Mission / Purpose
University of West Alabama Counseling Services enhances opportunities for students to pursue a quality education and assists in the development of important qualities of independent thinking, respect for the ideas of others, personal integrity and character in order to realize their quests for a philosophy of life and self-fulfillment through provision of guidance to promote academic success and personal and professional growth.

I. Goals and Outcomes/Objectives, with Any Related Measures, Targets, Findings, and Action Plans

A. Goal: Address issues of the region
Address the major educational, social, cultural, and economic issues of the region.

1. Objective: Retention for at risk students
   Assist with retention efforts related to "at risk" students.
   
a. Measure: Student Retention
   Counseling services will work to increase student retention, especially among conditionally admitted freshmen, by enrolling students in freshmen seminar course targeted at academic skill building, assigning upper-class mentors and tutors to meet with students weekly, and communicating with faculty about any academic support that would help in making students successful.

   1. Achievement Target:
      Increase retention for conditionally admitted freshmen by 5 percent.

      The freshmen retention rate for conditionally admitted students was 56.1% for the 2014-2015 academic year, which is a significant increase from 52% in 2013-2014. However, the persistence rate for freshmen increased from 54% to 72% during the 2014-2015 academic year.

2. Objective: Contact on excessive absences.
   Provide UWA faculty with an option for contacting students with excessive absences.
   
a. Measure: Excessive Absence Follow-Up
   Follow-up will be conducted with students reported by faculty and staff in Retention Alert who have excessive absences.

   1. Achievement Target:
      Increase contact through email, phone, and face-to-face meetings with students having excessive absences to 100 percent of all reported to Counseling Services by faculty and staff in Retention Alert.

      100% of students in retention alert were contacted and provided with information regarding the appropriate academic support or psychological services.
3. Action Plan:
   **Retention Alert**
   Students with excessive absences are entered into retention alert and contacted by the Director of Counseling Services to determine mental health status, academic progress, assess learning skills and habits, and develop an academic action plan to address weaknesses in learning skills.
   **Established in Cycle:** 2014-2015
   **Implementation Status:** In-Progress
   **Priority:** High
   **Implementation Description:** Students are contacted by the director when they are assigned to her in retention alert.
   **Projected Completion Date:** 09/30/2014
   **Responsible Person/Group:** Director
   **Additional Resources Requested:** n/a
   **Implementation Notes:**
   10/27/2015 Director, along with various other campus personnel, address issues reported in Retention Alert monthly. This is an ongoing effort across campus.

3. Objective: Success skills and tools
   Provide students with skills and tools necessary to achieve success in academics, social skills, personal growth, and personal development.

   a. Measure: Success Skills and Tools
   Personal and group counseling will be conducted and documented aimed at assessment, diagnosis and treatment of deficiencies in academics, social skills, and personal growth and development.

   1. Achievement Target:
      Increase number of students utilizing Counseling Services for individual and group needs by 40 percent.

      Increased the number of students utilizing Counseling Services by 40%. The number of students utilizing counseling services increased from 85 to 125 students who came to therapy one or two times a month.

4. Objective: Education on mental health issues
   Educate students, faculty, and staff about mental health issues that may contribute to impairments in academic, social, and personal functioning.

   a. Measure: Mental Health Education for UWA Community
   Satisfaction with knowledge and help received through dissemination of mental health education materials and face to face educational events.

   1. Achievement Target:
      Provide educational and mental health seminars in residence halls, targeted classes, and mental health promotion events on campus four times a month during the academic year.

      Provided educational and mental health seminars in the residence halls, targeted classes, and mental health promotions events on campus four times a month during the academic year in the form of Suicide Gatekeeper Training Events and mental health promotions campaigns. Counseling Services provided a total of 19 events with 562 students participating.
3. Action Plan:
   **Mental health promotions and wellness activities**
   Counseling Services will implement a series of mental health promotion seminars to targeted student organizations. In addition, counseling services will provide suicide prevention and education activities to the campus and the community. The suicide prevention effort will consist of GateKeeper Training programs for students who are Hall Directors and Resident Assistants and for students in Greek life. Faculty and Staff will also participate in a Spring Gatekeeper training activity. During the summer session, Counseling Services will provide a suicide prevention continuing education workshop for mental health providers in the local area. Counseling Services currently provides 24-35 hours of individual and group therapy to students. It is anticipated that the gatekeeper training and mental health promotions activities will further increase use of counseling services for the 2014-2015 academic year.

   **Established in Cycle:** 2014-2015  
   **Implementation Status:** In-Progress  
   **Priority:** High  
   **Implementation Description:** Counseling Services will begin providing mental health promotions seminars in the residence halls utilizing the living/learning community of HealthU. This series began in Fall semester of 2013 and will continue to address issues related to improved mental well-being.  
   **Projected Completion Date:** 07/31/2014  
   **Responsible Person/Group:** Director of Counseling Services Graduate Assistant Outreach Coordinator (funded by the Suicide Prevention Grant)  
   **Additional Resources Requested:** To address the increase of capacity and use of counseling services, a part-time Licensed Professional should be hired to assist the director with individual and group therapy. Salary: $25,000 + Benefits: $11,250 = $36,250 budget requested  
   **Budget Amount Requested:** $36,250.00 (recurring)  
   **Implementation Notes:** 10/27/2015 Provided 32 Gatekeeper Training programs and mental health promotion events to over 1,000 students during the 2014-2015 academic year, including those students in Greek organizations and Residence Life Assistants.

5. Objective: UWA 101 support
   Provide support for the UWA 101 classes.

   **a. Measure: UWA 101 Course Success**
   UWA 101 courses taught by the Director of Counseling Services will be successful per student evaluations at the end of each course taught.

   **1. Achievement Target:**
   Obtain feedback from students participating in UWA 101 courses taught each semester regarding their satisfaction with the UWA 101 course that reflects at least a 3.0 average satisfaction rate out of 4.0 satisfaction rate for courses taught.

   Obtained feedback from students participating in UWA 101 courses taught each semester regarding their satisfaction with the UWA 101 course. Results of course evaluations showed a student satisfaction rate of 3.5 out of 4.0.

6. Objective: Academic college collaboration
   Promote collaboration between Counseling Services and University academic colleges.

   **a. Measure: Satisfactory Collaboration with Academic Colleges and Other Units on Campus**
Collaboration between Counseling Services and University colleges and other units on campus (such as student organizations and the Athletic Department) will be satisfactory per feedback from leadership.

1. **Achievement Target:**
   Respond to 100% of each academic unit’s requests for guidance on how to address the mental health issues for students in academic distress. In addition, any student organization or Athletic department request for assistance with students having mental health issues will be addressed.

2. **Findings (2014-2015) - Target: Met**
   Responded to 100% of each academic unit’s requests for guidance on how to address the mental health issues for students in academic distress. In addition, any student organization or Athletic department request for assistance with students having mental health issues was addressed.

7. **Objective: Faculty and Staff Training Regarding Suicide Prevention Resources**
   Provide (QPR) Question, Persuade, Refer Suicide Prevention Gatekeeping Training to one-third of faculty and staff per year for the next three years. Funding has been provided by U.S. Health and Human Services Suicide Prevention Grant.

   a. **Measure: Provide Suicide Prevention Training to Faculty and Staff**
      Provide suicide prevention training in the form of an established Suicide Prevention program, Question, Persuade, and Refer (QPR), to one-third of all faculty and staff each year for the next three years. Funding provided through U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

      1. **Achievement Target:**
         Train 1/3 of faculty and staff either by face-to-face instruction or through online Gatekeeper Training portal. This training will be mandatory for all faculty and staff within a three-year time period.

      2. **Findings (2014-2015) - Target: Met**
         Provided Gatekeeper suicide prevention training to 1/3 UWA faculty and staff via face to face and in online format.

   b. **Measure: Disseminate University Suicide Crisis Protocol**
      Disseminate University Suicide Crisis Protocol to University and local community.

      1. **Achievement Target:**
         Revise University Suicide Crisis Protocol to include prevention, intervention, and postvention procedures. Post protocol on University website and communicate protocol during campus mental health events.

      2. **Findings (2014-2015) - Target: Met**
         Developed Suicide Crisis Protocol and disseminated information to faculty, staff, community, and university website.

8. **Objective: Persistence Rates for Conditionally Admitted Freshmen**
   Assist with persistence efforts related to conditionally admitted freshmen students.

   a. **Measure: To increase persistence rates of conditionally admitted students**
      Conditionally admitted freshmen tend to do poorly academic during their first semester in college. Increasing persistence rates among this target population, will allow these at risk students the opportunity to return to UWA in good academic standing. Conditionally
admitted freshmen will be assigned a specific section of UWA 101 for additional academic skill building activities, assigned to a peer tutor for help in all courses, and assigned a peer mentor to assist them with social integration. The assessment goal is to remain at the current level of 50-54 percent of conditionally admitted freshmen finishing their first year in good academic standing of a 2.0 grade point average or better.

1. **Achievement Target:**
   Increase Persistence rates of conditionally admitted freshmen to 60%.

2. **Findings (2014-2015) - Target: Met**
   Increased persistence rates of conditionally admitted freshmen from 54% to 62%.

**B. Goal: Comprehensive use of information technologies**
Meet the needs of its various publics, both internal and external, through the comprehensive use of information technologies.

1. **Objective: Counseling services for online students**
   Promote use of counseling services by University online students.

   a. **Measure: Increased use of counseling services by University Online Students**
   
   Increased access of Counseling Services and Career Services by UWA online students. This will be accomplished via the online counseling resources’ Blackboard platform available to all students enrolled in online courses. The part-time online counselor will assess needs, provide services, or refer students to appropriate resources.

   1. **Achievement Target:**
      Increase usage of Counseling Services and Career Services by University online students by 10 percent. This will be accomplished via the online counseling resources’ Blackboard platform available to all students enrolled in online courses.

   2. **Findings (2014-2015) - Target: Met**
      The usage of Counseling Services and Career Services by University online students increased by 10%. This was accomplished via the online counseling resources’ Blackboard platform available to all students enrolled in online courses.

3. **Action Plan:**
   **Increase Retention Rate of At Risk Students by 5 percent**
   Through collaboration with Student Success Coordinators with Colleges, provide tutoring and skills training support to increase retention of students who have been conditionally admitted or who are on academic probation or academic warning.

   **Established in Cycle:** 2010-2011
   **Implementation Status:** Finished
   **Priority:** High
   **Implementation Description:** Needs will be assessed per feedback of Student Success Coordinators and interventions provided to address needs.

   **Projected Completion Date:** 09/30/2013
   **Responsible Person/Group:** Director of Counseling Services

   **Implementation Notes:**
   10/27/2015 The retention rate for conditionally admitted freshmen was 56.1% for the 2014-2015 academic year, an increase of 4% from the 2013-2014 freshmen retention rate. Designated UWA 101 courses, implementation of Retention Alert software, mandatory tutoring, and meeting with peer mentors has all contributed to the increase.
II. Other Plans for Improvement

A. Increase Retention Rate of At Risk Students by 5 percent.
Through collaboration with Student Success Coordinators with Colleges, provide tutoring and skills training support to increase retention of students who have been conditionally admitted or who are on academic probation or academic warning.
Established in Cycle: 2010-2011
Implementation Status: Finished
Priority: High
Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
Measure: Increased use of counseling services by University Online Students |
Outcome/Objective: Counseling services for online students
Implementation Description: Needs will be assessed per feedback of Student Success Coordinators and interventions provided to address needs.
Projected Completion Date: 09/30/2013
Responsible Person/Group: Director of Counseling Services
Implementation Notes: 10/27/2015 The retention rate for conditionally admitted freshmen was 56.1% for the 2014-2015 academic year, an increase of 4% from the 2013-2014 freshmen retention rate. Designated UWA 101 courses, implementation of Retention Alert software, mandatory tutoring, and meeting with peer mentors has all contributed to the increase.

B. Structured experience for conditionally admitted freshmen
For the 2013-2014 academic year, students who were conditionally admitted were placed in designated sections of UWA 101 where they were provided with extra academic support and a structured first year experience.
Established in Cycle: 2012-2013
Implementation Status: Finished
Priority: High
Implementation Description: * Created designated section for conditionally admitted freshmen in UWA 101
Responsible Person/Group: Debbie Dean
Implementation Notes:
10/27/2015 Designated courses of UWA 101 are well-established and will continue to be taught each year. These individualized courses seem to have a significant impact on retention of conditionally admitted students.

C. Mental health promotions and wellness activities
Counseling Services will implement a series of mental health promotion seminars to targeted student organizations. In addition, counseling services will provide suicide prevention and education activities to the campus and the community. The suicide prevention effort will consist of GateKeeper Training programs for students who are Hall Directors and Resident Assistants and for students in Greek life. Faculty and Staff will also participate in a Spring Gatekeeper training activity. During the summer session, Counseling Services will provide a suicide prevention continuing education workshop for mental health providers in the local area. Counseling Services currently provides 24-35 hours of individual and group therapy to students. It is anticipated that the gatekeeper training and mental health promotions activities will further increase use of counseling services for the 2014-2015 academic year.
Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High
Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
Measure: Mental Health Education for UWA Community |
Outcome/Objective: Education on mental health issues
Implementation Description: Counseling Services will begin providing mental health promotions seminars in the residence halls utilizing the living/learning community of HealthU. This series began in Fall semester of 2013 and will continue to address issues related to improved mental well-being.

Projected Completion Date: 07/31/2014
Responsible Person/Group: Director of Counseling Services Graduate Assistant Outreach Coordinator (funded by the Suicide Prevention Grant)

Additional Resources Requested: To address the increase of capacity and use of counseling services, a part-time Licensed Professional should be hired to assist the director with individual and group therapy. Salary: $25,000 + Benefits: $11,250 = $36,250 budget requested

Budget Amount Requested: $36,250.00 (recurring)

Implementation Notes:
10/27/2015 Provided 32 Gatekeeper Training programs and mental health promotion events to over 1,000 students during the 2014-2015 academic year, including those students in Greek organizations and Residence Life Assistants.

D. Retention Alert
Students with excessive absences are entered into retention alert and contacted by the Director of Counseling Services to determine mental health status, academic progress, assess learning skills and habits, and develop an academic action plan to address weaknesses in learning skills.

Implementation Status: In-Progress
Priority: High

Relationships (Measure | Outcome/Objective):
Measure: Excessive Absence Follow-Up | Outcome/Objective: Contact on excessive absences.

Implementation Description: Students are contacted by the director when they are assigned to her in retention alert.

Projected Completion Date: 09/30/2014
Responsible Person/Group: Director
Additional Resources Requested: n/a

Implementation Notes:
10/27/2015 Director, along with various other campus personnel, address issues reported in Retention Alert monthly. This is an ongoing effort across campus.

III. Analysis Questions and Analysis Answers

A. What specific strengths did your assessments show? (Strengths)
1. 100% of all students submitted to Retention Alert for excessive absences were contacted by the Director of Counseling Services and provided with the appropriate academic or psychological service. This resulted in an increase persistence rate, students remaining in good academic standing, and retention rate for those students that received academic and psychological services. 2. Counseling Services increased the number of students utilizing counseling services to 40%. In addition, tutorial services were utilized by 220 students which is an increase of 55 students from the previous assessment cycle. 3. Counseling Services provided educational and mental health seminars in the residence halls, targeted classes, and mental health promotions events on campus four times a month during the academic year in the form of Suicide Gatekeeper Training Events and mental health promotions campaigns. Counseling Services provided a total of 19 events with 562 students participating. 4. Counseling Services increased the number of students utilizing Counseling Services from 85 to 125 students who came to therapy one or two times a month. 5. Freshmen students enrolled in UWA 101 Freshmen Seminar for the fall semester continues to rate satisfaction with the
course above the 3.0 level. The major complaint continued to be mandatory participation in
the fall cultural event. 6. The Director of Counseling Services participated in all assigned
university committees which resulted in increased number of students utilizing counseling
services as well as developing and conducting workshops and seminars in the residence halls
that addressed particular problem areas for students such as substance abuse and student
misconduct. 7. Counseling Services provided Gatekeeper suicide prevention training to 1/3
UWA faculty and staff via face to face and in online format. 8. Counseling Services
developed Suicide Crisis Protocol and disseminated information to faculty, staff, community,
and university website via Gatekeeper Training Programs, being a guest speaker at
conferences and professional events, and hosting a Professional Development event on
campus. 9. Increased persistence rates of conditionally admitted freshmen from 54% to 62%.
This is attributed to the development of UWA 101 Freshmen Seminar classes that specifically
targeted conditionally admitted freshmen and provided them with more opportunity to
develop academic skills such as time management, organization, reading and test taking
strategies, and listening and note taking skills conducive to college success.

B. What specific weaknesses or challenges did your assessments show? (Weaknesses)
The major challenge for Counseling Services continues to be the absence of another licensed
therapist to address the increased volume of students utilizing psychological services. The
infrastructure of the counseling center can no longer address the many needs of students who
seek counseling. The remedy to the increased volume of students seeking psychological
services would be to secure the funding of a full-time licensed therapist. Another option is to
refine the mission and purpose of the counseling center where the university is only
responsible for triage of the student in order to refer them to a licensed therapist in the
community.

C. What plans were implemented?
1. For conditionally admitted freshmen, 4 sections of UWA 101 Freshmen Seminar were
designed to provide additional academic skill building activities and academic support.
Additionally, incoming conditionally admitted freshmen were given a first semester schedule
that met academic rigor but also allowed for success, for example avoiding the BY 101 course
the first semester that results in a number of students failing. A second semester schedule was
also developed making a structured first-year experience opportunity for these marginally
prepared students to academically succeed. The result of this plan was an increase of 24%
more freshmen ending the spring semester in good academic standing. 2. The mental health
promotions campaigns in classes, residence halls, and at selected events on campus increased
the number of students seeking psychological services and education on mental health issues.
Also, providing Gatekeeper Training to 1/3 of the faculty and staff helped them understand
and recognize the symptoms of depression and how to refer a student in distress. 3. The
number of students using tutorial services increased to 165 to 220 due to more advertisement
of the services via email and counseling services being allowed to visit classes and let
students know the service is available to them free of charge. 4. Adding the requirement that
Success Coordinators contact all students in their majors who were placed on academic
probation and warning both in the form of email contacts and face-to-face meetings and
requiring these at-risk students to meet with the Director of Counseling Services for learning
assessment and tutoring for learning strategies development resulted in an increased
utilization of psychological and academic services by these students. 5. Semester assessment
of freshmen students enrolled in UWA 101 Freshmen Seminar for the fall semester continues
to rate satisfaction with the course above the 3.0 level. The major complaint continued to be
mandatory participation in the fall cultural event. 6. The Director of Counseling Services
participated in all assigned university committees which resulted in increased number of
students utilizing counseling services as well as developing and conducting workshops and
seminars in the residence halls that addressed particular problem areas for students such as
substance abuse and student misconduct.
D. What plans were not implemented?
Online counseling services has now been moved to Online Programs, and Sponsored Programs and Counseling Services no longer has access to the data for online students. Additionally, the online counselors position is now supervised by the Director of Sponsored Programs and will no longer be a part of the assessment for counseling services.

E. How will assessment results be used for continuous improvement?
The Director of Counseling Services, along with the Outreach Coordinator for the Suicide Prevention Program, will continue to organize focus groups of faculty, staff, and students to determine the mental health and academic needs of the students as to increase persistence, retention, and graduation rates for the campus. The results of these focus groups will be to develop a strategic annual plan that will raise the level of awareness and increase knowledge of the campus community regarding mental illness, academic struggles and barriers, and provide access to resources on campus and in the community that will result in mentally healthier students and student achievement.

IV. Annual Report Section Responses

A. Key Achievements
The Director of Counseling Services continues to work with the College of Education in developing a CACREP accredited counseling program. Also, the director has hosted 2 professional development events that were approved for continuing education credits by the National Board of Certified Counselors and the National Association of Social Workers. Finally, the director submitted a grant to the Department of Justice-Violence Against Women division in an effort to capture funding to develop and promote a Sexual Assault Prevention and Recovery Program for the campus.

B. Staff Achievements
Counseling Services sponsored a contest for IMC students to develop public services announcements, brochures, and posters to promote events and activities regarding mental health. These were uploaded to pages on the Suicide Prevention Resource Center Website and have been viewed by over 100,000 viewers.

C. Public/Community Service
The Director serves on the Sumter County Department of Human Resources QA committee and continues to volunteer as an instructor for the communication skills module for Wesley House in Meridian, Ms.