

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSE
PROGRAM: Counseling – Direct Service
DATE: April 15, 2011

Opening Remarks:

The direct service components of the program review will be addressed by the Deans of Student Development, while the instructional components will be addressed by the Deans of Instruction.

We thank you for putting a great deal of time and thought into your Program Review report and presentation. It was a very thorough and informative analysis, and we recognize the work involved in evaluating both the direct services and the instruction.

The comments included in this report were submitted by several deans and directors who attended your presentation. We look forward to further dialogue about questions, challenges, and recommendations noted below.

Commendations:

1. Highlighting emerging theme of crisis intervention and support.
2. Efforts to identify student learning outcomes in both instructional and service areas, and noting how the process of program review itself lead to outcomes.
3. Highlighting the discrepancy in counseling staff numbers across the district.
4. Emphasis on culturally appropriate instruction and services for an increasingly diverse student population, with strong emphasis on professional development.
5. Strong student satisfaction with counseling services based on point of service surveys.
6. Good documentation of increase in CG course enrollment.
7. Working on getting more folks licensed, even though not technically required.
8. Thoughtful recommendations were provided.

Questions/Areas for Further Consideration:

1. What would this group recommend re: CG100C and the On Course curriculum? Would they recommend revising/expanding/limiting offerings and on what basis? What has data demonstrated about effectiveness of these courses?
2. How would the counselors envision the role of a “consulting psychiatrist” and a “counseling resource specialist?” How would these positions interface with campus BITs and assist with students in distress? A more detailed proposal would be helpful.
3. What is the counselors’ emerging role given that the Standards for Academic Progress intervention procedures is changing? When should counselors, district wide, specifically provide interventions for these students?

4. It was reported that licensure is a best practice, but the benefits to the student or the college were not clear. Are there requirements in this area that PCC should be prepared for or respond to? Why was there was a need for malpractice insurance? Does this mean if the counselors obtain their licensure they can now provide mental health counseling?
5. It was unclear if the counseling department is responsible for providing mental health services vs. making referrals. Clarifying this role would help define best strategies for dealing with students who struggle with mental health disorders. Also, we need clarification on the liabilities and expectations for the counselors. What psychological testing will be required and which counselor is qualified to administer tests? What are the best practices and tracking of the services provided to this group of students?
6. How do we inform both students and staff about of the differences between the Career Resource Center, Counseling, and Academic Advising? The report provides some good recommendations about improving student access to and awareness of Counseling services, but how can we encourage more students to make use of the services, especially if they are undecided about career choice? The CCSSE (Community College Survey of Student Engagement) survey of PCC students (2011) found that 23.3% of respondents marked “did not know” or “not applicable” about Career Counseling, and 51.9% indicated “rarely” or “never” in terms of frequency of use.
7. Are non-students accessing counseling services? For what purposes? Should this be reviewed?

Suggestions/Observations/Challenges:

1. Data was not provided about actual numbers served, types of services or student issues, or trends over past years. There was also no assessment or surveys of what students need or want from counseling services.
2. The review described the increase in students on academic alert, probation and suspension but it did not provide data on how many students successfully moved off probation or suspension due to counseling interventions, or what interventions had the greatest impact.
3. Data focused on broader societal changes vs. PCC-specific data.
4. Crisis counseling should have been supported with data. What has the increase been in this area of counseling over the years?
5. The report could have been more concise and made it easier for the reader to locate important pieces, such as learning outcomes and overall recommendations.
6. The report did not specifically address how Counseling works with Career Resource Centers or Career Services/Student Employment Offices, Disability Services, or Veterans' Services.
7. There were no significant recommendations regarding serving distance learning students.

8. There were no significant recommendations regarding the use of technology or alternatives to the traditional classroom approach to deliver information to students who may not have the time or resources to come for appointments (e.g., group approaches, free workshops, web-based or video-based information on-line).

Recommendations

Staffing

- Hire additional full time counseling staff, especially on the Southeast Center and Cascade campuses.
- Hire counselors from backgrounds that complement the demographics of the PCC student community (ethnic and cultural minorities).
- Hire more male counselors to better reflect the gender representation of PCC students.
- Hire a counseling resource specialist who will manage a mental health referral list, provide information and education on mental health issues in the in person or online format, post community mental health links to counseling services web page and keep these resource links updated on a regular basis.

Response: *While it probably makes sense to increase counseling staff at Southeast and Cascade Campuses, competing priorities make it important to provide supporting evidence for the additional investment in full-time positions.*

We strongly support hiring of counselors who reflect student demographics.

What would “counseling resource specialist” do beyond maintaining referral list?

Safety

- Funding for professional development to enhance safety efforts (esp. suicide and homicide prevention) and for part-time counselor coverage while full-time counselors are out of the office for training.
- Reconfiguration of office spaces to maximize safety (seating designed so that the counselor can quickly exit without being blocked by a student)
- Safety technology (e.g., panic buttons, surveillance cameras, privacy film for windows, inside/outside lighting, etc.).
- Encourage administration to participate in trainings and continued communication to ensure the safety of counselors, students, and community.

Response: *We believe that support for training and professional development has been provided in the past, and should be continued. The Deans of Student Development have brought up the reconfiguration of offices in district-wide bond planning meetings. Discussions of other safety technology (e.g., privacy film windows) are currently underway. Public Safety has responded to inquiries about panic buttons by asserting that they need ways to get more specific information on the location and type of problem, which panic buttons don't seem to provide. We want all staff to feel safe, and realize that counselors deal with high-risk students, so we need more dialogue on solutions.*

Space

- Private waiting and reception area for students seeking counseling services.
- Relaxation room, as described above in best practices.
- A room for counseling groups, CG classes, and consultation meetings,
- Acquire additional private office space for full-time, part-time counselors and interns,

- Acquire an office at each campus for adjunct CG faculty to have office hours.

Response: *Most of these (and other) recommendations were included in the district-wide bond planning summary for Counseling. We should attempt to address them in ongoing bond planning, and counselors should be actively engaged on all campuses in this effort.*

Evaluation/Improvement

- Continue yearly assessments at each campus, using an online format to collect follow-up data, to apprise counselors of the needs of students seeking counseling services.
- Pilot new counseling assessments (see Appendices D, E & F), make revisions and utilize revised assessments for ongoing use.
- Monitor assessment results and adjust service delivery to ensure that counseling outcomes are being met.
- Utilize a focus group format in the future to assess outcomes and student satisfaction.
- Explore new and innovative ways to deliver counseling services that go beyond 1:1 sessions (group sessions, online services, phone counseling, etc).
- Analyze standardized course evaluation data to review student satisfaction across groups or courses.
- Explore the student experience of cross-cultural content and process in the classroom, including:
 - Cultural competence of the instructor (e.g., how difficult dialogues are handled, use of inclusive terminology, knowledge and awareness of cultural differences, etc.)
 - Multicultural curriculum infusion
 - Cross-cultural communications in the classroom

Response: *We strongly support all of these excellent recommendations. We encourage counselors to take the lead with technical support and guidance from DOS group, as the college as a whole encourages formalized intentional outcomes assessment.*

Professional Development

- Developing the number of faculty trained in online instruction
- Ongoing training and continuing education to help counselors best serve students of concern.
- Incorporate faculty trainings on:
 - How to facilitate sensitive dialogues related to culture, defined broadly (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, class, sexual/affection orientation, class, age, religion, nationality)
 - Best practices for cross-cultural instruction
 - Multicultural curriculum infusion
 - Preparing students for successful participation in a diverse workforce
 - Facilitating the development of knowledge, awareness, skills, critical thinking, and social action in students around issues of social justice and inequity.

Response: *We continue to support relevant d professional development opportunities.*

Ease of Access/ Resource Referrals

- Add links to the following departmental web pages, under a heading such as “related pages.”
 - Advising (currently a link exists in the section titled What is the difference between an academic advisor and a counselor).

- Careers and Jobs
- Disability Services
- Multicultural Center
- Roots – (Contacts and Resources)
- Women’s Resource Centers
- Break down counseling services into more manageable and user-friendly clusters (e.g., career counseling, personal counseling, crisis counseling).
- Market career counseling as a personal service available to students.
- Use counseling web site to educate students on the career counseling process.
- Work with other PCC departments (Admissions, Start Lab, Advising) to educate students on the difference between counseling and advising services.
- Continue outreach to students through CG courses.
- Continue to update the counseling website as needs and resources change.
- Make a more active effort to refer students to appropriate on-campus resources.
- Seek resources to assign a counselor to develop and maintain a community provider database to include individual and group providers, their specialties, and the cost of their services.

Response: *We support department chairs taking the lead to implement these ideas, with support from the Deans of Student Development*

Closing Comments:

It is impressive to see that counseling has been open to critical feedback and has been persistent in completing their program reviews. This shows a commitment to your profession and your students. It is clear that you put a great deal of work into this program review, and that you care deeply about meeting high standards of professionalism

This report did a good job of clarifying:

- the role of counselor in general;
- numbers and inequities of counseling staff across district;
- values, mission, intended outcomes of program area;
- relationship to college values, mission, goals, and college core outcomes;
- increase in CG enrollment and diversity of course offerings;
- increasing diversity of student population;
- types of counseling approaches;
- issues related to service delivery

However, it did not give us a clear picture of the actual numbers served, the increase in demand for overall services, or the most important areas of need at PCC. (For example what do students express a need for? How many are in crisis?).

We commend the initial work on the assessment of learning outcomes, and we encourage counselors to be active and innovative in gathering data on service outcomes as well. Many departments are looking at how to report on meaningful, verifiable outcomes, and using data to improve retention and student success. While receiving feedback directly from students is important, it needs to be balanced with more objective measures.

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