AOC Summary of Counseling Services

On September 24, 2012 the Assessment Oversight Committee reviewed the assessment report from Counseling Services. Deirdre Dalsing presented the report. She noted that Counseling Services formerly used the Effectiveness of Counseling Project (ECP) and the Client Satisfaction Survey (CSS) to measure student learning outcomes. During the 2011-2012 academic year Counseling Services participated in a UW System pilot project to develop and implement a Learning Outcome and Satisfaction Survey (LOSS) aimed at:

1. Establishing and collecting a standard set of data elements to track client trends, service delivery patterns and staffing needs and;
2. Researching the impact of counseling mental health services on student’s well-being and academic success.

This project sought to develop a core set of common data elements that can provide benchmarking for each campus and system-wide analysis of counseling impact. University Counseling Services participated in the pilot project (after receiving IRB approval) in the fall of 2011. As of May 2012 all UW Counseling Centers had entered in to an agreement to utilize the LOSS full-time, replacing all internally created systems.

Dalsing supports our involvement with LOSS. She believes that as a result of this new assessment project we are better able to document the positive changes that students who utilize counseling services make. This project will also allow us to evaluate the academic outcomes for students who utilize counseling services as well, and determine whether our services have any impact on retention. Since this tool incorporates learning outcomes, academic outcomes and satisfaction survey our department has been able to reduce multiple processes in to one project, thus reducing the number of surveys sent to students. Moreover, we will not only be able to compare our data across the UW System, but we will also be able to compare our data with the national trends, allowing us information that can assist in development of new programs and improvement of existing ones. Obtaining data on mental health trends will also allow us the opportunity to respond to student needs in a timelier manner.

The AOC members posed questions regarding the delivery method for the survey. It is currently being sent via email. Suggestions were made to explore alternate delivery methods in effort to increase response rate—in person completion during counseling session, etc. The committee also discussed alternative assessment tools beyond student self-reporting. Dalsing stated this would need more examination/exploration, but reiterated her belief that student feedback is the most valuable tool for assessment purposes.

The AOC is satisfied with the Counseling Services program’s efforts to assess its students and does not recommend any changes to its assessment tools.