

History of the CCAPS Innovations Program: Maryland Archival Databank Revisited

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In the year 2011 the American College Personnel Association's (ACPA) annual convention held in Baltimore, Maryland March 26th - 30th marked the 50th Anniversary of the Commission for Counseling and Psychological Services (CCAPS). Significant milestones in CCAPS' first 25 years of existence were duly recorded by Lynn Roney (1986). In 2010, Sherry Lynch Conrad completed the next 25 years of significant CCAPS achievements.

The 50th Anniversary Planning Committee, chaired by Jane Bost, requested a separate document chronicling the history of CCAPS' signature convention program "Innovations in College Counseling" and its relationship to the University of Maryland's Archival Databank. In the early 1960's, the Databank was founded by the visionary scholar, Dr. Thomas M. Magoon, a "pioneer" in the development of college and university counseling centers. As a research endeavor, the Databank examines central issues and emerging trends faced by college and university counseling centers nationwide. A brief sketch of that history is here provided for the CCAPS 50th Anniversary celebration.

Consistent with the focus of Commission VII's/CCAPS two other historical documents regarding ongoing achievements, this historical sketch of the Innovations Program and the University of Maryland's Archival Databank should be viewed as works in progress.

History

The origin of the Innovations Program, as an annual CCAPS convention offering, is more fully understood in connection with the databank source from whence it came. In 1962, Dr. Thomas Magoon, as the Director of the University of Maryland's Counseling Center and Professor of Psychology and Education, founded the Maryland Archival Databank which annually surveys college and university counseling center directors as to trends among students' presenting problems for counseling services; issues of importance to counseling center directors, and the various struggles and achievements of college and university counseling centers over the last half of the 20th Century.

In this country, counseling centers in colleges and universities began to emerge during the mid-1950's. The Maryland Databank began in the early 1960's thus closely paralleling the rise of counseling centers

on college campuses across the United States. Hence, this seminal databank not only provided participating centers with benchmarks and best practices, it inadvertently chronicled the history and evolution of these counseling centers at institutions of higher learning throughout the country.

Annual databank surveys routinely solicited information on innovative approaches to meeting the growing needs of students seeking counseling services. Each year the most remarkable strides in innovations are selected and featured in the “Innovations in College Counseling” program. According to Lynn Roney’s (1986) research, it was at the 1965 ACPA convention held in Minneapolis that the Commission (comprised of roughly 15 individuals at that time) met to discuss of the possibility of co-sponsoring Dr. Magoon’s Maryland Archival Databank.

In 1964, the first Innovations Program was included in the ACPA Convention general programs. Subsequently, at the 1967 ACPA Convention held in Kansas City, Commission VII deemed the Innovations program worthy of sponsorship.

At the 1972 ACPA Convention held in Cleveland, Lynn Roney noted that the modest budget for Commission VII totaled only \$300 and that all of those funds were earmarked for co-sponsorship of the Maryland Archival Databank. Commission VII’s co-sponsorship of the Databank continued for quite a number of years until it was eventually co-sponsored by the Association of University and College Counseling Center Directors (AUCCCD).

In more recent years, Sherry Lynch Conrad’s account of the Commission’s second 25 years indicated that the decision to make the Innovations Program a permanent offering at ACPA conventions occurred at the 1993 ACPA Convention in Kansas City:

“Up to this point, the Innovations in College Counseling Program had been selected by the Program reviewers each year since 1967 from among all programs submitted for Consideration for Commission sponsorship. Each year, this program had been among the most popular and well-attended programs that would automatically be commission-sponsored each year.”

Given his considerable talents and efforts, CCAPS acknowledged Dr. Magoon’s extraordinary contribution to the profession of counseling through two Lifetime Achievement Awards in 1989 and 2004. As the architect of the Maryland Archival Databank, Dr. Magoon was also recognized at the 2005 ACPA Convention through the inauguration of the Thomas M. Magoon Innovation Award for innovative counseling centers. The citation reads as follows:

“This award was presented in the spirit of the longstanding CCAPS/ACPA conference presentation entitled Innovation in College Counseling, and in particular in honor of the originator and coordinator of that presentation, Dr. Thomas M. Magoon.”

At the 2008 ACPA Convention held in Washington DC, the “flagship CCAPS Innovation Program”, in collaboration with the University of Maryland was voted to be an annually sponsored program of the Commission.

For the past several years, the Innovation program has been hosted by Dr. Jonathan Kandell and Dr. Vivian Boyd assuming the coordinating role for this annual convention program.

Upon his retirement in 1988 as the Director of the Counseling Center at the University of Maryland, Dr. Thomas Magoon was awarded emeritus status and continued to manage the databank for the next 15 years with his successor Dr. Vivian S. Boyd. In 2005 Dr. Thomas Magoon died.

Since his death, the Maryland Archival Databank has been maintained and run under the leadership of Dr. Vivian S. Boyd. In its current configuration, it canvasses college and university counseling centers as to emerging trends in service delivery, student engagement, and crisis management. To date, it remains an unrivaled source of archival data mirroring the progress of counseling centers nationwide.

Counseling Center Innovations – A Thumbnail Sketch

A preliminary content analysis of the Maryland Archival Databank innovation items which formed the CCAPS Innovations in College Counseling Program submissions were identified at five selected time intervals, namely 1968-69; 1978-79; 1988-89; 1998-99 and 2008-10.

Although complete datasets are available for each annual databank since 1962, only a handful of selected categories are included in this analysis. The focal categories consist of: (a) center programs or issues once prevalent and currently appear to be on the increase; (b) center services and programs reflecting a sharp increase over time; (c) administrative issues that resurface, and (d) center programs and concerns emerging on a current basis.

Media/Technological Interventions

| 1968-1969 | 1978-1979 | 1988-1989 | 1998-1999 | 2008-2010 |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 7.22% | 9.96% | 7.41% | 4.12% | 19.74% |

According to Databank respondents, the explosion in technological advances has had a profound impact on the delivery of counseling services. In the views of counseling center staff, Millennial students (Generation Y) are best reached through various forms of engaging social media. For example, newer technological formats enable greater use of online communications with students. We have noticed online stress reduction approaches; computerized approaches to career counseling -- Discover and Sigi, and center-dedicated websites. Whereas the "60-second" radio spot was seen as the novel presentation of its day in the 1980s, current Maryland Archival Databank submissions routinely take advantage of web-based platforms.

Expanding/Restructuring Center Centers and Counseling Services

| 1968-1969 | 1978-1979 | 1988-1989 | 1998-1999 | 2008-2010 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 9.28% | 25.27% | 29.63% | 21.65% | 26.32% |

Since the 1970s innovative program submissions reflect dynamic changes in the role and function of counseling centers. A shift in thinking has occurred as to what constitutes a university or college counseling center; what services legitimately belong to counseling centers as opposed to other campus units; and whether counseling centers should be structured as stand-alone units or combined with other campus agencies.

Responses to this inquiry signal an expansion in counseling services across the board. Most notably, counseling centers are morphing into a more clinical crisis model in contrast to the more holistic, developmental model of previous years.

Counseling center staff members have been involved in special taskforces in the wake of media attention aimed at college campuses. The boisterous demand for counseling services and the mounting expectation of parents and society at large are undeniable.

Typical expansion initiatives entail taking on a significant (if not the leading role) in the formation of campus disaster planning. Such activities include involvement in threat assessment teams or students of concern committees. From a logistical standpoint, counseling center directors must train staff in crisis management; provide ongoing training for campus personnel in how to respond appropriately; and offer Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) services for campus police.

The current restructuring of counseling centers through mergers with other campus services (primarily health services and career centers) is a disturbing pattern that gained currency previously in the late 1980s. This Draconian process is inevitably linked to periods of economic recession. Arguably, top administrators often believe it is a potent means of conserving financial resources and streamlining student services.

Change abounds in just how counseling centers deliver services to students. Not only has there been a marked increase in programs tailored toward structured groups and workshops targeting specific at-risk, help seekers, many centers are providing counseling services through the creation of classes for academic credit regarding career clarification and mindfulness.

Recent innovations that reflect change include the emergence of empirically-based treatment approaches focused on symptom reduction and the length of treatment, in contrast to the more holistic, humanistic, relational paradigm counseling approaches.

Campus Consultation/Outreach

| 1968-1969 | 1978-1979 | 1988-1989 | 1998-1999 | 2008-2010 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 21.65% | 29.89% | 34.98% | 35.05% | 40.79% |

Databank responses reflect a sizable increase of campus consultation and outreach on the part of counseling centers. Multiple factors can be easily linked to this rising trend. There has been considerable movement from the more private practice clinic model prevalent at the onset of college and university counseling centers to the more comprehensive counseling service for the campus at large.

Other factors include the recent spate of shootings at the University of Arizona, Virginia Tech, Northern Illinois University, University of Alabama, and Ohio State; increased parental intrusion in the collegiate experience of their children; intensive media scrutiny of campus services; an ever-present litigious society, increased severity of students now enrolling; and the dramatic upswing in faculty and staff requests for counseling assistance due to disruptive student behavior in class.

Intake/Walk-In/Emergency Approaches

| 1968-1969 | 1978-1979 | 1988-1989 | 1998-1999 | 2008-2010 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 6.19% | 2.14% | 1.23% | 0% | 2.63% |

Counseling centers still have to provide assistance to students experiencing higher forms of pathology and acute forms of emotional distress. Hence the debate around how such troubled students get into the system is gaining currency. As a result, intake assessment has radically been altered. Currently triage arrangements have been instituted in recognition of current demand levels on counseling center staff at the same time that such arrangements provide more timely, if not immediate assistance to help seekers.

The inclusion of case managers as permanent members of the counseling center staff is attributable to attempts to get clients the assistance they need in a timely manner. More recent program submissions feature novel intake approaches such as “Rainbow Walk-in Hours”; “Minority Student Walk-In Hours” and even “Veterans Walk-In Hours”.

Groups (Therapy and structured)

| 1968-1969 | 1978-1979 | 1988-1989 | 1998-1999 | 2008-2010 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 21.6% | 6.41% | 4.94% | 3.09% | 11.84% |

Therapy and other groups were considered revolutionary during the 1960's. As these groups became institutionalized their initial novelty wore off, and it is extremely rare for any counseling center not to offer such treatment options. The escalation in groups during the last decade seems inextricably linked to more structured forms of group counseling which have focused on specific issues such as race and culture, sexual orientation, pressing areas of concern (e.g., grief and loss, eating disorders, social anxiety, etc.).

The prevalence of structured or theme-oriented groups and workshops often address specific issues. In so doing, such approaches enable clients to learn from each other. Mutual support is paramount in overcoming specific issues.

Use of Undergraduates in the Delivery of Counseling Services

| 1968-1969 | 1978-1979 | 1988-1989 | 1998-1999 | 2008-2010 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 3.90% | 7.12% | 7.82% | 4.12% | 0% |

Peer counseling programs or paraprofessionals involved in the provision of preliminary counseling were once deemed novel approaches in the 1970s and 1980s. While many counseling centers still engage in peer counseling and peer educator programming, it may no longer be seen as novel. Moreover, the advent of more severe forms of mental distress in college students, as well as increased litigation, may be tied to this phenomenon.

Race/Ethnicity

| 1968-1969 | 1978-1979 | 1988-1989 | 1998-1999 | 2008-2010 |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 3.09% | 3.91% | 7.00% | 3.09% | 1.32% |

The issue of race saw the most innovative programs submitted during the 1980s. Since this pinnacle decade, innovations have tapered off to levels last seen in the late 1960s. Of late, there have been fewer submissions on this topic likely indicating less of a perceived need for innovative programming and services on this issue. Notable responses concentrated on finding ways to bolster cross-cultural competencies of professional staff and counseling trainees. Interestingly, counseling centers continue to include group offerings focused on within group supports, such as "Circle of Sisters" and "Asian American Students Support Groups," which underscore the therapeutic needs of students experiencing the acculturation process and subtle forms of racism and cultural bias.

Emerging Trends

Suicide Prevention

| 1968-1969 | 1978-1979 | 1988-1989 | 1998-1999 | 2008-2010 |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 0% | 0% | 0.41% | 0% | 10.53% |

Suicide prevention has taken center stage since the late 1960s. The admission of larger numbers of students with pre-existing mental health issues, coupled with the already well-known forms of mental disorders typical among college-aged populations (e.g., depressions, bipolar disorders, anxiety disorders, and schizophrenia), all contribute to the need for counseling centers to develop such programs. Approaches to training faculty, staff and other campus members in how to refer students to the counseling center have also be prevalent. Financial support (such as grants from SAMHSA) has been made available to counseling centers in the aftermath of several high-profile campus suicides. These funds have enabled many centers to development and provide new suicide prevention programs.

International Students

| 1968-1969 | 1978-1979 | 1988-1989 | 1998-1999 | 2008-2010 |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 2.63% |

International students are currently receiving more attention from college and university counseling centers. The globalization of education and the emerging marketplace certainly play a role, possibly along with increases in cultural biases in the wake of widespread economic downturns and global unrest.

Veterans

| 1968-1969 | 1978-1979 | 1988-1989 | 1998-1999 | 2008-2010 |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 2.63% |

Of late, innovative programs which address the counseling needs of veterans have begun to emerge on college campuses. It stands to reason that recent federal funding for the continuing education of veterans returning from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has been instrumental in bringing about this change.

A Work in Progress - To Be Continued

This preliminary content analysis of selected items from the Maryland Archival Databank barely scratches the surface of the data amassed over the 50 years concerning the evolution of counseling centers in the United States. Preserving Dr. Thomas Magoon's legacy has been an undertaking of his successor, Dr. Vivian S. Boyd, who has institutionalized the databank as an integral part of the University of Maryland's Counseling Center's research initiative. This wealth of information will continue to be explored through future articles and CCAPS Innovation convention presentations.

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