

**Counseling and Advising Center**  
**SECTION A**  
**RESOURCES AND CAPACITY**

**What are the mission and goals for your program area, department or office? Identify the indicators and measures for each goal.**

The Grays Harbor College Counseling and Advising Center provides a positive and approachable environment for all students and members of the College community and performs the following services.

- Orients students to the College and provides initial academic advising
- Helps students identify careers that fit with their unique interests, values and skills
- Provides a safe and nonjudgmental forum for students to explore personal issues
- Educates students on topics related to personal growth and development
- Coordinates a testing program including college placement testing and other tests
- Advises students on transferring, success plans and other academic issues
- Coordinates a Running Start program and a High School Completion program
- Provides mediation services for resolution of student conflicts
- Advocates for students with other College constituencies

**How does your program area, department or office support the college administrative unit to which you report (i.e. Student Services, Administrative Services, Human Resources, etc.)?**

The Counseling and Advising Center is one of the most central components of the Student Services unit. Virtually all students who enter the college come through our office for college placement testing and entry advising and many continue to use us for advising and counseling. We work very closely with the Admissions & Records and Financial Aid offices in resolving many types of student academic and financial aid issues. We also work closely with the Student Services VP and the Director of Security in addressing student behavioral and mental health related issues.

**Is the current budget allocation for your program, department or office sufficient to meet your mission and goals? Why or why not?**

The budget we had prior to the cuts of 2008-2009 was sufficient to meet our mission and goals. The current, reduced budget is manageable for the short term but is not sufficient in the longer term. Basically, we have completely stopped travelling for professional development because that is the one part of the budget that is in our control. We need to purchase essential supplies and bring in part-time staff to meet our coverage needs, so by eliminating travel we keep a bit of money that hopefully can offset any amounts we go over on essential functions. This is not sustainable in the long term if we are to stay up to date and continue to develop our skills.

**Is the staffing for your department, program or office sufficient to fulfill your mission and goals? Why or why not?**

No, our current staffing is not sufficient. We need a full-time office assistant and currently we have one for less than 19 hours per week. We fill in the front office coverage gap with an ever-changing stable of 3-4 work study students whose frequent family, health or academic emergencies leave us scrambling to find someone to cover the front office. It is not unusual for the desk to be covered by counselors whose time could be better spent doing something else. Also, with so many different and changing people involved in testing, entry advising and other crucial functions, it is hard to keep everyone informed of all the details they need in order to do everything correctly.

Until the spring of 2008, when we took over the GED Testing program, it worked to have the Testing Specialist serve as an office manager and do some of the receptionist duties. Since we took over the GED program, the job of Testing Specialist is a full-time role that involves a great deal of time out of the office, with 60-80% of our specialist's time spent on GED-related matters. This has left the very busy front office inadequately staffed.

Also, we could benefit greatly from another counselor or academic planner. The counselors are under nearly constant demands from students, between regularly scheduled appointments for counseling or advising and coverage of drop-in hours, which we maintain from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. This leaves counselors very limited time to do the administrative tasks that come with the components of our jobs such as coordinating the college's advising and entry advising programs, coordinating the Running Start program and keeping students informed of transfer options. As a result, the counselors very often work more than their scheduled hours and often feel stressed by the workload. We are challenged to keep this stress hidden from students so they will always feel that their visits and questions are welcome.

**Is space allocated and available to the department, program or office adequate to fulfill your mission and goals? Why or why not?**

Ultimately, to best meet our mission and goals, we should have a testing center that is adjacent to and connected to the Counseling Center but has its own space. Eventually it would also be good to be able to accommodate 20 testers rather than our current 16. Until our new building is built, the current space is adequate.

**Are equipment allocations, available equipment, and technology support adequate to support the services provided and fulfill goals? Why or why not?**

The work of some of our staff members could be more efficiently performed with additional equipment. Our Running Start coordinator and our Testing specialist both feel that they could perform better with two computer screens. They spend a great deal of time minimizing things and switching back and forth from screen to screen. Our Running Start coordinator also could

use a mobile unit for PowerPoint presentations. She performs these presentations at most of the regional high schools, and has to rely on the schools' equipment which is not always adequate and reliable.

We would also benefit from having an updated computer in our suite for students to use for Washington Occupational Information System (WOIS) research and taking Strong Interest Inventories and other counseling-related assessments. Additionally, we have been warned that the GED test is expected to go online in approximately two years. At that time we will need additional computers in the testing room.

**Are all required policies and procedures for your area up-to-date, clear, and easily accessible?**

Yes.