



2021-2022 Annual Report
Counseling Center
Student Affairs
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Message from the Director

The 2020-2021 academic year continued to be a time that required flexibility and innovation for the University of Illinois at Urbana- Champaign Counseling Center. As we started the second full year of the COVID-19 pandemic, we were able to return to more things in-person, but found that it was necessary to operate in a virtual space for other services. Counselors returned to the office and we began delivering in-person counseling for individuals. Our group counseling efforts remained online to be able to successfully socially distance. Our outreach offerings took a hybrid approach, offering both in-person or online programming as appropriate.



This past year, the number of students we served through counseling and outreach climbed from the previous year as students made their way out of isolation and returned to campus. For the 2021-2022 academic year, we had 12,781 individual appointments . Additionally, we offered 60 groups that were attended by a total of 426 students. Our Outreach and Prevention Services offered 1,442 events that served a total of 31,084 students, faculty/staff, and parents. Research and what we are seeing anecdotally indicates the pandemic has and will continue to have a tremendous effect on the mental health of our students. We will continue to be attentive to these needs to ensure students are supported and access the services they need to thrive and be productive.

This year, the Counseling Center continued to expand our embedded program. Our embedded counselors have greatly expanded our reach throughout campus and provide important services for students who may not have felt comfortable coming to the Counseling Center, but are willing to reach out to someone within their college. We were able to secure additional funding to add an embedded counselor for the College of Education, which brings out total number of embedded counselors to nine.

Additionally this year, we participated in an external review process commissioned by the Associate Vice Chancellor Loma Mwilambwe. The process yielded both positive feedback and areas for growth. The recommendations will serve as a prioritized focus for the next 18 months.

As we approach the 2022-2023 academic year, we are excited that it seems things will continue to move toward what they were prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward to supporting Illinois students with whatever challenges they face

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carla J. McCowan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carla J. McCowan, Ph.D.
Counseling Center Director

Mission, Vision, and Values



Counseling Center staff members at Fall 2021 retreat.

Our Mission

The Counseling Center is committed to providing a broad range of high quality, innovative, and ethical services that address the psychological, educational, social, and developmental needs of University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign students. We also actively contribute to the campus' broader academic mission by training and developing students and professionals, helping build a multicultural learning community, and providing leadership in forming collaborative partnerships among Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, the Graduate College, and Administrative Affairs units.

Our Vision

The Counseling Center enhances the overall well-being of students at the University of Illinois.

Our Values

Commitment to excellence

Wellness

Diversity and inclusion

Integrity

Collaboration

Comprehensive Counseling Center Model

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is a Comprehensive Counseling Center. We believe that the elements described below are all integral parts of what we do and work together to support our university.



The Comprehensive Counseling Center model was introduced in a 2017 article published by Brunner, et al. in the *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*. The authors assert that college counseling centers are much more than sites to provide students with psychological counseling. Rather, they suggest that outreach and prevention (psychoeducation and explanation of services), training experiences for students pursuing careers as mental health professionals, and providing guidance on managing mental health crises to faculty and staff are integral to responding to the changing landscape of college mental health. Universities across the nation have reported that, like we've seen at Illinois, students are presenting at increased rates and severity.



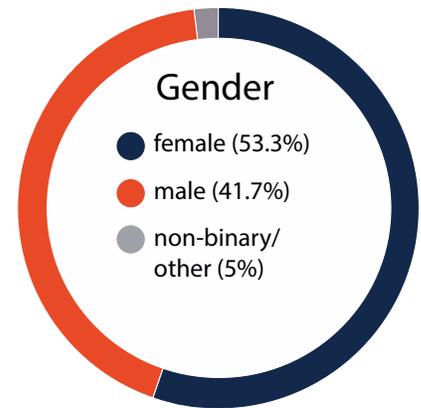
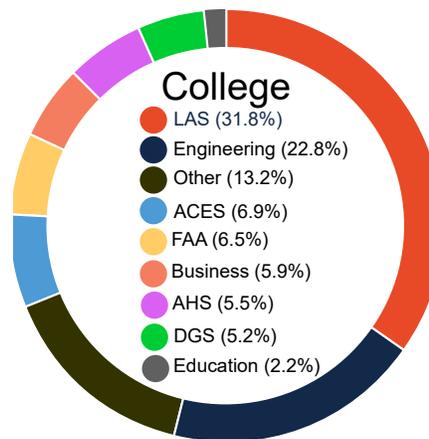
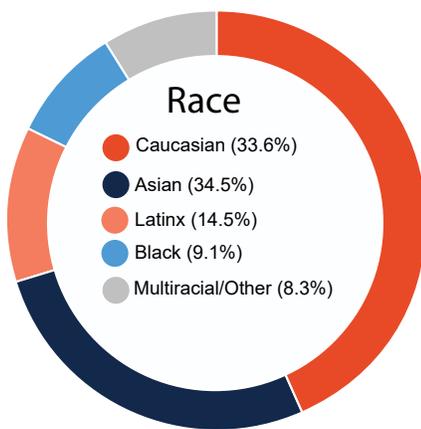
TOTAL INDIVIDUAL
CLINICAL
APPOINTMENTS
12,781



TOTAL
PSYCHOTHERAPY
GROUPS OFFERED
60

TOTAL GROUP
PARTICIPANTS
426

INFORMATION ABOUT THE STUDENTS WE SERVED



ACCESS AND CLIENT SATISFACTION

98%

Students receiving services agreed or strongly agreed that:

they benefitted from having an objective listener who offered a new viewpoint.

92.9%

counseling helped their well-being.

93%

they were satisfied with their counselor.

Outreach and Prevention Services



TOTAL OUTREACH
EVENTS OFFERED

1,693

TOTAL PEOPLE
REACHED

31,084



For each hour of outreach conducted, we reached,
on average **7.79** students.

OUTREACH POINTS OF PRIDE

- Our psychoeducational offerings continue to expand. These workshops now comprise more than 10% of the our outreach efforts and include workshops on managing ADHD, test anxiety, perfectionism, time management, and emotional regulation/mindfulness.
- Our Alcohol and Other Drug Program offered early intervention classes on alcohol and marijuana to assist students who may be struggling with substance misuse. Staff also led ACE IT trainings that reached 7,752 first year and transfer students with information on safer drinking and marijuana use practices.
- Peer education continues to be strength in our OPS area. Consistent with research and theory, our Counseling Center Paraprofessionals offered effective and innovative programming throughout the year. The CCP Tuesday @ 7 series focused on timely mental health topics and translated wellness goals into formats that resonated with students.
- Our embedded counselors provided almost 40% of our outreach hours and are making inroads in our academic units. One example of their impact is the use of “Let’s Talk” to provide easy access to consultation with a counselor.



Counseling Center Harm Reduction Peers educate students about standard drink sizes at National Screening Day in March. Participants were able to check in with a non-judgmental Counseling Center staff member to learn about safer substance practices.

Consultation and Crisis Management

Counseling Center staff are always available to assist students who are in the midst of a crisis or to consult with faculty and staff about how to approach a student who may be in need of our services. Through our trauma response efforts, triage efforts for students who feel they need to be seen right away, and our liaisons across campus, we strive to be there for the campus community when they need it most.

TRIAGE SERVICES FOR UNPLANNED APPOINTMENTS



NUMBER OF
UNPLANNED APPOINTMENTS

277

LIAISONS ACROSS CAMPUS

While the Counseling Center provides consultation to any person on campus who has concerns about a student, we had formal Counseling Center liaisons with the following units for 2019-20:

Asian American Cultural Center
Applied Health Sciences
Bruce D. Nesbitt African American Cultural Center
College of Applied Health Sciences*
College of Fine and Applied Arts*
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences*
College of Medicine
Division of General Studies*

Gies College of Business*
Graduate College
Grainger College of Engineering*
LaCasa Cultural Latina
LGBTQ Resource Center
Native American House
University Housing*

*Served by an embedded counselor.

Training Services

NUMBER OF TRAINEES WHO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED TRAINING AT
THE COUNSELING CENTER IN 2020-2021:

4 doctoral interns
4 practicum counselors



2021-2022 doctoral interns Robbie Luten (front left) and Jingru Chen (front right) are recognized for successfully completing their programs. Pictured in the back from left are Associate Director of Training Tzu-An Hu, Associate Director of Outreach Deidre Weathersby, Associate Director of Clinical Services Sue Stock, and Counseling Center Director Carla McCowan.

Future Directions



In the spring, we were excited to hold our first in-person NEDA Walk since before the pandemic!

For the 2022-2023 year, our focus is on the following areas.

- **Increase efforts to communicate accurate information around access and availability of Counseling Center services.** Our online self-scheduling system we introduced last year was convenient, but also wrought with multiple issues. Additionally, we have not abandoned our same-day or urgent appointment options, but students continue to complain about access while appointments went unfilled almost every single day of 2021-2022. In conjunction with Student Affairs Marketing, we will engage in marketing efforts to provide widespread information about appointment availability and ease of access.
- **Improve campus and community conversations to better support students and remove opportunities for gaps in service.** The Counseling Center is one of several units on campus that provide mental health services to students. Although marketing campaigns can increase student awareness of services, it will not necessarily increase collaboration. The external review highlighted several areas for increased communication and collaboration. The Counseling Center has already identified multiple campus and community services (e.g., McKinley Mental Health, Student Assistance Center, DRES, REACH, Rosecrance, etc.) where we can increase our partnerships by outlining clear protocols for each area to minimize potential gaps in services, especially when a student is in distress.
- **Increase equity, inclusion, and social justice awareness among Counseling Center staff.** The Counseling Center believes in promoting conversations and practices which increase inclusive practices at the Center and ultimately, have a positive impact of services. We attempted to connect with the Office of Diversity, Equity and Access to explore ongoing issues related climate, but they were not able to respond. Through our Multicultural Competency Committee (MC3), we will develop a year-long commitment to conversations and trainings to promote equity and inclusive practices at the center.
- **Explore options to recruit and retain clinical staff.** Similar to national trends, the Counseling Center has experienced widespread staff departures, especially among licensed psychologists. The Counseling Center is exploring more flexible work options, including remote work, without compromising the operational needs of the Center and hopes this will increase work-life balance for counselors. Additionally, we will utilize national and Big Ten data to propose a significant salary increase for clinicians in fall 2022.



Our Counseling Center Paraprofessional class of 2021.



This year Louis, whose owner is Clinical Counselor Emily Barnum, joined our staff as a registered therapy dog. Louis was an instant hit, and has been a huge draw at outreach events throughout campus. We're so glad he's part of our Center!



Student Affairs

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