

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Amy M. Lenhart – Collin College

Updates and Ponderings

Greetings TCCA Members! I hope that your spring semester is off to a good start. I wanted to update you on things happening on behalf of college counselors in Texas.

The first update is to let you know about a proposal that both Dr. John Hipple and I submitted to the TCA Secondary School Counselors Conference coming up in February. Our program will be addressing the continuing collaboration between school counselors and college counselors, making school counselors more aware of our varied roles as college counselors, and also focusing on the different roles of community college counselors and university counselors. Wish us luck!

Secondly, I am excited about our recent invitation and meeting with the Texas School Counselors Association. Juan LeBron, one of our board members in the Houston area, went to their meeting on Saturday, January 25th, as the meeting was in the Houston area. I had suggested the meeting, with the TSCA president this past summer, and I am happy that it took place. I welcome the continued partnership. I believe that this partnership highlights how all of us, whether we are school counselors or college counselors, need to continue to work together in the best interest of students. I thank Juan for being able to go to the meeting, and appreciate his dedication to TCCA.

I want you to remember to vote! If you would like to be involved in the TCCA board, please ask our past president, Lori Ellison for more details.

Finally, my “ponderings.” I want each of you to remember how important your role is as a college counselor. I think that sometimes it is quite easy to forget the impact that we as college counselors have on students. We are asked to consult, wear various hats in our varied positions, serve on committees, teach, counsel, test, recommend accommodations, do presentations, and crisis counseling, to name a few. Sometimes we may not know how we impact a life. One thing that I try to remember, is to see what I do as a rock that skips across the water; the ripples reach far and continue out until they are not seen, but the immediacy that is given when that rock hits the water no doubt has an impact.

**TCCA
Members
speak out**

What do you most enjoy about being a college counselor?

“The most rewarding aspect of my role as a college counselor is witnessing students make healthy decisions that they are confident about.”

Amy Ames, M.Ed., LPC
Career Counselor
Paul L. Foster Success Center
Baylor University

FROM THE PAST-PRESIDENT

Lori Ellison

Hello to everyone! Officer nominations have come in and voting will start in mid-February. Thanks to all of you who have nominated yourselves or someone else for officer positions in TCCA! Nominations for the Outstanding College Counselor Award for 2009 are also under way and we are anticipating more of them to be submitted. If you have an associate who you think is an exceptional, nominate them for the TCCA Outstanding College Counselor! We all work very hard in counseling, advocating for and guiding our students. We want to bring recognition to our colleagues who have been extraordinarily successful in their efforts on our state's college campuses. Nominations for the Outstanding College Counselor Award should be submitted via email to lellison4@yahoo.com and will close on April 15th.

Be watching the listerv for the announcement about voting to begin for the 2009-2010 executive board officers. There will be some information about each nominee and the offices they will hold to help you make an informed vote. We will be voting online again so we hope you will all participate in the electing of your new representatives to TCCA's board. Voting will be available to members from Feb 16 through March 16. We will be sending reminders to you so that you can make your preferences known. Announcements for the newly elected officers will be posted to the listerv by April 1.



The Texas College Counseling Association hosted a booth at the TCA Professional Growth Conference in November 2008. Those who stopped by could register to win two prizes. The names of the lucky winners were announced at the TCCA Luncheon and Business Meeting at the conference. Congratulations to the winners!

Fred Fuentes

Texas A & M Commerce
Won a \$50 Wal-Mart gift card

Adrian S. Warren

Saint Mary's University
Won a free TCCA membership

**TCCA members smile for the camera at the
TCA Professional Growth November 2008 Conference**



Hot Topics Presenters: Thomas C. Johnson, Amy Lenhart, John Hipple, Monica Kintigh



During the TCCA Business Luncheon, Lori Ellison (right) presented 2008 Outstanding College Counselor of the Year Awards to Bob Sindylek (4 year Colleges) and Pam Love-White (Community Colleges)



Joe Martinez, Juan LeBron work at the TCCA booth

81st Legislative Update

Senator Pam Love-White

Welcome TCCA members to a new year and a new Texas Legislative Session. TCA remains committed to bring your concerns to the legislators and advocating for all Texas Counselors.

The public policy agenda for the 81st legislative session remains focused on school counselor PK-12, college/university counseling services, and Licensed Professional Counselors issues. The public policy agenda is located on the TCA website, www.txca.org, for your easy access and use. The agenda is a concise one-page summary that you can easily utilize to communicate the priorities of Texas counselors to your colleagues, administrators, and legislative representatives.

For college/university counselors, TCA is “supporting legislation and rules to require colleges and universities to staff counseling and services for students with licensed professional and/or certified counselors”. Let your colleagues who are **not** members of TCA and TCCA know this, so they can join and become part of the movement to ensure that college students have access to professional college counselors!

As many TCCA members are also LPCs, the TCA public policy agenda is also focused on “protecting the public by ensuring that counseling services are provided by LPCs and preserving and expanding the availability of mental health services in Texas”. Profession College Counselors understand the importance of quality mental health services available for referrals.

Let’s make this a great year for Texas counselors by challenging yourselves to write/call your representatives and bring one new member into TCA and TCCA. A great opportunity is also available to attend one of the three Advocacy Days: February 17, March 25, and May 5, where professional counselors will meet at the State Capital to inform members of the Texas Legislature. For more information, contact your TCCA leaders or me at plove-white@ccccd.edu.

Advocacy Days

February 17, 2009

March 25, 2009

May 5, 2009

**Retaining Students on Academic
Probation: A Case Management
Approach****Joe Martinez El Centro College**

Student retention and success is an essential goal of institutional effectiveness for El Centro College and the District. Retaining students in higher risk categories, such as students on academic probation can be a challenge, but just as

important to the mission and purpose of El Centro and community colleges in general. Vincent Tinto (1994) identifies three major sources of student departure: academic difficulties, the inability of individuals to resolve their educational and occupational goals, and their failure to become or remain incorporated in the intellectual and social life of the institution. Students on academic probation are usually facing substantial academic struggles, lack well defined educational and career goals, and are less integrated into the college environment.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of case management for students reinstated from Suspension, Academic Dismissal and Indefinite Dismissal.

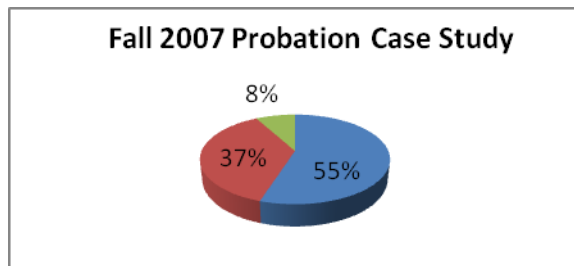
Students that were reinstated from Suspension, Academic Dismissal and/or Indefinite Dismissal for the Fall 2007 semester were required to register for HDEV 0100. The objectives of the course included: *to adopt positive attitudes that would enhance college success; to analyze personal qualities, skills, and behaviors to become more self-aware; and to feel empowered to make wise choices in school and in life.* The requirements of the course consisted of **Success Meetings**, where the student met with the instructor three times throughout the semester to discuss academic progress, difficulties, class assignments, and to work on the student's individual goals. Students were required to complete an **Autobiography** for their first Success Meeting, a **Personality Assessment with Reflection Paper** for their second Success Meeting, and a **Career Assessment with Reflection Paper** for their third Success Meeting. Other assignments included weekly **Journals** reflecting on their adjustment to school, and attendance at **Student Success Workshops** and **Tutoring Sessions**. The three class assignments and the Success Meetings were an opportunity for the student to explore their educational and career goals, as well as to help foster a trusting relationship with their instructor in the hopes of integrating them further into the environment of El Centro College.

This case study consisted of all 38 students that were reinstated to El Centro College for the Fall 2007 semester from Suspension, Academic Dismissal and/or Indefinite Dismissal. Retention and student success was evaluated on three measures: 1) the number of students who completed the Fall 2007 semester with a term GPA of 2.0 or higher, 2) the number of those "successful" students who then enrolled in the Spring 2008 semester, and finally 3) the number of those "successful" students who completed the Spring 2008 semester with a term GPA of 2.0 or higher.

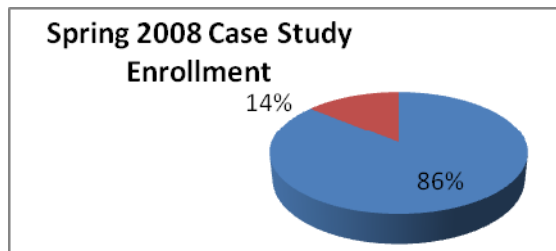
Twenty-one of the thirty-eight students (**55%**), completed the semester successfully with a 2.0 semester GPA or higher; fourteen of the thirty-eight students (**37%**) completed the semester with a semester GPA below 2.0; and three of the thirty-eight students (**8%**) withdrew from all Fall 2007 courses. So, **45%** of the students in the study failed to complete the semester successfully.

Article continued on next page

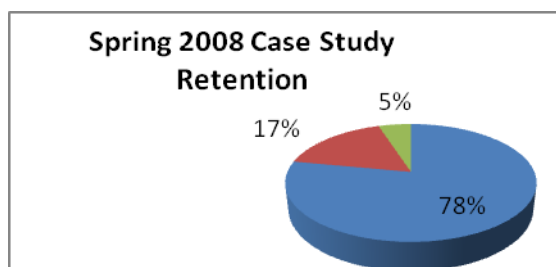
Martinez article p. 2



Eighteen of the twenty-one students (**86%**) who completed the Fall 2007 semester successfully enrolled for the Spring 2008 semester. While four students (**14%**) that were eligible to enroll for the Spring 2008 semester chose not to enroll.



Fourteen of the eighteen students (**78%**) who enrolled in Spring 2008 completed the semester successfully with a 2.0 semester GPA or higher; three of the eighteen students (**17%**) who enrolled in Spring 2008 completed the semester unsuccessfully with a semester GPA below 2.0; and one student (**5%**) withdrew from all Spring 2008 courses.



Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that case managing as a retention strategy for probation students is an effective method. It's my belief that case managing provided students with familiarity, trust and a connection to an individual on campus via the instructor/counselor who not only supported and encouraged the students, but also helped them enroll for the following semester. The student to instructor relationship goes both ways, however. A year later, I still remember a lot of my students and many continue to come see me for advisement and support!

Tinto, V. (1994). Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition. (2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

SUICIDE: Possible Meanings

**John Hipple Ph.D., LPC
University of North Texas**

Completed and attempted suicide among young adults is a problem facing college faculty and staff. Needless to say, such actions create chaos on our campuses.

In my personal and professional struggle to understand the suicidal process and to devise ways in which to intervene, I have concluded that it is essential that we attempt to identify the reasons underlying this behavior. At a very basic level, all behavior has purpose; suicidal actions of any sort either bring something to the individual or keep something away. Additionally, suicide can be thought of as a form of communication.

I believe there are two very common and powerful communication forms to suicide: a way to get attention and a way to escape deep emotional pain. It is my experience that many clients who have suicidal as an option are most interested in using suicidal talk and action as a way to communicate to others they need help in solving the chaos in their life. Those who have escape as base, certainly have rational aspects to their choice of behavior. Being dead is one sure way to get out of a difficult situation. But it is certainly a permanent solution to what is typically a temporary problem.

From an intervention perspective it is never helpful to remove a defense or coping mechanism without first introducing more constructive ways to deal with one's life situation. Consequently we cannot just say 'stop it' to those who have chosen suicide. Instead we must help them find new ways to ask for help or to escape the pain.

Another intervention tactic centers on helping the client to verbalize the communication elements of their destructive thoughts and actions. My approach is to ask "Who needs to know you are thinking of suicide or who needs to know you are cutting on your wrists?" My next question is "If they were here what would you say to them or what would you want different from them?" These two questions open the door to identifying action steps (coping or defense mechanisms) which are potentially more life sustaining.

Of course there are other reasons or communication aspects to suicide, but space limits me from discussing them. And it is essential during the initial interview to assess how immediate is the risk and what can be done to ensure life sustaining protection as the client continues develop a broader array of constructive coping behaviors.

FROM THE EDITORS:

Pam Midgett & Carol Scott

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the newsletter. If you have anything you would like to submit for the next newsletter, please email Pam or Carol. We would love to have more articles, case studies, etc. The deadline for the next newsletter is April 30, 2009.

pam.midgett@mwsu.edu Carol.Scott@ttu.edu