



**American College Counseling Association
Community College Task Force**

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for Immediate Release

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Community Colleges: Keeping pace with a changing America and playing a significant role in higher education.

“The overwhelming majority of survey respondents who said they are no longer in college (attendance stopped in the last 5 years) are not attending college because of a mental health related reason” (NAMI, 2012). And, 64% of drop outs report a mental health reason for leaving school. In this same report students report that 45% did not receive accommodations for their mental health concerns (NAMI, 2012). When mental health services are available to students finding accommodations and the support needed to stay in college.

Students in all levels of education need services to support their academic success. Many students are unaware or confused about the services available to help support their success, at community colleges. Community colleges have highly qualified mental health, and career counseling professionals working in the two year/community colleges.

The American College Counseling Association’s (ACCA) Community College Task Force, has completed their third survey to continue to gather important data about the services provided by community/two year college counselors. The survey was

distributed to a compiled list of Community colleges across the United States; the listserv of the ACCA, The Texas College Counseling Association, and the Georgia College Counseling Discussion list serv. One hundred and ninety eight (198) professional counselors responded to the survey.

Highlights of the survey include 73% of community/two year colleges state that they provide mental health counseling services, 78% hold a graduate degree, 51% hold licensure (LMHC/LPC) and 28% are Nationally Certified Counselors. Despite the increase in students continuing to have more severe psychiatric concerns in both 4 year and community colleges, 86% of community colleges have no on-site psychiatry resources, while 57% of four year colleges and universities have on campus psychiatry. (Gallagher, 2012). 67% describe the intensity/severity of clinical issues yet community/two year college counselors spend 57% of their time doing academic advising, as well as splitting their time in other areas.

The survey reveals some common themes and worries for community college staff. Community colleges are experiencing a boon in enrollment but continue to struggle with fiscal pressure, role overload (too many competing job demands), threat assessment, increased severity of mental health issues and pressure to serve more students with limited staff.

With the continuing enrollment at community colleges, the demands on staff will continue to increase. Being able to provide students the services and time that they deserve to continue to help with their academic success may require a paradigm shift, in the roles that many community college counselors fulfill, which are outside the realm of counseling.

The American College Counseling Association will continue to support the Community College Task Force's annual survey of community/two year colleges. We hope to support the efforts of our colleagues in all academic settings through increasing awareness of the needs and services on campus.

References:

CCTF Survey 2012-2013, Community College task Force, ACCA: Alexandria, VA

Gallagher, R.P. (2012) National Survey of Counseling Center Directors. Alexandria, VA: International Association of Counseling Services.

NAMI: National Alliance on Mental Illness (2012). *College Students Speak: A survey report on mental health*. NAMI, Alexandria.

