



Annual Assessment Report Template: Learning
Academic Year: 2016-2017

Date of Report Submission: July 1, 2017

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Part I: Follow-Up on Last Year's Assessment Report Recommendations

Clinical Services – Improve Staff Ratios

In the past academic year, UCS received approval and resources to hire an additional full-time staff psychologist thus improving our staff ratios from 1 counselor to 2,359 students (based on Fall Quarter enrollment 2015) to the current 1 counselor to 2,101 students (based on Fall Quarter enrollment 2016). Although current ratios fall short of the International Association of Counseling Services recommended ratio of 1 counselor to 1,500 students (IACS, 2017), they nonetheless represent an improvement.

Enhance brief therapy trainings

This goal was met. Best practices in conducting brief therapy is now a part of our advanced therapy practicum curriculum. Senior staff present on this topic early in the fall quarter and follow-up during supervisory meetings throughout the year.

Expand Outreach-Develop an intentional approach to outreach, including an outreach curriculum and an outreach component to the department's strategic plan

This goal was partially met. UCS has continued to offer more outreach and prevention programming. UCS re-designed a staff psychologist position to create (and hire) a dedicated Outreach Coordinator in August 2016. This has resulted in a significant improvement in terms of coordinating outreach events.

Now that UCS has a dedicated outreach coordinator position, we have used department retreats to set goals and strategic direction for outreach – recognizing that campus climate issues or response to crises may necessitate some flexibility. UCS has an increasingly intentional approach to outreach. Strategic goals have been developed for the 2017-2017 academic year, but were not fully implemented for the 2016-2017 academic year.

We used the 2016-2017 academic year to have team discussions about how to staff the new identity-based centers that will be rolled out in fall quarter 2017. A “Let’s Talk” style approach of stationing a UCS clinician in the Black Student Center will be piloted for the 2017-2018 academic year. It took longer than expected to hire a staff psychologist with a dedicated focus on African American students – Dr. Johnson did not begin his employment until May 1, 2017.

The department facilitated a successful National Depression Screening Day in winter quarter and Eating Disorders Awareness Week in spring quarter 2017. The eating disorders outreach was expanded beyond a typical screening to include a focus on developing a positive body image thus providing a learning experience for a wider range of students.

Several outreach presentations were made over the last academic year with the goal of supporting students during the contentious presidential election, especially students from marginalized populations. UCS developed and implemented intentional programming as well as on-site hours in both OMSS and the Center for Identity, Inclusion & Social Change.

Group Counseling

UCS continues to develop our group program. This year we ran several process groups on both campuses. In addition, a new Sexual Assault Survivor's Group was piloted as a partnership with Health Promotion & Wellness. The group received positive press in the *DePaulia*, thus helping improve campus awareness of sexual assault and interpersonal violence issues and campus resources.

The partnership with the Office of International Students and Scholars continued with a more informal drop-in group to help meet the psychosocial needs of international students and more readily connect these students to UCS when indicated.

We did not fully meet the recommendation of increasing percentage of students referred at initial consultation by 10% during the 2016-2017. However, we altered referral protocols and have added another group for the 2017-2018 academic year.

As recommended last year, the department increased training with the Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms (CCAPS) – our clinical outcome tool with the goal of checking in with clients, updating treatment goals and maximizing group referrals. The majority of UCS clinicians have been adherent with the 6 session check-in/review of CCAPS.

Develop a clear 'scope of service statement for the UCS website

This goal was only partially met. UCS has made some substantive website revisions, but we have deferred the goal of creating a clear scope of service statement.

Have quarterly meetings between UCS, HPW and the physicians at Presence/SAGE Medical Group.

This goal was not fully met. In practice, it has become more important to increase collaboration with the physicians at Advocate Illinois Masonic around emergency care of students. Dr. Harris has been especially helpful in engaging the physicians at Illinois Masonic which has led to improved communication around the care of students who have been psychiatrically hospitalized. Regular communication with SAGE is important and has taken place on a more ad hoc basis.

Pilot the Question, Persuade & Refer (QPR) approach to train RDs and RAs, groups and student leaders and target groups of faculty/staff on suicide prevention over the next three years.

This goal was not fully met. Suicide prevention training has been conducted with RAs and Health Education Action Team members (from HPW) but more work remains to be done in this area.

Part II: Report on This Year's Assessment Project

I. Abstract

As one of UCS' key service areas, outreach programming is an integral way through which UCS staff connect with the larger campus community and share important information and resources about mental health. However, the established learning outcomes for outreach programming have never been fully assessed. To fill this gap, the current project sought to assess one of the learning outcomes achieved in outreach programming through giving a brief survey to student attendees of select outreach programs between January and May 2017. Results of this survey indicated that although student attendees are learning the intended information, there may be opportunities for growth in terms taking more of a practical, skill-oriented approach during outreach programming. Additionally, the current project revealed administrative opportunities for UCS within its outreach area, including consistently using a post-outreach evaluation, clarifying learning objectives, and establishing a standardized record keeping system for outreach programming.

II. Assessment Question

Do students who participate in UCS outreach programming demonstrate knowledge of self-care strategies related to self-management, decision-making, or problem solving?

III. Introduction & Context

Project Overview

Outreach presentations and workshops are one of the five key areas through which University Counseling Services provides mental health support and consultation for DePaul University students, staff, and faculty. For many students, their first interaction with UCS is at an outreach program, and for some, it is the only contact they will have with UCS during their time at DePaul. The content and format of outreach presentations can vary widely and depend on the unique needs of the party requesting the outreach. The current project assessed one learning outcome across four student-focused outreach events. Three of these were outreach events for specific student groups, and one was a student training.

Learning Outcomes Assessed

Within University Counseling Services, under the Key Service Area of Outreach, this project aimed to assess the following program-level learning outcome: *Students who participate in counseling or programming through UCS will learn one or more strategies related to self-management, decision making, or problem solving, in order to reduce stress.* This learning outcome maps on to the following departmental-level learning outcome: *Students who participate in counseling or programming through University*

Counseling Services will develop skills for coping, self-care, and responsible decision-making. In turn, this links to the Intellectual Skills and Practical Competence learning objective at the divisional level: Students who participate in Student Affairs programs and activities will acquire and use intellectual and practical skills that will enable them to live productive and healthy lives during and after DePaul.

Context for This Year's Report

College counseling centers, including UCS, tend to rely on a more individual approach to supporting university students; however, standards established by the International Association of Counseling Services “dictate that quality counseling center services go beyond intervention in a clinical setting to include a focus on outreach” (Parcover, Mays, and McCarthy, 2015, p. 198). Emphasizing outreach programming, which naturally incorporates prevention and education, is essential as college counseling centers tend to see a smaller percentage of students who are in need of clinical intervention – while, simultaneously, the percentage of students struggling with serious mental illness on college campuses has increased significantly (Mier, Boone, and Shropshire, 2008). Given the unique potential that outreach programming has to reach high numbers of students, to promote and emphasize positive mental health, and to decrease the stigma associated with help-seeking, it is important to ensure that UCS is making the most of its outreach opportunities and that its programs/workshops are conveying the intended message (Parcover et. al., 2015).

As one of UCS' Key Service Areas, outreach programming is an integral manner through which UCS works toward its goal of assisting DePaul students in removing barriers to academic and personal success by addressing emotional, psychological and interpersonal concerns so that they are able to maximize their potential to benefit from the academic environment and college experience. The assessment of learning outcomes in outreach presentations/workshops supports this departmental goal, as outreach is one of the primary avenues through which UCS provides DePaul students with important information about mental health and related topics. Assessing and verifying that UCS outreach presentations and workshops actually lead to the intended learning outcomes will ensure that UCS is achieving its stated goal of helping students address their emotional, psychological, and interpersonal concerns so that they can thrive during their time at DePaul.

Further, this assessment project supports Objective 1A of Goal 1 of the University's strategic goals: *Focus the entire university community on student learning and success.* UCS often focuses more on symptom reduction and improvement in emotional, academic, and interpersonal functioning at the individual level. However, this project will shift our focus more to population-based student learning, which is directly in line with Objective 1A.

IV. Data Collection & Methodology

Population and Sample

The current study aimed to assess the level of learning achieved by DePaul University students who attended an outreach presentation or workshop facilitated by University Counseling Services staff between January and May 2017. This assessment project focused specifically on outreach presentations facilitated for DePaul students, rather than staff and faculty, as students are the primary population served by UCS. Overall, 857 students attended 34 outreach programs between January and May, 2017.

From this overall population, the current study utilized a sample of 37 students (n=37) who attended 4 outreach presentations between January and May 2017. This specific sample was selected because these were students who were in attendance at outreach presentations and workshops that were either student trainings, student group presentations, classroom visits, or orientations. Other outreach formats, such as tabling events or support groups, were not included in the sample as they do not involve a significant didactic component through which students could reasonably be expected to retain and learn new information. Of the four outreach programs assessed, three were presentations to student groups and one was a training.

Data Collection

A brief, three-question survey was used to collect data for this project. UCS' assessment facilitator (this writer) created the survey for this specific project. The survey consisted of three questions – a multiple-answer learning quiz, a Likert scale rating, and a brief subjective narrative. For the learning quiz, students were asked to select the two best answers from a total of six options, two of which were “correct” answers. The “correct” responses listed in the first question varied depending on the specific content of the outreach presentation. Student participants were given the survey immediately following the outreach presentation, and were asked to complete and return it to the outreach facilitator at that time. Although the current assessment project is specifically focused on student learning outcomes, student self-perception of learning and their opinions regarding the primary focus of the outreach presentation were also assessed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the student's experience during UCS-facilitated outreach programming. (See Appendix A for survey).

Data Analysis

A combination of descriptive statistics and thematic coding were used to analyze the survey data. On the learning quiz, “acceptable performance” was defined as the student participant selecting at least one of the two correct answers out of the total list of six. A Pearson correlation analyzing the relationship between the first two survey questions was also calculated, with the assistance of D. Scott Tharp, MSW, Assessment Coordinator in the Division of Student Affairs. Lastly, the narrative response in the third survey question was analyzed using thematic coding.

Participant Consent

Participation in this assessment project was voluntary, and the act of completing and returning the survey to the outreach facilitator indicated that the student gave consent to participate in the project. Explicit consent was not obtained because student responses were anonymous, no sensitive or identifying information was obtained, and the survey

was brief. All survey forms were kept in a secure folder in the assessment coordinator's office.

V. Data & Findings

Response Rate and Demographics

37 students participated in the assessment project, as indicated by the number of completed surveys that were returned to the outreach facilitator. Two students in attendance at one of the outreach presentations did not complete and return the survey, yielding a 95% response rate overall.

All participants were currently enrolled undergraduate or graduate students at DePaul University. Specific demographic information beyond that was not obtained, though some can be inferred through noting the student groups or organizations that hosted the outreach presentation or workshop. This project assessed two outreach presentations given to students affiliated with the Office of Multicultural Student Success, one to students connected to the Adult, Veteran, and Commuter Student Office, and one to students in the Arnold L Mitchem Fellows Program. The Office of Multicultural Student Success primarily serves students of color, low-income students, and first-generation college students, similar to the Arnold L Mitchem Fellows Program, which works with undergraduate students with sophomore standing who come from backgrounds that are traditionally underrepresented in higher education. The Adult, Veteran, and Commuter Student Office primarily serves the population of students indicated in its name. Thus, one can assume that the student participants consisted of both traditionally and non-traditionally aged students, and students from various underrepresented backgrounds (low income, students of color, first generation, etc.).

Key Findings

Of the 37 participants, 36 demonstrated acceptable performance, meaning they selected at least one of two correct coping skills out of the six listed on the first survey question. In percentage terms, this indicates that 97% of the student participants demonstrated acceptable learning following their respective outreach presentation. 34 out of the 37 participants (92%) exceeded the acceptable performance standard, and selected both of the correct coping strategies out of the list of six. One participant left the first question on the survey blank, and was counted as an incomplete. (See Appendix B for learning quiz data).

A Pearson Correlation was calculated to determine the relationship between student responses on the first and second survey questions. While a positive correlation between students' self-reported level of learning after the workshop (question 2) and the number of correct responses on their learning quiz (question 1) was found, the correlation was not statistically significant, $r_{(37)} = .08, p = .67$. (See Appendix C for Pearson correlation).

Thematic coding of the narrative responses of the third survey question revealed four major response categories. Student participants reported that they perceived the primary focus of their outreach presentation to be: coping strategies or ways to manage stress,

UCS resources, how to talk about counseling and mental health with others, and when to refer others to UCS. (See Appendix D for thematic coding).

Program Level Learning Outcome	Department Level Learning Outcome	Number of Students Assessed	Number of Students with Acceptable or Better Performance
Students who participate in counseling or programming through UCS will learn one or more strategies related to self-management, decision making, or problem solving, in order to reduce stress	Students who participate in counseling or programming through University Counseling Services will develop skills for coping, self-care, and responsible decision-making.	37	36

“Acceptable performance” was defined as the student participant selecting at least one of the two correct coping mechanism.

VI. Discussion & Interpretation of Findings

- Results of the learning quiz indicate that DePaul students who attend UCS outreach presentations and workshops are achieving the intended program-level goal of *learning one or more strategies related to self-management, decision-making, or problem solving, in order to reduce stress*. Specially, 97% of students assessed achieved the desired learning outcome. That is a very high percentage, and suggests that students can demonstrate accurate knowledge at the end of a UCS outreach presentation
- Analysis of the correlational relationship between student performance on the learning quiz and their self-perception of learning during the outreach presentation revealed a positive, but not statistically significant, relationship. This is not entirely surprising, given the distinction in wording between the first survey question: *Based on the material you have been presented with today, please select the best two ways for a person to cope*, and the second survey question: *This presentation taught me various strategies that will help me cope with stress*. There is a difference between being able to identify and select appropriate coping mechanisms from a list, and feeling that you have learned strategies that will effectively help with managing stress. The lack of a statistically significant relationship between these two questions could be interpreted to mean that while students are aware of various strategies that will help them cope with stress or feeling overwhelmed, they may not feel as confident in actually utilizing them in their day-to-day lives, or even stating that they “know” or have been “taught” these strategies.
- The current project assessed only one of the three program-level learning outcomes of UCS outreach programming. However, information about the other two can be inferred based on student responses to the third survey question. Specifically, one of the other program-level learning outcome of UCS outreach is:

Students who participate in outreach activities will increase their knowledge of on-campus and off-campus resources to support their success. Student's narrative responses overwhelmingly stated that the presentation they attended focused on providing them with information about campus mental health resources (such as UCS), and how and when to utilize them. However, there was no mention of off-campus resources.

- It seems that there is significant overlap between two of the program-level learning outcomes of outreach programming: *Students who participate in outreach programming through UCS will learn one or more strategies for self-management, decision-making, or problem solving, to reduce stress* and *Students who attend UCS outreach activities will learn one new skill related to care for self or others.* The current project assessed the former, however, it seems reasonable that the skills discussed could be considered *skill[s] related to care for self or others* as well as *strategies for self-management, decision-making, or problem solving.*
- A limitation of the current project was that not all the student-focused outreaches conducted between January and May 2017 could be assessed, as the currently established learning outcomes did not align with the structure and content of all the outreach programming that occurred during that period. Because this assessment project specifically focused on learning outcomes, only those outreach presentations or workshops that seemed explicitly focused on student learning were assessed. However, over the past year, UCS has developed and facilitated more outreach programming focusing on issues involving social justice, oppression, diversity, power, and privilege, largely due to the impact that the current political and social climate has had on DePaul's campus climate. Given this focus, students who attend this type of programming are not explicitly presented with information about stress relief or coping strategies. It seems that perhaps a different sort of learning is intended during this type of outreach programming. Similarly, tabling events are a common outreach format utilized by UCS. While still considered outreach events, tabling differs from a workshop, presentation, training, or orientation as contact with the student attendees is more fleeting and the information is conveyed in a more passive (e.g., handouts, brochures, signs) manner. Further, it is extremely difficult to assess learning outcomes following a tabling event as there is no captive audience – students simply stop by the table for a few seconds, minutes, or not at all, depending on their interest and availability. Lastly, a final limitation of the current project (likely related to the previously mentioned limitations) was that the small sample size and limited score range on the survey made it difficult to use the correlation statistic as effectively as would have been possible with a larger sample and score range.

VII. Recommendations and Plans for Action

Recommendations

- The results of this assessment indicate that, as intended, UCS is successfully conveying information about *strategies for self-management, decision-making, or*

problem solving. However, given the lack of a statistically significant correlation between student learning and student perception of learning, it may be useful to focus on conveying information about the ‘real-life’ (i.e., behavioral, skills-based) use of such strategies in outreach presentations. For example, rather than simply presenting information about what a specific coping strategy is and how to use it, it might also be worthwhile to focus on discussing what makes it difficult to implement such strategies, how it can be used in class or at work, how to know when it’s time to use a coping strategy, etc.

- It is recommended that outreach evaluations be administered at the completion of every outreach presentation or workshop that is not a tabling event. Although assessing student learning outcomes is essential in these evaluations, it may also be useful to obtain information about student perception of learning or focus of the presentation.
- It is also recommended that UCS’ program-level learning outcomes for outreach programming be updated; both for clarity and to more accurately represent the range of outreach programming facilitated by the department.
- Lastly, in the process of developing and completing this project, it became apparent that UCS lacks a streamlined system of recording its outreach programming that is consistently used following each event. The final recommendation of this project is that such a system be developed and implemented.

Action Plan

- Begin emphasizing a practical skills-based focus to outreach programming, starting in the 2017-2018 academic year
 - This recommendation will be communicated to UCS staff during staff retreats during Summer 2017
 - This recommendation will also be communicated to UCS trainees during their orientation to UCS/DePaul in August 2017
- Begin administering evaluations following every outreach event that is not a tabling event, starting in Fall 2017
 - Over the summer, Dr. Rachana Doshi, Outreach Coordinator, will work on creating a general evaluation survey that can be easily adapted to fit with a variety of different outreach programs/workshops.
 - Once finalized, this evaluation form will be added to the UCS shared drive, and instructions about how to use it will be added to the Staff Policy and Procedure Manual and the Extern Training Manual.
 - UCS staff will be instructed on how to use this evaluation form in a UCS staff meeting before the start of the 2017-2018 academic year
 - UCS trainees will be instructed on how to use this evaluation form during their UCS/DePaul orientation in August 2017
- Update UCS program-level learning outcomes for outreach programming by the end of the 2017-18 academic year
 - In collaboration with the rest of UCS staff, Dr. Doshi will edit the stated learning outcomes for UCS outreach programming to increase clarity, minimize redundancy, and to more accurately reflect the breadth of outreach programming that is facilitated by UCS

- Develop and consistently implement a user-friendly and accurate record keeping system for UCS outreach activities over Summer 2017
 - Dr. Doshi will take charge of this recommendation over the summer
 - Once finalized, instructions on how to use this system will be added to the UCS Extern Training Manual and the staff Policy and Procedure Manual.
 - UCS staff will be instructed on how to record outreach activities in UCS staff meetings before the start of the 2017-2018 academic year
 - UCS externs will receive this training during their UCS/DePaul orientation in August 2017

Sharing the results

As the survey used in this project was anonymous, there is no way to share its results with the students who participated. However, some of the results of this project could be used as an advertisement for UCS' outreach programming for interested students, staff, and faculty. Once the recommended action plan items are complete, UCS will, for example, have a more accurate description of the outcomes that are expected to be achieved following outreach programming. These updated learning objectives could be an excellent way to advertise how outreach programming could be used, outside of the standard presentation about UCS services and general mental health concepts.

Within UCS, results of this assessment project will be shared at one of the annual staff retreats during summer 2017. These retreats typically involve summarizing and reflecting on UCS' work over the past year, and identifying ways to adjust and prepare for the coming academic year. This is a strategic opportunity to share what this project has gleaned regarding UCS' outreach programming, and to discuss the ensuing recommendations and action plan. UCS trainees will be presented with this information during their orientation in August 2017.

References

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