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counseling & career services
director’s welcome

Counseling and Career Services is pleased to present the 2009 Annual Report. This is the second edition of the report printed for distribution across campus. It is also available in electronic format which may be requested at my rbusby@sfasu.edu email address.

We are now witnessing the benefits to students and to the university community of adding two mental health counselors and a career counselor in recent years. One may read in professional or commercial publications about the dramatic increase in demand for mental health services on college campuses across the country. 93.4% of college counseling directors in The National Survey of Counseling Directors 2009 indicate that greater numbers of students with severe psychological problems seeking counseling services continues to be true. SFA Counseling Services is now in a better position to meet the mental health needs of students, to respond to mental health emergencies, to provide psycho-educational presentations and to support the retention efforts of the university in many ways.

The career counselor assists hundreds of students from the SFA 101 classes as they begin to explore career alternatives or as they affirm choices already made. Many times students enter the university with a vague idea of what they want to do, but as they begin to take courses in that direction it becomes clear to them that they need to explore alternatives. Additionally, students are referred by professors, staff and friends and the result is that in many cases we re-recruit our own students. These are folks who may have gotten discouraged and dropped out, but career counseling assists them to discover possibilities that are rewarding and fulfilling.

In addition the work of Counseling and Career Services continues. Career Services is facing a particular challenge this year in terms of providing opportunities for students to interview with recruiters from business, industry, government and education. The recession continues unabated and the impact is statewide as well as nationwide. As we contact other universities in our region all are facing similar difficulties. It was my pleasure to write two articles for our SFA Career Services website, http://www.sfasu.edu/ccs/careerservices/, the first titled Getting a Job and the second titled Getting a Job In a Recession. It is my desire to lay out a plan and to encourage those who are struggling to read and adopt some of the strategies that will assist them as they approach this difficult job market.

Testing Services reports that computer based testing doubled in the last three years. We are very grateful to our Vice President of University Affairs, Steve Westbrook, for supporting every effort that we made to increase these important services to SFA students. We began computer based testing in 1996 with four computers administering THEA/TASP. We now have 40 computers delivering examinations on a daily basis and with administrative computers and servers there are 48 total in Testing Services alone. What will the next 13 years bring to testing?

Student Employment Services continues to offer part-time job postings for on and off campus jobs. They also work with students seeking full time summer jobs and internships.

Spring 2010 will find our staff in each unit continuing regular responsibilities and adding CAS/SAGS (The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education/Self Assessment Guides) reviews to their duties. This is a comprehensive review of each program and they will work tirelessly to accomplish the review, determine the strengths, and develop action plans for areas that need attention. This will be completed just in time for the SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) accreditation.

It was my distinct pleasure to serve on the CAS Board of Directors for six years ending Fall 2009. I trust that our effort in this review will allow us to be all that we can be in our service to students and to the university.

Our Administrative Assistant, Kristina Sage, is a joy to us all. She works tirelessly to see that everything we ask of her is completed competently, in a timely fashion and in a way that furthers the work in our office. She is completing her tenure as the President of the University Professional Women’s group on campus and we applaud her efforts in every way.

Ralph Busby

Director of Counseling and Career Services
Stephen F. Austin State University Mission Statement
Stephen F. Austin State University is a comprehensive institution dedicated to excellence in teaching, research, scholarship, creative work, and service. Through the personal attention of our faculty and staff, we engage our students in a learner-centered environment and offer opportunities to prepare for the challenges of living in the global community.

University Affairs Mission Statement
The Division of University Affairs supports the development of a learner-centered environment for SFA students by providing co-curricular PROGRAMS that create opportunities for students to engage in active learning; by the creation of a friendly and welcoming environment through ACTIVITIES that strengthen students’ connections to the institution and each other; by providing SERVICES to enhance the success of our students as they pursue their academic and personal goals, and by providing the FACILITIES that support these goals.

Student Affairs Mission Statement
The Department of Student Affairs strives to fulfill the university’s mission through personal connections with students, creating engaging and dynamic learning opportunities and providing programs and services designed to help students meet their personal and academic goals.

Counseling and Career Services Mission Statement
Counseling and Career Services’ mission is to assist students to discover career goals, prepare for careers in their chosen fields, to provide testing in order for students to meet their educational goals, to assist enrolled students in securing part-time employment opportunities on or off campus, and to assist students in functioning more effectively by helping them define and achieve their personal and academic goals.

our mission... to help students.
career services

The primary purpose of Career Services is to aid students in developing, evaluating, and effectively initiating and implementing career plans which is a process that will be fostered during the entire period of a student’s involvement with SFA.

Sheri Mullican, M.A., LPC
Licensed Professional Counselor
Associate Director of Counseling and Career Services

Jenny Davis
Assistant Director of Career Services

Jennifer Ewing, M.A., LPC, NCC
Licensed Professional Counselor
Career Counselor and Research Coordinator

Haley Hoskins
Interview Coordinator

Staff Awards and Achievements

The staff of Career Services strives to do anything possible for students’ growth and development. Not only do the staff perform the daily tasks of their jobs, they also participate in organizations, both on and off campus, in order to grow personally and professionally. This, in turn, benefits the students we serve. We would like to acknowledge the Career Services staff for the hard work and dedication to the students, the University, and the community.

Sheri Mullican works throughout the week fulfilling the many functions of Counseling and Career Services, SFA, and the Nacogdoches Community. She is a member of several professional organizations: Southern Association of Colleges and Employers, National Association of Colleges and Employers, Society for Human Resource Managers, Nacogdoches County Chamber of Commerce, Texas Counseling Association, Piney Woods Counseling Association, University Professional Women (UPW), and the SFA Alumni Association. Sheri is NCC eligible. Sheri attended several Houston Area Consortium of Career Centers (HACCC) Drive-In Conferences and meetings. She also attended the SoACE Conference in Nashville, TN, in December. Because budgets are much tighter these days, she participated in many professional development opportunities via teleconference. In an effort to prepare for the upcoming SACS accreditation, Sheri works on the department’s CAS internal audit. Sheri supports the University by serving on many committees and programs. She serves as the Title IX Coordinator for the University, and served on numerous search committees for new employees of SFA throughout this past year. She is a member of the Student Retention Workgroup, and she represents Counseling and Career Services as a member of the Student Process Implementation Team for the Banner conversion to Axcess. She is an SFA 101 instructor, assisting freshmen students with their transition into college life. Sheri lends her vocal talents to the University by performing the SFA Alma Mater at Spirit Rallies during Summer Orientations.
**Jenny Davis** also stays active with campus and professional organizations, and she is no stranger to lending a helping hand in the community. Jenny is a member of Southern Association of Colleges and Employers, National Association of Colleges and Employers, the Society for Human Resource Managers, UPW, and is a Life Member of the SFA Alumni Association. She attended several professional conferences throughout the year. She attended several HACCC drive-in conferences and meetings. In December Jenny attended the SoACE Conference held in Nashville, TN, in addition to several professional development webinars. In an effort to prepare for the upcoming SACS accreditation, Jenny works on the department’s CAS internal audit. While not performing duties associated with the University, Jenny participates as a member of Junior Forum. She put her artistic talents to use serving on the Decorating Committee for Holiday in the Pines. She also delivers meals to the elderly through Meals on Wheels. The highlight of 2009 for Jenny, however, was the birth of her daughter, Campbell Lane, in January. Jenny made the flawless transition from valued employee to working mother, and we have all been delighted to welcome Campbell into the CCS family!

**Jennifer Ewing** continues to define her relatively new position within Counseling and Career Services. She assists students with choosing their majors, changing their majors, or helping them discover occupational avenues which match the majors they’ve chosen. She also continues to be deeply involved in assessment within the department. Jennifer was asked to be part of the Assessment Committee for University Affairs and will take on those duties beginning in February of 2010. Jennifer spent a great deal of time entering our assessment data into the new system, Trac Dat, in preparation for SACS accreditation. In addition to those duties, she assists in the departmental internal audit process by aligning our services with CAS standards. She attended the HACCC Drive-In Conference in Houston in July and the SoACE Conference held in Nashville, TN, in December. Due to the economy and tightened budgets, she also participated in several professional development opportunities via teleconference. Jennifer is a member of the Southern Association of Colleges and Employers, American Counseling Association, Texas Counseling Association, Pineywoods Counseling Association, and UPW. Jennifer taught SFA 101 in the fall 2009 semester, and presented career assessment presentations to nearly 1100 freshmen students in the fall.

**Haley Hoskins** began her tenure with Counseling and Career Services in January of 2009. She coordinates interviews on campus for our students and makes sure that students and recruiters have all they might need during their time here with us. She also critiques students’ resumes and cover letters so that they can give employers the best first impression possible. As a Marketing Major, scheduled to graduate in May of 2010, she lends her artistic and marketing talents by assisting the department with the promotion of our services. She has worked many overtime hours offering professional workshops and presentations to our students so that they are more prepared for Career Fairs, Interviews, and other opportunities that might lead to our students obtaining employment. Haley is a member of the National Association for Colleges and Employers, Southern Association of Colleges and Employers, and Society for Human Resource Managers. She attended several HACCC Drive-In Conferences and meetings throughout the year and several professional development webinars. In an effort to prepare for the upcoming SACS accreditation, Haley works on the department’s CAS internal audit. Haley is a member of Chi Omega sorority and is the Co-Chair for the Make A Wish Foundation’s fundraiser, Swish for a Wish. She also served on the Welcome Week Planning Committee.
Ongoing Goals and Objectives

By now, no one will be surprised to hear that the economy had a significantly negative impact on Career Services. Hiring is down, starting salaries are down, and therefore, recruiting opportunities have decreased. We saw 16% fewer companies at the Spring Career Fair and 25% fewer companies at the Fall Career Fair. We saw 8% fewer school districts at the Spring Teacher Job Fair and 11% fewer school districts at the Fall Teacher Job Fair. While these numbers are tough to swallow, they’re not out of line with what other universities are experiencing. Career Services has proactively sought education about hiring and recruiting trends so that we may better prepare our students. One way we’ve accommodated our students and recruiters is by offering a separate Accounting Fair in the Fall of 2009. Response to this change was positive, so we will most likely continue with this trend next Fall.

One hiring trend that has changed is the need for students to have more diverse experience. Employers are looking for flexibility in employees so that if the need arises for them to move to a different division within the company, they can transition smoothly. One way students gain that diverse experience is through internships. It benefits students to participate in more than one internship. We have two main portals for students to learn about internship opportunities. One place is the Vault Career Insider. Vault has a National Internship Database with thousands of internship opportunities in a variety of industries all over the country and abroad. Career Services also posts internships on Jobs4Jacks.

We take seriously our responsibility to inform students of any changes in these hiring trends. Fewer employment opportunities are available to students, yet the number of people seeking jobs has not reduced which increases competition for the jobs that are available. We provide workshops to students on a variety of topics so that students will know exactly what employers are looking for in their candidates. We collaborated with several recruiters who have generously donated their time and effort to provide these workshops to our students free of charge. In addition, students may need to lower their expectations regarding salary. According to the Fall 2009 edition of Career Rookie Magazine, 21% of employers will offer a lower starting salary than they did in 2008. In addition, 69% of employers will offer starting salaries at $40,000 and below. Students need to seriously evaluate their values and realize that the employment goals they had when they started school may no longer be realistic.

Of course, Career Services does more than organize career fairs during the year. We also educate students about the services available to them and the purpose of these services. 39 presentations were given to over 1,800 students detailing the services available through Career Services such as job search strategies, career exploration and career success. 2,761 students registered with Career Services’ online system, Jobs 4 Jacks, and 6,233 maintain an active registration status with Jobs4Jacks (J4J). In order to get this sort of traffic, we need to advertise our services. We distributed the brochure, A Career Planning Checklist through the Admissions Office at college nights, and special event fliers were posted throughout academic buildings and student services buildings. Posters were placed in the Baker Pattillo Student Center (BPSC) and the lobbies of buildings on campus advertising events and highlighting new services. We purchased ad space during on-campus movies and various publications across campus were also utilized. Articles concerning Career Services and coverage of the major events it sponsored were published in the Pine Log and The Daily Sentinel. Programs and informational interviews were produced for both the campus radio station, KSAU, and the campus TV station. Feature stories also ran on the local ABC affiliate and local radio stations. Departmental newsletters are created bi-annually and sent to all students via email and are also available for pick up in our office. The newsletter features tips on job searching, successful interviewing,
navigating a career fair, and reminders of upcoming events.

We distributed over 1,500 magazines to students during the year. These included the NACE annual JOB Choices publication, Job Postings Magazine, GradSource, and Career Planning Guide. Part of our responsibility in assisting students to obtain occupational and career information is to maintain a career resource library with up-to-date information regarding career opportunities, employment trends, and job search strategies for students’ review and research. Our career library includes career related magazines, periodicals, and books representing a variety of career topics. Last year, we provided a new resource to students – The Vault Online Career Library. In December we upgraded this resource, and it is now The Vault Career Insider. While students still have access to the Vault 24 hours a day, it is now more accessible to our alumni because we relocated it to our Jobs4Jacks site. The Vault Career Insider still contains downloadable e-books, career advice articles, industry research, company research, career surveys, a national internship database, and sample resumes and cover letters, but it is now customizable which allows for deeper personalization of the site. It now contains a news feed and other information that is relevant to the user’s interests. Based on their saved company profiles, articles, job and industry information, Vault is able to further sync interests to opportunities. We provide internet resources on our webpage www.sfasu.edu/ccs/careerservices covering internships, resume/cover letter writing, job postings, interviewing, graduate schools, career dress, and general information.

A wonderful tool we provide to our students is Perfect Interview Software. This software is utilized as an interview simulator, which gives students experience in interviewing prior to interviewing with potential employers. It also allows students to critique their own performance, and if they wish, a staff member from Career Services can also critique the interview for them. 120 students used Perfect Interview in 2009, which is a decrease, but more students took advantage of Mock Interviews. Utilization of Mock Interviews increased 20% over last year.

Last year, Career Services hired a full-time Career Counselor and Research Coordinator, Jennifer Ewing. Having a staff member dedicated to Career Counseling allowed for many more students with major and career concerns to be served than in the previous years. Her job is to assist students in choosing a major, changing a major, or figuring out an appropriate occupation that fits with the major the student has chosen. One of the tools utilized in this process is an occupational inventory. The Strong Interest Inventory matches students with potential occupations based on their interests. The Typefocus matches students with potential occupations based on their personality type. Sigi 3 can match students to an occupation based on several factors: personality type, interests, skills, or values. It can also be utilized to research various occupations without taking an inventory at all. Many SFA 101 classes opted to take either the Strong or the Typefocus. Jennifer provided career interpretations to 47 SFA 101 sections, reaching 1093 students! In addition to the career interpretations, she saw 170 new clients and conducted 360 individual sessions. Career counseling appointments increased by 45% in 2009.

We developed a new system for critiquing resumes and cover letters for students. 385 students or alumni sought assistance with critiquing a resume, cover letter, personal statement, or letter of intent. This is 39% more than 2008. We analyzed students’ improvement in writing their resumes by using a Pre-Test/Post-Test system. We then conducted statistical analysis, utilizing a T-Test. Students had the most difficulty originally with using proper grammatical tense. However, after using our resume critique services, students improved significantly in this area. Students also improved significantly in the area of properly including their work history.
Learning and Development Outcomes

In addition to our ongoing goals and objectives, Career Services articulated 11 Learning and Development Outcomes (LDOs), 4 more than in 2008. These LDOs state what we anticipate students should know or be able to do as a result of participating in Career Services. All LDOs are assessed by providing students and/or employers/recruiters brief surveys to complete at various times, depending on the event in which they are participating. Next, the results were analyzed to determine if the LDOs were met, thereby allowing us to determine areas of strength as well as areas of relative weakness. Results are analyzed at various points throughout the year in order to understand if and when we need to amend policies and services in order to provide the most beneficial services possible to our clients.

Career Services LDOs are as follows:

- Upon completion of the SFA 101 assessment interpretation, a student will be able to list three occupations compatible with their personality or interest.
- Upon utilizing Career Services resume writing resources, a student will be able to create a resume/cover letter which meets professional standards.
- After utilizing the resources of Career Services, a student will be able to express organizational competence by articulating knowledge of the employer and industry during an On-Campus Interview.
- After utilizing the resources of Career Services, the student will be able to articulate their strengths, experience and skills to a recruiter in an On-Campus Interview.
- As a result of participating in a Career Services workshop, a student will be able to integrate knowledge and skills acquired to modify behavior that meets professional standards.
- Upon utilizing Career Services resume writing resources, a student will be able to demonstrate an increased knowledge of the objective and framework of a resume.
- After utilizing Career Services online resources, a student will be able to integrate the provided information into the process of selecting a major and/or career path.
- After participating in SFA career fair events, a student will be able to identify employers with whom they have established professional rapport.
- After interacting with recruiters at SFA career fair events, a student will feel a greater sense of independence and empowerment in their ability to contact potential employers.
- Upon completion of the On-Campus Interview process, a student will be able to accurately rate the likelihood of receiving a job offer or advancement to the next hiring phase.
- As a result of providing professional workshops, a student will be able to identify areas for improvement.

Program Activity and Assessment Findings

Through the hiring of a new Career Counselor and Research Coordinator in July of 2007, Career Services has increased their ability to counsel students whose needs are more strictly focused on career/major. This has also taken some of the load off of our mental health counselors so that they may assist more students with issues unrelated to major or career. Because of the trend to base more services on research and to be able to evaluate objective data, our Career Counselor/Research Coordinator spends much of her time assisting everyone in Counseling and Career Services with creating assessment tools appropriate for this type of evaluation.
Due to the LDOs not being implemented until early August of 2008, some aspects of our data collection were limited. This is our first year to have more complete data. Our Career Fairs during the 2008-2009 Academic Year yielded 92 Recruiter Evaluations and 553 Student/Alumni evaluations. In keeping with our LDOs, we asked recruiters their opinion of the professional behavior displayed by our students (i.e., handshake, eye contact, dress/hygiene, and verbal skills). 71% expressed that students’ handshakes were above average to high in quality. 79.35% stated the students’ eye contact was above average to high in quality. 73% stated that the students’ dress/hygiene was above average to high in quality, and 84% stated that the students’ verbal skills were above average to high in quality. Staff discussed reasons why we may have gotten some of these results, and there certainly seems to be room for improvement. We decided that we should provide professional workshops to students prior to the Career Fairs so that they will have a better understanding of professional behavior when they meet and interact with recruiters, and we began our workshop series in the Fall. Upon analyzing the numbers from our Fall 2009 Career Events, recruiters rated 83.1% of students’ handshakes were above average to high in quality. They rated 92.2% of students’ eye contact as above average to high in quality, 82% of students’ dress/hygiene was above average to high in quality, and 92.3% of students’ verbal skills were above average to high in quality. It appears as though these workshops have helped our students make a better impression with the recruiters at our career events! We also encourage students to attend these Career Fairs, whether or not they are ready to pursue a job, so that they can gain experience in talking to potential recruiters. Although we instruct everyone, through mail outs and advertisements, to dress professionally, we discussed becoming more proactive in getting that message out to all students who attend the Career Fair. We followed through in Fall 2009 and required professional dress before allowing students entry at the Career Fairs. For the students and alumni who attended the Career Fairs in 2009, we found that 96.56% met and interacted with recruiters quite a bit or very much, and 94.36% felt quite a bit or very much more empowered and confident.

When we reviewed our LDOs in the summer of 2009, one LDO we looked closely at dealt with students listing 3 employers they visited with and the positions available from that company. Because such a large proportion of students did not match 3 employers with positions available, we wondered whether we asked the right question. We eventually determined that it is more important that students establish professional rapport with recruiters and expand their networking connections than it is for them to seek out positions strictly in their area of study, particularly in an economy where flexibility and networking connections is more key than ever. Therefore, beginning in the Fall of 2009, we asked students to list 3 recruiters and their companies with whom students had established a professional rapport. Again, the results were somewhat disappointing. Over 65% of respondents did not list anyone. 17.2% could match 1 employer and company, 9.4% matched 2, and 7.8% matched 3 recruiters with their companies. As we saw before, students were much more likely to either list 3 recruiters OR 3 companies, and some listed up to 4, but they were not likely to list both. This simply means we have more work to do with our students. We have discussed stressing in our workshops the importance of meeting and developing a professional rapport with many employers, even if it is with an employer or a company that the student isn’t initially interested in.

We saw more success with the Teacher Job Fair. We collected 97 evaluations from recruiters and 324 evaluations from students and alumni. Upon evaluating recruiter responses, we found that 86.6% stated that the Teacher Job Fair was quite a bit or very much helpful in meeting prospective employees, and the majority were returning recruiters. We also saw improvement with the rating our recruiters attributed to the students’ professional behavior. 88.7% expressed the students’ handshakes were above average to high in quality. 94.9% expressed the same opinion of their eye contact, 85.5% expressed the students dress and hygiene were of above average or high quality, and 95.9% responded favorably to their verbal skills.
Students showed improvement in each of these categories, but they demonstrated the most improvement in their eye contact which increased by 6.7%. From the students’ perspective, we received more good news. 84.6% stated that the Job Fair was very much or quite a bit helpful in meeting recruiters, and 90.4% stated that they feel quite a bit or very much more empowered and confident after attending the Job Fair. After reviewing results at the end of the 2008-2009 academic year, we changed how we ask some of the questions. Previously, we asked how much they met and interacted with recruiters. What we found was a discrepancy between the students’ impressions of their professional behavior and the recruiters’ impressions, presumably because we were not asking the questions identically of both students and recruiters. We began asking the questions identically in the Fall semester. The results weren’t too far apart. Comparing data from the Fall Teacher Job Fair only, recruiters rated 92.5% of students’ handshakes as above average to high, compared to 94.3% of students rating themselves the same way. Regarding eye contact, recruiters rated students more favorably than they rated themselves. 95.5% of recruiters rated eye contact as above average to high and 91.5% of students rated themselves the same way. Recruiters rated students’ dress and hygiene as above average or high 92.5% of the time, compared to 95.4% of students. Another area in which recruiters gave higher marks to students than they gave themselves was in reference to verbal skills. Recruiters rated 97.5% of students as having above average to high verbal skills, and students gave themselves the same rating 93.7% of the time. Where we were disappointed with our general Career Fair regarding students’ ability to list 3 employers of high interest, we obtained better results with this question in the Teacher Job Fair. 76.8% of the students listed at least 3 employers of highest interest. Only 8% did not respond to the question. One last bit of information regarding the importance of the Career Events, students expressed a significantly greater amount of confidence and feelings of empowerment regarding their ability to contact potential employers. By means of a Paired Samples T-Test, we demonstrated significant difference at the .000 level.

On the Career Counseling front, we have documented a lot of learning on the students’ part. Last year, we created and implemented pre and post surveys, and we continued to collect and analyze by their respective groups. We then matched pairs to document the change due to counseling. In every case, regarding every question asked on the survey, students came away with significantly more knowledge (at the .000 level for those of you interested in statistics!) than they had previously. We asked 6 questions related to the client’s ability to distinguish an appropriate major and career based on their personality or interests; where to find, and how to use, resources to investigate various careers and majors offered at SFA; whether or not the student knows where to go for assistance with job search and interviews; and the level of the clients’ confidence that they are on the right path regarding having chosen a satisfying major that will lead to a satisfying career. In a similar vein, we wanted to determine how many students could list 3 occupations that match with their personality and/or interests after listening to their career inventory interpretations in the SFA 101 classes. 778 students participated in this activity, and 97.5% could list at least 3 occupations!

Overall, we had a successful year in Career Services although economic realities portend continued employment difficulties. We look forward to another year of helping students reach their goals.
counseling services

Counseling Services assists students in functioning more effectively in the University environment by helping them define and achieve their personal and academic goals. We work with staff, faculty and administrators to improve the quality of the student living and learning environment at Stephen F. Austin State University.

Jill Milem, M.Ed., LPC
Licensed Professional Counselor
Assistant Director of Counseling Services and Clinical Director

Charlotte Jackson, M.A., LPC
Licensed Professional Counselor

Nicole Preston, M.S., LPC, NCC
Licensed Professional Counselor

Binta Lorde, M.A., LPC, NCC
Licensed Professional Counselor
National Certified Counselor

Ron Smith, M.A., LPC, NCC
Licensed Professional Counselor

Staff Awards and Achievements

Counseling Services staff strives to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to better serve the SFA community, and most importantly, the students pursuing their educations here. 2009 was no exception to the rule. Below, we would like to acknowledge the Counseling staff for the work and dedication to the students, the University, the community, and to the Counseling profession.

Jill Milem is in her second year as Assistant Director of Counseling Services/Clinical Director. She served as the leader of the Suicide Prevention/Mental Health and Wellness Workgroup. Jill is a QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Certified Gatekeeper Instructor, is certified in First Aid and CPR, and is National Certified Counselor (NCC) eligible. Jill is an SFA 101 Instructor, assisting our freshmen students in their transition into college life. Jill is a member of the Texas Counseling Association as well as the Piney Woods Counseling Association.

Charlotte Jackson assisted the Fall 2009 move-in process by passing out cold water to hot students and parents. Charlotte was also a speaker in a Diversity Forum for the Family Crisis Center. Along with her counseling team, she passed out information to students during Suicide Intervention Awareness Week. She continues to be the advisor for the Pride Nac student organization. Charlotte is a QPR Certified Gatekeeper Instructor, is certified in First Aid and CPR and is NCC eligible. Charlotte updates and organizes the Mental Health Library, which allows students access to material to help them progress in their treatment in Counseling Services outside of their individual sessions. Charlotte is a member of the Piney Woods Counseling Association. Charlotte is excitedly anticipating the birth of her first grandchild who is due on September 25, 2010!
Nicole Preston is licensed in the state of Texas as well as a Nationally Certified Counselor. Along with her responsibilities in Counseling Services, she also chairs the Alcohol Prevention/Harm Reduction team. She is also a QPR Certified Gatekeeper Instructor and is certified in AED and CPR. Nicole coordinates Coffee/Cookies with the Counselors, a networking opportunity for SFA faculty and staff that allows for answers for counseling questions and collaborations in order to better serve our students. She is an SFA 101 instructor, assisting freshmen students in their transition into college life. She is a member of the Piney Woods Counseling Association and University Professional Women (UPW). Nicole also organized a division wide Penny War, which sparked our competition and philanthropy. This year Student Affairs raised over $900 to donate to United Way. Nicole also serves as advisor for Big Jacks and Jack2Jack. Big Jacks has won organization of the year and Ms. Preston has won advisor of the year. These awards were earned twice since 2006.

Binta Lorde is a QPR Certified Gatekeeper Instructor and National Certified Counselor and recently successfully completed the training to become a Certified Anger Resolution Therapist. She served as a mentor to SFA students for Martin Luther King Service for a Day project. She spent much of her time working closely with the Multicultural Center by assisting in the support group for African American females - Sister Circle. Binta also taught SFA 101 in the Fall. She coordinated the “Love Your Genes, Love Yourself” program in recognition of National Eating Disorder Awareness Week. She is a member of the Piney Woods Counseling Association and UPW. In addition, Binta serves as the advisor for the Caribbean Student Association, a student organization.

Ron Smith is a Licensed Professional Counselor and became a National Certified Counselor, as well as a Certified Anger Resolution Therapist, this year and remains a QPR Certified Gatekeeper Instructor. Ron is a member of the American Counseling Association, Texas Counseling Association, Texas College Counseling Association, and Piney Woods Counseling Association. Ron also works for SFA as an Adjunct Instructor teaching one section of Educational Psychology. Before returning to SFA in 2007, Ron provided counseling services to victims of domestic violence, child abuse, and sexual assault for a crisis center in East Texas.
Ongoing Goals and Objectives

Counseling Services monitors services and data continually in order to maintain the high standards at which we operate. Not only do we provide individual and group counseling, we also make ourselves available to academic classes, campus organizations, and other departments on the SFA campus to provide outreach programs on a variety of mental health topics to address the developmental concerns of students. We maintain a Referral Guide on our website at www.sfasu.edu/ccs so that all students, faculty, and staff can access the information 24 hours a day. Counseling Services’ website includes a campus/community and national referral guide for students and visitors to the site. This includes a self-help resource page as well as a confidential e-mail address that can be accessed by faculty, staff, students, families, and the community. Our brochure contains emergency information, the services we provide, the various issues students face where counseling would be beneficial, information on the counselors, and includes University Police and the MHMR Crisis Hotline numbers.

Suicide is a concern for all of us, whether it be personally, campus wide, community wide, or nationwide. Counseling Services continues to provide Crisis Intervention in cooperation with other university services. We constructed an informational letter to provide students who require a hospital/counselor visit as well as an incident report. 108 hours of counseling sessions were completed with clients indicating some level of suicidal ideation. This is an increase of 59%. We realize that not all students experiencing suicidal ideation will seek help from a counselor; therefore, we dedicated 61.65 hours training and preparing to present QPR, a Suicide Intervention and Training Program. The counselors facilitated 39 trainings (64% over last year) for 591 faculty, staff, and students (47% more than last year).

Learning and Development Outcomes

In addition to our ongoing goals and objectives, Counseling Services articulated 5 Learning and Development Outcomes (LDOs). These LDOs state what we anticipate the clients should know or be able to do as a result of participating in counseling. All LDOs are assessed by providing students with brief surveys to complete throughout the semester. Next, the results are analyzed to determine if the LDOs were met, thereby allowing us to determine areas of strength as well as areas of relative weakness. Results are analyzed at various points throughout the year in order to understand if and when we need to amend policies and services in order to provide the most beneficial services possible to our clients.

Counseling Services LDOs are as follows:
  • As a result of counseling, the student will express a greater ability to communicate thoughts and feelings effectively.
  • As a result of counseling, the student will demonstrate change in behavior making them more productive and proficient to reach their personal and life goals.
  • As a result of counseling, the student will demonstrate the ability to achieve their educational goals.
  • As a result of counseling, the student will express improved self-esteem.
  • As a result of counseling, the student will take steps to make healthy and more balanced choices regarding emotional, intellectual, and spiritual health.
Program Activity and Assessment Findings

Counseling Services provided 2,469 hours of individual sessions in 2009. While this number is down slightly from last year, we saw a significant increase in hours spent with outreach programs (increase of 13%), support groups (increase of 30%) and QPR Training (increase of 77%). The counselors also assisted students with a wider variety of personal issues than was possible just a year ago. One extremely important service provided to SFA faculty, staff, and students is the QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Training. The counselors provided approximately 87 hours of training designed to provide the appropriate tools to the participants to aid students and colleagues suffering from depression who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts so that these students and/or colleagues can access the help and support necessary to save their lives. Not only did participants comment on the amount of knowledge gained through the training, many stated that they would like to see the training reach more people on the SFA campus, which most certainly is our goal. Some participants also believed the training to be so helpful that they suggested the training be provided to teachers at the High School and Junior High levels. Our data indicates that 905 QPR gatekeepers have been trained since the inception of the program in August 2008 through December 2009.

Counselors continued to host Coffee With the Counselors/Cookies With the Counselors. The purpose of this reception, held twice each semester for 2 hours at a time, is to invite all SFA faculty and staff to our conference room on the 3rd floor of the Rusk Building to enjoy either morning or afternoon snacks and to give us all an opportunity to meet our colleagues, learn about each others’ job functions and programs, network with each other, and discover ways that we can all help the students of SFA by working together.

During the course of the year, Counseling Services assisted the University by providing individual counseling, facilitating support groups, and providing education and training to students, faculty, and staff. These topics included Suicide Prevention and Intervention, Alcohol and Drug Awareness and Abuse, Stress Management, and Sexual Attitudes. Data were collected for these endeavors.

Upon reviewing data from presentations, 97% of participants stated that they would recommend the presentation to other groups. 97% stated they learned something new, and 95% stated they gained information which would allow them to make better choices in school, work, and everyday life. We amended our QPR practices this fall to better assess learning. We gave participants an assessment prior to the presentation and one after we completed it. We found that participants understood issues and warning signs of suicide significantly better (at the .00 level) than they did before the presentation. We are pleased that those participating in QPR are better prepared to help save the lives of those contemplating suicide.

Upon evaluating the data from individual counseling sessions and presentations, we discovered many significant relationships, confirming the outstanding services our counselors provide to the SFA community. Our findings in 2008 showed that items on our survey were not necessarily always directly related to each other, although many items were interrelated. This year, our data shows many more direct relationships as demonstrated by a correlation. Clients choose to participate in counseling for a variety of reasons; therefore, some questions we ask on the survey don’t apply to them. For example, if a person seeks counseling for assistance with achieving educational goals, they may not feel they need help coping with psychologically distressful situations or in managing their emotions. What we found, however, was those who did make changes that would allow them to achieve their personal goals, whatever they might be, were also significantly better able to cope with psychologically distressful situations, manage their emotions, and
also improved significantly on every other issue we measured. This shows that our clients are becoming more balanced and psychologically healthy even if they initially believed they were functioning well in most areas of their lives.

In 2008, the items that had the greatest number of significant relationships, as indicated by a correlation, were students who stated that they have a greater ability to express their thoughts and feelings more effectively as a result of counseling and students who stated they have made changes that will allow them to achieve their personal goals as a result of counseling. This year, the item that had the greatest number of significant relationships has to do with students who stated they would return to counseling services if they needed assistance in the future. Tied for a close second were students who stated they have made changes that will allow them to achieve their personal goals and students who stated the counselor understood their concerns and provided useful information. This highlights the fact that students benefit, on more than one level, from the services our counselors provide and make positive changes in areas they may not have originally anticipated.

Our Learning and Development Outcomes Assessment is embedded in the survey provided to students receiving counseling. Prior to analyzing LDO data, we set 80% as the criterion for meeting an LDO successfully. All LDOs were met again this year. Students’ responses ranged from 80% to 100% indicating that the LDOs were met by 80% to 100% of the students. What makes these numbers more impressive is the fact, as stated previously, not every LDO will apply to every student due to their varying goals and motivation for participating in counseling. Anywhere from 10% to 19% of students stated that the questions did not apply to them. This means that the LDOs, when considering the N/A responses, were met by 90%-99.9%.
student employment

_Student Employment Center (SEC) assists students currently enrolled at Stephen F. Austin State University in securing part-time employment opportunities either on or off campus; the SEC also makes the process of hiring students for on-campus employers as efficient as possible by using the online Jobs4Jacks job posting and job search process._

Jenny Davis  
Assistant Director of Career Services

Tonna Davis  
Student Employment Coordinator

Staff Awards and Achievements

The staff members of Student Employment are generous with their time and talents, both on and off campus. They each add something special to make our University, and the communities in which the staff members live, a better place. We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Student Employment staff for their work and dedication.

Jenny Davis, as Assistant Director of Career Services, is in charge of running both Student Employment and Career Services. Please see her achievement information on the Career Services Section of the Annual Report, page 4.

Tonna Davis has an active life both on and off the SFA Campus. Her days are filled assisting students obtain part-time jobs, which requires a significant amount of planning and organization. When Tonna isn’t helping others on campus, she dedicates her life to helping others off campus. She volunteered her home for a program called Disciple Now, which consisted of young people coming into her home for a weekend. The purpose of this outreach program is to give young people a place to go and have small-group Bible studies. It is also intended to get more young people involved in their Church. Tonna visits the elderly in nursing homes and sings in her Church choir. She participated in her Church musical and lent her baking talents by preparing goodies for the Dinner Theater, which took place around Christmas. One interesting talent that Tonna possesses is her knowledge of puppets. She shares this knowledge with the youth at her Church as part of a Puppet Ministry. They also entertain the residents of nursing homes with the puppet shows that the youth have learned.
Ongoing Goals and Objectives

Before any student can obtain employment, one must understand the services available at Student Employment. We provided this information to students during all 5 summer orientation programs. The structure of Orientation changed in 2009 when students and parents attended separate sessions. The Student Employment information session became an optional program for students only. While we reached fewer students than the previous year, 800 students attended the Student Employment session of Orientation. We provided this audience with additional printed information. We also provided handouts to the Office of Financial Aid for distribution to students that frequent their office. Student Employment representatives attended both fall and spring Showcase Saturday events, sponsored by the Office of Admissions, where we distributed material and answered questions.

Student workers hold positions of great importance all over campus. They assist in day-to-day tasks which keep campus offices running smoothly. While the experience they acquire is beneficial to them because their skills will transfer to other work settings, we appreciate their effort and hard work. To show this appreciation, our office encourages our on-campus employers to reward their student employees during Student Worker Appreciation Week, which ran from April 14-20, 2009. 21 departments nominated their student workers for Student Employee of the Year. A panel of judges selected Paul Harwell from Disability Services as the winner based on performance reports and letters of recommendation. In addition, departments honored their student workers with numerous events at various times throughout the week.

Students have access to job postings through the Jobs 4 Jacks internet site. Registration is always free and allows them access to view job postings 24 hours a day. SEC also maintains a Job Vacancy board, located on the 3rd floor of the Rusk Building, which displays current positions available on and off campus. While job postings, for both on-campus and off-campus positions, decreased by 13% this year, they are still 41% higher than they were in 2007. SEC provided consultation to every student who came to our office. We showed students which jobs were open, which jobs they were eligible to apply for, and where to go in order to apply for those jobs. To help facilitate this process, we created handouts answering the most frequently asked questions about the SEC, and distributed them to students. SEC created 1,011 new Student Employment files, and overall, we maintained over 5,000 files. We provided orientation to all students as they completed their forms. We maintain relationships between employing departments partly by assisting them in filling vacant work-study and student assistant positions.

SEC conforms to all government regulations regarding I-9 laws and W-4 forms. We also comply with the rules governing on-campus student employment. SEC conducted audits to ensure students were enrolled in at least 6 credit hours and were working no more than 20 hours per week. We notified and advised students and departments when not in compliance with requirements. Several Oracle trainings for online student cards were conducted for both new users and as a refresher course for departmental staff needing to improve their skills.

Another way in which we assist students in gaining employment is by sponsoring a Summer Camp Fair. We held this fair on February 12. 12 camps from Texas, Louisiana, and Colorado attended the event, which includes 19 recruiters. 153 students participated. We advertised the Camp Fair by posting fliers in each residence hall, the Campus Recreation Center, on bulletin boards throughout campus, and by placing handbills in students’ mailboxes. We placed posters in the Campus Recreation Center and in the BPSC.
Learning and Development Outcomes

In addition to our ongoing goals and objectives, Student Employment articulated 8 Learning and Development Outcomes (LDOs). These LDOs state what we anticipate the clients should know or be able to do as a result of participating in Student Employment Services. All LDOs are assessed by providing students and on-campus employers brief surveys to complete. Students complete these surveys when they bring in their permit to work another semester. On-campus employers complete their survey at the end of the semester, when they can most accurately evaluate the performance of the student worker. The results are analyzed to determine if the LDOs were met, thereby allowing us to determine areas of strength as well as areas of relative weakness. This allows us to amend policies and services in order to provide the most beneficial services possible to our clients.

Student Employment LDOs are as follows:

- As a result of participating in student employment at the University, the student will express an increased ability to communicate professionally in a workplace setting.
- As a result of participating in student employment at the University, the student will express an improved ability to work with those who are different from themselves.
- As a result of participating in student employment at the University, the student will demonstrate ethical behavior through the accurate reporting of time worked.
- As a result of working on campus at the University, the student will demonstrate appropriate work behavior at their place of employment.
- As a result of participating in student employment at the University, the student will express having learned something that was relevant to their field of study.
- As a result of participating in student employment at the University, the student will express an improved understanding of their skills and abilities.
- Upon completion of the Student Employment paperwork, the student will indicate an understanding of the relevant portions of the F-26 policy as evidenced by their signature.
- As a result of participating in student employment at the university, the student will be able to recognize and communicate one transferrable skill acquired while employed on campus.

Program Activity and Assessment Findings

This is our 2nd year to evaluate our LDOs utilizing our Semester Follow-Up Survey and our Work Habit Evaluation. The SEC Semester Follow-Up Survey asks students about their experience working on campus, while the Work Habit Evaluation asks the employers about their experience with the student workers. We collected 228 Semester Follow Up surveys and 101 Work Habit Evaluations in 2009.

We found some promising data when analyzing the Semester Follow Up survey. 84.2% of students stated that they “quite a bit” or “very much” gained a better understanding of themselves, their skills, and their abilities. 96.5% stated that they “quite a bit” or “very much” developed the ability to get along with different types of people. 90% stated that they “quite a bit” or “very much” acquired the knowledge and skills applicable to a specific job or type of work. Upon deeper analysis, we found that the more students gained a better understanding of themselves, their skills, and their abilities, the more they seemed to also acquire knowledge and skills applicable to a specific job or type of work. They also developed a greater
ability to get along with people different from themselves. These findings are the result of a correlation performed on these items.

The good news continued with the Work Habit Evaluation. 91% stated that the student workers usually or always reported to work in a timely manner. 87% stated that the student workers usually or always gave appropriate and timely notice of absences. 85% stated that the student workers usually or always prioritized work tasks and personal matters. 87% stated that the student workers usually or always used computer resources in a professional manner. 84.2% stated that they never or only sometimes encountered problems with student employees inaccurately reporting hours worked. Upon further analysis, we found that the most significant personal qualities that our student workers possess are reporting to work in a timely manner and giving appropriate and timely notice of absences. These characteristics corresponded significantly with every other question asked of employers. Students who prioritized their work tasks and personal matters, in addition to corresponding with the above characteristics, were also more likely to use computer resources professionally and to take professional messages from phone calls and office visits. Again, we determined these findings as a result of a correlation performed on these items.

We are delighted that we are able to provide our students with such valuable opportunities for learning and growth. We are also delighted that the various departments on the SFA campus seem to be satisfied with the quality of the SFA student workers.
testing services

The primary purpose of Career Services is to aid students in developing, evaluating, and effectively initiating and implementing career plans which is a process that will be fostered during the entire period of a student’s involvement with SFA.

Cathy Simkunas, M.A.
Assistant Director of Testing Services

Christi Reeves
Coordinator of Testing and Technology

Alana Culpepper
Testing Assistant I

Staff Awards and Achievements

The staff of Testing Services maintains flexibility in their schedules and attitudes in the spirit of offering convenient testing dates and times for our clients. It is not unusual to see them in the office at 6:00 a.m. on Saturdays! They often work late hours as well. With all of this dedication to customer service, they still find time to accomplish goals, which not only add to their own personal growth, but to the growth of others. We would like to acknowledge the great job and achievements of the Testing Services Staff.

Cathy Simkunas works tirelessly to ensure that those utilizing Testing Services come away from their experience as satisfied customers. She works closely with her team and others to maintain professional standards. Cathy participates in 2 professional organizations – TACTP (Texas Association of College Testing Personnel) and NCTA (National College Testing Association).

Christi Reeves is the newest addition to Counseling and Career Services. She began working with Testing Services in September of 2009. Prior to joining our group, she worked for the Residence Life Department and The Office of the Registrar, so she is no stranger to this campus. In fact, she is also a full-time student and will graduate in May 2010 with her Bachelor’s Degree in Communication Studies. Professionally, Christi is a member of TACPT and NCTA. As if working and going to school full time weren’t enough to keep her busy, she has a busy home life with her husband and 2 children. Her oldest son is six years old, which means that she’s active in his school activities and his sporting activities. Christi transitioned into her new job quite smoothly and has been a great addition to the CCS family!

Alana Culpepper completed her Associates Degree in Business Management. She earned this degree from the University of Phoenix and continues to take classes towards her Bachelor’s Degree in Business Management. Professionally, she is a member of TACTP, NCTA, and UPW. On a personal level, Alana donates her time as an Advisor for Soul to Soul Gospel Ministries, a Christian-based Choir on the SFA Campus. She also helped organize the All-Faith Barbeque on the SFA Campus during the Fall 2009 semester.
Ongoing Goals and Objectives

It takes a lot of work to provide the number of tests we offer to our students and other clients. Testing Services increased the number of computer-based test we offer by 18% and increased testing overall by 7%. We finalized a contract with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality which will enable us to offer this brand new test in 2010.

Last year, Testing Services increased the number of available testing stations to 39 computers which allowed for more efficient use of time and resources in addition to serving clients who might not have been able to test on their preferred day due to a lack of resources. In addition to the increased number of tests administered as stated previously, we also increased the number of days we offered the GED which allowed for 22% more of those tests to be administered. We continue to be pleased with the number of TeXES (Teacher Certification Testing) examinations given. TeXES computer-based testing increased by 34.5%. Testing Services works collaboratively with Orientation to provide opportunities for freshmen attending Orientation sessions to take the ACCUPLACER. In 2009, the number of ACCUPLACERs administered during Orientation increased by 24%. Overall, the number of ACCUPLACERs administered in 2009 increased by 15.9%.

As testing policies change, Testing Services strives to stay abreast of all policy changes and updates and communicates these changes to the locations that advertise our services, so people will know what to expect when they test here at SFA. We also monitor our website to make certain that the most accurate and up-to-date information is posted. Please visit our website at www.sfasu.edu/ccs/testing. Administering so many tests on so many dates could easily cause scheduling conflicts; however, we did not encounter a single scheduling glitch in 2009! BRAVO!!

Advertising services is important for us all, and Testing Services reaches clients both on and off the SFA Campus. One goal is to advertise specifically for the GED and the CLEP tests. We advertised the GED this year by sending out flyer mailings to various organizations, including Adult Learning Centers and School Districts. We also sent flyers outlining updates and changes to the GED. We advertised the CLEP by placing 50 posters throughout the SFA campus.

Testing Services maintains cordial relationships, not only with the various testing companies whose tests we administer, but also with many campus departments, in an effort to make sure that we offer the tests necessary for our students to gain admittance into those departments and pertinent graduate and professional schools. We work particularly closely with the Education, Nursing, and Math Departments. We also work closely with Disability Services so that accommodations can be provided for those who meet the established guidelines. This year, 7 special accommodation ACCUPLACERs and 5 special accommodation Elementary Education Admission Tests were administered through Disability Services.
Learning and Development Outcomes

In addition to our ongoing goals and objectives, Testing Services continues to measure our Learning and Development Outcomes (LDOs). These LDOs state what we anticipate the students should know or be able to do as a result of participating in Testing Services. All LDOs are assessed by providing students with brief surveys to complete after they finish their test. Next, the results are analyzed to determine if the LDOs were met, thereby allowing us to determine areas of strength as well as areas of relative weakness. Results are analyzed at various points throughout the year in order to understand if and when we need to amend policies and services in order to provide the most beneficial services possible to our clients.

Testing Services LDOs are as follows:

- As a result of Testing Services, the student will feel better able to assess and evaluate the career path they have chosen.
- As a result of Testing Services, the student will feel better prepared for academic advising and course selection.

Program Activity and Assessment Findings

Testing Services offers clients the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience here in order to consistently provide the best quality of service possible. Many questions on the survey relate to “customer satisfaction;” however, 2 questions relate directly to LDOs. Testing Services collects data prolifically. In 2009, we collected 1,863 evaluations completed by our clients! We found some very promising results. Of those who answered the questions pertaining to the professional behavior of the staff, 99.9% of our clients stated that the staff behaved in a professional manner. The lowest rating received in the customer satisfaction portion of the survey was still 93.33%, and this question pertained to the speed in which the clients’ tests could be scheduled. Testing Services aims for tests to be scheduled within a 2-week period of the request. This can be a difficult goal to attain, but we continue to try. Still, this rating is very high, indeed. 99.8% of participants stated they understood the verbal instructions, which is essential due to the importance to our clients of the tests being taken.

Because of the individual circumstances of our clients, such as the fact that not all people who utilize our testing services are SFA students, our LDOs do not pertain to everyone like they do for the other entities within Counseling and Career Services. However, 89.51% of respondents stated they are better able to assess their career path, and 6.6% stated the question was not applicable. 86.2% stated that they are better prepared for advising and course selection, with 8.41% stating the question was not applicable. When we viewed the data provided by freshman and sophomore students only, 93.06% stated they are better able to assess and evaluate the career path they have chosen. 1.98% stated the question was not applicable. 94.42% stated they are better prepared for advising and course selection with only 1.98% stating the question was not applicable. This is certainly an intuitive finding, but it is always nice to have objective data indicating our positive impact on students.
counseling & career services

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