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2008 CCAPS Thomas M. Magoon Excellence in Counseling Award

San Jose State University

Counseling Services Mental Health Ambassador Program

The Thomas M. Magoon Innovation Award is a Commission for Counseling and Psychological Services award. The award is named for Dr. Tom Magoon who was a much beloved mentor and colleague to so many in our profession. One of this many contributions to our profession included the creation and coordination of an ACPA program which has been one of the highlights of ACPA conferences since the early 1960's. While the "Innovations" program selects several innovative and fresh programs involving counseling centers, CCAPS has decided to honor one particularly innovative counseling center program each year.



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This year, we are pleased to recognize Dr. Wei-Chien Lee, and the San Jose State University's Counseling Services. Dr. Wei-Chien Lee created the [Mental Health Ambassadors](#) program in 2007, which has allowed the campus community to receive information about mental health issues, with the goal of making a systemic intervention into the campus environment. This program assists the campus in reducing the stigma of seeking services, increasing mental health literacy, and creating a climate which is supportive of mental health issues.

Student Ambassadors receive training and mentoring, and serve as the student representatives and messengers of the SJSU Counseling Services. They further serve as liaisons between the campus and counseling center. While many campus peer counseling programs aim to assist with individual change, the Mental Health Ambassadors focus on campus climate change by developing innovative programs and materials, initiating contact with faculty and students, and conducting outreach and research. During the first year of the program, five student Ambassadors had contact with more than 200 individuals. Feedback from the campus indicated that students and professors were highly receptive to the opportunity to talk with these trained student Ambassadors, and often preferred this to meeting with a counselor. Ambassadors created many innovative programs, such as "International Buddies" as well as a study on student retention. By developing a strong reputation on campus, more students volunteered on their own to join the Ambassadors in their second year of operation. The Counseling Services have 7 Ambassadors this year.

CCAPS applauds the SJSU Counseling Services in developing this innovative program to reach out to students who might otherwise not have known about or sought mental health services.

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