

Benchmarking Counseling Programs, Services and Collaborations

What can DePaul University Counseling Services learn about best or promising practices in college mental health from our benchmark institutions?

Methodology

- Benchmark institutions were identified with assistance from DePaul's Office of Institutional Research and Market Analytics.
- An internally created Qualtrics survey was distributed to 17 benchmark institutions.
- Data points for benchmarking mirrored UCS's key area analysis, including clinical services, collaboration with campus partners and outreach and consultation.
- Frequencies and mean scores were calculated and ranked in order to analyze and interpret the data.

Key Findings

- DePaul ranked 12 out of 14 benchmark institutions in terms of counselor to staff ratios with 1 counselor per 2,359 students, while the mean counselor to student ratio of benchmark institutions was 1 counselor per 1,677 students.
- 8 of 14 benchmark institutions (57%) had session limits and 14 of 15 benchmark institutions (93%) indicated that they practice within a norm of brief therapy.
- Student health insurance was available at 13 of 16 of benchmark institutions (81%), and required at 12 of 16 of benchmark institutions (75%).
- 10 of 14 benchmark institutions (71%) employed outreach to higher risk student populations with programs such as Question, Persuade and Refer (QPR) for suicide prevention training and "Let's Talk" group or counseling staff presence in offices that serve underrepresented student populations.

Demographics

- 17 benchmark institutions were surveyed based on enrollment, similar numbers of residential students and Catholic or urban character.
- 15 institutions (88.2%) completed part of the survey.
- 9 benchmark institutions (60%) were private institutions.
- 6 benchmark institutions (40%) were Catholic institutions.

Plan of Action

- Advocate for normative staff ratios in accordance with benchmark institutions, including a new full-time staff position
- Continue to expand the UCS group counseling program, including mindfulness-based stress and anxiety coping skills groups
- Enhance strategic communication and partnership between UCS, Health Promotion & Wellness and leadership of DePaul Health Services focusing on cross-referrals and collaborating on treatment plans when appropriate
- Enhance outreach curriculum and outreach strategic plan, including piloting QPR for staff, faculty and student leaders as well as pilot a "Let's Talk" outreach program (i.e., onsite drop-in counseling) with the Office of International Students and Scholars and Office of Multicultural Student Success

Student to Clinician Ratio

