

International Accreditation of Counseling Services (IACS) Annual Assessment (RSMo. 173.2530)

Missouri State University-West Plains

2023-2024

This report is compiled on an annual basis pursuant to state statute.

173.2530: Report on compliance with standards for mental health services

provided on campus — Beginning in the 2021-22 school year, and continuing on an annual basis thereafter, each public institution of higher education shall publish a report measuring compliance with the standards promulgated by the International Association of Counseling Services, Inc., relating to mental health services provided on college campuses. The report shall include a measure of the institution's ability to adequately meet student mental health needs. All reports required by this section shall be made available to the public. ([Link](#))

For the most recent version of the IACS standards from which this report was compiled, click [here](#).

I. RELATIONSHIP OF THE COUNSELING CENTER WITH THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

A. Administrative Independence and Neutrality
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The Missouri State University-West Plains (MSU-WP) Counseling Center operates independently from other entities on campus. The Counseling Center does not provide mandatory assessments. Assessments are performed only with permission of the student-client and results of the assessments are only shared if the student-client completes a signed Release of Information form.
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MSU-WP Counseling Center staff have additional duties within the University setting that includes membership of the Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT). The Center counselors that work with student-clients in a clinical setting and serve on the BIT remain cognizant of the ethical responsibility of maintaining confidentiality and the challenges that serving on the team can pose. The counselors remain highly knowledgeable of the legal responsibility to report
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individuals at risk of harm to self or others and maintaining informational boundaries.

B. University and Community Relationships

Counseling Center staff maintain working relationships with additional departments including: Student Life and Development, Residence Life, ASCEND Autism/Neurodivergent Support Services, Academic Advisement, Faculty, Title IX representatives, and Campus Safety. This allows seamless referrals for students in need of additional resources on campus. This also provides the chance for Counseling Center staff to continue emphasizing the importance of mental health support and positive growth throughout campus.

The Counseling Center also maintains community partnerships with various organizations offering medical services, intensive mental health services, and community resources and assistance.

C. Reporting Structure

The Counseling Center reports directly to the Vice Chancellor of Student Services. The Director of Counseling Services meets with the Vice Chancellor at a minimum of once a week to exchange departmental updates and work together to advance the importance of mental health awareness throughout campus. The Vice Chancellor is able to learn and understand the unique and complex role of counseling services on campus and inform necessary administrators of that role on campus.

D. Accreditation of Multiple Counseling Services and Merged Centers

The MSU-WP Counseling Center serves as a single, non-merged department on campus. It is independent from the MSU Counseling Center, maintaining its own Operating Procedures, physical building, and separate staff workers, Director, and counselors. The MSU-WP Counseling Center does not share confidential information with the MSU Counseling Center.

E. Embedded Counseling Services

The MSU-WP Counseling Center does not currently provide embedded counseling on campus.

II. COUNSELING SERVICES ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

A. Individuals, Couples, and Group Counseling

The MSU-WP Counseling Center provides individual, group, and couples counseling per request. Counseling Center staff and counselors promote available services to students and campus entities, including the potential benefits and risks of such services. Such services are adjusted to meet the educational, career, personal, developmental, and/or relationship concerns of each individual student-client. Counselors work to maintain an appropriate balance of available counselors and the continued needs of students. (II.A.1)

Support Staff and Counselors are hired after assessing the appropriateness of their background, training, and ability to expand their helping skills. All individuals

within the Counseling Center are aware of the importance of multicultural competence and take continued steps to learn and meet the diverse needs of students. Counselors maintain the appropriate licenses and certifications needed to provide counseling services to students. (II.A.2)

The Counseling Center conducts a student-client survey each year to gather information regarding the experience of each student-client that interacted with the Counseling Center. This survey is intended to gain feedback on what needs improvement and how the Center can better meet student needs. The survey is conducted anonymously and student-clients are encouraged to offer feedback openly throughout their services. (II.A.3)

All Counseling Center Counselors are required to be licensed and operate within the ethical principles and guidelines set by state and federal law. Trainees are required to adhere to all relevant state and federal laws while maintaining required supervision. Any non-clinical and support staff are selected carefully and required to follow the appropriate ethical principles. (II.A.4)

Any practicum students or trainees receive close supervision by a qualified staff member and maintain training standards set by state licensure laws, academic program rules, and center operating procedures. (II.A.5)

B. Psychiatric Services

Psychiatric services are provided through referrals to community resources.

C. Case Management

Non-clinical Case Management is offered to students and housed in the Behavioral Intervention Team. This role serves as a way to refer students to the appropriate community and campus resources. Case Manager clearly describes their scope of practice to individuals and refers students elsewhere if they reach the limit of their scope. Case Manager can assist students in scheduling an appointment within the Counseling Center upon request. Involvement of a case manager's assistance with scheduling is clearly written in the Counseling Center's Operating Procedures.

D. Testing

Testing is not provided through the MSU-WP Counseling Center. Referrals are made to community providers as needed.

E. Crisis Intervention and Emergency Services

The MSU-WP Counseling Center provides crisis intervention as allowed by availability of counselors during open business hours of the Counseling Center. Crisis intervention and emergency services are provided through community resources. Contact information of community resources and explanation of limited availability of the MSU-WP Counseling Center is highlighted in all Center paperwork and is explained during the first intake session with student-clients. Student-clients are encouraged to contact community resources if they find themselves in need of crisis and emergency services.

MSU-WP contracts with a medical and mental health service in the community and requires the partnership to provide crisis intervention and emergency services to students as needed.

F. Outreach Interventions

The Counseling Center provides many different outreach interventions throughout the academic year. These interventions provide preventive programming to encourage students to be proactive with their mental health. These programs are designed to reach all students of various identities, orientations, racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity. Programs also collaborate with different campus departments and community partners.

G. Consultation Interventions

Counseling Center counselors and supportive staff provide consultation to departments on campus and student support systems while maintaining strict confidentiality. Proactive and informative trainings are provided to faculty, staff, and administrators on a variety of topics including common student obstacles, Counseling Center policies, mental health warning signs, and how to refer a student to the Counseling Center. During new student orientations, parents, spouses, and other supportive relationships are shown how to express concerns about their loved ones and how to contact supportive departments on campus in order to collaborate and assist their students as needed. These interventions do not provide confidential information about student-clients. (II.G.1 and II.G.2)

The MSU-WP Counseling Center staff serve on various committees but are not responsible for making any academic or administrative decisions related to students. (II.G.3)

H. Referral Resources

The MSU-WP Counseling Center maintains a network of community resources that allow seamless referrals for students needing assistance beyond the Counseling Center's scope of practice. Students have the option to work with a non-clinical case manager or their counselor to help them connect with community resources. The Counseling Center provides a variety of referral options with different low cost and financial assistances available.

I. Research

The MSU-WP Counseling Center does not currently participate in any research efforts. The Counseling Center performs their own evaluation of their effectiveness through an anonymous survey each year to those students who participate in counseling services. (II.I.1 and II.I.2)

At this time, there are no local research projects being conducted, but the Counseling Center would consider the participation of research by providing de-identified data and limiting involvement to tasks that fit within ethical guidelines and approval from the Missouri State University Office of Institutional Research department while maintaining strict confidentiality. (II.I.3)

The Counseling Center staff work to contribute to the related fields of counseling, psychology, and other related fields. Staff have presented mental health topics in student classes, community events, and community organizations. They also serve on various committees in the community to support further advancement of the field, whether through research, scholarly endeavors, or other events. (II.I.4)

J. Program Evaluation

The MSU-WP Counseling Center conducts a yearly student-client feedback survey that allows them to anonymously provide feedback on the effectiveness of the Counseling Center and any complaints, suggestions, or areas of needed improvement they see. This data allows the Counseling Center to compare results to other institutions of comparable structure and size. The Counseling Center also used the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) to guide the structure and operation of services.

K. Training Programs

The Counseling Center is available to practicum students working to advance their degree through supervised counseling experience. The Center collaborates with degree programs in the state, providing available practicum placement to students. Counseling staff that meet supervisor qualifications will meet with students weekly to provide supervision over cases in accordance with accreditation standards, state licensure laws, academic program rules, and staff supervision experience.

Though a practicum student or graduate assistant has not yet chosen the MSU-WP Counseling Center for a practicum site, there is availability upon request and pending approval after careful interviews and screening.

III. ETHICAL STANDARDS

A. Selection of Staff and Training on Policy/Ethics

All staff within the MSU-WP Counseling Center are selected carefully in the interview process and go through comprehensive training in regard to office policy and professional ethics.

B. Confidentiality of Counseling

The MSU-WP Counseling Center's Operating Policies and Procedures around client confidentiality are consistent with professional ethical standards and legal statutes. Supportive staff are expected to follow the same policies and are trained to do so.

C. Imminent Danger

In cases where a student-client presents as clear and immediate danger to themselves or others, counseling professionals are trained and aware of the appropriate ethical principles, statutes, and local mental health guidelines and resources.

D. Psychological Tests

The MSU-WP Counseling Center does not provide psychological testing.

<p>E. Research The MSU-WP Counseling Center is not participating in any research at this time.</p>
<p>F. Case Records The MSU-WP Counseling Center utilizes both physical and electronic records. All procedures for record storage follow professional and legal standards of practice. Digital records are housed with the secure Titanium Schedule server, which is entirely separate from the MSU-WP standard server.</p>
<p>G. Disposition of Records MSU-WP's Counseling Center procedures for the disposition of client and agency records is consistent with all relevant guidelines, standards, and statutes.</p>
<p>H. Access to Records Access to client records is limited to the appropriate counseling service personnel within the Counseling Center. An informed and signed release of information consent form is obtained from the student-client before records or other confidential information is shared with anyone outside of the Counseling Center, University, or other agencies.</p>
<p>I. Shared Electronic Records System The MSU-WP Counseling Center utilizes the same electronic documentation software as the MSU Counseling Center. There are strict privacy settings in place that limit access to any student-client file and information that does not belong to the active counselor assigned to each student-client. Any non-counseling center staff does not have access to client files beyond basic demographic information and are required to maintain strict confidentiality. It is clearly outlined in the student-client consent forms that support staff have access to a counselor's schedule. This is explained and consented to in each intake appointment.</p>
<p>J. Regulatory Awareness Staff are carefully trained to adhere to relevant civil and criminal laws, including obligations and limitations imposed on the institution by national, regional, and local constitutional, statutory, regulatory, and institutional policy.</p>
<p>K. Technology All Counseling Center staff are trained in the appropriate usage of technology that maintain secure usage. Access to sensitive data requires multiple passwords and two step authentication. (III.K.1)</p> <p>The use of email with student-clients is carefully discussed in operating procedures and consent forms that are explained to each student-client during their intake session. Counselors are required to explain the lack of security with email and encourage student-clients to avoid using email to exchange clinical or sensitive information, but to use it only for scheduling purposes. (III.K.2)</p> <p>All electronic equipment and confidential information transmitted electronically are secured from unauthorized access and informed consent is sought whenever confidential information is transmitted electronically. (III.K.3)</p>

The MSU-WP Counseling Center website meets the identified criteria and can be found at <https://wp.missouristate.edu/counseling/> (III.K.4)

L. Telemental Health Services and Contracted Services

The MSU-WP Counseling Center provides telemental health services as appropriate and needed. All staff are trained to closely adhere to all relevant guidelines.

IV. COUNSELING SERVICES PERSONNEL

A. Diversity Competencies of Staff

The MSU-WP Counseling Center highly values the benefit of having a diverse staff that maintains a high level of cultural competency. The Counseling Center follows hiring procedures that reflect a commitment to hiring staff that reflects this value.

B. Director

Lauren Willis is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and obtained her master's degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from the accredited Oklahoma Baptist University. She has graduate-level academic training in diagnosis and assessment, counseling theory and practice, ethical issues, supervision, diversity, and research. She has completed supervised field placement and internships in diverse settings with college-age population and beyond, while working with clinical assessment, counseling, and crisis intervention. Lauren Willis has over five years of clinical experience, including one year in a supervisory capacity. She works to represent the campus with mental health awareness and collaborate with other departments by building effective professional relationships. Lauren is committed to the educational and professional development of herself and other Counseling Center staff. (IV.B.1)

The Director's responsibilities and job description are in line with the standards IV.B.2.a-j.

C. Professional Staff

Due to the current size of the Counseling Center, there are no additional professional staff besides the Director of Counseling Services. When hired in the future, the Counseling Center will utilize the standards outlined in IV.C.1 and IV.C.2 to guide hiring and expected responsibilities of those hired.

D. Other Center Administrative Staff

As mentioned above, there are no other center administrative staff hired at this time.

E. Trainees

The MSU-WP Counseling Center is adequately prepared to be considered a supervised field placement where practicum students can be appropriately trained, supervised, and arranged. Hosting a practicum student will be determined on available trainees for the region. The Counseling Center is prepared to provide a minimum of 1 hour of direct supervision each week. The trainee will also be able to work towards completing practicums and internships

as part of their graduate level coursework. This work will be coordinated and overseen through the student's graduate program and the student's direct supervisor in the Counseling Center. The MSU-WP Counseling Center does not host any pre-doctoral interns, post-doctoral candidates, or paraprofessionals/peer educators at this time. (IV.E.1-5)

F. Administrative Support Staff

The Counseling Center has an appropriate amount of support staff that is highly trained in the practice, ethics, and confidentiality required within the Counseling Center. They are trained in the technology needed to perform their job duties that include receptionist duties, data analysis, word processing, and scheduling. Staff have access to clinical consultation when needed. (IV.F.1)

The Counseling Center does not employ student workers at this time. (IV.F.2)

G. Professional Status

Counseling Center staff are not considered faculty but are considered mental health experts and are well respected on campus.

V. RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

A. Professional Development

MSU-WP Counseling Center allows release time and limited funding for professional development training each year. (V.A.1)

Counseling Center staff are provided with opportunities for clinical/peer supervision and case consultation. Unlicensed staff members would have the opportunity to be supervised under licensed staff. (V.A.2)

Throughout the year, staff go through informal in-service trainings. (V.A.3)

Staff members are part of professional organizations like NABITA and AAMFT. Staff also participate in local mental health organizations that support mental health awareness in the local community. (V.A.4) Staff also participate in relevant campus events and committees and any other local, regional and professional meetings. (V.A.5)

B. Consultation Resources

MSU-WP Counseling Center maintains a wide network of mental health professionals with which they can consult on clinical matters while maintaining confidentiality. This network spans across campus, within West Plains, across the state and country.

C. Number of Staff

MSU-WP Counseling Center has a 1FTE staff to 700 student ratio, excluding dual-enrolled students that do not qualify for services. (V.C.1)

<p>Administrative support staff is adequate to meet all administrative needs for the functioning of an effective counseling service. The Director has administrative authority and supervision over the support staff. (V.C.2)</p>
<p>D. Center Budget The Director of Counseling Services at MSU-WP has responsibility for managing all aspects of the center’s budget.</p>
<p>E. Compensation – Salary and Benefits At the MSU-WP Counseling Center, salaries are commensurate with credentials, experience and responsibilities (V.E.1) and are in line with the broader MSU community and peer institutions (V.E.2). Staff are provided with opportunities to advance to positions of responsibility within the Center as positions become available. (V.E.3)</p>
<p>F. Physical Facilities The MSU-WP Counseling Center is in the process of relocating to a physical location that will meet physical facility standards. The Director and campus administration have utilized the IACS standards to guide planning for this future facility and plan to be relocated before the end of the academic year. (V.F.1; V.F.2; V.F.4; V.F.7; V.F.11)</p> <p>All Counseling Center staff have access to the appropriate technology needed for their responsibilities. (V.F.3) All staff have access to the campus library resources that provide professional journals, books, and other materials within the field of mental health. (V.F.5)</p> <p>The MSU-WP Counseling Center does not conduct psychological testing. Student-Clients conduct a limited number of self-report measures (GAD-7, PHQ-9, CCAPS-62, demographic questionnaire, intake paperwork). (V.F.6)</p> <p>The MSU-WP Counseling Center is prepared to provide adequate audio-visual recording and observation as part of supervision requirements for trainees and practicum students. (V.F.8)</p> <p>The Counseling Center has adequate storage space (V.F.9) Security cameras are not located in a location that could compromise the privacy or confidentiality of student-clients. (V.F.10)</p>
<p>G. Malpractice/Liability Insurance The State of Missouri System provides liability insurance. Individuals may purchase additional or separate coverage at their discretion. (V.G)</p>
<p>VI. SPECIAL CONCERNS</p>
<p>A. Issues Affecting Counseling Centers Outside of the United States Not applicable.</p>