

Counseling Services Program Review

Program Review Team

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Program Mission

The primary mission of Counseling Services at WNC is to provide quality academic advising, career guidance and personal counseling for students throughout our service area. In addition, Counseling Services develops, coordinates and supports many access, enrollment and retention programs on our campus and at local high schools.

To accomplish this mission, Counseling Services must:

- Provide access to all counseling services for students on the Carson, Fallon and Douglas campuses.
- Implement a student-friendly mandatory advising program for all new degree and certificate seeking students.
- Partner with all WNC stakeholders, including high school principals, counselors and college coordinators of high school outreach programs, to ensure that consistent and accurate advising information is communicated to students.
- Develop, coordinate and implement access, enrollment and retention programs such as the Jump Start, Project Graduate, Bridge to Success and Early Alert programs.

Counseling Services Program Goals

The following are Counseling Services goals as they relate to the core themes in the WNC Strategic Plan.

1) Core Theme 1: Student Success

- a. Text all returning and transfer students to communicate advising processes, procedures and college deadlines. This will include the date the class schedule becomes available and when registration opens each semester. We will also use the texting system to send a mid-semester check-in to all students prior to the last day to withdraw/audit a class.
- b. Develop and staff a Career Center which offers assistance with resume writing, interviewing, obtaining internships and employment data.
- c. Increase faculty involvement in the Early Alert program to serve more students.

- d. Work with institutional research to obtain evaluative data so that the effectiveness of the program can be assessed. Obtain computer access to run query data on the programs coordinated by our department.
- e. Officially change the name of the department to “Academic Advising/Counseling Services” to make it clear to students that we offer a range of both counseling and academic advising services in our office.

2) Core Theme 2: Institutional Excellence

- a. Work closely with institutional research to obtain pertinent evaluative data to better assess all programs and services operating under the auspice of Counseling Services.
 - i. Refine the college-generated questions on the CCSSE survey of student engagement and the Noel Levitz survey of student satisfaction to remediate the confusion between “advisors” and “counselors” to more accurately reflect student opinion of Counseling Services.
 - ii. Create a tracking system through OnBase to capture engagement and satisfaction measures from students who actually use counseling services to better measure the efficacy of those services.
- b. Partner with Admissions and Records to run periodic queries to obtain data on programs and services coordinated by Counseling Services.
- c. Develop clear implementation and evaluation plans for all student services initiatives supervised by the Counseling office, including Project Graduate, Jump Start, Bridge to Success, Early Alert and Gear Up.
- d. Work collaboratively with WNC administrators and faculty to develop and implement a faculty mentoring/advising initiative to complement the academic advising, career and personal guidance students receive from Counseling Services.
- e. Restructure the Jump Start program to improve communication among the diverse stakeholders: high school superintendents, principals, counselors, teachers, students and parents as well as college administrators, faculty, counselors and program coordinators.

3) Core Theme 3: One College Serving Many Communities

- a. Develop and offer short-term workshops to meet the diverse needs of students, such as test anxiety reduction.
- b. Continue to offer the full range of counseling and outreach services on the Fallon campus, and expand outreach efforts to the local high schools by organizing a number of special events to bring students to the Fallon campus to generate interest in taking college courses in Fallon. These will include a *Women in Non-Traditional Careers*, a *Meet and Greet College Instructors*, and other events which will be of interest to high school students.

Program Description

Unique Characteristics

Counseling Services is unique among other student services departments because it not only fulfills its primary mission of providing academic advising, career guidance and personal counseling to students, it also develops, coordinates and implements a number of access, enrollment and retention programs designed to promote student success, all of which play an important role in maintaining enrollment, course completion, retention and graduation rates. Another important and unique aspect to Counseling Services is that the quality of essential services we provide to students hinges on having adequate staff to accomplish this effectively. The National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) recommends an optimal student to advisor ratio at various institutions of higher education.

(<http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Advisor-Load.aspx>).

At 2-year institutions, NACADA recommends a student to advisor ratio of 300:1. They find that in general, most 2 year colleges have a ratio of 441:1. Western Nevada College currently has a student to advisor ratio of 628:1. (WNC total headcount – Fall 2017 = 3642 students divided by 5.8 counselors. This ratio does not include the Director of Counseling or the Coordinator of DSS who have different roles). Clearly, we are not only out of compliance with the recommended student to advisor ratio, we far exceed the average ratio for most other 2-year institutions. Our students feel the pinch through longer wait times to see a counselor and the severe shortage of time counselors have to follow-up individually with students.

General Counseling

All students in need of academic advising, career guidance or personal counseling are directed to Counseling Services.

Academic Advising

Counselors offer advice to any student or community member who has a question about degree programs, majors and selection of courses to meet degree requirements. Counselors must remain knowledgeable about course prerequisites and course sequencing for various degrees. They run academic advising reports through myWNC which allow students to see which requirements they have completed for their declared degree and which are still unsatisfied. In addition, they run “what-if” reports on other degree programs a student may be considering. Online advising is staffed by counselors who respond to students’ inquiries via email.

Many students are interested in transferring to 4-year colleges and counselors advise students on which courses to select that will meet requirements for their intended degree program. If the student is interested in attending UNR, the counselor prints a copy of the transfer agreement and reviews it with the student – explaining how the transfer agreement works in conjunction with the student’s declared AA, AS or AB degree. Counseling invites representatives from local colleges to attend staff meetings and share updates, and counselors attend UNR transfer days to stay current on transfer articulation and changes.

Since paying for classes is a huge concern for students, counselors engage in financial aid advising. They explain how to apply for FAFSA, the difference between a Pell grant and a student loan, the number of credits a student needs to be enrolled in to qualify for a grant or loan and how and when to apply for scholarships. In addition, any financial aid student who does not meet SAP (satisfactory academic progress) standards has to fill out an online financial aid appeal form which is automatically routed to a counselor que in OnBase. Students must then meet with a counselor to discuss why they didn't meet SAP and come up with an academic plan for the following semester. A counselor has to sign off on this plan and route the form back to the financial aid office before the student's aid will be processed. According to the Financial Aid office, during the Fall 2016/Spring 2017 academic year, counselors meet with 551 students with SAP appeals.

Career Guidance

Every conversation counselors have with students regarding selecting a degree/major involves career guidance. Part of the mandatory placement testing for project graduate students includes a brief career survey in CareerFinder; counselors use these results when beginning the conversation about degrees. CareerFinder is a free service available to all WNC students which can be accessed on the counseling website. In addition, the Myers-Briggs Personality Type Inventory (MBTI) and the Strong Interest Inventory are valid and reliable instruments which students can complete and have interpreted by a counselor. Some counselors also use the NCIS online survey to help students with career choices.

Personal Counseling

Students who are distressed either seek out a counselor or are referred to a counselor (or the DSS coordinator) by other faculty. Counselors intervene during times of emotional crisis and if the issue is not resolved, will refer the distressed student to a counseling clinic for therapy. This is also true for distressing students who are exhibiting behaviors that are inappropriate in a classroom environment. These students may be required to sign a behavioral contract and meet with a counselor or the DSS coordinator for a specified amount of time if the student wishes to continue at the college. Typically, a counselor either Chairs or sits on the college's Behavioral Intervention Team. Counseling Services also partners with local mental health facilities such as Carson Mental Health, Behavioral Health Services and Carson Community Counseling to triage students who are in crisis (i.e., suicidal) so they can be seen quickly.

Student Success Programs

Counseling Services oversees and staffs the following programs:

Project Graduate

Currently, all students who apply for admission to WNC and who have never attended college before, are routed into the mandatory services provided by the Project Graduate (PG) program. As soon as new students' applications for admission are processed, their names are sent to Counseling and the services begin. A peer mentor calls each student, welcomes him/her to the college, and informs the student that there are three important steps to be completed before registering for his/her first semester. The student will need to take a placement test, attend a new student orientation, and meet with a counselor to develop an educational plan, review placement test scores and build

his/her first semester class schedule. The peer mentor explains each step in detail to the student, answers any questions, and then schedules the student for a placement test, an orientation date and then an appointment with a counselor. During the 2016-2017 AY, approximately 1,259 students were contacted and welcomed by peer mentors to begin the PG process.

Placement Testing – All new students must complete the NSHE sanctioned Accuplacer placement test in reading comprehension, writing and math or submit ACT or SAT test scores. The ACT/SAT cut scores to determine placement in English and Math are set by NSHE. The Accuplacer cut scores are determined by the English and math faculties and are periodically updated by them. All students are directed by counselors to take English and math in their first semester. Counselors review placement test scores with students at their counselor appointment and explain the pre-requisite sequencing for both English and math.

New Student Orientation – During the 2016-2017 AY, counselors conducted 46 one-hour orientations serving approximately 800 new college students. Counselors begin the sessions by explaining that the better prepared new students are when they first begin college, the more likely they are to reach their educational goals. Students learn about the academic calendar, add/drop dates, financial aid and satisfactory academic progress standards, career exploration, the WNC student handbook, and Title IX rights. At the end of the orientation, students fill out a survey form. Results indicate that 92% of students strongly agreed or agreed that the orientation was helpful and 89% said they strongly agreed or agreed that they would recommend the orientation to a friend. The final question on the survey is used to determine whether students feel the outreach, guidance and initial steps of the Project Graduate program are intrusive or not. It reads, “I appreciate the call welcoming me to the college and letting me know about the three steps to get started.” In response, 89% of students strongly agreed or agreed – indicating a clear appreciation for the way the program is structured to guide them from application to enrollment.

Counseling Session - Students sign up for an appointment to meet with a counselor at the orientation session. At that meeting, the counselor and student discuss the student’s educational goals and determine the correct degree/certificate to pursue. In addition, they review the student’s placement test scores and build an appropriate class schedule for the first semester. The counselor then introduces the student to a peer mentor who sits down at the computer with the student and helps him/her register for classes. By the time the student leaves the counseling office, he/she is registered in the appropriate classes and is ready to start the semester.

Since Spring 2012, on average 1,000 students complete the entire Project Graduate program annually and enroll in classes. Thanks largely to the peer mentors and counselors staffing the program, new students feel welcomed, supported and informed before they begin their first semester.

Early Alert

The Early Alert (EA) system is an intervention referral program that identifies academically “at risk” students as they move through the semester. The referral is initiated by an instructor and is sent to the counseling office. A counselor follows-up with each student. We reach out three times to attempt to contact each student through two phone calls and finally an email. If we are able to reach the student by phone, the conversation usually transitions into 20-30 minute counseling session. After communicating with the student (or attempting to contact three times), the counselor sends a follow-up email to the instructor who initiated the referral to give general information about how the student was going to approach the class for the remainder of the semester. Although these interactions are very valuable, they add up to a considerable number of work hours for each counselor.

The EA program was suspended 2012-2014 during which time the college used mid-term grades to alert students about their mid-term performance in classes. Beginning Fall 2015, mid-term grades were discontinued and the Early Alert program was reinstated. During Spring 2016, faculty submitted a total of 143 alerts and the Fall 2016 semester saw an increase with 317 alerts submitted. See the *Changes and Needs* section for more information about the Early Alert program.

Veteran’s Advisement

At Western Nevada College student veterans are met with a high level of support. Several departments and individuals work to foster their success such as: Counseling Services, the WNC Veterans Resource Center, Disability Support Services and the Financial Assistance Administrative Assistant IV Certifying Official.

Although all counselors in Counseling Services are qualified to assist student veterans, one primary counselor coordinates veteran related activities and aims to meet with the majority of student veterans. The primary counselor participates in quarterly Veteran Service Meetings and regularly communicates with student veteran support departments on campus. In addition to meeting with student veterans in Counseling Services, the primary counselor is also available to meet with students in the WNC Veteran Resource Center on a bi-weekly basis. Strong communication is the cornerstone of the veteran services network so that students are referred to appropriate resources to facilitate their overall achievement.

All student veterans receive a welcome phone call from Counseling Services during their initial application. Depending on their classification as non-degree seeking, degree seeking/new to college, degree seeking/returning or transfer student veterans will be offered or required to participate in one or more steps: placement testing, orientation and/or meet with a counselor.

Student veterans and student veteran dependents that are using Veterans Education Benefits are required to meet with a counselor every semester to complete a Veterans Benefit Data E-Form. This process ensures that students are staying on track with their educational goals and following the guidelines pertaining to the use of their veteran education benefits. Upon completion, the form is routed to the Certifying Official to prompt the process for receiving education benefits.

Out of approximately 4,000 undergraduate students at WNC, currently 122 are veteran education benefit recipients. This figure does not account for active duty or military personnel.

The below data represents veteran education benefit recipients by chapter in recent academic years:

	2016-2017	2015-2016	2014-2015
Ch 30	24	31	33
Ch 31	13	7	6
Ch 33	115	143	97
Ch 35	18	14	16
1606/1607	6	12	10
Totals	176	207	162

Return to Earn Program

Counseling Services coordinated a new NSHE initiative called “Return to Earn” on the WNC campus. The goal of this initiative is to reach out to students who have not attended college in the last year, but who are within 15 credits of graduating, and to provide any support they may need to complete their degree. A counselor ran advisement reports for the 174 students who met this criteria, and 23 of those students had actually completed all requirements for a degree and just needed to apply for graduation. The remainder of the students on the list who still met the eligibility requirements (in good financial standing, etc.) received a phone call from the counselor to discuss the possibility of completing the degree. To date, 6 of those students have returned to WNC and are currently completing the requirements for their degrees.

Access and Outreach Programs

Counseling Services also oversees and staffs the following access and outreach programs:

Bridge to Success

The Bridge to Success program was created in 2004 to address the problem of a relatively low high school to college going rate. Recognizing that a big part of this problem resulted from high school students being spread out across WNC’s expansive rural service area, the Bridge program was specifically designed to address this challenge.

The Bridge program provides general “outreach” to all of the high schools in the WNC service area. These include:

- ASPIRE Academy
- Carson High School
- Churchill County High School
- Dayton High School
- Douglas High School
- Fernley High School
- Sierra Lutheran High School
- Silver State (Argent Academy)
- Silver Stage High School
- Smith Valley High School
- Yerington High School

We offered BTS to Pioneer, Virginia City, and Whittell HS, but they did not participate.

A counselor travels to every high school multiple times during the spring semester to bring the full range of services a high school senior needs to successfully transition to Western in the following fall semester. This counselor becomes the “cohort advisor” for every high school student who participates in the Bridge program – connecting and guiding each individual through the process. This is accomplished by:

- Bussing students to the WNC campus to attend a College Day where they visit different academic departments and get to meet faculty from these areas
- Discussing the student’s educational and career goals
- Identifying an appropriate degree program
- Administering the placement test and reviewing the scores with the student
- Building a class schedule that will meet requirements for the student’s major as well as accommodate their work/life needs
- Teaching students how to navigate the myWNC registration system
- Helping students enroll in fall classes
- Following up with students during the summer to answer any questions and to encourage follow-through with starting classes in the fall semester

Since its inception in 2004, the Bridge to Success program was primarily responsible for more than doubling WNC’s high school to college going rate.

Jump Start

In Fall 2014, WNC launched the Jump Start program, a partnership between the college and 19 western Nevada high schools. It offers high-achieving junior and senior high school students the opportunity to earn up to a college associate degree prior to high school graduation. Almost 200 students from local high schools participated during the pilot academic year. During the 2015-2016 AY, 321 students participated. The increase was due in part by incorporating students from the NV Virtual Academy, the Oasis Academy and the homeschooled community.

The Dean of Student Services developed, coordinated and provided oversight for the Jump Start program during the first three semesters. Counseling was very involved in the process and was responsible for creating and implementing the *cohort coach* component of Jump Start. Students from each high school were divided into cohorts of not more than 30 students. Each cohort is assigned a coach who provides supplemental instructional support by:

- Attending classes with students
- Guiding them through the college experience
- Offering an Supplemental Instructional (SI) session every Friday to review course material and provide tutoring support

In the 2015-2016 academic year, the Jump Start program added a Career and Technical Education track which allows students to choose pathways such as construction and auto mechanics. In Spring 2016, the responsibility for supervising the coordination of the Jump Start program was shifted over to the Director of Counseling, while the Dean of Student Services remained responsible for providing direction and oversight of the program. The shift in program coordination resulted in the Director allocating approximately 80% of her time to coordinating the program. In addition, the Outreach Counselor is now dedicating 100% of her time to Jump Start. Those responsibilities include recruiting 25 cohort coaches; defining their role and responsibilities and translating those into policies and procedures; conducting training for coaches; and keeping in close contact to supervise and assist them. The Outreach Counselor and

other JS professionals provide all the academic advising for Jump Start students including course selection and transfer advising. During Fall 2016, the number of Jump Start students rose again to 410 students. Fall 2017 data indicate that 500 high school students are participating in the program. See the *Concerns and Trends* and *Changes and Needs* sections for more information about the Jump Start program.

Gear Up Program

Gear Up is a grant program awarded by the U.S. Department of Education and administered through the State of Nevada. The objective of the grant is to increase the number of low income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. The Gear Up Ambassador Program at WNC serves 10th and 11th grade public high school students in Lyon County exclusively. The service area is dependent upon meeting the low income standards set by the Department of Education grant. A WNC counselor oversees the program and supervises a half-time Gear-Up Ambassador and a Near-Peer Mentor who travel weekly to the Lyon County high schools to meet with students on college and career readiness and financial literacy. During these meetings and through workshops, students receive mentoring, information about college and careers and knowledge on financial options for pursuing a college degree.

Concerns and Trends

There are a number of concerns and trends that impact Counseling Services. These include:

Evaluative Data

Evaluating a department and the efficacy of its services is central to the mission of the department and the college. Counseling Services is committed to implementing strategies to obtain more evaluative data, to use that data to improve services, and to communicate those outcomes to a broader college audience. The anticipated end result will not only be to improve the department, but also to clear up some confusion, erroneous assumptions and inaccurate data about the effectiveness of Counseling Services which currently exist.

For example, the Associate of Arts program review (2016, Faculty Advisement Recommendations) recommended that all students should be assigned a faculty advisor, stating “The results of the 2014 Community College Survey of Student Engagement clearly show that our students believe academic faculty are, by far, the best source of academic advising.” This statement is in reference to Custom Survey Items #6 (written by WNC) which asked, “While attending this college, what has been your best source of academic advising (academic planning, course recommendations, graduation requirements, etc.)? (Choose only one). Students could choose: 1) Academic advisor (not faculty); 2) Academic advisor (faculty); 3) Friends, family or other students; 4) Online college registration/advising system; 5) I have not had any academic advising. There was no option for the student to choose “Counselor”, which is the title of all administrative faculty in the Counseling Services office who provide academic, career, and personal advisement to students. The results to this question indicated that only 6.5% of students use an “academic advisor (not faculty); whereas on the same survey, 57% of students reported using “academic advising/planning” often or sometimes. In addition, in the short span of 4 months (December 2016 – March 2017), **1,200** students came into the counseling office on the Carson campus and met individually with a counselor. Students use a kiosk to check-in and the data is recorded in OnBase. This sizable number does **not** include the 242 students who were advised through the Bridge to Success program or the 421 students advised through the

Jump Start program. It does not include students who were advised on the Fallon campus. It does not include the advising counselors conduct through email or over the phone. Clearly, there is a huge disconnect between these pieces of data. Our department will collaborate with Institutional Research to clarify the custom questions and terms used on the CCSSE and Noel Levitz surveys and we will change our department name to “Academic Advising and Counseling Services”.

Students Self-Advising

Currently, only new to college, degree and certificate seeking students are required to meet with a counselor for academic advisement as well as assistance with developing an educational goal and for detailing a plan on how to accomplish that goal. Student success research conducted by Noel Levitz and others conclusively states that course completion and graduation rates increase dramatically when students begin college prepared with a goal and a plan. However, all *continuing students* (those who have completed one or more courses at WNC – excluding high school students) and all *transfer students* (those who have completed one or more courses at any other college or university) are not required to meet with a counselor. As a result, they may not have clarity about their educational goals and they are very unlikely to be aware of how to use the degrees or resources WNC offers to achieve those goals.

Students who do not voluntarily seek out counselors for academic advice also miss critical information about transferring credits and often don’t know about essential prerequisites for courses that have not been “hard-flagged” in the system. Consequently, these students who self-advise may have enrolled in courses lacking the prerequisite knowledge they need to be successful. See the *Changes and Needs* section for more information.

Jump Start Program Administration

The rapid expansion of the Jump Start program has created a number of concerns which need to be addressed as the program continues to grow and evolve.

- **Program Structure and Communication Among Stakeholders**
Because the Jump Start (JS) program serves several high school districts, each with their own policies and procedures, communicating with all stakeholders in the program becomes extremely complicated and multi-layered. For example, when a Superintendent makes an agreement with a WNC administrator, an entire chain of communication needs to occur in order for that agreement to become a viable policy that will be effectively implemented as part of the JS program. The Superintendent needs to inform the principals at their high schools who in turn need to update their counselors. The WNC administrator needs to inform both the JS program coordinator, who updates the counseling office and cohort coaches, as well as the Division Directors who must relay this information to faculty teaching for the JS program. Anytime this chain of communication gets broken, miscommunication, mistakes, frustration and complaints from JS parents and students ensues. See the *Changes and Needs* section for more information.

Early Alert Program Use

Relatively few faculty are using the Early Alert system; those that do tend to make numerous referrals. Research and experience demonstrate that a robust system does have a positive

impact on course completion and retention. See the *Changes and Needs* section for more information. A potential way to expand the faculty advising role would be to revise the Early Alert program so that faculty members are the first group to reach out to students struggling in their classes and then counselors would provide back-up as needed.

Counselor / Student Ratio

As counselors assume increasing responsibilities for coordinating new and existing enrollment and retention programs, the time they have available to counsel students diminishes. Additionally, those programs are designed to drive students to the counseling office, which causes an increase in student traffic and corresponding need for more counselor availability. These two factors combined result in too few counselors being available to serve a growing clientele of students. Students are already feeling this pinch during peak registration periods and they are complaining about three hour wait times. Since Counseling Services began tracking student traffic in OnBase last December, by mid-March over 1,200 students met in person with counselors. This number does not include the numerous students counselors have advised via email and over the phone. Again, NACADA recommends a student to advisor ratio of 300:1 for 2 year colleges and our student to advisor ratio is 628:1.

Faculty Mentoring/Advising Pilot Program

The Division of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences communicated an interest in faculty assuming more of an active role in advising students. Representatives from Counseling Services have met with faculty representatives to create the program and outline a set of roles and responsibilities for faculty advisors which complement the academic advising, career and personal counseling supplied by counselors.

Significant Changes or Needs in Next Five Years

Challenges for Counseling Services in the next five years include:

- Staff sufficient counselors to meet student need and to get nearer to the student to advisor ratio recommended by NACADA.
- Change the department name to “Academic Advising and Counseling Services”.
- Develop and staff a career center to provide students with essential career guidance.
- Continue to use the new OnBase kiosk to track student appointments and drop-ins to provide accurate on-going data on the number of students who use Counseling Services. In addition, some questions will be added to the check-in screen to assess student satisfaction with Counseling Services.
- Expand outreach efforts to *continuing* and *transfer* students, many of whom are non-traditional, to encourage them to use the services available in Counseling.
- Evaluate the Early Alert system and develop a strategy to revitalize it.

- Partner with all Jump Start program stakeholders to strengthen and streamline communication. Use the \$180,000 of funding from the College and Career Readiness grant to facilitate better communication by assigning a Lead Jump Start Faculty member and a Lead Cohort Coach who will meet regularly with the Jump Start Coordinator to share ideas and collaboratively problem-solve any program challenges.
- Coordinate with faculty to implement a Faculty Mentoring/Advising program that complements the counseling/advising provided by counselors.
- Update and clarify the language used in the survey questions related to Counseling Services in the *Noel Levitz* and *Community College Survey of Student Engagement* assessments to clearly identify Counselors as Academic Advisors.
- In order to effectively use the texting alert/update system, greater cooperation and a smoother system needs to be developed with other departments on campus so that Counseling Services can access current lists of student phone numbers.

Niches Served in the Community

The department serves many niches in the community including:

- All high schools in the large WNC service area.
- Partnerships with many local mental health providers.
- Serves all online students in the local community enrolled at other colleges/universities by providing proctored testing.
- Offers free career assessment and guidance to all interested members of the local community for the cost of the Myers Briggs Personality Type assessment and Strong Interest Inventory.
- Staffs the “Live Chat” option on the WNC website and responds to questions from any student or individual in the community with a question about the college.

Quality of the Program

Faculty and Staff Information

The department employs the following professional staff to provide counseling services on the Carson, Fallon and Douglas campuses:

- **Director of Counseling: Piper McCarthy, M.S. Applied Psychology/School Counseling**
 - Over 12 years combined experience providing counseling and guidance to high school and college students. National Board Certified Counselor since 2006.
 - At WNC since 2015:
 - Responsible for the oversight and implementation of all counseling services and programs in the WNC service area.

- **Coordinator of Disability Support Services: Susan Trist, M.A. Clinical Psychology**
 - Over 30 years experience in vocational rehabilitation and disability support services. Certified Rehabilitation Counselor since 1992.
 - At WNC since 2005:
 - Designed, developed and implemented a comprehensive program of services to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Awards include:
 - 2010-2011 - Administrator of the Year, WNC
 - 2011-2012 - WNC, Academic Advisor of the Year
 - 2013 - Board of Regents, Regents' Academic Advisor of the Year for Nevada

- **Counselor: Lauren Stevens, M.A. Counseling and Educational Psychology**
 - 11 years combined experience as a mental health therapist and community college counselor. Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, State of Nevada. Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor, State of Nevada
 - At WNC since 2012:
 - Provides academic advising, career and personal guidance to WNC students
 - Primary counselor for veterans and functions as a liaison with the Veteran's Resource Center

- **Counselor: Denise Stout, MSW, Master of Social Work**
 - Over 7 years combined experience counseling community college and social work clients
 - At WNC since 2014:
 - Provides academic advising, career and personal guidance to WNC students
 - Coordinates the State of Nevada Gear Up grant program for WNC

- **Counselor: Tricia Wentz, M.A. Counseling and Guidance Personnel Services**
 - 20 years experience counseling high school and community college students.
 - At WNC since 2013:
 - Provides academic advising, career and personal guidance to WNC students
 - Outreach Counselor and JumpStart Program Coordinator since 2017. Awards include:
 - 2018 - Board of Regents, Regents' Academic Advisor of the Year for Nevada

- **Counselor: Mariah McClosky, M.S. Education, emphasis School Counseling**
 - 3 years experience counseling college and high school students
 - At WNC since 2017:
 - Provides academic advising, career and personal guidance to WNC students

- **Counselor – Pao Lee** (Fallon Campus), M.S. Student Affairs and College Counseling
 - 5 years experience in student affairs and academic advising in higher education
 - At WNC since 2016:
 - Provides academic advising, career and personal guidance to WNC students
 - Point of contact for counseling, financial aid and admissions questions for students on the Fallon campus
 - Conducts rural outreach and recruitment for the JumpStart and Bridge to Success programs

- **Counselor – Deborah Case** (part-time), M.Ed. Community College Counseling
 - More than 25 years experience counseling university, community college and high school students along with developing and directing student success programs.
 - At WNC since 2005:
 - Provides academic advising, career and personal guidance to WNC students. Awards include:
 - 2011-2012 - Board of Regents, Regents’ Academic Advisor of the Year for Nevada
 - 2014-2015 - Western Nevada College - Academic Advisor of the Year

- **Administrative Assistant IV: Heather Rikalo**
 - 15 years experience providing a range of administrative support services to elementary, high school and college students. Over 5 years experience as the Registrar of Foothill High School.
 - At WNC since 2014:
 - Assists the Director of Counseling with all administrative responsibilities. Recruits, hires and supervises 6-8 peer mentors in the counseling office. Assists the JumpStart Coordinator with purchasing, hiring cohort coaches, and payroll. Awards include:
 - Classified Employee of the Year, 2017

Other personnel employed or supervised by the Counseling Department as Letter of Appointment (LOA), part time or temporary:

- 22 Cohort Coaches for the various cohorts in the Jump Start Program
- 6-8 Peer Mentors
- Geer Up Coordinator
- Jump Start specialist
- 2-3 Outreach assistants

Evidence of Effectiveness

A number of areas need to be evaluated to determine the effectiveness of Counseling Services. As stated in the mission, the two main areas are:

- 1) Academic advising, career guidance and personal counseling
- 2) Enrollment and retention programs supported by the department

Effectiveness of Academic Advising, Career Guidance and Personal Counseling

One way to evaluate effectiveness in this area is to assess whether students are utilizing these services or not and to compare the rate of use with that of other colleges in our demographic. The majority of this data derives from the most recent Community College Survey of Student Engagement survey (2014). Here is a link to the document containing this data:

https://www.wnc.edu/files/reports/institutional/2014_ccsse_frequency_distributions.pdf

Assessment	Outcome
Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE - 2014)	57% of students reported they used Counseling Services (CS) "Often or Sometimes" – very close to the 60% rate for the other colleges in the 2014 CCSSE cohort
CCSSE - 2014	37.5% used CS for career counseling "Often or Sometimes" – significantly above the 29.6% rate for the other colleges in the 2014 CCSSE cohort
CCSSE - 2014	40.8% attended a new student orientation. This puts us just 1.7% below the 42.5% rate of "Promising Practices Colleges"
CCSSE - 2014	94.3% registered before starting classes – significantly above the 89.2% rate for the other colleges in the 2014 CCSSE cohort
OnBase Student Tracking (NSHE)	<u>December 2016 – March 2017</u> : In the short span of 4 months, 1,200 students came into the counseling office on the Carson campus and met individually with a counselor. Students use a kiosk to check-in and the data is recorded in OnBase. This sizable number does not include students who were advised for the Bridge to Success or Jump Start programs. It does <u>not</u> include students who were advised on the Fallon campus. It does <u>not</u> include the advising counselors conduct through email or over the phone.

Effectiveness of Enrollment and Retention Programs Supported by Counseling Services

To assess the effectiveness of programs, we can track the number of program participants by year (and note the related impact on FTE). We can also describe specific services that were delivered and project reasonable outcomes.

Program	Outcomes															
<p><u>Project Graduate</u> Mandatory college entry process for new to college students. Students reported they felt supported, connected to the college, and had greater clarity regarding their educational plan. Since the final step is sitting with a peer mentor and actually registering for classes, no students are lost between advising and registering.</p>	<p>Begun in Spring 2012, every year approximately 1,000 students were served. Last year (2016-17) 1,259 new college students were guided through placement testing, orientation, academic and career advising and registration. Completing all of these steps prior to a student’s first semester of college meets the gold standard in best practices for incoming students.</p>															
<p><u>Bridge to Success</u> Intensive outreach to all high school students in our service area which dramatically increased our “high school to college going rate” – nearly doubling it in 2005-2006 when the Bridge program was launched.</p>	<p>The Bridge to Success program facilitated the transition to college and enrollment at WNC for the following number of high school students:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="870 877 1432 1056"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th># Served</th> <th># Enrolled</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2013 – 2014</td> <td>282</td> <td>148</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2014 - 2015</td> <td>380</td> <td>247</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015 – 2016</td> <td>257</td> <td>205</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2016 – 2017</td> <td>242</td> <td>177</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		# Served	# Enrolled	2013 – 2014	282	148	2014 - 2015	380	247	2015 – 2016	257	205	2016 – 2017	242	177
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2013 – 2014	282	148														
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<p><u>Jump Start College</u> A dual enrollment partnership program with local high schools. Unique in the support services it offers (cohort coaches, SI sessions, JS Coordinator) which are all coordinated and implemented through Counseling Services.</p>	<p>See data tables below. Momentous expansion in student numbers every year since inception in 2014-15. Impressive completion rates each year. Dramatic increase in number of associate degrees awarded in 2016-17. *These outcomes are due in part to the support services provided by Counseling Services, but they also reflect the work of dedicated Jump Start faculty and the program administration. The huge gain in Hispanic student representation in 2015-16 is largely due to outreach efforts by the Latino Cohort Coordinator.</p>															

***Jump Start Course Completion and Graduation Rates**

AY	# of Students	Completion - Fall	Completion - Spring	# of Associate Degrees
2014-15	199	97.5%	96.3%	0
2015-16	321	92.6%	95%	27
2016-17	421	96.2%	93.9%	89

***Jump Start Students by Underrepresented Race/Ethnicity**

AY	Hispanic	Black	Native American
2014-15	12.2%	1.1%	0%
2015-16	18.5%	1.7%	1.4%
2016-17	21.2%	1.5%	1.0%

Evidence of Satisfaction

Evidence for how satisfied students are with Counseling Services can be found in the data from the most recent Noel Levitz student satisfaction survey (2016). Here is a link to the document containing this data: <https://www.wnc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/2016-Noel-Levitz-Summary-Report.pdf>

Scale/Item	Outcome
Academic Advising/Counseling (Overall)	Student satisfaction rating of 5.4. National community college rating is 5.36. The gap between importance and satisfaction demonstrates a +.04 rating for WNC. Student satisfaction with Counseling Services at WNC is slightly higher than that of most other community colleges.
My academic advisor is approachable.	Satisfaction = 5.46. National = 5.52. Gap is -0.06. We scored slightly lower than the national mean.
My academic advisor helps me set goals to work toward.	Satisfaction = 5.19. National = 5.18. Gap is +0.01. We scored very slightly higher than the national mean.
My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.	Satisfaction = 5.20. National = 5.22. Gap is -0.02. We scored very slightly lower than the national mean.
My academic advisor is knowledgeable about my program requirements.	Satisfaction = 5.43. National = 5.52. Gap is -0.09. We scored slightly lower than the national mean.
My academic advisor is knowledgeable about the transfer requirements of other schools.	Satisfaction = 5.44. National = 5.28. Gap is +0.16*. We scored much higher than the national mean.
Counseling staff care about students as individuals.	Satisfaction = 5.48. National = 5.39. Gap is +0.09. We scored higher than the national mean.
This school does whatever it can to help me reach my educational goals.	Satisfaction = 5.57. National = 5.39. Gap is +0.18** WNC scored much higher than the national mean.

Another way we measured student satisfaction is analyzing data from the New Student Orientation survey results. Every new to college student must attend an orientation and before leaving each student must fill out a brief survey (a copy is attached). We use survey results to improve the orientation and to track student satisfaction on the mandatory Project Graduate process.

Project Graduate: New Student Orientation Survey Results January 2016 – December 2016

Question	Strongly Agree/Agree
I found the orientation helpful.	92%
I'd recommend this orientation to a friend.	89%
I appreciate the call welcoming me to the college and letting me know about the three steps to get started. (Project Graduate)	88%

FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN 2017-2021

Our five year action plan ties directly to our *Significant Changes or Needs in the Next Five Years* section of this report:

Partner with all Jump Start Program Stakeholders

Strengthening and streamlining communication among all Jump Start program stakeholders will greatly enhance program effectiveness. This process has already begun with the inception of two Jump Start program committees on campus which facilitate open sharing and discussion about the program. In addition, the College and Career Readiness grant program is designed to further communication and collaboration by funding two JS Lead Faculty and two JS Cohort Coach positions who meet regularly with the Jump Start Coordinator to share ideas and collaboratively problem-solve any program challenges. This action item will be thoroughly assessed through the grant reporting requirements which include 1) administering end-of-semester surveys to JS *instructors* and SI *coaches* to evaluate the efficacy of the SI sessions and to measure their satisfaction with the program overall; 2) administering an end-of-year survey to all JS *students* to assess their level of satisfaction with the program in general and to offer “what went well” and “what could be better” feedback; 3) comparing the survey results from 2017-2018 with those of future years to demonstrate a marked increase in instructor, SI coach and student satisfaction.

Collaborate with Faculty on a Faculty Mentoring/Advising Program

Working in cooperation and collaboration with faculty on creating and implementing a faculty mentoring/advising program which complements the counseling and advising provided by Counseling Services will be a tremendous boon to supporting students and their success at WNC. This action item will be assessed by coordinating with faculty to track the number of faculty and students participating in the program and to create and administer an end-of-semester satisfaction survey to all participants.

Maximize Visibility and Increase Clarity Regarding Counseling Services

Recognizing that there is generalized confusion about the terms *counselor* and *academic advisor* and that this confusion may keep some students from seeking critical services, we are committed to maximizing our visibility and increasing clarity about the services students receive in Counseling. To accomplish this goal, we will rename the department *Academic Advising and Counseling Services*. In addition, we will work in conjunction with Institutional Research to update and clarify the language used in the survey questions related to Counseling Services on the *Noel Levitz* and *Community College Survey of Student Engagement* assessments to clearly identify “counselors” from “faculty advisors”. This action item will be assessed by reporting that these changes have been successfully implemented.

Track Student Use of Counseling Services

Acknowledging that it is essential that we know how many students are using the services in Counseling as well as who these students are and whether they are satisfied with the services they receive, we will continue to use the OnBase kiosk to track student appointments and drop ins. In addition, we will add some pertinent questions to the online form students fill out when they sign in, which will provide us with this greater detail. This action item will be assessed by running the numbers from OnBase at the end of every semester to evaluate the number of students who signed in and their level of satisfaction with the services.

Expand Outreach to Continuing and Transfer Students

Expanding outreach efforts to continuing and transfer students to encourage them to meet with a counselor to receive crucial information on educational planning and degree requirements will have a positive impact on their retention and goal completion. This action item will be assessed by tracking the number of text messages/reminders sent to this student group and then evaluating how many students from this group check-in through the kiosk to meet with a counselor.

Develop a System to Quickly Obtain Texting Lists

Increasing the outreach to various student groups by using the college texting system is pressing the need to develop a smoother process for Counseling Services to be able to obtain current lists of student names and phone numbers. This action will be assessed by reporting that a new system has been implemented.

FIVE-YEAR ASSESSMENT PLAN 2017-2021

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Means of Assessment
Year: 2017 – 2021	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Partner with JS Stakeholders	X	X	X	X	X	End of semester JS instructor and coach surveys. End of year JS student survey. Continue JS committees on campus.
Faculty Mentoring/Advising Program	X					Track the number of faculty and student participants. End of semester satisfaction survey for all participants.
Increase Visibility and Clarity of Counseling Services	X					Change department name to Academic Advising and Counseling Services. Change terminology in the Noel Levitz and CCSSE assessments.
Track Student Use of Counseling Services	X	X	X	X	X	Use the OnBase kiosk to track student use and satisfaction.
Expand Outreach to Continuing and Transfer Students	X	X	X	X	X	Track number of text messages/reminders sent to this group. Track the number of students from this group signing in to speak with a counselor.
Develop a System to Obtain Student Contact Information for Texting	X					Report that a new process has been implemented.