



## **Student Services Program Review**

**Program**

**Counseling**

*March 28, 2023*

## **WMCC Mission Statement**

White Mountains Community College is a comprehensive student-centered educational institution providing opportunities for educational and career mobility while sustaining community development.

## **WMCC Vision Statement**

White Mountains Community College will excel as a sustainable educational and community resource for the North Country. Our vision is to be the region's first choice for an accessible, high quality education, providing direction and opportunity for those seeking a new path: a new career, a trade, or transfer to a four-year institution.

## **Student Services Mission Statement**

Student Services provides high-quality, student-focused support, assistance, and services responsive to individual needs in a caring environment that enhances success and empowers students to maximize their potential. The administration, faculty, and staff regard student services as an integral part of the total educational program at this college. A wide range of student service programs helps to meet the needs and interests of the student body. Every effort is made to know students as individuals and to serve their individual needs.

## **Preface**

The Comprehensive Program Review (CPR) is a process intended to assist each student services program in fulfilling its mission and that of the College. This process is to be guided by the standards set forth by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education. The CPR framework guides the College in:

- Resource allocation
- Improvement of student learning through the provision of systematic feedback
- Strengthening the program's ability to maintain sustainability
- Strengthening the bonds within the college community and fostering collaboration
- Generating a culture of continuous improvement

The process is meant to be a collaborative one in which all relevant staff members work together with the Vice President of Student Affairs (VPSA), as well as other members of Leadership, staff from other departments, and faculty to review how effectively all elements of the program – structure, staffing, budget, facilities and services - contribute to the mission of the College and to the success of students in meeting established Program Outcomes.

Minutes from relevant committee meetings, approved structural proposals and changes, and other similar documentation should also be considered as part of the CPR and are to be submitted as appendices to the final report. These documents provide valuable information about the dynamics of the program.

A staff member will be assigned to be responsible for putting together the initial package with the support of the VPSA and other staff as needed. All staff are encouraged to actively participate in the CPR process and approach the process with the goal of program improvement in mind.

## CAS Standards

The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) has developed standards to assess the quality of student services programs. WMCC has chosen to use these standards to guide our Comprehensive Program Review for student services programs. These Standards are divided into the following 12 parts...

- “1. Mission:** This section identifies the purpose and essential characteristics of the functional area. It may also provide guidance on themes that are important to include in a mission statement for the functional area. Guidelines in this section may provide insight into how the functional area’s scope varies depending on institutional type or context. This section does not include details of specific program elements and/or services provided by the functional area.
- 2. Program and Services:** This section explains how the functional area is structured and what it does. It further outlines programs, services, and/or resources provided by the functional area, including pivotal aspects of the function’s performance.
- 3. Student Learning, Development, and Success:** This section explains how the functional area contributes to student learning, development, and success, how the approach aligns with a student learning and development model, and how these outcomes are measured.
- 4. Assessment:** This section addresses the functional area’s approach to assessment, including how it is conducted, analyzed, and used. It addresses the key assessment practices for this functional area.
- 5. Access, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion:** This section outlines the functional area’s role in advancing and maintaining access, equity, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace and educational environments. It addresses fundamental requirements, philosophies, procedures, and/or approaches specific to the functional area.
- 6. Leadership, Management, and Supervision:** This section describes the responsibilities of functional area leaders, managers, and supervisors and how these individuals advance the work of the functional area. It may address initiatives that are key to the functional area’s success, which leaders must or should advocate on behalf of for their programs.
- 7. Human Resources:** This section covers who is employed by the functional area (including professional and paraprofessional staff and student employees and volunteers). This section discusses employee qualifications or credentials, the functional area’s employment practices, and personnel training and professional development. Communication and Collaboration
- 8. Communication and Collaboration:** This section identifies key collaborators and partners for the functional area and discusses how the functional area shares information and promotes its services. It identifies the key institutional offices/departments, or external organizations with whom the functional area should consult or engage. It may address considerations regarding outreach and information-sharing.
- 9. Ethics, Law, and Policy:** This section describes standards for ethical practice, points to key legal issues and obligations of practitioners, and outlines policies and procedures that are critical to the work of the functional area. This section may identify laws or policies specific to the functional area that should be followed to ensure compliance with institutional policy or with state, provincial, or federal law. This section also addresses required or recommended ethical considerations that are unique to the field.
- 10. Financial Resources:** This section provides an overview of important fiscal considerations for the functional area, including how programs and services must or should be funded; financial planning and accounting processes that may be necessary; and measures that must or should exist for accountability and sound management of financial resources.
- 11. Technology:** This section describes the role of technology in the functional area. It provides insight into the technological needs of the program, ways it is leveraged to engage users, and ongoing management of IT infrastructure.
- 12. Facilities and Infrastructure:** This section details the facilities, equipment, space, and other infrastructure needs of the functional area. It may address issues related to how or where the functional area should be physically located; requirements or restrictions related to space, sustainability, or safety; and considerations that may exist regarding equipment acquisition and/or use.”

## Comprehensive Program Review Committee Process and Procedures

1. The CPR template will be provided to the VPSA at least 6 months in advance of the committee review date. It is expected that the VPSA will work together with the appropriate staff to complete the review.
2. Once the review is complete, the VPSA will review, respond in the area provided, and sign that he/she has read and provided the feedback and input on the necessary section of the template.

3. The committee will schedule a date for both the VPSA and the appointed staff member(s) to attend a CPR committee meeting. During this time, the student services team will be given 10 minutes to provide a summary of program strengths, weaknesses, and goals. Following this, the committee will seek clarification and there will be a period for questions and answers. At the end of the hour, the student services team will leave the meeting so that the committee can discuss the review.
4. The CPR committee will gather relevant information from the review and meeting to formulate a letter to the student services team addressing recommendations. The VPSA and college leadership team will also receive a copy of the letter. It is up to the VPSA to coordinate with the college leadership team to discuss the recommendations and work with the appropriate student services staff to develop action items.

Should the CPR committee and/or college leadership team feel that a program needs to be reviewed again before the 5-year cycle (i.e. 2 or 3 years), the VPSA will be notified and will notify the appropriate student services staff.

### **2022-2023 Comprehensive Program Review Committee Members**

|                   |                          |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Sarah Baillargeon | Amanda Gaeb              |
| Nicole Bourque    | Jonathan Mullins         |
| Rachel Dandeneau  | Nikolaus Nutting (Chair) |
| Mark Desmarais    | Mary Orff                |

### **Resources**

Suzanne Wasileski – Institutional Data  
Kristen Miller – Vice President of Academic Affairs  
Mark Desmarais – Vice President of Student Affairs

## **Section I: Mission and Target Population**

### **Program Mission Statement:**

WMCC Counseling Services is committed to serving those students having social or emotional challenges, whether it be adjustment issues or a concern that may be in need of a clinical solution. Our institution does not assess or diagnose, but Counseling Services is ready and able to triage problems and recognize crisis.

1. Explain how the service uniquely satisfies an institutional or community need. Comment on its alignment with the College's and Student Service's mission statements.

The college experience, and life itself, can be fraught with challenges. One of the premier ways an institution of higher education can aid its students is by providing secure, effective Counseling Services (CS). These services should assist students in defining and accomplishing personal, academic, and career goals, while enhancing their personal growth. White Mountains Community College (WMCC) is deeply committed to its' students and providing quality counseling and reliable resources for any and all students seeking support.

2. Identify the service's target population(s). Summarize activities directed toward student engagement with the service and the success of these efforts.

This institution performs a wide variety of counseling, consultative, evaluative, and training functions to the betterment of the entire student body. In comparison to 4-year universities and metropolitan junior colleges, this institution's CS is a smaller department. Therefore, the services offered must go above and beyond to meet the needs of the constituents and reach them wherever they are.

Counseling Services aims to clearly advertise their programs and services not only with students, but all faculty and staff to ensure all individuals seeking Counseling Services will know where, how and what options are available.

The primary way WMCC engages students with Counseling Services is through referrals. Referrals are often made by faculty and received via email. The College Counselor speaks to faculty during the days of responsibility prior to the beginning of the semester in order to be sure that Department Chairs and Program Coordinators know how and when to reach out with a referral and are able to pass the information along to adjuncts in their programs. Not all referrals lead to an intake. The College Counselor reaches out to all students that are referred but some do not respond, however, of those that do, all of the students that go through the intake make at least one other appointment. The College Counselor identified a need to reach a larger audience of faculty and staff since it is typically the same few people that show up to hear his message at the beginning of each semester. To that end, he has spoken at Campus Conversations, which appears to have been a good way to get his message out to more people.

In order to try to directly engage students, the College Counselor attends all orientations and talks to incoming students about Counseling Services. This allows a brief introduction and plants the seed in students minds, letting them know that Counseling Services are available. Given the format of orientations, it does not allow for much more than that and therefore does not typically elicit self-referrals. Most students that ask for more information or make an appointment during orientation are the

ones that had planned to do that at some point before classes begin. However, having that face-to-face time does make it easier for them and therefore lessens the chance that they will put it off indefinitely.

There is also a Weekly Wellness post, occasional workshops, and a Prime For Life Prevention Education Series, every semester. These are all ways to engage students, faculty, and staff. They all help to destigmatize and bring awareness to mental health care and help members of the WMCC community develop useful skills and techniques. The students who are regularly engaged with Counseling Services enjoy and pay close attention to the Weekly Wellness post. It has become a good way to build momentum in counseling. Every connection builds on the relationship and as relationship grows, motivation grows to continue on the path to mental health.

Additionally, there are three workshops that are presented in the library as well as four 1-hour sessions once a week for four weeks devoted to prevention each semester. These are not always well attended and finding a way to better promote them or even to incorporate them, to some extent, in the curriculum of academic courses is a goal. Last year the Prime for Life Series was very successful. It was attended by 15 actively engaged Nursing students who all received a certificate of participation for attending the 4-week series.

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## **Section II: Program and Services**

### **1. Describe the program and the services that are offered.**

Counseling Services is equipped to provide individual, or group counseling options as needed or requested, especially for those experiencing psychological, behavioral or learning difficulties. Areas of personal, educational, career development, interpersonal relationships, family, social and psychological issues are often discussed in a one-on-one capacity and ensure the privacy of the student. Similarly, students looking to discuss substance abuse and addiction are met with independently, and, when it is in the best interest of the student, are referred to addiction treatment facilities or rehabilitation professionals. Students needing crisis and violence assessment are provided the same security and discretion, with the promise of being referred to the appropriate entity when their needs go beyond the scope of institutional Counseling Services.

### **2. Are there any structural changes needed in this program? If so, describe the changes necessary and provide data that highlight the need.**

No structural changes are needed for this program. The program design of Counseling Services is intentionally crafted to achieve student learning and development success and respond to the needs of the student body. At times, this requires creative solutions to better engage students. This institution's Counseling Services has found group counseling can be especially effective when students are removed from a static setting, like a classroom, and instead gather outdoors with a purpose, such as taking a walk or planting a tree. Counseling Services is equipped to help students establish satisfying personal relationships and to become more effective in areas such as interpersonal processes, communication skills, decision making concerning personal relationships and educational or career matters, and the establishment of personal values. By taking students out of a fixed environment, and engaging in "Adventure Therapy", some students find it easier or more natural to discuss such matters and are more receptive to solutions offered by Counseling Services.

### **3. Clearly define the goals of the program.**

Counseling Services aligns with institutional framework for student outcomes, covering the twelve domains defined by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS). Knowledge from a range of disciplines is evident and tailored to student demand. Counseling Services is committed to fostering critical and reflective thinking, through its use of individual, and group, counseling, while a focus on intrapersonal development teaches students realistic self-appraisal and better self- understanding. Equally important is interpersonal aptitude and students' further development of meaningful relationships, and interdependence. Counseling Services identifies that students require a social support system which may consist of family, friends, coworkers or individuals within the Counseling Services department. Finally, practical competence is the culmination of student learning, development and success, and emboldens students to be well learned contributors to society.

4. The College has identified eight competencies that guide faculty and staff in their efforts to graduate an 'educated person'. How does this program contribute to this effort?

- Students will need to research their options and choices.
- Students will need to be able to communicate with the Counselor.
- Students will need to be able to critically think about their options.
- Students will need to be able to evaluate the social, cultural, and artistic skills they might need or might need to develop in order to successfully participate in counseling.
- Students will need to be comfortable with technology to best utilize Kepro.
- Students will need to be able to use quantitative reasoning to determine how to best use their time.
- Students may need to use the scientific process to determine what their options are.
- Students and their understanding of the global perspective may come in to play when finding the best counseling methods.

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### Section III: Student Success

1. How does this program contribute to the overall success of students? Indicate the student success metrics such as graduation or retention rate that this program contributes to. Provide the college-wide data associated with those metrics and describe the program's contribution.

The National Education Association performed a study in 2016 where two-thirds of students polled reported “overwhelming anxiety” In its quest to help students assess and overcome specific deficiencies, especially those related to anxiety and depression, Counseling Service is committed to instilling in the students a preparatory, emotional education. By utilizing a system of prevention and wellness, Counseling Services contribute to the student education by imparting skills for life. Skill building imbues students with tactics and methods to identify when their emotions or anxieties are escalating and how to relieve some of that pressure. Recognizing that “Preventative Counseling” is preferable to “Reactionary Counseling” is a new direction, and new philosophy, that suits both the institution and its constituents well.

Counseling Services is committed to fostering critical and reflective thinking, through its use of individual and group counseling, while a focus on intrapersonal development teaches students realistic self-appraisal and better self-understanding. Equally important is interpersonal aptitude and students' further development of meaningful relationships, and interdependence. Counseling Services identifies that students require a social support system which may consist of family, friends, coworkers or individuals within the CS department. Finally, practical competence is the culmination of student learning, development and success, and emboldens students to be well learned contributors to society.

White Mountains Community College consistently has graduation, persistence, and retention rates that are significantly higher than the national average. Due to this and other factors, in 2021 WMCC was one of 150 two-year institutions chosen as finalists for the 2023 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. WMCC's commitment to providing Counseling Services contributes significantly to this success.

## **2. How is student success measured within this program?**

The College Counselor position is grant-funded. As part of the grant, the counselor has mandatory monthly data entry requirements. Data pertaining to the number of intakes, individual sessions, and group sessions as well as the source of the referral and the race, ethnicity, and gender of those being served are collected each month. However, this information is used more to measure the need for the continued funding of the program than it is to measure the success of the students receiving services.

### **a. How successful are students according to these metrics? Include data.**

One of the datapoints on the monthly report is the number of students who previously accessed Counseling Services and continued through that month. Discounting the students that graduate and therefore are no longer here to continue accessing services, this number always equates to close to 100%

### **b. How accurately do these metrics reflect student success?**

Continuing to engage with Counseling Services is a very good measure of success. Mood follows action. For students to be able to make emotional changes in their lives they need to continue to show up. Continuing to engage with Counseling Services is a huge success for someone who is struggling.

It would be preferable to have other helpful metrics as well, though. Student feedback would be helpful in measuring the success of the program and in making improvements. The difficulty with collecting student feedback is that a counseling session is not the time to ask a student to complete a survey. Other ways to better assess the program would be the use of a supervising counselor and tracking characteristics recorded in case notes

## **3. Is the service easily accessible; is the process to access the service well communicated to potential students? Include discussion of remote and virtual access options**

The website has a page for Counseling Services and it includes a link and instructions for using Kepro resources. The website also includes the College Counselor's contact information. As mentioned



previously, efforts are made through presentations to faculty and staff as well as students to increase awareness about the services offered.

Counseling Services is also part of the CARES team. This creates more pathways to get students connected to Counseling Services. There is a CARES Team button that links to a page of information that includes a link to a referral form. There is also a simple email address, [wmccCARES@ccsnh.edu](mailto:wmccCARES@ccsnh.edu), that anyone can use to alert the CARES team of a student that may need support. The Team assesses the situation and determines the best way to proceed. The core members of the CARES team also meet regularly to go over students that may possibly be in need of support from the Success Team, Accessibility Services, or Counseling Services and work together to connect with students. There are multiple ways that students can access services remotely. Kepro offers a 24/7 phone line and instant messaging. For appointments with the College Counselor, students can have the remote option of a Zoom appointment.

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#### **Section IV: Organizational Structure**

1. Describe the leadership and supervisory structure of the program. Is there a need for a change in that structure? If so, describe the changes needed and provide data that highlight the need.

The Counselor is hired under a grant program through JSI/CHI's Center for Excellence on Addiction, which holds the single source contract to provide support and coordination for all SAP counselors throughout the state of New Hampshire. The WMCC grant funded counseling position is managed by JSI. JSI is a global public health consulting organization dedicated to greater health equity and improving the health of individuals and communities. The JSI New Hampshire office, established in 1995 and located in Bow, is also known locally as the Community Health Institute. JSI New Hampshire is recognized nationally for empowering communities they work with to improve their health outcomes and well-being. The partners of JSI represent a broad spectrum of community health sectors including maternal and child health, substance use disorders, emergency preparedness, juvenile diversion, and more.

Because NCHC valued the strong network in place in the North Country and recognized that the very short application window fell within the summer recess, our staff assisted with the completion of applications, but that was the limit of NCHC's intervention this year. Please use this link for more information: <https://nhcenterforexcellence.org/our-services/the-new-hampshire-student-assistance-network/>

On the college campus(es) the Counselor falls under the purview of the Vice President of Student Affairs as part of Student Services.

2. Analyze the program staffing and discuss the impacts on the program. Is there a need for a change in staffing? If so, describe the changes needed and provide data that highlight the need. The staffing structure consists of one part-time counselor, and this model (along with a 24/7 online counseling resource) is currently meeting the needs of the college.
3. Describe the collaboration and lines of communication that are necessary for the success of the program. Is there any need for improvement?

- a. Are there structures in place that allow for members of this service's team to communicate and collaborate freely?
- b. What other programs, professional workgroups, or community partnerships are integral to the success of this program?

The Counselor does rely heavily on the collaboration between the Counselor and the faculty and staff. The majority of all referrals come from the faculty. There is a need for more education of the faculty on when and how referrals should be made. The Counselor is working with other members of Student Services to figure how to provide the education needed.

Communication and collaboration are key to the program, though there are limits on what can be shared by the Counselor back to the community.

The Counselor functions as a member of the SAP community in the North Country, while being the only college-level SAP counselor. The Counselor meets regularly with the group for trainings and support. The Counselor works closely with the counseling services in the North Country in order to best refer those services to the students of White Mountains Community College.

4. Does the program have purposeful policies and procedures in place that ensure that that it functions in a legal and ethical manner? What services inherently involve potential for legal or ethical complications? Are there clear and widely understood best practices indicating how to manage these potential complications?

The Counselor has to follow all policies and procedures as established by the State of NH and JSI/CHI's Center for Excellence in Addiction. The Counselor is a confidential supporter, while also being a mandatory reporter. The Counselor works in an ethical and legal manner to best support and protect our students. The Counselor informs all students using the Counseling Services of what they can expect and what the Counselor's best practices are prior to starting any sessions.

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#### **Section V: Infrastructure**

1. Does this program have a budget? If so, please attach it. Are there financial needs that are met through other program budgets? Are there financial needs that are going unmet?

There is no budget that is controlled by Counseling Services. Counseling Services is funded entirely through the grant and therefore the budget is not managed in-house. Typically, there is no problem with getting funding for whatever is needed. For instance, the North Country Health Consortium paid for the Prime For Life Certification

2. How is technology utilized in delivering the services of the program? Are there additional technology needs for this program? If so, describe the technology needed and provide data that highlight the need.

The only technology required is that which is needed to communicate with students. Especially now as more and more of our students are accessing learning remotely and may not ever be on campus, being able to communicate and arrange virtual appointments is important. There are multiple ways to contact students through WMCC online platforms and we have a college Zoom account that works really well for virtually meeting with students.

3. How adequate and appropriate are the program facilities and equipment? How could facilities and their use be improved?

The facilities are adequate. It would be nice to be able to make the office a little more comfortable and inviting with things like more comfortable chairs, a rug, and plants. There are no windows in the office so anything else that could be done to make it more warm and welcoming would be nice.

Having said that, some students don't feel comfortable having a counseling session in an office at all. A possibility that we would like to consider is potentially expanding to offer individual and group counseling outside of the office and potentially off-campus. Adventure Behavioral Counseling can be a great option. Getting out into nature is good for mental health and changes perspective on counseling.

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## **Section VI: Program Review Summary**

### **Identify:**

#### **1. Major Program Strengths**

Integration into the college community has been a developing strength of counseling services. The diversity of services (in addition to individual counseling sessions) such as workshops, social media posts, prevention classes, has enabled the Counselor to reach more students. The integrated presence supports a de-stigmatization of mental health services. Along these lines, there has been the gradual success of educating the college community that the Counselor's role is not just acute crisis care but prevention and wellness. The Counselor has adopted a hybrid approach where face-to-face meetings for counseling are readily available, as are low-pressure workshops and mindfulness training sessions. The Counselor works closely with the Student Success Center and the Accessibility Services Coordinator and supports students and colleagues in Berlin , Littleton, N. Conway, and virtually.

#### **2. Program Weaknesses or Needs for Improvement**

The Counselor would like to provide more education and training for the faculty and staff on best practices and the referral process.

The Counselor would like to be able to participate in more continuing education and trainings focused on college counseling.

The Counselor would like to have improved, and more accurate, program oversight and data collection from the counseling grant managers. Currently, the program that the Counselor uses to submit data to JSI does not allow the Counselor to retrieve the data to be used by the Counselor.

#### **3. Opportunities for Program Development or Growth**

The Counselor would like to close the referral gap.

Have continued integration and normalization of Counseling in the college curriculum.

**Program Representative:** Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

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