These are exciting times at university counseling centers across the nation, and that is no different at SJSU Counseling Services (CS). There is a trend across the nation of increasing awareness of mental health issues on campuses, and the important roles that mental health professionals play in helping to address students’ distresses, struggles, and to respond to campus community’s concerns. In addition to the traditional individual and groups counseling that we provide, one of our important roles has been to provide consultations to staff, faculty, administrators, and fellow students regarding students of concern. Whether the student is exhibiting significantly disruptive behaviors when working in groups with fellow classmates, is struggling with personal or academic pressures, exhibiting behaviors such as inability to track reality, or having thoughts of hurting themselves, our personal counselors have been very responsive and happy to be of service to various members of our campus.

To meet the demands of increased mental health needs on campus, CS has been fortunate that students have agreed to pay a Mental Health Fee (MHF) the last couple of years. These student fees have allowed us to stabilize and expand our services to address students’ emotional and mental wellbeing, which in turn ultimately help them succeed academically and personally. For example, we have contracted with a service, ProtoCall, which is an after-hours psychological crisis phone coverage, so that the campus community can call to obtain appropriate crisis referrals and resources after hours. This service also allows CS to have contact information to follow up with students who used the service after hours, so that our counselors can make sure the students’ mental health needs are being addressed.

The MHF also means that we have been able to hire more counselors who have already made significant contributions and connections on campus. Dr. Karisman Roberts-Douglass started over two years ago and has been advising the Men Creating Change student organization, whose mission is to encourage men to fight violence against women. Tova Feldmanstern has stepped in and trained and mentored a group of wonderful peer mentors (Peers in Pride) for the LGBT students. As a Case Manager, Tova has also built and continues to provide much referral for students with significant challenges in obtaining resources for daily necessities. Jennifer Morazes also started more than two years ago, and has built and continues to expand the First Generation outreach initiative, so that the first generation college students are getting information about the important resources on campus that will help them succeed. Dr. Colleen Johnson has been instrumental in expanding our consultation and psychological services to student athletes. In addition, she is now trained as an ASIST suicide prevention trainer, and has already trained several campus members on identifying suicide warning signs as well as having caring and effective skills to respond.

2012-2013 was the first year of our California Mental Health Services Act grant, and Dr. Wei-Chien Lee has worked tirelessly in creating and expanding several prevention programs on campus (e.g., expanding our Mental Health Ambassadors and Thousand Stars peer trainings). As part of this grant, she and Dr. Colleen Johnson became trained as ASIST trainers, and Dr. Lee and Ms. Tova Feldmanstern are both Query, Persuade, Refer (QPR) certified suicide prevention trainers.

In addition to these new ventures, our counselors continue to provide excellent counseling and psychological services and to collaborate across campus, e.g., in facilitating numerous alcohol education courses with our campus Wellness Program partners; co-lead Mental Health First Aid trainings with various trainers across campus; etc. We are excited to be able to offer these prevention and intervention services, and look forward to continuing to collaborate with campus partners to contribute toward SJSU students’ academic and personal successes.

Ellen Lin, Ph.D., Director of Counseling Services
Mission Statement of the Educational Program: Counseling Services Educational Programs provides student success and life skills that promote academic success. Our program assists students in navigating the university by informing them of SJSU resources and policies and serving as a bridge to personal counseling to help students’ overall well-being. We work with students on an on-going basis to create tailored educational plans to meet their goals.

Educational Programs accomplished many goals this last academic school year. We surveyed our most at-risk students to get their feedback regarding Educational Programs. Some of the comments about Educational Programs by respondents were:

“…(Last year) was a very difficult time for me and I was able to remain in school due to the help of the counseling services that I took advantage of.”

“Having regular appointments with my counselor gives me someone to personally hold me accountable. My counselor has also provided me with valuable information to help me improve my GPA.”

Some results from the Survey can also be seen below.

We also offered 61 Spartan Success workshops on topics such as time management, study skills, stress management and much more. We had a total of 605 students attend our workshops. The average score for effectiveness of our workshops was 4.53 out of 5, with 5 being the highest possible score.

In addition to the Spartan Success series, we also presented 26 workshops and programs to various departments on campus and were able to reach approximately 731 students. In total, Educational Counselors were able to reach approximately 1,336 students through all of our workshops and programs offered. Educational Counseling also added two new Groups to Counseling Services: The First-Generation Student Group and the UNICAS: Women of Color Empowerment Group. These groups allow the target population to develop connections, gain a sense of belonging on campus, and obtain valuable life skills to succeed on campus.

This year we were also able to expand our services to First-Generation college students. Educational Counselor Jennifer Morazes and AVP of Student Affairs Art King were awarded a grant for the “I-Relate campaign,” which funded the development of a video that shares the experiences of first-generation college students at SJSU. In addition, Generate held its second annual family night event in Fall 2012.

Veronica Hand, M.A. Coordinator for Educational Programs
Counseling Services provides short-term confidential personal counseling to the students of San José State University. Personal counselors help students identify and accomplish their academic goals, enhance personal development, meet life’s challenges, and improve interpersonal relationships. We do this through services such as individual, couple, and group psychotherapy sessions; crisis intervention sessions; outreach presentations; workshops; and consultation for students, parents, faculty, staff, and community members.

Counseling Services continues to be a department that is highly utilized by students. During the 2012-13 Academic-Year, demand for personal counseling continued to increase with 1420 students seeking personal counseling. That’s an increase of 15% for personal counseling compared to the past two years.

The top five reasons students sought personal counseling were to address anxiety, stress, academic concerns, depression, worry, and difficulty concentrating. Five hundred and seven students who sought counseling reported considering suicide sometime in their life while a concerning 148 students actually attempted suicide. Students who utilized personal counseling met with a personal counselor for an average of 4.5 sessions.

To address the increase in demand, Counseling Services continued its successful group therapy and workshops services. Last year, we provided general process groups, mindfulness groups, an anxiety group, an LGBT support group, an international student support group, a men’s group, and a social skills group. Additionally, numerous workshops and presentations were provided addressing test-taking skills, time management, stress management, community resources, and housing assistance.

Counseling Services also expanded its clinical services by hiring a licensed clinical social worker, Tova Feldmanstern, in summer 2012. Ms. Feldmanstern assisted students, faculty, and staff by providing consultation services and referrals in the areas of housing, food, financial, and medical services. The addition of a clinical social worker is proving to be an invaluable service to the university community as more students struggle to survive in the Bay Area. Additionally, we continue to provide outreach into the campus community by operating a few satellite offices in Royce Hall and the Accessible Education Center, previously called the Disability Resource Center. These offices offer individual personal counseling, educational counseling, and consultation services. It also allows the campus community greater accessibility of our counseling services.

Finally, students who seek personal counseling continue to be seen immediately in a triage/assessment appointment. These appointments allow counselors to implement short-term interventions and assess high risk concerns. Unfortunately, due to the high demand of students wanting personal counseling, we continue to have a wait list. However, we are pleased to announce that our wait list is down 40% from the previous two years, and our current wait time for students receiving an appointment is an average of 3 days. We are happy to be able to respond quickly to students’ needs.
accreditation. This recognition speaks to the enduring excellence and robustness of the training program, and commitment of the University to supporting students with skilled staff and trainees. Consistent with previous years, our program had a full set of trainees that consisted of two post-doctoral residents, four pre-doctoral interns, and two practicum doctoral students. These graduate and postgraduate students came from various private professional schools in the Bay Area, such as Alliant University, the Wright Institute, and PGSP – Stanford Psy.D. Consortium. In addition, we are thrilled to have Dr. Yu-Ping Huang, a post-doctoral resident from San José State University last year, and Dr. Alexandria Gerrick, from the University of California, Berkeley, joining our training program team as faculty counselors.

The academic year had a running start as Counseling Services hosted the 5th Annual Multicultural Training Day Conference. The annual conference focuses on multiple student mental health issues. This past year’s topics focused on Asian American Women’s Body Image Issues, Counseling African American Men in College, and the Challenging Lives of Immigrants in the U.S. More than a hundred graduate, postgraduate students, faculty, and staff attended the conference. The feedback received indicated that once again, we provided an excellent training conference, and bay area university counseling center professionals expressed much appreciation for this annual conference focusing on multicultural and social justice issues.

As usual, the full set of trainees in our program allowed Counseling Services to meet the ever growing service demands requested by the campus. For example, our trainees provided counseling to 862 clients last year, which is a significant percentage of our overall client population. In addition to individual and couple counseling, trainees offered several themed group therapy to students, such as a meditation group, and women’s and men’s support groups. They also presented prevention workshops to classrooms and students on topics such as stress management and overcoming procrastination. Our trainees also actively participated and assisted in several campus outreach activities such as the Tunnel of Oppression debrief facilitation and being a counselor at Raising Sexual Assault Awareness events, in case any students start to experience trauma.

Because our training program’s main goals are to provide additional mental health services to the SJSU campus and to provide service to the community by providing high quality learning experiences for future mental health professionals, we prioritize training of our trainees for work with our students and in our diverse world. We utilize a practitioner model of training which focuses on the acquisition of clinical skills, the development of cultural sensitivity, and awareness of self and ethical issues. After completing a year with us, many trainees have been placed successfully at various locations, such as Kaiser Permanente and University of California, Los Angeles to name a few. Next year, we are excited to announce another full training program, and we are excited to integrate the new cohort’s expertise and interests to meet the mental health demands of our wonderful campus.

Stephen Chen, Psy. D. Training Coordinator

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