


**Priorities of Counseling Programs and Outcomes
Within the Virginia Community College System**

by

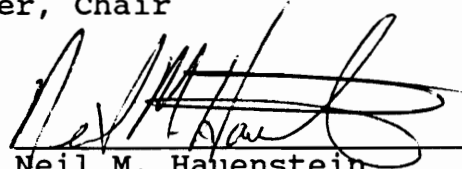
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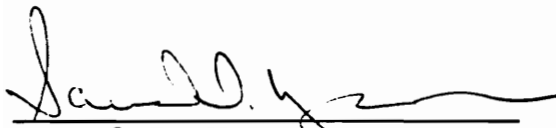
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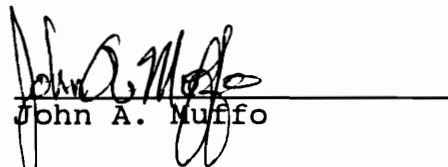
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Abstract

The study was designed to identify counseling services and program outcomes within the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). VCCS counseling providers and chief administrative officers (presidents and campus provosts) assessed the level of importance and existing levels of institutional priorities for counseling services and program outcomes. The study sought to clarify institutional expectations, define the role of counseling providers, and provide elements essential to the assessment of counseling program outcomes.

Major findings included the identification and clarification of services provided by VCCS counseling personnel, the dichotomous relationship between the two study groups regarding recruitment and retention activities, the under-valued and under-involved role of counselor participation in research activities, the process of developing program outcomes, and the significantly different perceptions regarding institutional priorities for services and program outcomes between the two study groups.

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Implications for practice were presented including the need for greater collaboration between chief administrative officers and counseling services providers to make maximum use of available resources.

Acknowledgements

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Priorities of Counseling Programs and Outcomes
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CHAPTER ONE

The assessment movement in higher education has received considerable attention as campus administrators scramble to determine how specific interventions and programs affect student learning (Erwin, 1993). Whether dictated by state legislative mandates or designed to assist institutional program and funding priorities, community colleges throughout the nation are actively involved in the assessment movement (Ewell, 1987). Most initiatives focus on the assessment of academic programs and student learning outcomes. Very few community colleges are including information regarding counseling programs and student development outcomes in annual assessment reports (Carr, 1994).

Historically, counseling professionals have been haunted by program accountability issues insisting measurements of affective techniques and interventions were nearly impossible (Hanson, 1982). In an era when accountability is the hallmark of program success,

counseling professionals must provide the impetus for the assessment of desired program outcomes (Erwin, 1993; Hanson, 1989; Miller, 1982).

Prior to 1994, only three national studies on the scope and quality of student services programs were reported in the literature (Creamer, 1994). A 1994 study conducted by Mattox and Creamer reported an increase in services and functions provided by two-year college student services personnel. Little evidence exists regarding the assessment of counseling program outcomes on community college campuses. This study examined priorities established by counselors and chief administrative officers (CAOs) for community college counseling programs and desired outcomes. The analysis of the similarities and differences between the two groups has the potential to help clarify institutional expectations, clearly define the role of student services program providers, and provide the initial elements needed to assess counseling program outcomes.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of the study was grounded in the philosophy and criteria established through the

accreditation process, the standards developed by the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS), the assessment movement, and program development.

Regional accrediting associations have traditionally monitored the quality of colleges and universities and sought to assure the general public that certain institutional standards were being met (SACS, 1996). In 1957, the Commission on Colleges developed a self-study program to assist institutions in the identification of areas of improvement. The self-study component, including a peer review process, is the cornerstone of the "self-regulatory mechanism" designed for institutions of higher education. Criteria and procedures for accreditation have been developed to evaluate institutional effectiveness. A major component of the criteria focuses on planning and evaluation. A new emphasis on institutional improvement, with a focus on student learning outcomes, is being explored in an attempt to reform the current accreditation process and develop uniform institutional standards (NASPA, 1994).

In 1979, the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) was established to promote professional standards and guidelines for various services and program areas in higher education (CAS, 1988). Originally comprised of a consortium of more than 20 professional associations, CAS has developed standards and guidelines for 21 functional areas of higher education. A major contribution of CAS includes self-assessment guides for each functional area of student services/development programs. These self-assessment guides provide a mechanism for program regulation and assessment to determine institutional effectiveness.

With the impetus provided by accrediting associations and standards developed by CAS, the assessment of counseling and student development program outcomes must occur to ensure comprehensive institutional effectiveness. Lenning (1980) believed assessment of outcomes was essential to strategic planning and program implementation. His model for assessment focused on two types of program goals: the first, outcome goals, focused on intended results; and

the second, process goals, focused on how to achieve outcome goals.

Grounded in the work developed by Morrill, Oetting, and Hurst (1974) and Moore and Delworth (1976), Barr and Cuyjet (1983) designed a five-step model for program development. The second component of the model focused on planning. An essential task of this element was the design of goals and objectives. They believed that before program effectiveness could be assessed or counseling outcomes measured, emphasis needed to be placed on the development of programs with special emphasis on intentional results and desired outcomes. Critical decisions must be analyzed early in the program development process. In order to determine program success, Barr and Cuyjet (1983) believed the essential element of the planning process was the determination and development of narrowly focused, measurable objectives.

Problem Statement

Historically, community college student services professionals have provided an abundance of support services to students, faculty, staff, and

administration. Services have included admissions and records, counseling, financial aid, academic advising, recruitment, new student orientation, student activities, career planning and placement, and testing (Matson, 1983). Recently, community college student populations have increased and become more diverse while funding for community colleges has decreased (Evangelauf, 1992; Leitzel, Morgan, & Stalcup, 1993; McLeod, Atwell, & Bedics, 1995; Thurston, 1983). Evangelauf (1992) projected that by the year 2002, 16 million students would be attending college, up from 14.1 million students currently enrolled. Tuition and fees increased by 13% between 1990 and 1991 while state financial support of community colleges continued to decrease (Leitzel et al., 1993). All community college personnel, particularly counseling professionals, find themselves in a quandary in providing more services with fewer personnel and resources. Two studies that surveyed counselors represent an example of the decline in the number of personnel providing counseling support. A 1971 study of counseling professionals found six to ten counselors employed per community

college campus (Hinko, 1971). In 1988, Keim found the average number of counselors per campus had decreased to four and eight-tenths. Providing more services to a more diverse student population with fewer resources has created increased role ambiguity among community college counseling professionals (Coll & House, 1991; Cordova & Martens, 1986; Creamer, 1983).

State legislative mandates and increased interest in the outcomes assessment movement have forced community college administrators to scrutinize institutional effectiveness and program outcomes. In a 1987 study conducted by the National Governors' Association, 22 states were actively involved in the development of comprehensive assessment initiatives involving higher education (Friedlander & MacDougall, 1990). One year later, 36 states had implemented or were considering implementing some form of outcomes assessment (Bragg, 1989). Mandated in 1985 by Senate Joint Resolution 125 and perceived as one of the "front-runners" in state-based assessment, the assessment movement in Virginia focused primarily on learning outcomes generated by general education

components (Ewell, 1992; Scott, 1991). The assessment guidelines developed by the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) do not require the reporting of counseling or student development outcomes. Only four community colleges in Virginia included information regarding counseling or student development outcomes in their 1992-93 assessment reports (Carr, 1994).

Counseling professionals have traditionally been haunted by program accountability, insisting it was not possible to measure affective techniques and interventions (Lenning, 1980). Hanson (1982) asserted that counseling professionals focused energies on talking about how students changed in college and spent little time documenting how counseling programs facilitated student growth and development. Before counseling or student development outcomes can be assessed, program outcomes should be determined in the initial planning process. Miller (1991), Seybert (1992), and Hutchings (1993) viewed assessment as a goal-setting process where establishing desired program outcomes should be the first step.

Because of the reasons stated previously, the procedural problem of the study was to assess the congruency between services provided and desired outcomes on counseling program priorities by counseling personnel and chief administrative officers (CAOs).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the study was to assess the similarities and differences of priorities that exist between counseling personnel and CAOs regarding counseling programs and outcomes. In addition, the following ancillary purposes were addressed:

1. synthesized the literature concerning counseling programs and the assessment of counseling program outcomes;
2. identified Virginia Community College System (VCCS) counseling programs through the analysis of position descriptions;
3. Determined intended counseling program outcomes through the use of standards developed by CAS and focus group responses;

4. and, analyzed program and outcome priorities among community college counseling professionals and CAOs.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed in the study:

1. What is the level of agreement between community college counseling professionals and CAOs regarding services provided and priorities assigned to those specific services?
 - a. What counseling programs exist in Virginia community colleges?
 - b. What services do counseling professionals identify as most important?
 - c. What services do CAOs identify as most important?
2. What is the level of agreement between community college counseling professionals and CAOs regarding specific program outcomes and associated program priorities?

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- a. What specific program outcomes do counseling professionals and CAOs identify as most important?
- b. What specific counseling program outcomes are priorities for community college counseling personnel?
- c. What specific counseling program outcomes are priorities for CAOs?
- d. Is there a significant relationship between the priorities that exist for counseling program outcomes by counselors and CAOs?

Assumptions

The following assumptions existed throughout the study:

1. Services and desired outcomes are similar among all VCCS counseling programs.
2. Position descriptions are an appropriate source for first-line identification of counseling services provided.
3. CAS standards and guidelines are an appropriate determinant for desired counseling program outcomes.

Limitations

The study was limited to services provided by non-grant funded professionals classified within the Virginia Community College System as coordinators of counseling, counselors, and student services specialists or coordinators. The study of counseling program priorities was limited to individuals serving as CAOs on the 37 campuses of the VCCS. Because the subjects of this study were Virginia community college professionals, the results were cautiously generalized to other colleges.

Definitions

Terms used throughout the study are defined in the following:

1. CAS Standards and Guidelines - criteria and suggestions established by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education for minimal practice of student services/development programs (CAS, 1988).
2. Community college counselors - masters degree credentialed student services professionals within the VCCS who provide support services to students

and the institutional community (Creamer, 1983; Matson, 1983).

3. Chief administrative officer (CAO) - individual on each community college campus that serves as a president or campus provost (VCCS, 1996).
4. Community college student services coordinators - a classification within the VDPT of individuals who are responsible for planning, coordinating, and organizing multiple student services activities related to career or academic counseling, student activities, or job placement (VDPT, 1991).
5. Community college student services specialists - a classification within the VDPT of individuals who are responsible for providing general guidance and advice in special student services areas (e.g., career planning, advising) (VDPT, 1991).
6. Counseling programs - a collection of specific activities or services designed to meet institutional and/or student needs provided by counseling personnel (Barr & Cuyjet, 1983; Moxley & Duke, 1986).

7. Institutional Priority - the level of importance or attention the college devotes to a specific counseling service (e.g., staff allocation, funding).
8. Position descriptions - a narrative describing various job responsibilities and duties (Harvey, 1991).
9. Program outcomes - specific results of activities, services, or planned interventions (Barr & Cuyjet, 1983; McClenney, 1993).

Significance of the Study

Counseling services and student development outcomes may not be included in institutional assessment reports required by SCHEV because community college administrators have failed to develop and articulate desired outcomes for counseling programs. Documentation of the services provided and program outcomes may provide clarity and specificity regarding counseling activities, programs, and interventions. If different program outcomes and priorities are assessed between counselors and CAOs, then the results may be utilized to clarify institutional expectations, to

clearly define the role of counseling program providers, and provide the initial elements needed to assess counseling services and student development outcomes.

By analyzing similar and different priorities of services determining program outcomes, counseling professionals may be better equipped to articulate desired outcomes and provide tangible measures to increase accountability and support of programming efforts. These results may not only establish the essential components needed to determine desired objectives and outcomes, but may also provide the framework for the assessment and measurement of counseling services and student development outcomes for community college counseling programs.

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 includes the introduction, conceptual framework, problem statement, purposes, research questions, assumptions, limitations, definitions, and significance of the study. Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive review of the literature related to

community college counseling and student services personnel, program outcomes, and CAS Standards and Guidelines. Chapter 3 outlines the methods of research, including a discussion of the population, research procedures, and statistical analysis. Chapter 4 presents the findings and analysis of the data focusing on the two research questions. Chapter 5 includes an interpretation of the findings, conclusions, implications, and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

Access, flexibility, and affordability have been major hallmarks of the community college movement (Building Communities, 1987). Designed to enhance access to higher education, community college open door admissions policies have afforded all individuals an opportunity to try and the right to fail (Roueche & Baker, 1987). Community colleges continue to respond to changing technologies through the design and delivery of programs to diverse student populations. Bell (1993) believed that community college's have defied "the time honored phrase that you can't be all things to all people" (p. 8).

With increased interest in accountability issues by legislative units and citizens, community college personnel across the nation struggle to clearly define, articulate, and measure how programs and interventions impact and improve student learning. A wealth of information exists regarding "value added" learning and outcomes assessment measures inside the walls of the academic classroom. However, limited empirical

evidence exists concerning the assessment of counseling program outcomes and establishment of program priorities on community college campuses. This chapter will review the literature-based findings of the (a) services and programs provided by counseling and student services units, (b) types of existing program outcomes measures, (c) methods to establish counseling program outcomes, and (d) the relationship and use of CAS Standards and Guidelines to link anticipated outcomes to the evaluation of community college counseling services programs.

Community College Counseling and Student Services

Throughout the country, community college counseling services personnel provide a myriad of support services to students, faculty, staff, and administration. These support services may include admissions and records, counseling, financial aid, advising, recruitment, new student orientation, co-curricular activities, career planning and development, and testing (Matson, 1983). Because of the specialized mission and open-door admissions philosophy, community colleges attract diverse student

populations. Individuals of all ages, possessing various career goals and expectations, diverse cultural, intellectual, and socio-economic backgrounds, appear in counseling services professionals' offices with a variety of needs (Creamer, 1983; Thurston, 1983). Creamer (1983) described the role of a community college counselor as a "jack-of-all-trades" and concluded the most common approach to delivering community college counseling services was that of an educational generalist. As educational generalists, counseling professionals provide support to diverse student populations and are often challenged by attempting to be all things to all people (Cordova & Martens, 1986; Creamer, 1983).

Role and Function of Counseling Personnel

Historically, the counseling function has served as the central focus of comprehensive student services programs (Matson, 1983; O'Banion, 1989). Perceived as filling multi-dimensional roles, community college counselors are required to be responsive to diverse institutional and student needs. Duties and responsibilities assigned to counselors and desired

counseling program outcomes differ significantly depending on the academic mission of the institution (Paterson & Carpenter, 1989). The multi-faceted role of community college counseling personnel seems to focus on providing information to diverse constituents, assisting other campus personnel in providing responsive services to diverse student populations, and designing programs to enhance and create a learning environment maximizing the potential for student learning (Dassance, 1986; Matson, 1983; O'Banion, 1989; Payne, 1989).

Some administrative personnel believe counselors should focus energies and develop programs surrounding student success while other individuals want counselors to manage programs such as placement testing and gender equity programs (Parnell, 1985; Schinoff, 1983; Thurston & Robbins, 1983). Many student services professionals believe that all college personnel (e.g., faculty, administration, student services staff) are responsible for the development of human potential. In a 1983 study of perceptions of responsibility for student development, Cordova found there were

significant differences between faculty, student services professionals, and administrators regarding who should be responsible for student development. Faculty and administrators believed counselors were most responsible for this development and administrators were least responsible (Cordova, 1983).

Grounded within the mission of the institution's academic programs, SACS (1996) believed student services program goals should contribute to the overall cultural, social, moral, intellectual, and physical development of students. Perceived as an institutional responsibility with "high priority," academic advising, counseling, and career development programs should include, but not be limited to, orientation, personal counseling, career planning and placement, career counseling, and testing services (SACS, 1996).

Counseling personnel in Virginia community colleges provide a variety of services including career, educational, and personal assistance. Through the use of various assessment instruments (e.g., tests and inventories), counselors are tasked with dissemination of occupational and educational

information, as well as financial aid and potential employment information (VCCS, 1996).

Even though community college enrollment has continued to increase, state financial support of higher education continues to decline (Evangelauf, 1992; Leitzel et al., 1993; McLeod et al., 1995; Thurston, 1983). Community college administrators have been forced to creatively reduce personnel costs while serving more students with fewer human resources (Leitzel et al., 1993; Thurston, 1983). In a study designed to examine the professional activities and characteristics of community college counselors, Keim (1988) found the average number of counselors per community college was slightly less than five. In two additional studies, Higgins (1981) found an average of five and seven-tenths counselors per community college campus and Hinko (1971) found six to ten counselors per campus. Using these three studies, the average number of counselors on community college campuses dropped from six to ten per campus to four and eight-tenths over a sixteen year period. The role of student services and counseling professionals has become more

expansive because of decreased funding, fewer personnel, and decentralization of services in an attempt to provide responsive services to diverse student populations.

Numerous studies have generated information regarding how community college counselors devote their time. Contrary to the position titles, these individuals are devoting less and less time to counseling students regarding personal concerns and issues. Keim (1988) reported that surveyed counselors indicated they spent 29% of their time in academic and educational counseling and 11% of their time conducting personal counseling. The time counselors reported spending with academic/educational counseling as compared to personal counseling continues to foster the belief that community college counselors are providing more generalistic services. The trend for community college counselors to spend less time in personal counseling continues. Hinko (1971) found counselors devoting 15% of their time to individual counseling, Wolf and Dameron (1975) reported personnel spending 26% of their time in personal-social-emotional counseling,

and Hughes (1976) reported counselors spending 23% of their time in individual counseling sessions.

In a 1990 study, Coll and Rice found that a community college counselor's typical week included 13 hours of academic advising, 7 hours in career counseling, 6 hours in personal counseling, 4 hours in administrative tasks, and 12 to 16 hours in counselor-related duties (e.g., recruitment, placement testing, teaching).

Rationale for role clarification

The open door admissions policy and work with diverse student groups, budgetary constraints, campus-wide responsibility for student development, and educational preparation of personnel have generated a need for role clarification among community college counseling professionals (Coll & Rice, 1990; Cordova & Martens, 1986; Creamer, 1983; Drakulich, 1986; Matson, 1983). A 1991 study conducted by Coll and House found student services co-workers had the perception that their counseling colleagues did not possess a clear understanding of their responsibilities and did not delegate time appropriately. When role confusion and

ambiguity within various components of a student services unit exists, personnel may react in a variety of ways. These responses may include uncertainty of an institution's mission, individual feelings of being less valued and respected, and confusion involving the role and responsibilities of counseling and student services personnel.

Cordova and Martens (1986) believed that trying to accomplish a variety of priorities and to be all things to all people resulted in a concept called "mission blur." They believed this concept was created when individuals had difficulty determining and clarifying priorities in terms of the institution's documented mission. In response to added institutional demands, Cordova and Martens (1986) recognized that counseling professionals could do little to change increasing enrollments and decreasing financial resources. "However, many of the institutional challenges in implementing student development programs relate to questions or concerns about the mission of the college" (Cordova & Martens, 1986, p. 62).

Several potential solutions exist in an effort to define the role and function of community college counseling personnel. These solutions include: (a) better articulation of the value of student services and development, (b) setting priorities of programs by grounding them within the institutional mission, and (c) providing and enhancing professional development opportunities for new personnel (Cordova & Martens, 1986; Dassance, 1986; Erwin, 1993; Hanson, 1982; Matson & Deegan, 1985; Moxley & Duke, 1986; Wirtz & Magrath, 1979).

Several individuals believed community college counseling personnel needed to focus more energy on articulating the value of student development and increasing institutional awareness. Dassance (1986) acknowledged that counseling personnel on community college campuses possessed the same challenges facing the profession as a whole. The issue centered around better and more thorough communication with decision makers regarding "the purpose and value of a concern for the development of the whole student and the role of student affairs within the mainstream of the

institution to help achieve developmental outcomes for students" (Dassance, 1986, p. 26). Cordova and Martens (1986) also believed one of the greatest challenges and opportunities facing counseling professionals was to "increase institutional awareness of the importance of counseling and student development goals" (p. 60). Matson and Deegan (1985) believed community college counseling services programs were being reduced in staff and other resources not only because of budgetary constraints but because there seemed to be little general agreement on the need for effective counseling services programs. Efforts need to be devoted to clearly defining and articulating the role of various counseling services programs and resources among all community college personnel (e.g., student services staff, students, faculty, staff, and administration).

A technique to increase institutional awareness and to better represent the value of counseling and student development would be to ground the importance of counseling and student development within the institution's mission. By grounding the importance of counseling services in the mission of the institution,

counseling professionals can proactively establish priorities, increase awareness, and promote the importance of counseling services throughout the entire campus community (Cordova & Martens, 1986).

Determining program objectives and establishing program priorities are essential elements to overall unit success (Erwin, 1993; Hanson, 1982; Moxley & Duke, 1986; Wirtz & Magrath, 1979). Development of desired program outcomes and objectives will assist counseling and student services personnel with budgetary decisions, securing institutional support, and determination of program effectiveness (Moxley & Duke, 1986).

A final approach to providing a solution to the confusion, ambiguity, and dissatisfaction that exists among community college counseling personnel would be to provide and enhance professional development opportunities. Since the majority of counselors and other student services professionals are trained through educational programs that focus on individual counseling (Keim, 1988), and community college students may be better served by generalists prepared as student

development specialists (Creamer, 1983), then community college student services administrators need to design in-service training programs to help develop more generalistic skills. As a result of clearly defining and articulating the responsibilities and expectations of counseling staff members, student services administrators will better utilize personnel in prioritizing and reaching the desired outcomes of counseling and student services programs.

Rationale for Program Outcomes

Although limited empirical evidence exists, a variety of reasons support the need to determine and assess counseling programs and outcomes. Issues of accountability, continuous improvement, enhanced relationships among personnel, and role clarification within an institution's mission provide the impetus for the difficult, complex process of the assessment of student learning outcomes (Erwin, 1993; Hanson, 1989). The topic of assessment requires considerable time and institutional commitment. Many researchers believe the element central to the success of assessment involves articulating and defining desired program outcomes

(Erwin, 1993; Hanson, 1989; Lenning, 1980; Miller, 1982). Counseling services practitioners must first determine program objectives in addition to establishing program assessment measures to effectively design intentional assessment techniques and program objectives.

Importance of Establishing Program Objectives

Historically, Hanson (1982) believed student services professionals did little to document change within students while in college. "Student affairs professionals talk about student development a great deal but do very little to document that the programs we devise actually help students grow and change" (Hanson, 1982, p. 47). Hanson (1982) believed extensive descriptions of counseling services programs were designed to facilitate student development but failed to systematically assess student development.

With a student development philosophy embedded in the very beginnings of higher education in the United States and with a rich conceptual base, is it not strange that our profession has done so little to assess student development, to document

what we believe so strongly and practice so arduously? (Hanson, 1982, p. 48)

To combat the belief that the need for a thorough assessment of student development occurs to program planners well into program implementation, the process of determining program objectives must be a forethought to the daily operations within a counseling unit. Program objectives can be utilized in many ways including budgetary decision-making, to garner and enhance institutional support, and as a tool to evaluate program effectiveness (Justice & Ragle, 1979; Lenning, 1980; Miller, 1982; Moxley & Duke, 1986; Thomas, 1979).

Moxley and Duke (1986) believed it was important to set priorities for counseling services programs and saw it as an essential component for budgetary decisions. After a four year period of utilizing program priorities for budgetary purposes, Moxley and Duke (1986) found a series of continuous benefits. Establishing program priorities from a budgetary perspective assisted chief student affairs officers (CSAOs) with the decisions to reduce and eliminate

programs with greater confidence, provided a means for program reinforcement within other administrative circles, and linked counseling objectives directly to institutional mission. From a personnel perspective, Moxley and Duke (1986) believed integrating budgetary decisions within program objectives enhanced "camaraderie" among personnel, provided a more thorough understanding of the comprehensive nature of services provided by the entire unit, and provided the impetus for the revision and refinement of departmental objectives.

In an attempt to garner and enhance institutional support, Lenning (1980) believed it was necessary for counseling personnel to clearly articulate program outcomes through student benefits and gains. Echoing Hanson's (1982) beliefs that counseling personnel often perceived affective program goals as "imprecise, vague, illusory, and difficult to measure" (Lenning, 1980, p. 247), Lenning believed it was essential to provide empirical data and analysis to assess program outcomes. Lenning's (1980) model of assessment emphasized two different types of program goals. The first, outcome

goals, focused on results the program was intended to accomplish. On the other hand, process goals referred to how specific outcome goals were to be achieved (e.g., staffing, funding, methods). In 1988, Lenning identified six assessment methods or strategies frequently used to evaluate non-cognitive educational outcomes. The six methods included: (a) observable performance measures; (b) self-report measures; (c) consensus-rendering techniques; (d) inventories; (e) simulations; and (f) secondary data applications. Goals and objectives must be specified and student population defined before developing strategies and procedures to implement the program or outline the proposed assessment strategies.

By establishing program objectives, counseling services managers can better evaluate program effectiveness through program assessment and provide much needed accountability measures (Justice & Ragle, 1979; Miller, 1982; Thomas, 1979). Thomas (1979) believed continual assessment by counseling services program managers was similar to the basic pedagogy of teaching. He observed that "good teachers do not

continue lessons that are unlearnable, and take no pride in the failure of their pupils" (Thomas, 1979, p. 53). Miller (1982) viewed assessment and program development as a normal part of counseling services' daily activities with students and programming. He emphasized the belief that all individuals in the higher education community needed "to carefully ascertain their purposes, goals, and objectives, as well as the strategies to achieve them" (Miller, 1982, p. 13).

Determining Program Outcomes

Although various techniques were outlined in the literature, all seemed to focus on the importance of establishing intentional program outcomes and determining assessment measures prior to program or activity implementation. Justice and Ragle (1979) believed the most critical component of measuring program effectiveness was the identification of the principal goals of the counseling services unit. Harpel (1978), Oetting and Cole (1978), Barr and Cuyjet (1983), and Erwin (1993) viewed the determination and

the evaluation of program outcomes as a dynamic process with various interacting components.

Harpel (1978) utilized a management model to analyze program effectiveness which incorporated seven stages in the determination and evaluation of program outcomes. These stages included: (a) identification of the problem; (b) assessment of environmental constraints; (c) goal specification; (d) definition of objectives; (e) definition of program structure; (f) budgeting; and (g) determination of outcomes. Harpel (1978) viewed the goal setting process as a "reminder or restatement of long term intended outcomes" (p. 25). Harpel (1978) believed effective goals served as excellent motivators and provided a connection for staff members through program implementation. "A clear sense of goals clarifies what each program, as well as the individual within each program, is uniquely contributing to the achievement of the overall aims of the institution" (Harpel, 1978, p. 26). Grounded within systems theory, Harpel's management model is designed with the knowledge that

interacting elements cannot change without affecting other elements.

Oetting and Cole (1978) believed the essential element in the development or analysis of outcome measures was the connection between goals and measures. One of the first steps of Oetting and Cole's model of outcome measures development was to determine "what the program [was] meant to accomplish and exactly what changes would finally occur if it met its goals" (1978, p. 47). The process of identifying outcome measures included the determination of general program goals, dissecting program goals into specific aims, and the translation of the goals into some "form of observable changes or behavioral goals" (Oetting & Cole, 1978, p. 47).

The second stage of the program development model developed by Barr and Cuyjet (1983) focused on the significance of planning. They believed the first task involved in designing goals, objectives, and evaluation was to "determine what specific outcomes should occur for whom and under what conditions" (Barr & Cuyjet, 1983, p. 459). Emphasis should be placed on narrowly

focused objectives that could be easily evaluated regarding program success. During the planning phase, measurable objectives need to be developed in order to determine program accomplishments. "Identify expected outcomes by listing clear, specific goals and objectives and define the specific outcome(s) that will indicate the program's success" (Barr & Cuyjet, 1983, p. 471). Methods evaluating all components of a program should be identified during the initial design phase of the program or activity.

Prior to determining how to assess the measurement of successful student outcomes, Erwin (1993) believed the first step in program assessment was the articulation and definition of intended program outcomes. The second step included the analysis of programs and services to determine if programs had been designed to support the overall objectives of the student services unit and whether or not the program or service was reasonable to accomplish.

The need to determine and assess counseling programs and outcomes through intentional methods is supported by literature-based findings. Techniques to

measure counseling programs and establish program priorities will differ among various community colleges based on institutional mission. The establishment of intentional program outcomes will assist community college counseling personnel with most accountability issues and help to more clearly articulate the role of the profession.

CAS Standards and Guidelines

Historical Background

In 1979, the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) for Student Services/Development programs, a consortium of over 20 professional organizations, began to develop a series of professional standards and guidelines related to programs and services for students in higher education. The general purpose of the group was to develop "written professional standards, disseminating those standards to the profession at large, and aiding in the implementation of the standards" (History of the CAS, 1986, p. 1). With a grant from the American College Testing Program, the original publication included a series of standards for 16 functional areas of student

services/development programs (CAS, 1993). Today, Self-Assessment Guides (SAG) have been established for 21 different functional areas (e.g., academic advising, counseling services, student orientation) of higher education programs and services (CAS, 1992). A list of affiliated professional organizations and CAS Functional Area Self-Assessment Guides are presented in Appendix A and B respectively.

When the first set of Standards and Guidelines for commuter student programs and services were disseminated, Jacoby and Thomas (1986) believed:

1. The CAS Standards and Guidelines are probably the most important statements of professional purpose that have evolved in the student services/development area.
2. The CAS Standards and Guidelines, developed and adopted by a consortium of professional associations in higher education, represent the best and most current thinking of leaders in our field.
3. CAS intends ultimately that its standards be used by institutions proceeding regional

accreditation. The use of the 'Standards and Guidelines for Commuter Student Services and Programs' in the accreditation process will serve to legitimize the commuter services functional areas as an integral part of the institutional mission. (pp. 55-56)

Designed to enhance institutional quality, CAS Standards provide "measures of program and service effectiveness, designs for program and service development and assessment, criteria for institutional self-studies and preparation for accreditation, opportunities for staff development, directions for student learning and development, and frameworks for accountability" (CAS, 1992, p. 2). Mullendore, Bryan, Birmingham, and Marron (1989) saw several additional uses of CAS Standards including justification of budget requests, enhancement of unit credibility, "political maneuverability," and standardization of language within various student services areas. CAS Guidelines can also be used in numerous ways including new program development, expansion of services, staff development, program and service evaluation, prioritization, and

goal setting (Materniak & Williams, 1987). Described in each self-assessment guide are the Standards and Guidelines, the roles of documentation and assessment in the self-study process, and the steps for developing a follow-up action plan. The self-assessment guides have been designed in a worksheet format for the evaluation of each student services functional area (Yerian & Miller, 1989).

Studies Involving the Use of the CAS Standards

Several studies have examined the use and impact of the CAS Standards and Guidelines on the services and programs provided by counseling and student services professionals. In a 1989 study of CSAOs, Marron found that (a) full utilization of the CAS Standards had not been achieved because of insufficient distribution of the Guidelines, (b) Standards received minimal overall utilization, (c) fewer private institutions used the Standards than public institutions of higher education, and (d) long-term effect could not be determined from the study.

A 1991 study of the use and impact of CAS Standards on the practice of student affairs found that

51% of the 130 CSAOs responding to a survey indicated some use of the Standards (Mann, Gordon, & Strode, 1991). Thirty-three percent were aware of but not using the Standards and 16% were unaware of them. In this study, respondents reported using the CAS Standards to "evaluate individual units, measure achievement, and set goals and objectives" (Mann et al., 1991, p. 5). Although the Standards appeared to have an impact, the study seemed inconclusive as to CSAOs' perceptions on actual practice.

The CAS Standards and Guidelines have also been used to review student affairs graduate curricula. Paterson and Carpenter (1989) believed the CAS Standards for professional development should be used as a part of every student affairs preparation program. Von Destinon (1986) utilized the CAS Standards to evaluate the student affairs coursework at the University of Arizona. Although he acknowledged the need for additional research, Von Destinon (1986) believed the Standards served as a useful mechanism for curriculum development and review.

CAS Standards as a Framework for Delivery of Programs

Determining what programs and services to offer and how to assess outcomes of these various activities seem to play an essential role in the delivery of comprehensive counseling services programs. Many different mechanisms and strategies are available to assist in the determination of program offerings and the assessment of student outcomes (Hanson, 1989). Lenning (1988) acknowledged that "every measure has weaknesses; where one is weak, another may be strong" (p. 49). Adaptable to diverse institutions of higher education, the CAS Standards and Guidelines are one method available to assist with program and services evaluations (Mann et al., 1991). Combined with the identification and clarification of program goals, Dassance (1987) believed the CAS Standards would strengthen the counseling services role on community college campuses.

Many believe the CAS Standards and Guidelines provide an excellent vehicle for goal setting and the establishment of counseling services program design and development (Mann et al., 1991; Materniak & Williams,

1987; Mullendore et al., 1989). In addition, the CAS Standards can be utilized to enhance and clarify the overall role of counseling services professionals. Miller (1984) perceived the CAS Standards as a mechanism to give direction and help achieve professional and program status to counseling efforts. Echoing this perception, Paterson and Carpenter (1989) believed the development, distribution, and use of the CAS Standards helped advance all student affairs efforts toward a distinguishable profession.

CAS Standards and Guidelines can serve as a useful mechanism to assist CAOs and CSAOs establish appropriate accountability measures and program priorities for community college counseling units. Determination and articulation of unit and program priorities will help clarify the role of community college counseling professionals as they continue to serve diverse student populations.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Design and Methodology

This study was designed to examine counseling services programs and outcomes and to identify the similarities and differences of priorities that exist between Virginia community college counseling personnel and chief administrative officers. The study investigated counseling services program offerings, the level of perceived importance for counseling programs and outcomes, and the level of institutional priority that exists for counseling programs and outcomes between the individuals actually providing counseling program activities (e.g., coordinators of counseling, counselors, student services specialists, student services coordinators) and chief administrative officers.

Chapter 3 describes the procedures used in the study including the identification and description of participants, the design and development of the *Counseling Program Survey*, and the analysis of data in response to research questions one and two.

Population

Each Virginia community college has been directed to maintain a staff of counselors to help students make a variety of career, educational, and personal decisions. Duties of various counseling personnel may include recruitment and high school articulation, advising, testing, orientation, career planning and placement, and student activities (VCCS, 1996). Individuals classified as student services specialists and coordinators have recently assumed counseling responsibilities due to state budgetary constraints. Because of this phenomenon, this study included non-grant funded professionals classified within the Virginia Community College System as coordinators of counseling (N=9), counselors (N=116), student services coordinators (N=1), and student services specialists (N=14) (Beaudry, 1996). Campus provosts and community college presidents were selected as a comparison group for the study because these individuals are directly responsible to the Chancellor for the overall operation of the institution, leadership and supervision for the entire campus program, budgeting, campus development,

and strategic planning (VCCS, 1996). Designated as chief administrative officers, VCCS presidents and campus provosts (N=34) were surveyed to determine the similarities and differences that exist between counseling personnel and campus leaders regarding counseling programs and outcomes (Beaudry, 1996).

Instrumentation

The *Counseling Program Survey* was designed to collect data regarding program and outcome priorities among community college counseling professionals and chief administrative officers and to determine what counseling services programs were provided by counseling and student services specialists or coordinators within the Virginia Community College System.

Survey Design

The *Counseling Program Survey* consisted of three sections. Section one was designed to collect data regarding basic services provided by counseling services personnel throughout the VCCS and assess perceived levels of institutional priority existing for each service. Section two was constructed to

collect data regarding potential outcomes for counseling programs and sought to identify the level of institutional priority that exists for each program outcome. Section three collected general demographic information about survey respondents.

Survey Development

Position descriptions of counselors, student services specialists, and student services coordinators were reviewed to construct section one of the *Counseling Program Survey*. Functional areas of responsibility identified in position descriptions were listed as "services provided" in the survey instrument. A stratified random sampling technique for the review of position descriptions was used because of the assumption that like services exist on campuses of similar sizes throughout the Virginia Community College System. In an attempt to reduce repetition, one large (2,000 or more annualized FTEs), one medium (1,000 - 1,999 annualized FTEs), and one small (less than 1,000 annualized FTEs) community college were selected. A list of Virginia's community colleges and annual 1995-96 FTEs enrollment is located in Appendix C.

Institutions selected randomly and request for information letters are located in Appendix D.

Section one of the *Counseling Program Survey* included two components. Respondents were asked whether or not an identified service is provided by counseling services staff and whether or not the service should be provided by counseling services staff members. Respondents were then asked to rate the importance of the service and to indicate the level of institutional priority that exists for the service using a four-point Likert scale (1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=important, 4=very important).

Section two of the survey was developed from information generated by a focus group and CAS self-assessment criteria for functional areas identified in section one. A focus group consisting of counselors, student services professionals, and faculty constructed potential counseling program outcomes using an open-ended sentence structure format. A detailed description of the procedure used during the focus group session is provided in Appendix E. The self-assessment guides developed by CAS for student

services/development program specifically identify assessment criteria related to: mission; program; leadership and management; organization and administration; human resources; funding; facilities; legal responsibilities; equal opportunity, access, and affirmative action; campus and community relations; multi-cultural programs and services; ethics; and evaluation. Individuals responding to section two of the survey were asked to indicate the importance of program outcomes using a four-point Likert scale (1=not important, 2=somewhat important, 3=important, 4=very important) and the level of institutional priority existing for program outcomes (1=no priority, 2=low priority, 3=priority, 4=high priority).

Survey respondents provided general demographic information in section three of the survey. Data collected included age, race, gender, highest degree earned, major of highest degree earned, and number of years experience in a community college and counseling services setting. A copy of the *Counseling Program Survey* is located in Appendix F.

Validity and Reliability

A comprehensive process was used to construct the *Counseling Program Survey*. Focus group responses blended with CAS self-assessment criteria were used to determine program outcomes and revised to eliminate redundancy. The process used to construct the survey instrument and judgment of the author ascertains the instrument possesses face validity. The survey instrument could be expanded to be used in other areas but covers institutional expectations of counseling support functions within a community college setting.

A pilot study was conducted to determine the reliability of the *Counseling Program Survey*. Pilot study participants were not only asked to complete the survey but were asked to critique the instrument and identify unclear or ambiguous statements or directions. This information was used to provide feedback about the survey and the effectiveness of the entire questionnaire package.

Procedures

The Classification and Compensation Manager of the Virginia Community College System provided names for

all non-grant funded individuals employed by the Commonwealth of Virginia (VCCS) and classified as coordinator of counseling, counselor, student services specialist, student services coordinator, provost, or president. For purposes of distribution, collection, and follow-up, a comprehensive list of individuals surveyed was developed. Selected VCCS personnel identified for the study were assigned code numbers to serve as identifiers.

A cover letter was developed and signed by Arnold Oliver, VCCS Chancellor, and mailed with questionnaire package to campus chief administrative officers, coordinators of counseling, counselors, student services specialists, and student services coordinators.

A questionnaire package consisting of cover letter, *Counseling Program Survey*, and postage-paid, self-addressed return envelopes were distributed to selected VCCS personnel. A two-week response was requested in the cover letter.

Follow-up correspondence with counselors, student services specialists and coordinators, and chief

administrative officers was conducted as needed. Initially, a post card was distributed to non-responders requesting questionnaire completion. Complete questionnaire packages were redistributed to non-responders after a four-week time period.

Data Analysis

Section one of the *Counseling Program Survey* was designed to determine the level of agreement between community college counseling services professionals and CAOs regarding services provided and priorities assigned to specific services. Responses to survey questions regarding whether or not counseling services staff provided specific services and whether or not student services staff should provide service yielded categorical data that was reported in a table displaying frequency distribution. A chi square statistical test was used to determine whether significant differences exist between counseling personnel and CAOs responses.

Likert scale data collected to statements regarding perceived levels of importance and level of existing institutional priority in the *Counseling*

Program Survey was used to generate a mean response for each service for both groups. A *t* test was used to determine differences between counseling services professionals and CAOs responses. A table was developed to report the mean response, standard deviation, and distribution and *p* values for each service for counseling professionals and CAOs.

Section two of the *Counseling Program Survey* was designed to assess the level of agreement between community college counseling services professionals and CAOs regarding specific program outcomes and associated program priorities. A mean response, using a four-point Likert scale, was calculated for the level of importance and perceived level of institutional priority for program outcomes for both groups. A *t* test was used to determine differences between the responses of counseling services professionals and CAOs.

Section three of the survey was designed to collect general demographic information about the individuals responding to the *Counseling Program Survey*. Various charts were developed to graphically

represent demographic data of respondents. Data were used to describe study participants and create a portrait of chief administrative officers and counseling services providers working within the VCCS.

Summary of Analysis Plan

Information summarizing the analysis plan for the study is presented in Table 1.

Conclusion

Documentation of the various functions of counseling services providers within the VCCS and design of intentional program outcomes provided clarification regarding counseling services activities, programs, and interventions. If different levels of agreement were assessed for program outcomes and priorities between the counseling services providers and CAOs, then the results were utilized to clarify institutional expectations, to more clearly define the role of counseling services providers, and provided the initial elements needed to assess counseling services program outcomes. With the development and articulation of desired outcomes, perhaps community college counseling services programs will become a more

Table 1

Summary of Study Analysis Plan

Research Questions	Type of Data	Analysis
Does counseling staff provide service?	Categorical Information	χ^2
Should counseling staff provide service?	Categorical Information	χ^2
How important is service?	Likert scale data	t test
What level of institutional priority exists for service?	Likert scale data	t test
How important is program outcome?	Likert scale data	t test
What level of institutional priority exists for service?	Likert scale data	t test

integral part and play a more active role in the assessment of institutional outcomes.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

The study was designed to identify services provided by counselors throughout the Virginia Community College System and to determine the similarities and differences of priorities that exist between Virginia community college counseling personnel and chief administrative officers regarding counseling programs and outcomes. The *Counseling Program Survey* was designed and distributed to all individuals within the VCCS classified as a president, provost, coordinator of counseling, counselor, student services specialist, or student services coordinator (N=174). Ninety-four surveys were returned after the first mailing. An additional 34 were returned after a reminder postcard and a complete survey instrument was redistributed (N=128, 73.6%). Of the survey completers, 86.1% were chief administrative officers (president 100%, provost 61.5%) and 70.3% were counseling professionals. Most respondents were between the ages of 40 to 60. Even though 74% of the chief administrative officers group were men, the

majority of survey completers were women. The majority of those who completed the survey were Caucasian/White American (non-Hispanic). Only 9.7% of the chief administrative officers and 21% of the counseling professionals surveyed represented minority ethnic backgrounds. General demographic information regarding age, gender, and race is presented in Table 2.

Over 70% of the individuals responding to the *Counseling Program Survey* possessed 10 to 29 years of experience within a community college setting. One-half of the chief administrative officers lacked any experience in a counseling setting. The majority of counselors responding to the survey had worked in counseling services for 10 to 29 years. The majority of survey completers earned a masters degree credential. Almost 94% of the chief administrative officers had completed a doctorate. Most of the presidents and provosts earned their highest degrees in the area of administration. The majority of counseling professionals responding to the survey earned their highest degrees in the counseling field. Specific information regarding the number of years experience in

Counseling Program Priorities

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Table 2

Demographics of the Sample - Age, Gender, Race

Sample Attributes	Survey Classification					
	CAOS		Counselors		All	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Age Group (n=126*)						
20 - 29 years	0	0	3	3	3	2
30 - 39 years	1	3	13	14	14	11
40 - 49 years	5	17	38	40	43	34
50 - 59 years	19	63	30	31	49	39
60 years or over	5	17	12	13	17	14
Gender (n=128)						
Female	8	26	59	61	67	52
Male	23	74	38	39	61	48
Race (n=127*)						
Asian-American or Pacific Islander	0	0	1	1	1	1
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	0	1	1	1	1

Table 2, Continued

Demographics of the Sample - Age, Gender, Race

Sample Attributes	Survey Classification					
	CAOS		Counselors		All	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Race						
African-American	3	10	17	18	20	16
Hispanic-American	0	0	2	2	2	1
Caucasian/White American (non-Hispanic)	28	90	75	78	103	81

Note. *non-reported data.

a community college, the number of years experience in a counseling setting, highest degree earned, and major of highest degree earned is presented in Table 3.

Position descriptions of various counseling services professionals were reviewed to determine the types of services and activities provided within counseling programs throughout the VCCS. Sixteen different services were identified and included admissions, advising, alumni, campus programming, career planning and placement, counseling, financial aid, orientation, placement testing, recruitment, registration, research, services for special needs students, student activities, developing and teaching student development courses, and veterans services. All 16 services were provided on at least one community college within the Virginia Community College System.

Responses to survey questions regarding whether or not a specific service is provided by counseling personnel and whether or not counseling staff should provide the service are represented in Tables 4 and 5 respectively. A chi square statistical test was used to determine whether significant differences existed

Table 3

Demographic Information - Years Experience in a
Community College, Years Experience in Counseling,
Highest Degree Earned, Major of Highest Degree Earned

	Survey Classification			
	CAOS		Counselors	
	n	%	n	%
Years Experience (Community College)				
0 - 9	0	0	26	27
10 - 19	7	23	31	32
20 - 29	17	55	36	37
30 - 39	7	23	4	4
Years Experience (Counseling)				
0	16	53	0	0
1 - 9	6	20	17	18
10 - 19	3	10	30	31
20 - 29	5	17	47	49
30 - 39	0	0	3	3

Table 3, Continued

Demographic Information - Years Experience in a
Community College, Years Experience in Counseling,
Highest Degree Earned, Major of Highest Degree Earned

	Survey Classification			
	CAOS		Counselors	
	n	%	n	%
Highest Degree Earned				
Bachelors	0	0	2	2
Masters	2	7	70	72
CAGS	0	0	8	8
Doctorate	29	94	14	14
Other	0	0	3	3
Major of Highest Degree				
Student Personnel	1	3	20	21
Counseling	3	13	58	60
Psychology	0	0	1	1
Administration	19	61	6	6
Other	7	23	11	12

Counseling Program Priorities

Table 4

Number and Percentage of Reported Services Provided by Counseling Staff

Service	CAOS		Counselors		All		χ^2	<i>p</i>
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Admissions	22	73	66	70	88	70	.16	.6864
Advising	31	100	96	99	127	99	.32	.5703
Alumni	7	24	18	19	25	20	.34	.5595
Campus Programming	26	84	80	83	106	84	.00	.9441
Career Planning & Placement	30	97	91	94	121	95	.40	.5281
Counseling	31	100	97	100	128	100	.00	1.000
Financial Aid	14	48	47	50	61	49	.01	.9101
Orientation	30	97	96	99	126	98	.74	.3910
Placement Testing	26	84	56	58	82	64	6.97	.0083
Recruitment	29	94	91	94	120	94	.00	.9575

Counseling Program Priorities

Table 4, Continued

Number and Percentage of Reported Services Provided by Counseling Staff

Service	CAOS		Counselors		All		χ^2	p
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Registration	24	77	78	82	102	81	.33	.5640
Research	6	19	30	31	36	28	1.56	.2122
Special Needs	27	87	87	91	114	90	.32	.5731
Student Activities	25	81	72	75	97	76	.41	.5200
Teaching Student Development Courses	25	81	84	87	109	86	.66	.4171
Veterans	15	48	32	33	47	37	2.40	.1216

Table 5

Number and Percentage of Completers Indicating
Counseling Staff Should Provide Service

Service	CAOS		Counselors		All		χ^2	p
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Admissions	23	77	49	53	72	59	5.37	.0204
Advising	27	90	91	95	118	94	.88	.3475
Alumni	4	14	22	24	26	21	1.28	.2575
Campus Programming	25	81	79	82	104	82	.04	.8360
Career Planning & Placement	31	100	93	97	124	98	.99	.3192
Counseling	31	100	97	100	128	100	.00	1.000
Financial Aid	14	48	42	44	56	45	.15	.7002
Orientation	30	97	93	99	123	98	.69	.4055
Placement Testing	26	84	49	52	75	60	10.12	.0015
Recruitment	27	87	80	83	107	84	.25	.6170
Registration	23	74	56	61	79	64	1.79	.1807
Research	6	19	37	39	43	34	4.14	.0420
Special Needs	28	90	88	94	116	93	.38	.5383

Table 5, Continued

Number and Percentage of Completers Indicating
Counseling Staff Should Provide Service

Service	CAOS		Counselors		All		χ^2	<i>p</i>
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Student Activities	22	71	60	63	82	65	.73	.3915
Teaching Student Development Courses	26	84	86	90	112	88	.73	.3916
Veterans	15	48	26	27	41	33	4.70	.0301

between counseling personnel and CAO responses regarding services provided and whether or not services should be provided by counseling staff. A greater percentage of CAOs indicated that placement testing was a service provided by counselors than did counseling professionals ($\chi^2=6.97$, $df=1$, $n=128$, $p=.0083$). A greater number of CAOs indicated admissions ($\chi^2=5.37$, $df=1$, $n=123$, $p=.0204$), placement testing ($\chi^2=10.12$, $df=1$, $n=126$, $p=.0015$), and veterans ($\chi^2=4.70$, $df=1$, $n=126$, $p=.0301$) services should be provided by counseling staff than did counselors. A higher percentage of counseling professionals responded that research activities should be provided by counselors than did CAOs ($\chi^2=4.13$, $df=1$, $n=126$, $p=.0420$).

The *Counseling Program Survey* was designed to address two specific research questions. The first question related to the level of agreement between community college counseling professionals and chief administrative officers regarding services provided by counseling personnel and priorities assigned to those specific services. Responses to level of importance and level of institutional priority assigned to a

specific service are presented in Tables 6 and 7. Significant differences between the two groups were found in career planning and placement, financial aid, and orientation services. Counseling professionals viewed career planning and placement and orientation services as more important than did CAOs. On the other hand, campus presidents and provosts rated financial aid services as more important than did the counseling group.

Numerous differences were found between the CAOs and counselors regarding the level of institutional priority that exists for various counseling services. Admissions, advising, counseling, financial aid, placement testing, and student activities were rated at significantly higher levels of existing institutional priority by the CAOs.

Financial aid and admissions services were ranked the highest among chief administrative officer responses while counseling, advising, and career planning and placement ranked the highest among counseling professionals. Alumni services, campus programming, and research were listed as the least important services by both the CAOS and

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations of Responses from Chief Administrative Officers and Counselors Concerning Perceived Importance of Selected Services

Service	CAOS		Counselors		t	p
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
Admissions	3.86	.43	3.78	.61	.84	.3991
Advising	3.77	.43	3.88	.36	-1.38	.1688
Alumni	2.41	.78	2.37	.88	.23	.8155
Campus Programming	2.84	.73	3.06	.75	-1.45	.1507
Career Planning & Placement***	3.32	.65	3.81	.47	-3.85	.0004
Counseling	3.67	.54	3.88	.41	-1.95	.0572
Financial Aid**	3.93	.26	3.69	.66	2.83	.0054
Orientation*	3.35	.61	3.63	.53	-2.49	.0143
Placement Testing	3.77	.50	3.62	.60	1.28	.2045

Table 6, Continued

Means and Standard Deviations of Responses from Chief Administrative Officers and Counselors Concerning Perceived Importance of Selected Services

Service	CAOS		Counselors		t	p
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
Recruitment	3.65	.49	3.47	.67	1.55	.1264
Registration	3.77	.43	3.63	.59	1.43	.1562
Research	2.90	1.08	2.84	.79	.30	.7662
Special Needs	3.5	.63	3.73	.53	-1.82	.0711
Student Activities	3.23	.72	3.15	.73	.54	.5934
Teaching Student Development Courses	3.16	.69	3.47	.70	-2.15	.0338
Veterans	3.10	.70	3.10	.77	-4.73	.9624

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations of Existing Level of Institutional Priority

Service	CAOS		Counselors		t	p
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
Admissions**	3.7	.54	3.28	.84	3.21	.0019
Advising**	3.58	.67	3.08	.80	3.15	.0021
Alumni	2.03	.87	1.99	.84	.25	.8002
Campus Programming	2.65	.84	2.43	.78	1.33	.1857
Career Planning & Placement	2.97	.88	2.81	.75	.90	.3693
Counseling**	3.42	.72	2.91	.90	2.82	.0055
Financial Aid***	3.76	.44	3.18	.84	4.88	.0000
Orientation	3.23	.67	2.98	.80	1.55	.1233
Placement Testing*	3.65	.49	3.36	.73	2.46	.0162
Recruitment	3.42	.67	3.10	.80	2.02	.0457
Registration	3.65	.55	3.46	.64	1.43	.1551

Table 7, Continued

Means and Standard Deviations of Existing Level of Institutional Priority

Service	CAOS		Counselors		t	p
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
Research	2.65	1.11	2.38	.87	1.37	.1727
Special Needs	3.19	.64	2.89	.87	2.04	.0455
Student Activities*	3.06	.81	2.68	.78	2.34	.0208
Teaching Student Development Courses	3.16	.73	2.89	.82	1.61	.1093
Veterans	3.03	.66	2.85	.70	1.26	.2085

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

counselors. Responses concerning the importance of specific services provided by counseling professionals were ranked according to the mean response by each group. Results appear in Table 8.

In response to the study's first research question, there seems to be a certain level of agreement between community college counseling professionals and CAOs regarding services provided by VCCS counseling personnel. However, significant differences did exist for whether counseling staff should provide services in the areas of admissions, placement testing, research, and services to veterans. Significant differences also existed for CAO and counselor responses to the importance of the services provided. Counselors reported that career planning and placement and orientation activities were more important than did chief administrative officers. On the other hand, CAOs believed financial aid services were more important than what counselor responses indicated.

Different levels of institutional priorities existed for counselors and chief administrative

Table 8

Rank by Means of Service Importance

Service	Mean Rank			
	CAOS		Counselors	
	\bar{x}	Rank	\bar{x}	Rank
Admissions	3.87	2	3.78	4
Advising	3.77	3	3.88	1
Alumni	2.41	16	2.37	16
Campus Programming	2.84	15	3.06	14
Career Planning & Placement	3.32	10	3.81	3
Counseling	3.67	6	3.88	1
Financial Aid	3.93	1	3.69	6
Orientation	3.35	9	3.64	7
Placement Testing	3.77	3	3.62	9
Recruitment	3.65	7	3.47	12
Registration	3.77	3	3.63	8
Research	2.90	14	2.84	15
Special Needs	3.52	8	3.72	5
Student Activities	3.23	11	3.15	13
Teaching Student Development Courses	3.16	12	3.47	11
Veterans	3.10	13	3.42	12

officers in the areas of admissions, advising, counseling, financial aid, placement testing, and student activities. CAOS indicated the services listed above received greater levels of institutional priorities than did counseling professionals.

The second research question in the study sought to determine the level of agreement between community college counseling professionals and CAOs regarding specific program outcomes and associated program priorities. Program outcomes were generated by a focus group and CAS self-assessment criteria for functional areas listed in section one of the *Counseling Program Survey*. Responses to statements associated with the sentence stem "as a result of what counselors do, faculty will . . ." generated a variety of significant differences between the two student groups. Counselors indicated a higher level of importance to linking learning to the world of work than did CAOs and CAOs believed faculty involvement with recruitment was significantly more important than did counselors. Numerous significant differences were reported by the two groups when responding to levels of institutional

priorities for program outcomes associated with faculty involvement. Significant differences at the .001 level were found to exist in the following outcomes: become better advisors; provide accurate advising information; student needs; assist with recruitment; recognize counseling contributions; and available for student advising. Presidents and provosts indicated a much higher level of existing institutional priority than did counselors. Responses to statements associated with this sentence stem are represented in Tables 9 and 10.

Survey completers responding to the sentence stem "as a result of what counselors do, the institution benefits from . . ." indicated similar levels of importance to all program outcomes except student retention. All CAOs rated retention as very important (4). Significant differences were found in seven of the nine outcomes regarding level of existing institutional priority and institutional benefits. CAOs indicated significantly higher levels of existing institutional priority than did counselors with the

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations of Program Outcome Importance Associated with the item stem "As a result of what counselors do, faculty will"

Program Outcome	CAOS		Counselors	t	p	
	\bar{x}	SD				
become better advisors	3.41	.63	3.42	.76	-.01	.9853
refer students needing assistance	3.40	.56	3.44	.66	-.28	.7799
accommodate special needs students	3.53	.51	3.68	.57	-1.23	.2195
recognize barriers to learning	3.27	.74	3.52	.60	-1.92	.0575
serve as role models to students	3.17	.91	3.13	.78	.24	.8123
be involved in student activities	2.77	.73	2.77	.77	.00	.9964
be involved in campus activities	2.97	.67	2.82	.70	.99	.3208
provide accurate advising information	3.73	.45	3.74	.53	.06	.9534
recognize student rights	3.20	.81	3.40	.66	-1.37	.1726
place students accurately	3.53	.86	3.67	.66	-.82	.4175

Table 9, Continued

Means and Standard Deviations of Program Outcome Importance Associated with the item stem "As a result of what counselors do, faculty will"

Program Outcome	CAOS		Counselors		t	p
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
link learning to world of work*	3.10	.76	3.46	.67	-2.53	.0131
student needs	3.43	.57	3.52	.58	-.73	.4698
assist in the recruitment of students*	3.50	.57	3.02	.84	3.32	.0014
recognize counseling contributions	3.30	.70	3.47	.69	-1.20	.2328
be available for student advising	3.33	.80	3.44	.79	-.63	.5320

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations of Existing Institutional Priority Associated with item stem "As a result of what counselors do, faculty will"

Program Outcome	CAOS		Counselors		t	p
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
become better advisors***	3.03	.98	2.30	.87	3.84	.0002
refer students needing assistance**	3.10	.85	2.58	.81	3.02	.0031
accommodate special needs students	3.23	.68	2.91	.79	1.97	.0514
recognize barriers to learning*	3.03	.81	2.63	.75	2.49	.0142
serve as role models to students**	3.00	.95	2.41	.83	3.25	.0015
be involved in student activities**	2.63	.72	2.15	.73	3.13	.0022
be involved in campus activities**	2.70	.70	2.29	.72	2.74	.0071
provide accurate advising information***	3.47	.78	2.82	.89	3.56	.0005
recognize student rights**	3.17	.70	2.71	.76	2.87	.0049
place students accurately	3.40	.81	3.22	.85	1.01	.3160

Table 10, Continued

Means and Standard Deviations of Existing Institutional Priority Associated with item stem "As a result of what counselors do, faculty will"

Program Outcome	CAOS		Counselors		t	p
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
link learning to world of work	2.97	.85	2.63	.83	1.89	.0607
student needs***	3.20	.71	2.55	.79	4.02	.0001
assist with recruitment of students***	3.10	.80	2.38	.88	4.01	.0001
recognize counseling contributions***	2.97	.81	2.20	.92	4.09	.0001
be available for student advising***	3.20	.89	2.52	.91	3.61	.0004

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

following program outcomes: increased enrollment, retention of students, positive image within community, informed students, new curriculum offerings, educated workforce, and continuous assessment of services. Information regarding these program outcomes is presented in Table 11 and Table 12.

Responses to program outcomes developed from the sentence stem "as a result of what counselors do, students will develop . . ." are listed in Tables 13 and 14. No significant difference was found between the CAOs and counselors regarding the importance of these program outcomes. However, numerous differences were found in perceived levels of institutional priorities associated with this program outcome. Significant differences at the .01 level were found to exist in the following outcomes: coping strategies; critical thinking skills; overcoming psychological difficulties; and study skills strategies.

In response to the sentence stem "as a result of what counselors do, students will receive information about . . .," counselors rated significantly higher

Table 11

Means and Standard Deviations of Program Outcome Importance Associated with item stem "As a result of what counselors do, the institution benefits from . . ."

Program Outcome	CAOS		Counselors		t	p
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
increased enrollment	3.84	.37	3.67	.59	1.98	.0506
retention of students*	4.00	.00	3.82	.41	3.87	.0000
positive image within community	3.61	.62	3.58	.53	.31	.7571
informed students	3.74	.44	3.68	.49	.65	.5152
contributions to service area	2.97	.75	3.16	.69	-1.30	.1961
facilities expansion	2.29	.94	2.59	.94	-1.57	.1192
new curriculum offerings	2.87	.85	2.79	.92	.44	.6636
educated workforce	3.52	.77	3.34	.73	1.12	.2649
continuous assessment of services	3.57	.50	3.48	.65	.77	.4430

Note. * $p < .001$.

Table 12

Means and Standard Deviations of Existing Institutional Priority Associated with item stem "As a result of what counselors do, the institution benefits from ..."

Program Outcome	CAOS		Counselors		t	p
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
increased enrollment*	3.71	.53	3.43	.74	2.29	.0249
retention of students***	3.61	.67	2.99	.89	4.14	.0001
positive image within community*	3.45	.85	3.03	.83	2.45	.0159
informed students*	3.39	.76	2.97	.79	2.62	.0100
contributions to service area	2.74	.82	2.59	.79	.92	.3573
facilities expansion	2.39	.95	2.49	.97	-.54	.5901
new curriculum offerings**	2.97	.86	2.45	.78	3.11	.0023
educated workforce**	3.48	.72	2.93	.76	3.58	.0005
continuous assessment of services*	3.00	.95	2.59	.92	2.12	.0359

Note. *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Table 13

Means and Standard Deviations of Program Outcome Importance Associated with item stem "As a result of what counselors do, students will develop . . ."

Program Outcome	CAOS		Counselors	t	p
	\bar{x}	SD			
coping strategies	3.45	.68	3.62	.51	-1.27 .2124
problem solving strategies	3.48	.68	3.52	.54	-.27 .7912
critical thinking skills	3.32	.70	3.40	.64	-.59 .5576
job search skills	3.48	.57	3.52	.61	-.25 .8003
overcoming psychological	3.16	.78	3.30	.74	-.89 .3741
prevention strategies	3.00	.73	3.22	.75	-1.40 .1630
educational plans	3.58	.56	3.73	.47	-1.49 .1391
study skills strategies	3.58	.50	3.61	.53	-.26 .7991
interpersonal skills	3.29	.69	3.40	.62	-.84 .3995

Table 14

Means and Standard Deviations of Existing Institutional Priority Associated with item stem "As a result of what counselors do, students will develop . . ."

Program Outcome	CAOS		Counselors		t	p
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
coping strategies**	3.10	.79	2.64	.84	2.71	.0077
problem solving strategies***	3.16	.73	2.63	.76	3.40	.0009
critical thinking skills**	3.06	.77	2.59	.78	2.94	.0039
job search skills*	3.03	.80	2.64	.80	2.41	.0173
overcoming psychological difficulties**	2.77	.85	2.23	.83	3.17	.0019
prevention strategies	2.67	.84	2.40	.82	1.55	.1247
educational plans	3.26	.68	3.00	.77	1.67	.0974
study skills strategies**	3.35	.75	2.85	.85	2.94	.0039
interpersonal skills*	2.90	.94	2.48	.82	2.41	.0174

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

that student rights and resources were more important program outcome than did CAOs. Presidents and provosts believed that higher levels of institutional priority existed for establishing career objectives, program requirements, financial aid, leadership skills, and transfer of credits than did counselors. Information regarding this sentence stem is represented in Tables 15 and 16.

Responses to the final sentence stem, "as a result of what counselors do, students will learn . . .," are listed in Tables 17 and 18. CAOs and counseling professionals indicated similar levels of importance for all program outcomes. However, significant differences were found with all outcomes associated with this sentence stem. The CAOs believed higher levels of institutional priority existed with program outcomes associated with interpersonal relationship skills, how students assess strengths and weaknesses and different learning styles, how students interact with diverse cultures and develop employment-related goals.

Table 15

Means and Standard Deviations of Program Outcome Importance Associated with item stem "As a result of what counselors do, students will receive information about _____."

Program Outcome	CAOS		Counselors		t	p
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
how to be successful	3.39	.72	3.45	.63	-.49	.6285
establishing career objectives	3.61	.50	3.63	.53	-.17	.8623
curriculum/program requirements	3.74	.44	3.77	.42	-.30	.7659
transferring credits	3.81	.40	3.73	.47	.75	.4573
the college's application process	3.42	.62	3.41	.75	.06	.9529
applying for financial assistance	3.43	.63	3.32	.76	.77	.4446
receiving credit for prior experience	3.06	.81	3.35	.65	-1.98	.0504
accommodations for special needs	3.45	.62	3.62	.58	-1.41	.1605
student rights and responsibilities*	3.00	.77	3.32	.66	-2.28	.0246
college procedures and policies	3.13	.72	3.40	.67	-1.89	.0612
development of leadership skills	3.10	.65	3.20	.61	-.79	.4307

Table 15, Continued

Means and Standard Deviations of Program Outcome Importance Associated with item stem "As a result of what counselors do, students will receive information about _____."

Program Outcome	CAOS		Counselors	t	p
	\bar{x}	SD			
becoming involved in student activities	2.97	.55	3.11	.64	-1.07 .2869
resources available in community*	2.68	.75	3.01	.72	-2.22 .0281
how to register for classes	3.45	.62	3.64	.56	-1.54 .1269
the placement testing process	3.45	.68	3.64	.60	-1.44 .1532
orientation to college	3.48	.51	3.67	.50	-1.77 .0784
overcoming academic skills deficiencies	3.45	.62	3.52	.55	-1.48 .1413

Note. * $p < .05$.

Table 16

Means and Standard Deviations of Existing Institutional Priority Associated with item stem "As a result of what counselors do, students will receive information about"

Program Outcome	CAOS		Counselors		t	p
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
how to be successful	3.0	1.00	2.67	.81	1.85	.0662
establishing career objectives*	3.23	.76	2.82	.89	2.28	.0244
curriculum/program requirements**	3.71	.46	3.37	.69	3.14	.0024
transferring credits*	3.58	.50	3.32	.62	2.15	.0337
the college's application process	3.39	.67	3.27	.66	.88	.3778
apply for financial assistance*	3.43	.77	3.08	.69	2.34	.0212
receiving credit for prior experience	2.90	.83	2.98	.77	-.47	.6423
accommodations for special needs	3.26	.63	2.99	.82	1.90	.0611
student rights and responsibilities	2.97	.81	2.76	.70	1.38	.1708
college procedures and policies	2.90	.75	3.04	.67	-.98	.3304
development of leadership skills*	2.81	.70	2.44	.80	2.28	.0246

Table 16, Continued

Means and Standard Deviations of Existing Institutional Priority Associated with item stem "As a result of what counselors do, students will receive information about"

Program Outcome	CAOS		Counselors		t	p
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
being involved in student activities	2.77	.62	2.52	.88	1.77	.0810
resources available in community	2.52	.77	2.38	.77	.86	.3926
how to register for classes	3.48	.63	3.44	.61	.33	.7439
the placement testing process	3.35	.71	3.37	.70	-.12	.9047
orientation to college	3.26	.68	3.06	.76	1.28	.2041
overcoming academic skills deficiencies	3.26	.82	2.94	.80	1.94	.0548

Note. *p<.05; **p<.01.

Table 17

Means and Standard Deviations of Program Outcome Importance Associated with item stem "As a result of what counselors do, students will learn . . ."

Program Outcome	CAOS		Counselors		t	p
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
interpersonal relationship skills	3.10	.79	3.28	.73	-1.18	.2406
how to assess strengths and weaknesses	3.06	.73	3.27	.67	-1.44	.1516
about different learning styles	2.84	.78	3.11	.78	-1.71	.0888
how to interact with diverse cultures	3.00	.73	3.26	.71	-1.75	.0834
to develop employment-related goals	3.29	.69	3.34	.59	-.39	.6964

Table 18

Means and Standard Deviations of Existing Institutional Priority Associated with item stem "As a result of what counselors do, students will learn . . ."

Program Outcome	CAOS		Counselors		t	p
	\bar{x}	SD	\bar{x}	SD		
interpersonal relationship skills**	2.99	.76	2.34	.82	3.36	.0011
how to assess strengths and weaknesses*	2.87	.78	2.46	.77	2.50	.0138
about different learning styles*	2.80	.76	2.43	.87	2.08	.0397
how to interact with diverse cultures*	2.93	.74	2.55	.90	2.14	.0345
to develop employment-related goals***	3.27	.74	2.67	.78	3.68	.0003

Note. *p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001.

Although most CAOs and counseling professionals indicated similar levels of agreement regarding the importance of program outcomes, significant differences were found to exist between the two groups' perceptions of numerous outcomes associated with existing levels of institutional priorities. Presidents and provosts indicated significantly higher levels of existing institutional priorities than did counselors.

Responses to the first research question, "What is the level of agreement between community college counseling professionals and chief administrative officers regarding services provided and priorities assigned to those specific services," generated similar responses among the presidents, provosts, and counselors regarding importance level for specific services. On the other hand, significant differences existed among the two groups in response to existing levels of institutional priority. Responses to the second research question, "What is the level of agreement between community college counseling professionals and chief administrative officers regarding specific program outcomes and associated

program priorities," again generated similar responses regarding program outcome and level of importance between the two groups. However, significant differences existed between the two groups regarding the existing level of institutional priority for numerous program outcomes.

A summary of major findings, recommendations, and conclusion are presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Across the nation, community college counselors are challenged by dwindling resources, greater demands, and issues of accountability. In an era where "doing more with less" is an ever present theme, community college administrators are faced with the challenge of balancing increased enrollments with decreased funding allocations and counseling personnel are challenged by providing more services with fewer personnel and resources (Leitzel et al., 1993; Thurston, 1983). Some institutions have eliminated counseling departments and have shifted academic counseling responsibilities to teaching faculty (Cvancara, 1997). Societal issues brought to campus by a diverse student population, the need for increased enrollment, and one of the community college hallmarks, open access, have exacerbated the role ambiguity that exists for community college counseling personnel. Even though counseling professionals can do little to overcome the demands of increased enrollments and decreased financial resources, efforts need to focus on clearly defining

and articulating the role of the counseling professional within the community college arena (Cordova & Martens, 1986).

This study was designed to identify counseling services and program outcomes within the Virginia Community College System (VCCS). VCCS counseling providers and chief administrative officers (presidents and campus provosts) assessed the level of importance and existing levels of institutional priorities for counseling services and program outcomes. The study sought to clarify institutional expectations, define the role of counseling providers, and provide elements essential to the assessment of counseling program outcomes.

Summary of Major Findings

The study resulted in several major findings including the identification and clarification of services provided by VCCS counseling personnel, the dichotomous relationship between the two study groups regarding recruitment and retention activities and associated program outcomes, the under-valued and under-involved role of counselor participation in

research activities, the process of developing program outcomes, and the significantly different perceptions regarding institutional priorities for services and program outcomes between the two study groups.

Although specific services delivered by VCCS counseling personnel differ from campus to campus because of institutional size, the role of counseling providers remains multi-faceted. Consistent with national studies, community college counseling personnel within Virginia provide comprehensive services to diverse student populations (Matson, 1972; Mattox & Creamer, 1996). The role of the VCCS counselor can best be defined as an educational generalist. Services identified in the study through position description analysis and survey responses mirror national trends of the counselors' generalistic approach to providing support services on community college campuses.

A dichotomous relationship surfaced from survey results between chief administrative officers and counseling personnel regarding recruitment and retention activities and associated program outcomes.

Services associated with the recruitment and in-take of students (e.g., financial aid, admissions) were ranked at higher levels by the chief administrative officers while retention activities (e.g., counseling, advising, career planning) were ranked as most important services by counseling providers. In comparison to chief administrative officer responses, program outcomes associated with student retention activities (e.g., coping and study skills strategies) were perceived by counseling providers as receiving lower levels of institutional priority. Recruitment and subsequent student enrollment drive funding allocations within the VCCS. Reports of record enrollment, greater numbers of recent high school graduates registered for courses, and increased levels of service area penetration rates have consistently served as evaluation mechanisms, and measurable, successful outcomes for campus leaders.

Even though campus leaders are faced with increased interest and demands in the areas of evaluation and assessment, both study groups rated research activities at relatively low priority levels. Survey results echoed the generally held belief that

community college professionals focus on teaching as opposed to research activities (Mattox & Creamer, 1996).

Perhaps the most significant contribution of this study was the process used to develop counseling services program outcomes. It has been well documented in the literature that student affairs and counseling professionals have struggled to establish measurable program outcomes and assessment criteria. No existing program outcomes had been established for VCCS counseling services and intended program outcomes. Little evidence existed regarding the assessment of counseling program outcomes on community college campuses. Significant criticism existed in the literature regarding the lack of willingness of student affairs practitioners and counseling providers to document change and assess program outcomes (Hanson, 1982). Many researchers believed the element central to the success of assessment involved articulating and defining desired program outcomes (Erwin, 1993; Hanson, 1989; Lenning, 1980; Miller, 1982). Echoing Erwin's (1993) belief that the first step in program assessment

was the articulation and definition of intended program outcomes, the researcher in this study developed program outcomes from information generated by focus group responses and CAS self-assessment criteria for specific functional areas.

Finally, responses to levels of existing institutional priority for specific services and program outcomes generated numerous significant differences between the two study groups. In all significantly different situations, counseling personnel rated the level of existing institutional priority for program outcomes at much lower levels than did presidents and campus provosts. These results reflect the historic trend of the difference between expectations of services and programs and institutional support (e.g., staff allocations, funding). The institutional priority and commitment exists among chief administrative officers yet resource allocations are not congruent within the eyes of counseling services providers. Blended with the belief that counselors are doing more to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population with fewer

resources, this study is consistent with historical evidence that expectations and demands of community college counseling personnel far exceed the perceived levels of institutional support. Once again, different levels of importance seem to exist between institutional priorities and resource allocations. Perhaps enhanced resources would be available if counselors devoted more attention to those areas identified as most important by chief administrative officers.

Major Implications for Practice and Research

Because of the multi-faceted role of community college counseling personnel, the inability or lack of interest to assess services and program outcomes, and limited resource allocations, counselors may perceive institutional contributions are not valued and may result in decreased levels of performance effectiveness. Role ambiguity, role overload, and lack of interest in assessment may add to the general confusion surrounding the central focus of counseling practitioners.

The current VCCS budget allocation process is directly correlated to institutional enrollment patterns. Recruitment activities which are often shouldered by counseling and student affairs professionals lend themselves more easily to evaluation criteria than do retention activities. Statistical, quantitative data can easily be collected to evaluate program success of recruiting related services. On the other hand, affective techniques associated with career planning and placement, orientation, and advising are more difficult to determine measurable outcomes. Activities associated with the recruitment of students may be perceived as being more valued by campus leaders because they are more easily measured and evaluated and, as a result, garner greater levels of institutional support (e.g., funding, staff allocations).

Technology has been used throughout the country to enhance student success through the development of effective learning environments. Since the inception of the community college, teaching has been a major hallmark. Research activities have been "add-on"

assignments. Lack of institutional support, use of technology in the classroom as opposed to data collection, and, perhaps, the need for professional development, may result in decreased priorities of the research component in the community college arena.

Development of program outcomes and assessment of counseling services have not formally taken place within the Virginia Community College System. The lack of "know how" and a systematic approach to determining program outcomes and establishing measurable criteria may add to the role confusion that exists with counseling services providers.

The tremendous gap between perceived levels of institutional priorities for counseling services and program outcomes by counseling personnel and chief administrative officers imply an imbalance between institutional expectations and resource allocations. Services and program outcomes receiving lower ratings of institutional priority may result in decreased levels of staffing and resource allocations.

Recommendations

Study findings can serve as an impetus for system-wide and campus-wide changes in the delivery of counseling programs and services within the Virginia Community College System. Recommendations include the following:

1. Community college leaders should increase funding allocations for counseling services.
2. Counseling personnel should embrace the ideals of assessment and develop a systematic model for a formal evaluation of services and establishment of measurable program outcomes.
3. Counseling personnel and campus administrators should work collaboratively to more clearly define and clarify the role of counselors on community college campuses.
4. Campus leaders should conduct annual reviews and revise, as needed, of counselor position descriptions to insure accurate reflection of job assignments and responsibilities.
5. With the impetus provided by accrediting associations and standards developed by CAS,

regular assessment of counseling program outcomes should occur to ensure comprehensive institutional effectiveness. Annual VCCS assessment reports should require the reporting of counseling/student development outcomes.

6. VCCS personnel and campus leaders should promote professional development opportunities for counseling services personnel in the areas of research, assessment, program outcome development, and technology.
7. Presidents, campus provosts, and counseling providers need to collaborate to achieve a realistic balance of expectations of services provided by counselors and institutional resource allocations.
8. VCCS counseling personnel should work with campus leaders to create a greater understanding of student development issues and support services.

Recommendations for future studies of the practices of counseling professionals within the community college arena could include the establishment

of program outcomes for identified services, use of technology within the counseling arena, and assessment of professional development needs. First, a study should be designed to establish program outcomes and measurable criteria using pre- and post-assessment of student development program outcomes. Student development programs and services serve as key elements of an institution's commitment to the recruitment and retention of students. Because of decreased funding allocations and increased student enrollments, a second study should examine the community college counselor's use of technology in creating a more manageable work environment. Finally, a study examining the professional development needs of counseling providers should be conducted to provide valuable information to graduate preparation programs and campus personnel and impact statewide initiatives.

Conclusion

To reduce the gap between institutional expectations and resource allocations, community college student services administrators and counseling personnel must make the commitment to systematically

assess student development. Program objectives must be established and used to support budget requests, garner and enhance institutional support, and as an evaluation tool for program effectiveness. In an era when accountability is the hallmark of program success, counseling personnel must provide the leadership for the determination and assessment of desired program outcomes. Affective techniques and interventions can be measured and counseling leaders must step forward to establish measurable program outcomes. Initial steps would include defining current services, assessing levels of program importance, and defining desired program outcomes. In collaboration with campus leaders, counseling services and programs can continue to provide support services to enhance student recruitment, retention, and ultimately, student success.

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Appendix A

CAS Member Associations (November 1996)

American Counseling Association

American Association of College Registrars and
Admissions Officers

American College Personnel Association

Association of College and University Housing Officers
- International

Association of College Unions - International

Association for Counselor Education and Supervision

Association of Fraternity Advisors

Association for School, College and University Staffing

Association for Student Judicial Affairs

Association on Higher Education and Disability

College Placement Council

National Academic Advising Association

National Association of Campus Activities

National Association of College Admissions Counselors

National Association of International Educators

National Association of Student Financial Aid

Administrators

National Association of Student Personnel

Administrators

National Association for Women in Education

National Clearinghouse for Commuter Programs

National Council on Student Development

National Intramural Recreational Sports Association

National Orientation Directors Association

Southern Association for College Student Affairs

Appendix B

CAS Functional Area Self-Assessment Guides

1. Academic Advising
2. Admission Programs
3. Career Planning and Placement
4. College Unions
5. Commuter Student Programs
6. Counseling Services
7. Disabled Student Services
8. Division Level Programs
9. Drug and Alcohol Programs
10. Fraternity and Sorority Advising
11. Housing and Residential Life
12. Judicial Programs
13. Learning Assistance Programs
14. Minority Student Programs
15. Preparation Standards
16. Recreational Sports
17. Religious Programs
18. Research and Evaluation
19. Student Activities
20. Student Orientation
21. Women Student Programs and Services

Appendix C

Annual 1995-96 FTEs Enrollments at
Virginia Community Colleges

COMMUNITY COLLEGE	Annual 1995-96 FTEs
J Sargeant Reynolds	5,256
John Tyler	2,535
New River	2,131
Northern Virginia	21,142
Southwest Virginia	2,611
Thomas Nelson	4,224
Tidewater	10,486
Virginia Western	3,302
Blue Ridge	1,396
Central Virginia	1,978
Danville	1,855
Germanna	1,402
Lord Fairfax	1,739
Mountain Empire	1,846
Patrick Henry	1,492
Piedmont Virginia	1,902
Southside Virginia	1,810
Virginia Highlands	1,270
Wytheville	1,444

Counseling Program Priorities

129

COMMUNITY COLLEGE	Annual 1995-96 FTEs
Dabney S. Lancaster	826
Eastern Shore	390
Paul D. Camp	748
Rappahannock	956

Counseling Program Priorities

130

Appendix D

Randomly Selected Institutions for

Position Description Analysis

FTEs **College** **Contact Person**

2,000 or more	John Tyler	Ray Drinkwater Director of Student Services
1,000 - 1,999	Danville	Pete Castiglione Director of Student Services
less than 1,000	Rappahannock	Pam Turner Director of Student Services

M E M O R A N D U M

TO: Pete Castiglione, Danville Community College
Ray Drinkwater, John Tyler Community College
Pam Turner, Rappahannock Community College

FROM: Susan Collins, Lord Fairfax Community College

SUBJ: Request for Information

DATE: September 20, 1995

Greetings from the Shenandoah Valley. I am in the survey development phase of my dissertation and I need your help. Please mail me, as soon as possible, copies of position descriptions for each non-grant funded person on each of your campuses with titles of counselor, student services specialists, or student services coordinator. I will be extrapolating information from these position descriptions to determine services provided by these folks within in the Virginia Community College System.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact me. It is essential I receive this information from each of you. This is a stratified random sample from the largest (2,000+ FTEs), medium (1,000-1,999 FTEs), and small (less than 1,000 FTEs) community colleges within the system. I appreciate all of your help and hope the beginning of your new academic year has gone smoothly. Thanks!

Appendix E

Focus Group Process

Sentence Stem Development

Author reviewed CAS Functional Area Self-Assessment Guide format and developed five sentence stems to form focus group responses. Don Creamer reviewed and confirmed sentence stem development and focus group process. Sentence stems used in study included:

Students will develop . . .
Student will receive information about . . .
Student will learn . . .
Faculty will . . .
The institution benefits from . . .

Focus Group Participants

Focus group participants included the entire Student Services staff, three faculty team leaders, and Director of Instructional Services at Lord Fairfax Community College (n=12).

Focus Group Process

Select individuals were invited to attend a two-hour focus group session to discuss student services program outcomes. An outline of the process is listed in the following.

- (1) The group was asked to reflect on the services and activities provided by student services personnel throughout the nation's community colleges. Focus groups members reviewed various student services functions.
- (2) Focus group participants and facilitator defined and discussed the five sentence stems for consistency and clarification.

- (3) The five sentence stems were listed on paper and distributed to focus group members.
- (4) Participants were asked to list several responses to each sentence stem in relationship to desired student services program outcomes.
- (5) Dyads were formed to discuss and generate additional responses.
- (6) All responses to open-ended sentence stems were listed on newsprint and posted throughout the focus group study room.
- (7) All focus group participants reviewed the master, comprehensive list and revised as needed.
- (8) Focus group adjourned.
- (9) A master list of focus groups responses was distributed one week later to group participants for verification and revision.

Survey Development

Focus group responses were reviewed by the author and revised as needed. Services listed within CAS Functional Area Self-Assessment Guides for student services programs but not offered at Lord Fairfax Community College were added to sentence stem responses. Similar responses in different sentence stem categories were eliminated to reduce repetition.



VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM
James Monroe Building • 101 North Fourteenth Street • Richmond, Virginia 23219

January 27, 1997

Dear Colleague:

I encourage your participation in a dissertation study conducted by Ms. Susan Collins, Director of Student Services, Lord Fairfax Community College, that examines counseling services and outcomes within the Virginia Community College System. The population for this comprehensive study includes VCCS presidents, campus provosts, and counseling personnel. Results will be used to clarify institutional expectations, define the role of counseling providers, and provide elements essential to the assessment of counseling outcomes.

Please complete this survey and return to Susan Collins at Lord Fairfax Community College by February 10, 1997. Survey completion should require less than 20 minutes of your time. If you have questions or need additional information, contact Susan at (540) 869-1120, ext. 40. Thank you in advance for your thoughtful responses, and for your cooperation in this worthy project.

Sincerely,

Arnold R. Oliver
Chancellor

This research project has been approved, as required, by the Institutional Review Board for Research Involving Human Subjects at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, by the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, and the Virginia Community College System.

SECTION I. COUNSELING SERVICES

INSTRUCTIONS: Listed on page three are basic services provided by counseling personnel throughout the Virginia Community College System. Please respond by circling Y (Yes) or N (No) whether your college's counseling staff provides the service and circle Y (Yes) or N (No) whether, in your opinion, counselors should provide the service. In the two columns labeled "how important is service" and "what level of institutional priority exists for service," indicate your response by circling the appropriate number on the response scale. **Counseling staff is defined as non-grant funded personnel classified by the Virginia Community College System as coordinators of counseling, counselors, student services specialists, or student services coordinators.** A sample of counseling activities is listed below.

Service	Sample of Activities
Admissions	Application processing, evaluation of transcripts of previous course work, graduation certification, policy and records management, student registration
Advising	Delivery of information regarding course selection, prerequisites, transfer requirements, placement test result interpretation, academic progress
Alumni	Programs and events designed for former students
Campus Programming	Coordination and implementation of in-and out-of class programs focusing on alcohol, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS prevention
Career Planning & Placement	Career exploration and clarification, occupational information, graduate follow-up, job placement
Counseling	Clarification of values, attitudes, interests, and abilities, identification and resolution of problems creating barriers to academic success
Financial Aid	Delivery of information regarding the application process for federal student aid, verification of student eligibility, packaging of student financial aid awards, coordination of campus work-study program
Orientation	Delivery of information regarding the registration process, interpretation of program requirements, developing individual class schedules
Placement Testing	Measurement of reading, English and mathematics skills
Recruitment	Visitations with high school guidance personnel and potential students, college day/night programs
Registration	Processing of class schedules, changes, withdrawals
Research	Collection of data regarding retention, documentation of student outcomes, preparation of materials for student assessment reports
Special Needs Students (504)	Providing access for handicapped and learning disabled students
Student Activities	Cultural activities, clubs and organizations, student publications
Teaching Student Development Courses	Classes designed to promote student learning and personal development, study skills, campus resources
Veterans	Program verification and facilitation of financial assistance for students receiving veterans benefits

DEFINITIONS:

Service: A combination of specific activities intentionally designed to meet students' needs.

Institutional Priority: The level of importance or attention the college devotes to a specific counseling service (e.g., through staff allocation, funding).

Service	Does counseling staff provide service?	Should counseling staff provide service?	How important is service?	What level of institutional priority exists for service?
	Yes or No (circle one)	Yes or No (circle one)	(circle one) 1=not important 2=somewhat important 3=important 4=very important	(circle one) 1=no priority 2=low priority 3=priority 4=high priority
Admissions	Y or N	Y or N	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
Advising	Y or N	Y or N	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
Alumni	Y or N	Y or N	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
Campus Programming	Y or N	Y or N	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
Career Planning & Placement	Y or N	Y or N	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
Counseling	Y or N	Y or N	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
Financial Aid	Y or N	Y or N	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
Orientation	Y or N	Y or N	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
Placement Testing	Y or N	Y or N	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
Recruitment	Y or N	Y or N	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
Registration	Y or N	Y or N	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
Research	Y or N	Y or N	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
Special Needs Students (504)	Y or N	Y or N	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
Student Activities	Y or N	Y or N	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
Teaching Student Development Courses	Y or N	Y or N	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
Veterans	Y or N	Y or N	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4

SECTION II. COUNSELING SERVICES OUTCOMES

INSTRUCTIONS: Listed below are identified outcomes for counseling programs. In the two columns labeled “how important is program outcome” and “what level of institutional priority exists for program outcome,” indicate your response by circling the appropriate number on the response scale.
PLEASE NOTE: Different sentence stems begin five separate program outcome segments. Please respond accordingly.

Program Outcome

**How important is
program outcome?**

**What level of
institutional priority
exists for program
outcome?**

1=not important
2=somewhat important
3=important
4=very important

1=no priority
2=low priority
3=priority
4=high priority

*As a result of what counselors do,
faculty will . . .*

(circle one)

(circle one)

become better advisors	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
refer students needing assistance to appropriate campus and/or community resources	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
accommodate special needs students	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
recognize barriers to student learning	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
serve as a role model to students	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
be involved in student activities	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
be involved in campus activities	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
provide accurate advising information	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
recognize student rights and responsibilities	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
place students accurately in math and English courses	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
link learning experiences to world of work	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
possess a greater understanding of student needs	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
assist in the recruitment of students	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
recognize counseling services contributions	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
be available for student advising and registration	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4

Program Outcome**How important is program outcome?****What level of institutional priority exists for program outcome?**

1=not important
 2=somewhat important
 3=important
 4=very important

1=no priority
 2=low priority
 3=priority
 4=high priority

As a result of what counselors do, the institution benefits from . . .

	(circle one)	(circle one)
increased enrollment	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
retention of students	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
positive image within community	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
informed students	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
contributions to service area (resource sharing)	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
facilities expansion	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
new curriculum offerings	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
educated workforce	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
continuous assessment of counseling services	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4

As a result of what counselors do, students will develop . . .

coping strategies for special needs	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
problem solving strategies	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
critical thinking skills	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
job search skills	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
strategies to overcome psychological or behavioral difficulties	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
prevention strategies for HIV/AIDS infection, alcohol and drug abuse	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
educational plans	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
study skills strategies	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
interpersonal skills	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4

Program Outcome**How important is program outcome?****What level of institutional priority exists for program outcome?**

1=not important
 2=somewhat important
 3=important
 4=very important

1=no priority
 2=low priority
 3=priority
 4=high priority

As a result of what counselors do, students will receive information about . . .

	(circle one)	(circle one)
how to be successful	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
establishing career objectives	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
curriculum/program requirements	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
transferring credits to other institutions	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
the college's application process	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
applying for financial assistance	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
receiving credit for prior academic experiences	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
accommodations for special needs	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
student rights and responsibilities	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
college procedures, policies and regulations	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
opportunities for leadership skills development	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
becoming involved in student activities	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
resources available in the community	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
how to register for classes	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
the placement testing process	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
orientation to college	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
overcoming academic skill deficiencies	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4

As a result of what counselors do, students will learn . . .

interpersonal relationship skills	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
how to assess strengths and weaknesses	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
about different learning styles	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
how to work and interact within diverse cultures	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4
about and develop employment-related goals	1 - 2 - 3 - 4	1 - 2 - 3 - 4

SECTION III. DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please respond to the following:

1. Age

- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or over

2. Gender

- Female
- Male

3. Race

- Asian-American or Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- African-American
- Hispanic-American
- Caucasian/White American (non-Hispanic)
- Other

4. Number of years experience in a community college

- 0-9
- 10-19
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40 or over

5. Number of years experience in counseling services

- 0
- 1-9
- 10-19
- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40 or over

6. Highest Degree Earned

- Bachelors
- Masters
- CAGS
- Doctorate
- Other (please specify) _____

7. Major of Highest Degree Earned

- Student Personnel
- Counseling
- Psychology
- Administration
- Other (please specify) _____

**Please fold and return completed questionnaire
no later than February 10, 1997**

1

-----Fold-----

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Counseling Program Priorities

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VITA

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Education

Doctor of Philosophy -- 1997. Community College
Education. Virginia Polytechnic Institute and
State University, Blacksburg.

Master of Science -- 1984. Counseling/Student
Personnel. Shippensburg University (PA).

Bachelor of Music Education -- 1981. Shenandoah
College and Conservatory of Music (VA).

Bachelor of Music Therapy -- 1981. Shenandoah College
and Conservatory of Music (VA).

Employment

Lord Fairfax Community College, Middletown, VA --
Director of Student Support Services. July 1990 -
current.

Lord Fairfax Community College, Middletown, VA --
Counselor/Coordinator of Student Activities.
August 1984 - June 1990.

Shippensburg University, Shippensburg, PA -- Graduate
Counselor. June 1982 - June 1984.

Shenandoah University, Winchester, VA -- Admissions
Counselor. May 1981 - June 1992.