement. For the second year in a row, the GSU Testing Center has earned a Gold rating during each of the past twelve months.

Using both internal and external computer lab resources on campus, several additional computer-based testing programs are administered throughout the year. Approximately 1900 incoming freshmen and transfer students were tested for math placement assessment to assist the Math Department in placing students into the appropriate level of math courses. Other computer-based testing programs include a growing number of online (internet-based) testing for distance learning students (supporting external degree programs from approximately 15 schools nationwide), the MAT (306 candidate), and two programs, CLEP and Dantes, for which approximately 873 tests were administered. Although the number of candidates tested for CLEP has declined by approximately 34% due to several other campuses in the metro now offering CLEP, the test center continues to rank in the top100 test centers nationally based on volume.

Many testing programs remain paper-based although there is a constant shift of paper-based programs to computer-based programs. The volume of paper-based Regents’ tests remains the same with approximately 4500 tests administered to approximately 2600 students. Other paper-based programs supported by the Testing Office include the ACT, SAT, MCAT, LSAT, PRAXIS II, NET, CFA, and approximately 50 additional admissions tests and professional certification exams. Most of these programs will likely continue to be paper-based (with the exception of the MCAT which converted to computerized testing in August 2006) and currently exceeds 31,000 examinees tested annually. A large growth area for the Testing Office is the offering of proctoring services for paper-based tests for external degree programs. Approximately 440 students representing over 25 programs/schools were tested this past year, representing a 25% increase over last year’s total and reflects a growing trend in testing. This includes students from approximately a dozen international programs based in Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, and South Africa.

The Testing Office provides direct support to faculty and academic departments through the offering of 1) proctoring services for make-up exams, and 2) scanning and scoring operation. During 2006-07, approximately 235 students took make up exams through the Testing Office. Approximately, 180,000 forms were scanned to support classroom assessment, faculty evaluations, and special projects for groups such as the Atlanta Public Schools (APS) and American Board of Physicians. This number represents a large decline of approximately 48% from the previous year which is explained by the continued growth of online testing and assessment methods and the subsequent decline of paper-based testing and data collection

processes. Several large outside projects which have utilized the scanning services over the past few years have either ended or due to budgetary constraints, have discontinued some optional testing aspects of the projects. APS alone has accounted for ~ 55,000 forms scanned annually.

Progress in Institutional Effectiveness Phyllis' section

(e.g., adoption of student learning outcomes or administrative support area outcomes; implementation of new methods for assessing learning or non-academic outcomes; implementation of academic program or non-academic process changes as a result of assessment evidence; evidence of improvement in specific areas as a result of assessment-based changes in programs or processes)

- 1) The Counseling Center collected data on 7 outcome objectives:
 - Managing emotions: Students can identify two or more ways to manage their emotions by behaving differently and by thinking differently
 - Managing conflict: Students can articulate the steps needed to resolve or manage conflict and can identify how their personality type contributes to conflict in their significant relationships after taking the GSU 1010 course on Conflict Resolution.
 - Crisis intervention for students: Crisis intervention for students in response to mental health emergencies (including self, faculty, Housing, Student Affairs, and other staff referrals)
 - Effective instruction: Counseling Center's instructional offerings are effective for students and trainees.
 - Efficacy of clinical services: Efficacy of clinical services for the purposes of retention and graduation.
 - Satisfaction with clinical services: Overall student satisfaction with their clinical services
 - Satisfaction with testing services: Overall customer satisfaction with testing services

- 2) The following results were of greatest importance.
 - Students exceeded the 75% criteria for success indicating that students could identify more than two ways to manage their emotions after 8 or more sessions of counseling and the 60% criteria to be able to articulate the steps needed to resolve and manage conflict in a significant relationship after attending the GSU 1010 Conflict Resolution class.
 - 93 students who completed faculty evaluations for GSU 1010 instructors (of the 97 students enrolled in the classes) rated their instructor's overall effectiveness as 4.4 out of 5.0.
 - Clinicians in training rated their individual supervisors as 5.79 out of 6.0.
 - Clinicians in training rated their seminar instructors as 5.56 out of 6.0.

- 3) The Counseling Center also collected data on Crisis Intervention as part of the Center's Institutional Effectiveness Program aimed at ensuring quality control over intervening with students in crisis (e.g., suicidal ideations, psychosis, rape). The results from 153 student crisis reports collected in Fall 2006 and Spring 2007 indicated that counselors most often cited the following outcomes of crises to which they responded.
 - Scheduling follow up appointment(s) for safety of students
 - Devising an action plan for the student.
 - Referral to psychiatric services for medication
 - Consistent phone consultation until therapeutic placement

- Referral outside of counseling center due to high demand for care

For 153 out of 232 crises, clinicians rated the severity of student problem on a scale from 1-6:

- 1 = no necessary crisis
- 2 = tearful, agitated, &/or very dissociated by recent event
- 3 = fears or concerns about harming self or other (nonsuicidal or nonhomicidal)
- 4 = morbid thoughts of suicide or homicide with no plan (**or** mildly impaired in current functioning)
- 5 = suicidal (homicidal) ideation with plan but willing to take proactive action (**or** moderately impaired in current functioning)
- 6 = suicidal ideation with plan but not willing to take proactive action (or severely impaired) and hospitalization required

Overall, the mean for these cases in the past year was 2.1 (indicating significant distress and urgency but not danger to their life). However, 50% of the students who self-identified in crisis (232) reported they were experiencing a danger to their life. Additionally, the most severe cases we handled were not captured by our severity scale, which needs to be changed to accommodate students who have already attempted suicide. The most important finding is that all students in crisis met with a crisis counselor and received help in a timely manner (estimated by the Front Office personnel and on call counselors to be between 5 and 10 minutes). Many times students received extended services by phone over the weekend and follow up sessions during subsequent weeks until they could be placed into stable care.

4) Students who sought counseling services also reported that it helped them in school. For example:

- 88% of student clients reported that their situation had improved as a result of counseling
- 81% of student clients reported that they were better able to remain enrolled at Georgia State
- 72% of student clients reported that they were more successful in their area of study
- 63% of student clients reported that they were more engaged in their studies
- 55% of student clients reported that they had better class attendance
- 55% of student clients reported that their completion of assignments improved
- 53% of student clients reported that their test scores improved

5) Student clients were satisfied with their counselors. They rated their overall counseling experience as 4.8 out of 6. They rated their counselors as:

- 5.5 out of 6 on attentiveness
- 5.5 out of 6 on concern
- 4.7 out of 6 on helpfulness

