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STAFFING THE COLLEGE COUNSELING CENTER TO MEET THE  
NEEDS OF MINORITY AND FEMALE STUDENTS

by

Christine Rickly

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Psychology

Approved:

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, Utah

1975

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Abstract

Staffing the College Counseling Center to Meet the

Needs of Minority and Female Students

by

Christine Rickly, Master of Science

Utah State University, 1975

Major Professor: Glendon Casto

Department: Psychology

This study assessed Utah State University students' perceptions of the U.S.U. Counseling Center with regard to meeting students' counseling needs. The study focused on racial background and sex of counselors as significant variables. A written questionnaire was mailed to 420 students. Fifty-three percent of the questionnaires were returned.

The students' impressions of the Counseling Center were generally positive. Caucasian females were more satisfied than Caucasian males. Minority students were least satisfied. Students who had not used the center most often indicated they had no need. Many students lacked information concerning the services and availability of staff of different sex and/or backgrounds.

For most counseling situations, the majority of the students indicated that sex and racial background of the counselor were unimportant. In counseling situations concerning personal problems related to sex the

availability of a staff member of a particular sex or racial background was frequently essential. Since the staff at the time of this study lacked variety, in respect to sex and racial background, some students could not have been served according to their preferences. Recommendations were made available concerning the expressed needs as ascertained by this study.

(69 pages)

## Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing concern in the university community for the development of counseling center services and programs to meet the personal and developmental needs of students. As a reflection of this concern, a number of attempts have been made to evaluate client and student response to the quality of services which counseling centers are providing (Snyder, Hill, & Derksen, 1971; Harman, 1971). In 1970 the University and College Counseling Center Directors Task Force drew up a set of "Guidelines for University and College Counseling Services" (Kirk, 1971). The Guidelines were written with the hope that they would contribute to the understanding of counseling on college campuses, further its development, and help to maintain high standards in its functioning. While numerous efforts have been under way to evaluate counseling center services and to gather information useful for growth and improvement of services, a question which has not been completely answered relates to the importance of having staff members who are heterogeneous for (differing in) sex and background.

This question assumed special importance at Utah State University as a result of a Region VIII Office for Civil Rights Recommendation which stated:

It is recommended that the University provide the Office for Civil Rights, Region VIII, with evidence that non-church related minority students, especially females, have access to adequate professional counseling and that this information has been published for the benefit of the studentbody.

The Counseling Center staff indicated in reply to this recommendation that, at that time, records showed that three counselors on the staff had seen a total of five Black female students in interviews during the past 18 months and that there were only nine Black female student enrollees Spring Quarter. Also, that four of these cases were terminated after presenting problems seemed to have been successfully resolved. One of these students was continuing in counseling. In addition, it was reported that the Dean of Women, the Women's Housing Assistant and a well qualified female graduate assistant trained in Counseling Psychology were regularly available to assist female students with problems they might be experiencing.

However, the staff indicated that they recognized that there still might be some female students as well as male students in need of help who were not seeking such help at the Center. At that time they presented a proposal to conduct a survey to determine the Counseling needs of all students and to determine if the Counseling Center were meeting these needs.

In exploring the question, "Could the needs of a greater number of students be met by the availability of different staff?" two major areas of concern were identified. These two areas were: 1) the needs of minority students and 2) the needs of female students. While the importance of answering the question for all groups was great, by far the greatest number of students in question were females. Therefore, the needs of this group presented a problem of primary concern. Little information was available which could assist in



determining if the needs of both groups were being met. Therefore, the present study was undertaken.

### Objectives

The major objective of this research was to determine if U. S. U. students perceived the composition of the Counseling Center Staff, with respect to racial background and sex, to be related to adequately meeting student needs.

To attain this objective answers to the following questions were sought:

- 1) To what extent were students who had been to the Counseling Center satisfied with the availability of staff and services ?
- 2) What were the major reasons more students were not using the services available in the Counseling Center ?
- 3) What were students' perceptions of the adequacy of the Counseling Center in meeting students' needs ?
- 4) Were students likely to seek out a counselor of a particular sex for help in dealing with specific kinds of problems ?
- 5) Were students likely to seek out a counselor of a particular racial background for help in dealing with specific kinds of problems ?
- 6) To what extent did the availability of staff of a particular sex alone govern students' decisions to come to the Counseling Center ?
- 7) To what extent did the availability of staff of a particular racial background alone govern students' decisions to come to the Counseling Center ?

- 8) Did students have accurate knowledge of the availability of persons of differing background and sex on the staff of the Counseling Center?
- 9) Where did students get information about the Counseling Center?
- 10) What were the purposes of students' contacts with the Counseling Center?

### Review of Literature

The volume of research on women and minorities produced over the past decade documents a growing concern and awareness of their special needs. Those who are concerned with the counseling needs of women and minority students should be aware of the results of this research and its implications for counseling. Warnath (1972) indicates that the professional counselor's role as the principal source of counseling services on campuses is being challenged. There is a discrepancy between the way professionals view their competencies and the way students view them. As a manifestation of this discrepancy Warnath points to the rejection of formal counseling services by ethnic minority students. These students say that the typical middle class counselor does not have the background or style to help them with most problems. Young women who may have had the misfortune of finding themselves with an unwanted pregnancy or who have nontraditional occupational goals frequently have echoed these same charges.

For the purposes of this review of literature the research concerning the counseling needs of minority group students and the needs of women students will be discussed separately. The needs of women students will be discussed first.

Recent research relating to the counseling needs of women seems to fall into five areas. The first of these areas is demographic changes. Westervelt (1973), in discussing the psychological impact of feminism on

educated women, summarized some of these changes: Average age at marriage is increasing rather rapidly as is the percentage of unmarried women from 20 to 24. The birth rate is falling (1971 had the lowest rate since 1820, with the fertility rate of women from 14 to 55 at its lowest point since 1940). The number of women over 30 who are enrolled in higher education courses has doubled during the past 10 years, and the number of women in the work force has increased. A U. S. Department of Labor 1973 publication reported that the percentage of married women in the labor force is continuing to rise. Forty-two and two-tenths percent of the married women in the U. S. were working. Most of the women representing this increase were under the age of 35. Many are mothers of preschool children.

It appears that increasing numbers of women are remaining single longer, having fewer children, working when their children are young, and returning to work or to school when family responsibilities ease. These trends have implications for career guidance. In counseling younger women, developmental stages should be taken into consideration within a life planning context. Older women who wish to continue their education or reenter the work force will need help in reorganizing their lives when family responsibilities have diminished or shifted.

A second important area of research concerned sex differences. It is generally agreed that differences between males and females do exist. Oliver (1975) states that motivational differences related to sex would seem to have most importance for counselors in any counseling situation. Achievement

motivation has an especially high priority for concern. She points out that although achievement motivation has been extensively studied, the theory that has been developed to explain it has been based primarily on data about males; and this theory has limited application to females. Stein and Bailey (1973) indicate that girls tend to achieve well in early school years but with many girls this achievement drops off in adolescence. The reverse pattern generally is displayed by boys (Bardwick, 1971; Stein & Bailey, 1973). Stein and Bailey (1973) summarized studies emphasizing the importance of affiliation rather than achievement for females. They have suggested that women may shift their achievement efforts from academic and career concerns to social concerns. A frequently voiced interpretation of the lowered academic achievement in females is that achievement jeopardizes the female's chances of social success and acceptance by males. Horner (1968) concluded that many young women who face a conflict between their need for achievement and their female image will sacrifice academic or career success for possible social failure and that this may result in negative emotional consequences and the loss to society of a valuable human resource. There is also some research to support the possibility that there is a cyclical pattern in achievement motivation in some groups of women. Baruch (1967) found that an increase in achievement motivation occurred 10 to 15 years after marriage among women who had formerly been college students. Bardwick (1971) offers a possible explanation; the need for achievement is suppressed by a higher need for affiliation during the years of early marriage and childrearing but reemerges when affiliative

needs have been satisfied. Oliver (1975) suggests that in light of sex differences related to motivation and achievement that counselors take the differences into account especially with respect to the clients' life stage, and explore potential conflicts with female clients.

The third research area concerns sex-role stereotyping. The effects of affirmative action and the impact of the feminist movement may be influential in altering sex-role stereotypes but research by Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, and Vogel (1970) indicates that well-defined sex-role stereotypes exist. They found that clinicians are likely to suggest that "healthy" women differ from "healthy" men by being more submissive, less independent, less adventurous, more easily influenced, less aggressive, less competitive, more excitable in minor crises, having their feelings more easily hurt, being more emotional, more conceited about their appearance, less objective and by disliking math and science. Broverman and others (1970) also found that what is judged healthy for adult males is highly correlated with previous studies of judgements of social desirability. They conclude that for a woman to be judged healthy she must "adjust" to and accept the behavioral norms for her sex, although these behaviors are generally regarded as less socially desirable and offer less personal satisfaction. Both males and females in the helping professions in this study stereotyped by sex. More recent research by Maslin and Davis (1975) with counselors in training showed females holding an approximately uniform standard for healthy males, females, and adults (sex unspecified) while male subjects subscribed to this standard for healthy males and adults

but held another, more stereotypically feminine standard for healthy females. A possible explanation for these different findings is given by Maslin and Davis (1975): Egalitarian beliefs and ideas associated with the feminist movement have resulted in females no longer employing stereotypes in their images of healthy women, but it seems males are still perpetuating such stereotypes to some degree.

To counter some of the present stereotyping, Helson (1972) has presented evidence from several recent studies indicating that women who view themselves in nontraditional ways in terms of career orientation are psychologically healthier than their more traditional sisters. As Bardwick (1971) pointed out, career-oriented women do not necessarily reject the feminine role: They think in terms of a dual role--marriage plus a career commitment. She also cautioned that young women planning to combine work and families tend to be unaware of the problems involved. A complication for counseling stems from the finding that future career commitment in women cannot be predicted at age 18 (Harmon, 1970). This makes counseling women different from counseling men who generally expect to be rather continuously involved in the world of work.

Demographic changes, affirmative action programs, and the feminist movement may all be influential in altering sex roles. However, research by Broverman and others (1970) and by Maslin and Davis (1975) would indicate that stereotypes still exist among mental health professionals though there is some evidence that change has occurred. Oliver (1975) points out important

considerations for counseling which are suggested by the research on sex roles: The counselor must recognize the current stereotypes and what changes can be expected in them. These changes may cause discomfort and conflict for clients. Women particularly may need help resolving career-marriage conflicts and assessing potential difficulties. If having children is an important source of self esteem, population pressures may force women to seek alternatives for personal satisfaction. Counselors will be called on to help women resolve these conflicts.

A fourth research area concerns counselor bias. Several studies show findings which would indicate that counselors do reflect a sexist bias in their counseling. Studies by Thomas and Stewart (1971) and Scholssberg and Pietrofesa (1973) show a bias by both males and females toward a female client with nontraditional occupational goals. Studies by Broverman and others (1970) and Maslin and Davis (1975) found differences among mental health professionals and trainees in their concepts of a "healthy" male, "healthy" female and "healthy" adult (sex unspecified). Maslin and Davis (1975) did show female trainees to have more similar concepts for all three than male trainees held.

There is some evidence to indicate that counseling style may be affected by the sex of the client and this may have undesirable effects for women. Parker (1967) demonstrated that male therapists tended to be more nondirective with females than males. Heilburm (1970) found that dependent females tending to leave counseling prematurely showed a preference for more



directive therapist responses. This could lead to female clients who need a more directive approach leaving counseling too soon.

A related bias is the use of occupational information and vocational tests which are sex-stereotyped. Dewey (1974) points out that counselors should look to newer instruments than the commonly used Strong Vocational Interest Blank and the Kuder Occupational Interest Test which have been viewed as biased since they provide a more restricted range of occupations for women than men. She has developed the Non-Sexist Vocational Card Sort (Dewey, 1974). Also available is The Strong-Campbell Interest Inventory (Campbell, 1973).

Research has shown bias to exist among counselors. For this reason, counselors should guard against the tendency to perceive as desirable, traits for women that are psychologically unhealthy. Research would indicate that male counselors in particular should monitor their counseling to be sure they are not treating clients differently on the basis of sex alone rather than individual needs (Maslin & Davis, 1975). Also counselors should be aware of the tendency to be biased in considering women's nontraditional career choices.

A fifth research area concerns client preferences for sex of therapist and the relationship of these preferences to what is known about providing facilitative conditions for therapy. Rosen (1967) completed a comprehensive review of the literature concerning preferences of clients and potential clients with respect to the characteristics and procedures of counselors and psychotherapists. He reported on two findings dealing with sex preferences of college students, both from studies by Fuller: 1) Males showed a stronger preference

for male counselors than did female students for female counselors, and clients who initially preferred a female counselor were more likely to change this preference after counseling than were those who originally desired a male (Fuller, 1964). 2) Clients with no preference regarding sex of counselor expressed more feeling in counseling sessions than those who preferred male counselors (Fuller, 1963). Rosen (1967) notes that further research is needed in determining the relationship of client preferences regarding counselors to the process and outcome of counseling.

Hill (1975) investigated how sex of client and counselor affected behaviors in counseling. She found that there was more discussion of feelings among same-sex pairings. She also found clients of female counselors reported more satisfaction with the sessions than did clients of male counselors. She notes that this finding is consistent with Howard, Orlinsky, and Hill (1970) who found that female clients were more satisfied when paired with female therapists than with male therapists. It is suggested that perhaps prior to counseling, clients preferred male counselors due to expectations of authority and prestige. However, during counseling, those paired with males may have discovered they did not possess the qualities most satisfying in a therapeutic situation. Those paired with female counselors may have been surprised that their counselors were more competent than expected.

Olesker (1972) examined the relationship of empathy to sex pairings in counseling. Empathy has long been considered an important part of the counseling process (Carkhuff, 1969; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967). Olesker (1972)

found that being of the same sex is significantly related to being more empathic. In terms of this variable for counselor effectiveness there is an advantage to having a same-sex counselor.

Male and female clients do present different problems in counseling (Chesler, 1971; Oliver, 1975) and are viewed differently by counselors (Broverman et al., 1970). These facts have led at times to claims by feminists (Chesler, 1971; Gardner, Thomas, & Harris, 1970) that male clinicians possess little knowledge about women. Furthermore, male clinicians diagnoses and sympathy reinforce the standard sexual stereotypes which are oppressive to women and women should see only female clinicians who are feminists. Gardner (1971) does temper this by saying it is harder for a man to meet feminist standards but not impossible. She cites the example that even the most militant blacks recognize that some whites can also work effectively for black liberation and similarly, most militant feminists will admit there is a place for males in helping women to reach self-actualization.

Rogersian nondirective counseling requires that "the client has the right to select his life goals even though these may be at variance with the goals that the counselor might select for him" (Rogers, 1942). This places a high value on each individual's right to maintain his psychological independence. Counselors must be aware of recent research and apply this research knowledge to their practice of counseling with women (and minorities) if this right is to be given.

Turning to research concerning the counseling needs of minority students, agreement was found in the literature that minority students do have backgrounds and experiences differing from Caucasian students and that they often present special needs in counseling. The relationship of racial background to satisfaction and effectiveness in counseling has been of continuing concern to counselors and has generated interest in professional literature that discusses the problems of biracial counseling. However, most studies concerning biracial counseling have been carried out with Black and Caucasian subjects. Research concerning biracial counseling with other minorities is sparse.

In reviewing the literature six major areas of concern were discovered. Vontress (1969) discussed several of these areas in reference to the barriers to counseling rapport in black-white biracial counseling situations. The areas he discusses may also have relevance for other minority populations. He indicates racial attitudes of counselors who are caught up in the current whirlpool of racial attitudes in this country may be a primary barrier to counseling rapport. The minority client's antipathy to all whites may likewise not allow him to evaluate and react to the white person as an individual. No matter what qualities the counselor possessed, if the client rejects him because he is white, he is rendered professionally impotent. On the other hand, a black counselor's blackness would not automatically put him in good stead with the client as the counselee who perceives the white counselor as the enemy may perceive the black counselor as the collaborator with the enemy (Gochros, 1966). The

"collaborator" problem may have applicability to situations with other minority groups. Members of these groups may view with suspicion, any other member who may have strayed too far from his initial background through education. On the other hand, the minority counselor may be accepted simply because of his minority status but if he is unable to assist the client with his problems his ethnic or racial similarity will be of fleeting value. Thus, minority group status and resultant attitudes are initial barriers in counseling.

Vontress believes that perhaps the greatest blockage in the relationship is the counselor's lack of understanding of the sociopsychological background of the client; that much of the misunderstanding, distortion, and ignorance about the so-called disadvantaged client can be attributed to the paucity of contacts that middle-class personnel have with him. He cites McHahon, 1964. He feels that generally the counselor has grown up in a middle-class environment and is deprived of an understanding of the cultural backgrounds of those minorities whom he would assist. An example of such lack of cultural understanding would be the white middle-class-counselor who fails to recognize that eye contact with some minority clients, in particular American Indians from some tribes, may convey a different message than the message conveyed to the typical white counselee (Proskauer, 1975).

A third barrier Vontress discusses is the language barrier. Inability to penetrate the language barrier may render the professional helpless. He indicates that educated people, especially therapeutic personnel, communicate

in abstractions and words that not only convey motivations, but that transmit, modify and verbalize their feelings fluently. Such fluency may be rare with persons from other backgrounds. He cites Bernstein, 1964. Perhaps a "language" barrier of equal importance to the verbal communication barrier discussed by Vontress is the misunderstanding that can occur in nonverbal communication--as with the eye contact example cited above. Meanings of non-verbal cues differ from culture to culture and may result in blocked communication in biracial counseling situations.

A fourth barrier to counseling discussed by Vontress (1969) may be the client's unfamiliarity with counseling. Middle-class whites have from infancy a continuing series of relationships with professionals who assist them in some way: Doctors, lawyers, parents, etc. These contacts are, in the main, verbalizing relationships. The roles of the assister and the assisted are clearly understood. These roles may not be as clear cut with the minority students and, therefore, structuring the counseling relationship is of considerable importance in working with them.

A fifth blockage to effective counseling may be the hesitation to reveal oneself psychologically. Vontress (1969) states that individuals who have been treated harshly and have experienced hardships are reluctant to share their hurts with anyone. English (1957) says this is particularly true of blacks and it could be hypothesized of other minorities also. Vontress (1969) points out ways this may come out in counseling with blacks and he also notes that there are regional differences. He states, it has been observed often that young

Negroes reared in the North are overtly hostile or reserved in the counseling relationship. Having grown up under the illusion of freedom that grows out of the more impersonal atmosphere in the urban North, and having been reared in all-black ghettos in which they develop a separate life of their own, northern-born Negroes are more apt to "tell it like it is" than southern-born blacks. As northern-born blacks come to believe that freedom is an illusion, they are more hostile than southern Negroes who have yet to make it to the North and be disillusioned. Southern born Negroes may be hostile, but throughout their history they have learned to conceal their hostility. Thus, in the counseling interview, antagonism is often masked by an overwhelming passivity, a willingness to do "whatever you say." This passivity but lack of follow-through has been noted with other minorities. Among other possible cultural barriers to counseling rapport cited by Vontress (1969) are the relationship of age and the status attributed to age in various cultures, the formal atmosphere and the structure of the school, regional accents, and one barrier particular to the black-white counseling situation--the sex and race taboos.

A sixth research area involves considerable discussion of the degree to which counselors can work effectively with clients who differ from them in race. Doubts have been expressed (Mitchell, 1970; Thomas, 1969; Vontress, 1971; Williams & Kirkland, 1971) regarding the effectiveness, at least without special training of white counselors in counseling minority clients. Several studies (Banks, Berenson, & Carkhuff, 1967; Burrell & Rayder, 1971; Carkhuff & Pierce, 1967) indicate less positive attitudes toward counseling,

interference with rapport and less self-exploration when a minority client has seen or is to see a white counselor as compared with a situation of racial similarity between client and counselor.

Sattler (1970) in a review of literature concerning biracial counseling with black clients concluded that although black clients prefer black counselors, controlled investigation of interracial counseling and psychotherapy are only in their beginning and few conclusions were warranted. Since the time of his review Backner (1970) has investigated the ability of white counselors to work with black and Puerto Rican students in a special college program. The results of a questionnaire study indicated that the majority of the subjects considered the racial or ethnic background of their counselor irrelevant. Cimboic (1973) compared black subjects ratings of counselor effectiveness, likeability, and skill level for black and white counselors. Black subjects did not rate black counselors more favorably than white counselors. Ewing (1974) also found little support for the hypothesis that counselors must have the same racial or ethnic background as their clients to be effective. Black and white students rated black and white counselors comparably. Counselor experience was found to be related to competence rating given by students.

In contrast, Gratham (1973) and Wolkon, Moriwaki, and Williams (1972) found greater satisfaction was reported when the counselor was of the same racial background. In investigating further, Gratham (1973) found that depth of exploration was not related to racial similarity but was related to sex. In his study black clients explored themselves in greater depth with female



counselors. Bryson and Cody (1973) examined the relationship between race and level of understanding between counselor and client. Results suggested that race of the counselor was related to understanding in the counseling process. Black counselors were found to understand black counselees best and white counselors understood white counselees best. Overall white counselors understood both white and black counselees better than did black counselors. The race of client was not related to understanding between client and counselor. White clients understood black counselors as well as they did white counselors. Conversely, black clients understood white counselors as well as they did black counselors. In this study the clients appeared to have more flexibility than the counselors.

The point is made repeatedly (Ewing, 1974; Haettenschwiller, 1971; Mitchell, 1971; Vontress & Clemmont, 1970) that training for sensitivity, knowledge of minority cultures, and general human qualities seem to be important factors in working with clients of differing backgrounds. They indicate that some counselors can be effective with persons of differing racial backgrounds.

Knowledge of background of minority clients may lead to the discovery and use of techniques which work particularly well with a given population. For example, Gibbs (1973); Haettenschwiller (1971); and Vontress (1968) advocate the use of more aggressive techniques with black students, both in seeking them out for anticipatory guidance and in developing counseling methods to counteract directly the students' initial mistrust, apathy, or hostility.

Christensen (1975) offers suggestions for working with Puerto Ricans. Discovery and knowledge of techniques which work particularly well with other groups of minority students would greatly facilitate the counselor in working with these students.

Although research has not really answered the question concerning the importance of racial and cultural similarity in counseling there is little doubt that at times racial background may be a factor in the establishment of rapport and the facilitation of the counseling process. Ewing (1974) states that racial and cultural similarity is undoubtedly a factor in some cases; that research findings which imply that racial similarity may be unimportant should not be interpreted to mean that racial similarity of client and counselor is unimportant for all clients. In addition, he states that a counseling center should strive to achieve a staff of counselors representing appropriate variety in racial and cultural backgrounds. His suggestion seems to be a worthy one and could be expanded to read, A counseling center should strive to achieve a staff of counselors representing appropriate variety in sex, and racial and cultural backgrounds.

### Summary

To summarize, the review provides evidence that there are changes in the roles of women. Sex differences, especially with respect to achievement motivation, exist and are important in counseling. Sex role stereotyping still occurs though this may be changing. Counselors show bias in counseling and biased information may be used. Females state preferences for female

therapists less often than males state preferences for male therapists. However, factors other than preferences may be important to the outcome of counseling. There is some evidence to suggest that in same sex pairing there is more open discussion of feeling and greater empathy. Male and female clients do present different problems in counseling and are viewed differently by counselors. Researchers stress that knowledge and awareness of these differences is essential to counselors.

Agreement was found in the literature that minority students have backgrounds and experiences differing from Caucasian students and often present special needs in counseling. There was a paucity of research concerning counseling at the college level with minorities other than blacks. Areas found to present barriers in counseling with minorities were current racial attitudes, lack of understanding of the minority clients sociopsychological background, language barriers, the client's unfamiliarity with the structure of the counseling relationship, and the minority client's hesitation to reveal himself psychologically. Doubts have been expressed by some that the typical white middle class counselor can work effectively with the minority client. Some research has indicated that racial similarity of client and counselor may be of less importance than once thought. Knowledge of the background of minority clients may lead to the use of techniques which are particularly effective with that population. There is little doubt, however, that at times both sex and race are factors in the establishment of rapport and the effectiveness of counseling.

### Procedures

A pilot study was conducted for the purpose of questionnaire modification. This consisted of a preliminary questionnaire (see Appendix C) which asked specifically about 1) contact with the Counseling Center; 2) general impression of the adequacy of the Counseling Center; 3) satisfaction with the outcome of any contact; 4) counselor preferences; and 5) knowledge of the Counseling Center staff. In addition, there were several questions which were left open-ended so that a representative sample of answers could be obtained. These questions concerned source of information about the Counseling Center, reasons for not using the services, and opinions concerning improvement of the Counseling Center. This questionnaire was administered to a sample of 100 students on the Utah State University campus, 50 of which were taken from an intact Abnormal Psychology class and 50 from the student body at large. The final questionnaire (see Appendix A) was constructed from data obtained.

The final questionnaire was mailed with an accompanying letter of explanation (see Appendix B) to a sample of U. S. U. students from the following categories: 100 Caucasian females, 100 Caucasian males, and 100 minority students. The minority sample included both males and females who were American Indian, Chicano, Black, or were from other American minority groups. Dr. Keith Checketts selected the students at random and gave the list to the investigator. Members of these groups were selected at random from university records of students enrolled fall quarter 1972.

A special sample was drawn from all students who had used the services of the Counseling Center during fall quarter 1972. This sample consisted of the following: 50 Caucasian males, 50 Caucasian females, and 20 minority students. This sample was used to compare responses of students who had used the services of the Counseling Center with those students who had not.

#### Instrumentation and Data

A written questionnaire, consisting of 10 questions, was the primary tool used in this research. It was designed to sample student knowledge and opinion concerning the adequacy of the Counseling Center for meeting the needs of all students. The questionnaire, along with a letter of explanation signed by the Vice Provost of the University and a stamped envelope for return, was mailed to students in the sample. Phone calls requesting completion and return of the questionnaire were made to those students who could be contacted by phone if the questionnaire had not been returned within 1 week. A second questionnaire with request to complete was mailed to those not reached by phone. Fifty-three percent of the questionnaires were returned.

Descriptive data of the entire sample were collected from the questionnaires. Data were tabulated to show how subgroups were distributed on response alternatives to individual questions. Comparisons were made among and between groups. Statistical analysis to determine significance was carried out on selected questions.

### Results

Data collected from a total of 221 returned questionnaires were analyzed. Because of the exploratory nature of this study, results which reached the .10 level were considered to be significant. A probable sample bias was noted when returned questionnaires were tabulated. It appeared that students from the general sample (100 Caucasian males, 100 Caucasian females, and 100 Minority students) who had contact with the Counseling Center were more likely to have returned the questionnaire than those who had no contact. Also, it is suspected that responses to some items on the questionnaire would be quite different on a campus in a different locality. The extent to which a cultural bias may be reflected in this study is unknown but it is quite possible that the dominant culture (Latter-Day Saints religion) which stress male authority and family orientation might yield a different set of responses. Specifically, the sample bias might affect responses to the question, "What sex of counselor would you prefer to see?" The frequency of preferences for a male counselor might be higher than from another population where male authority is not so highly valued.

Data were tabulated in an effort to answer the following questions:

- 1) To what extent were students who had used the Counseling Center satisfied with the availability of staff and services?

Table 1 summarizes responses to questionnaire item #8 (If you have used the services of the Counseling Center were you: very satisfied, somewhat

satisfied, very dissatisfied? As may be seen in the table, females reported greater satisfaction than either males or minorities. A  $t$  test computed on this question showed the difference in satisfaction between males and females to be significant at the .10 level. Other possible combinations between subgroups were explored but they did not reach significance.

Table 1

Percentage of Students Answering Very Satisfied, Somewhat Satisfied, Very Dissatisfied

	Male	Female	Minority	Total
Very satisfied	43.75	55.93	38.09	48.44
Somewhat satisfied	47.92	44.07	57.14	47.66
Very dissatisfied	8.33	0.00	4.76	3.91

Total Respondants= 127

	$t$ Values	df	Level of sign.
Males/Females	1.91	105	.10
Males/Minorities	.04	67	---
Females/Minorities	.55	78	---
Females and Males/ Minorities	.43	126	---

2) What were the major reasons more students were not using the services available in the Counseling Center ?

Table 2 summarizes responses to questionnaire item #8 (If you have not used the services of the Counseling Center, what are your reasons ?) This question was asked as an open-ended question so that respondents would not have suggestions as to possible answers.

Table 2

Percentage of Students Giving Various Reasons for not Using the Services of the Counseling Center

N equal 107	Male	Female	Min.	Mean
1) no need	56.76	44.12	55.5	52.37
2) didn't know it existed	21.62	11.76	25.00	19.63
3) don't know what's available	13.51	23.53	11.11	15.89
4) have gotten help from other sources		2.94	5.55	2.80
5) advisor has given needed help		5.88		1.87
6) haven't had the time	2.70	2.94		1.87
7) want to keep my problems to myself		2.94		.93
8) didn't feel I could get help there		2.94		.93
9) afraid my problems are silly		2.94		.93
10) bad impression of counseling	2.70			.93
11) afraid	2.70			.93
12) no minority counselor			2.78	



3) What were students' perceptions of the adequacy of the Counseling Center in meeting students' needs ?

Table 3 summarizes responses of those who stated an impression to questionnaire item #3 (Which statement best describes your general impression of the U. S. U. Counseling Center ?)

- \_\_\_\_\_ very effective, meets the needs of all students, including minorities and women
- \_\_\_\_\_ generally effective, meets the needs of most students, including minorities and women
- \_\_\_\_\_ ok for some, but ineffective for students with special needs such as minorities and women
- \_\_\_\_\_ generally ineffective, does not meet the needs of most students
- \_\_\_\_\_ very ineffective, does not meet the needs of students
- \_\_\_\_\_ no impression

The number of students who stated no impression approached 40% of the total number sampled.  $t$  tests were computed from the data of those who stated an impression yielding the following information: Caucasian students viewed the Counseling Center as significantly more effective than did minority students (.02 level). Counseled minority students viewed the Counseling Center as significantly more effective that did minorities with no contact (.05 level). Other possible combinations between subgroups were explored but they did not reach significance. Impressions of students who had contact

with the Counseling Center did not differ significantly from those who had contact in the Male and Female groups.

Scores were assigned to the answers to this question on a 1 to 5 Likert scale. Mean scores for each subgroup are reported at the bottom of Table 3.

Table 3  
Percentage of Students Rating the Counseling Center in  
Various Categories of Effectiveness

	<sup>a</sup> NC-M	C-M	NC-F	C-F	NC-Min	C-Min	Overall
Very Effective	0.00	19.51	0.00	20.00	0.00	5.88	14.61
Generally Effective	66.67	53.66	100.00	56.00	22.22	58.82	55.38
OK	11.11	12.19	0.00	18.00	33.33	29.41	17.69
Generally Ineffective	11.11	9.76	0.00	6.00	44.44	0.00	9.23
Very Ineffective	11.11	4.88	0.00	0.00	0.00	5.88	3.08
Mean	3.39	3.84	4.00	3.70	3.15	3.83	3.66

<sup>a</sup>NC = no contact with the Counseling Center.  
C = had contact with the Counseling Center.

	<u>t Values</u>		
	t	df	Level of sign.
Males and Females/Minorities	2.467	127	.02
Males/Females	1.324	101	---
C Males/NC Males	1.014	48	---
C Females/NC Females	.490	52	---
C Minorities/NC Minorities	2.289	24	.05

- 4) Were students likely to seek out a counselor of a particular sex for help in dealing with specific kinds of problems?

Table 4 summarizes responses to questionnaire item #4 (Assuming you were to go to the Counseling Center with the problems listed below, with whom would you choose to counsel?). The problem areas listed were: questions about tests, concern over career choice, personal problem not related to sex, personal problem dealing with sexual matters, and academic difficulty. Alternative answers were: must be someone of the same sex, prefer someone of the same sex, the sex of the counselor doesn't matter, prefer someone of the opposite sex, must be someone of the opposite sex.

Chi square was computed to test the hypothesis that no sex differences existed in counselor preferences. Only in the area of personal problems related to sex was there a significant difference between the responses of males and females. In the majority of the cases sex of the counselor was unimportant. In ranking the categories, sex of the counselor was most important if the student were contacting the Counseling Center for aid in dealing with a personal problem related to sex, followed in order by personal problem not related to sex, career choice, academic problems, and questions about tests.

Table 4

Percentage of Students Indicating Various Degrees of Importance  
of Sex of Counselor

	must be s	prefer s	unimp.	prefer d	must be d
<b>Tests:</b>					
NC-F	0.00	3.85	84.61	11.54	0.00
C-F	0.00	4.92	91.80	1.64	1.64
NC-M	0.00	3.03	96.97	0.00	0.00
C-M	2.27	9.09	84.09	4.54	0.00
NC-Min	0.00	6.90	93.10	0.00	0.00
C-Min	0.00	15.00	85.00	0.00	0.00
Mean	.47	6.57	89.67	2.82	.47
<b>Career:</b>					
NC-F	0.00	11.54	88.46	0.00	0.00
C-F	0.00	13.33	80.00	6.67	0.00
NC-M	6.06	27.27	66.67	0.00	0.00
C-M	2.22	51.11	42.22	2.22	2.22
NC-Min	13.79	24.14	62.07	0.00	0.00
C-Min	0.00	36.84	63.16	0.00	0.00
<b>Personal:</b>					
NC-F	0.00	29.63	62.96	7.41	0.00
C-F	3.33	18.33	56.67	21.67	0.00
NC-M	0.00	27.27	63.64	9.09	0.00
C-M	4.35	39.13	45.65	10.87	0.00
NC-Min	6.90	27.59	65.52	0.00	0.00
C-Min	5.55	22.22	72.22	0.00	0.00
Mean	3.28	27.23	58.68	10.80	0.00
<b>Sex:</b>					
NC-F	7.41	37.04	33.33	22.22	0.00
C-F	11.67	36.67	31.67	18.33	1.67
NC-M	18.18	33.33	39.39	3.03	6.06
C-M	20.00	48.89	24.44	6.67	0.00
NC-Min	34.48	20.69	44.83	0.00	0.00
C-Min	5.55	38.89	55.55	0.00	0.00
Mean	16.51	36.79	35.38	9.91	1.41

Table 4. Continued

	must be s	prefer s	unimp.	prefer d	must be d
Academics:					
NC-F	0.00	3.85	88.46	7.69	0.00
C-F	0.00	5.17	87.93	5.17	1.72
NC-M	0.00	6.06	90.91	3.03	0.00
C-M	0.00	19.05	78.57	2.38	0.00
NC-Min	0.00	8.00	88.00	4.00	0.00
C-Min	0.00	23.81	71.43	4.76	0.00
Mean	0.00	10.24	84.88	4.39	.49

$\chi^2$  Values

	$\chi^2$	df	Level of sign.
Tests	<sup>a</sup> .04	1	.90
Career Choice	<sup>a</sup> 1.93	1	.20
Personal	1.74	1	.20
Sex	6.26	1	.02
Academic	<sup>a</sup> 2.35	1	.20

<sup>a</sup>Yates Correction for small sample frequencies applied in cases where one or more cells had less than five responses.

5) Were students likely to seek out a counselor of a particular racial background for help in dealing with specific kinds of problems ?

Table 5 summarizes responses to questionnaire item #5 (Assuming you were to go to the Counseling Center with the problems listed below, with whom would you choose to counsel ?). The problem areas listed were:

Table 5

Percentage of Students Indicating Various Degrees of Importance  
of Racial Background of Counselor

	must be s	prefer s	unimp.	prefer d	must be d
<b>Tests:</b>					
NC-F	7.69	11.54	80.77	0.00	0.00
C-F	3.45	1.72		0.00	0.00
NC-M	3.23	6.45	90.32	0.00	0.00
C-M	0.00	6.67	93.33	0.00	0.00
NC-Min	6.90	3.45	89.65	0.00	0.00
C-Min	5.00	15.00	80.00	0.00	0.00
Mean	3.83	6.22	89.95	0.00	0.00
<b>Career:</b>					
NC-F	15.38	26.92	57.69	0.00	0.00
C-F	3.51	12.28	84.21	0.00	0.00
NC-M	6.45	12.90	80.64	0.00	0.00
C-M	5.00	15.00	77.50	2.50	0.00
NC-Min	4.17	8.33	87.50	0.00	0.00
C-Min	4.76	4.76	80.95	9.52	0.00
Mean	6.03	13.57	78.89	1.51	0.00
<b>Personal:</b>					
NC-F	20.83	20.83	54.17	4.17	0.00
C-F	10.17	22.03	67.80	0.00	0.00
NC-M	6.25	9.37	84.38	0.00	0.00
C-M	2.27	20.45	75.00	2.27	0.00
NC-Min	7.14	7.14	85.71	0.00	0.00
C-Min	5.26	10.53	78.95	0.00	5.26
Mean	8.25	16.50	73.79	.97	.48
<b>Sex:</b>					
NC-F	30.77	19.23	50.00	0.00	0.00
C-F	14.03	26.32	59.65	0.00	0.00
NC-M	15.64	9.36	75.00	0.00	0.00
C-M	5.13	25.64	69.23	0.00	0.00
NC-Min	6.90	6.90	86.21	0.00	0.00
C-Min	0.00	17.65	82.35	0.00	0.00
Mean	12.50	19.00	68.50	0.00	0.00

Table 5. Continued

	must be s	prefer s	unimp.	prefer d	must be d
Academic:					
NC-F	7.69	30.77	61.54	0.00	0.00
C-F	5.26	3.51	89.47	1.75	0.00
NC-M	6.25	3.13	87.50	3.13	0.00
C-M	2.38	7.14	90.48	0.00	0.00
NC-Min	0.00	13.79	86.21	0.00	0.00
C-Min	5.26	10.53	84.21	0.00	0.00
Mean	4.39	9.76	84.88	.98	0.00

questions about tests, concern over career choice, personal problem not related to sex, personal problem dealing with sexual matters, and academic difficulty. Alternative answers were: must be someone of the same racial background, prefer someone of the same racial background, racial background is unimportant, prefer someone of a different racial background, and must be someone of a different racial background.

Inspection of the data shows that in the majority of the cases racial background was unimportant. Preference for a counselor of a particular racial background was stated most often for personal problems dealing with sex, followed in order by personal problem not related to sex, career choice, academic problems and questions about tests.

- 6) Did students have accurate knowledge of the availability of persons of differing backgrounds and sex on the staff of the Counseling Center ?

Table 6 summarizes responses of 218 students to questionnaire item #6 (To the best of your knowledge which of these people are available on the full-time staff of the Counseling Center?). Students lacked accurate knowledge concerning the availability of persons of differing backgrounds and sex on the staff of the Counseling Center. Overall 24.77% of the students had accurate information. Knowledge was more accurate among students who had visited the Center than among those who had not.

Table 6

Percentage of Students Indicating to the Best of Their Knowledge the Listed Persons were available on the Full-Time Staff of the Counseling Center

	C-M	NC-M	C-F	NC-F	C-Min	NC-Min
M	43.48	6.25	39.34	7.69	27.27	0.00
F	6.52	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.54	0.00
Min	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.54	0.00
M & F	30.43	3.12	27.87	0.00	18.18	0.00
M & Min	4.35	3.12	0.00	0.00	9.09	0.00
M, F & Min	6.52	0.00	4.92	0.00	0.00	0.00
No idea	8.70	87.50	27.87	92.31	36.36	100.00
% W. accur. info.	43.48	6.25	39.34	7.69	27.27	0.00



- 7) To what extent did the availability of staff of a particular racial background alone govern students' decisions to come to the Counseling Center ?

Table 7 summarizes percentages of students in each subgroup who chose the extreme alternatives on questionnaire item #4 (Assuming you were to go to the Counseling Center with the problems listed below with whom would you choose to counsel? Extreme alternative answers to this question were: must be someone of the same racial background, and must be someone of a different racial background.). An asterisk (\*) designates percentages of students who according to their answer could not be served by the staff of the Counseling Center at the time of the survey.

Table 7  
Percentage of Students Choosing Extreme Alternatives to  
Questionnaire Item #4

	Males	Females	Minorities
Ques. about tests			
must be same	1.32	4.76	*6.12
must be diff.	0.00	0.00	0.00
Career choice			
must be same	5.63	7.23	*4.44
must be diff.	0.00	0.00	0.00
Personal			
must be same	3.95	13.25	*6.38
must be diff.	0.00	0.00	0.00
Personal-sex			
must be same	9.86	19.28	*4.35
must be diff.	0.00	0.00	0.00
Academic difficulty			
must be same	4.05	6.02	*2.08
must be diff.	0.00	0.00	0.00

- 8) To what extent did the availability of staff of a particular sex alone govern students' decisions to come to the Counseling Center?

Table 8 summarizes percentages of students in each subgroup who chose the extreme alternatives on questionnaire item #4 (Assuming you were to go to the Counseling Center with the problems listed below with whom would you choose to counsel? Extreme alternative answers to this question were: must be someone of the same sex, and must be someone of the opposite sex.). An asterisk (\*) designates percentages of students who according to their answer could not have been served by the full-time staff of the Counseling Center at the time of the survey.

Table 8  
Percentage of Students Choosing Extreme Alternatives to  
Questionnaire Item #4

	Males	Females
Questions about tests		
must be same	0.92	0.00
must be opposite	0.00	0.96
Career choice		
must be same	5.50	0.97
must be opposite	0.92	0.00
Personal		
must be same	2.73	3.88
must be opposite	0.00	0.00
Personal-sex		
must be same	19.44	13.46
must be opposite	1.85	0.96
Academic difficulty		
must be same	0.00	0.00
must be opposite	0.00	1.00

## 9) Where did students get information about the Counseling Center ?

Table 9 summarizes responses given by 213 students who responded to questionnaire item #7 (Where did you get any information you have about the Counseling Center ?). This question was followed by a check list and additional space to specify any sources of information not listed. Thirty point ninety-nine percent of the students who responded to the question indicated that they had no information about the Counseling Center. Some students indicated more than one source of information.

Table 9

Percentage of Students Indicating Familiarity with the Counseling Center  
through Listed Source of Information

Source of Information	Percent
Personal Experience	30.99
Friends	28.16
Teacher or Advisor	23.00
U. S. U. Catalog	13.16
Bulletin Board	7.51
Orientation	6.57
Help Line	6.57
Other	7.04

10) What were the purposes of students' contacts with the Counseling Center?

Table 10 summarizes the responses of 128 students to questionnaire item #1 (Mark the alternative(s) which describe your main contact(s) with the Counseling Center.). This question was followed by a check list and additional space to specify other alternatives. Some students had contacted the Center for more than one type of service. The mean number of responses given by the 128 students was 1.64.

Table 10

Percentage of Students Indicating Various Reasons for Contact  
with the Counseling Center

Reason for Contact	Percent
Testing Information	54.69
Personal Counseling	47.66
Career Counseling	35.94
Encounter Group	10.16
Other	7.81

### Discussion

It appeared that the number of students whose needs were not being met by the Counseling Center due to absence of staff who were heterogeneous for sex and background was not unduly high. Females, the group which was of particular concern in this study, reported greater satisfaction and greater use of the Counseling Services than did the other subgroups. Minorities expressed less satisfaction than other groups. It would appear that some of their needs were not met.

Regarding major reasons why more students were not using the services of the Center, greater than 50% of all students reported that they had felt no need. Responses next highest in frequency were "didn't know it existed" and "don't know what's available." These responses constituted about 35% of all reasons given. This indicated a lack of available information about the Counseling Center. There may have been something lacking in the methods being used to inform students of the services available at the Counseling Center. Perhaps Counseling Center services need to be actively promoted if more students are to be served.

When students were asked about their perceptions of the adequacy of the Counseling Center in meeting student needs, most students rated the Center as "OK" to "generally effective." The average score was 3.66. Caucasian students viewed the Counseling Center as significantly more effective than did minorities. Minority students who had contact with the Center had

more positive impressions than those who had not had contact. These students' positive feelings may have brought them to the Counseling Center in the first place. On the other hand, their feelings may have become more positive with exposure to the Services.

Student response to the question, "Would you recommend the Counseling Center to someone else?" may also reflect students' impressions of the Center. Students who had contact with the Counseling Center were more willing to recommend it than those who had no contact. Approximately 65% of all students indicated they would recommend the Counseling Center to someone else. Ten percent of all students said they would not. Females were most willing to recommend the Services, followed by males, and then minorities. Some students, especially those with little contact with the Services were reluctant to say whether they would recommend the Counseling Center to someone else.

When students were asked about the likelihood of their seeking out a counselor of a particular sex, approximately two-thirds of the responses to all questionnaire situations indicated that sex of the counselor was unimportant. Sex of the counselor was most important if the student were contacting the Center for aid in dealing with a personal problem related to sex. Personal problem not related to sex was next, followed by career choice. Sex of the counselor was less important for help with academic problems and questions about tests. Generally, if students stated a preference for sex of counselor the preference was for a counselor of the same sex. Preferences for opposite

sex counselors were generally low but were higher among Caucasian females than among Caucasian males or minority students of either sex.

Females who stated a preference for a counselor of the same sex and the few males who stated a preference for a counselor of the opposite sex could not have received help from a counselor of their preferred sex at the time of this survey. In other words, if a student preferred a female counselor, this choice was not available through the full-time staff of the Counseling Center. There were no female full-time counselors on the staff. An issue raised by this fact is; are the preferences of these students worthy of serious concern?

When asked about preference for a counselor of a particular racial background, students stated preferences less often than for sex. Generally, if a preference were stated, the preference was for a counselor with the same racial background. Having a counselor of the same racial background was most likely to be important for personal problems dealing with sex, followed by personal problems not related to sex, career choice, academic problems, and questions about tests. Minority students who stated a preference for a counselor of the same racial background and the few Caucasian students who stated a preference for a counselor of a different racial background could not have received counseling help which was in keeping with their preferences. The full-time staff of the Counseling Center at the time of this survey did not include minority group members of any kind.

In some cases it appeared that the availability of a staff member of a particular sex or racial background alone would govern a student's decision to come to the Counseling Center. This was most likely to happen if the student needed help with a personal problem related to sex. Of the males sampled 24.60% and of the females 10.45% reported that sex of the counselor must be the same for problems of this nature. With respect to racial background 19.28% of the Caucasian females, 8.33% of the Caucasian males, and 4.35% of the minority students reported that background of the counselor must be the same on this particular question. Percentages of students requiring that sex or racial background of the counselor must be same or must be different were much less for other problem areas. Small percentages of students could not have been served by the Counseling Center staff due to their requirement that their counselor be of a particular sex or racial background. These small numbers, however, do not make their needs any less acute. At the time of the survey, females who indicated that sex of the counselor must be the same, males who indicated that sex of the counselor must be different, and minorities who said the background of the counselor must be the same could not have received help with the problem area where this was true.

Students did not have accurate knowledge concerning the availability of persons of differing backgrounds and sex on the staff of the Counseling Center. Only 24.77% of the students sampled had accurate information. Approximately 50% indicated they had no idea who was available on the staff. Students who had contact with the Counseling Center had more accurate information than



those who had not had contact. Accuracy for the groups with contact ranged from 27.27% to 43.48%. These figures may indicate that the sex and racial background of persons on the Counseling Center staff is not of particular concern to most students.

When students were asked where they got their information about the Counseling Center they mentioned personal experience most often. Those who had not had personal experience with the Center mentioned friends, teacher or advisor, and the U.S.U. catalog most often. Informal communication seemed to be the primary way information about the Counseling Center was transmitted. Small percentages of students mentioned bulletin boards, and orientation as sources of information. This may reflect a need to publicize or "advertize" the services available.

Students sampled most often came to the Counseling Center seeking testing information. Personal counseling was the second most stated reason, followed by career counseling. It was noted that approximately 50% of the students who used the services for help in one area were likely to seek help in other areas also. This could be an indication that they were satisfied with services received.

Students surveyed offered some recommendations for improvement of the Counseling Services. Their responses reflected some thought and deserve attention. "More publicity" was mentioned by approximately two-thirds of the students who responded to the question, "What changes do you think could be made to increase the overall effectiveness and availability of services

of the Counseling Center?" Comments made were: "Many students have no idea of what the Counseling Center offers, a public awareness program might be helpful;" and "Make information about how to use it and where it is more available to the average student. I don't think I'm alone in knowing little if anything about the services." Mentioned with second highest frequency was, "Make the services faster and more efficient." Specific suggestions were: have more counselors, have a counselor available at all times to handle walk-ins, and extend hours to evenings and weekends. Having a woman and a minority counselor were mentioned third (woman and minority were mentioned with equal frequency). This suggestion was followed by "Improve the Career Guidance Program."

### Summary and Recommendations

In an effort to determine if U. S. U. students perceived the composition of the Counseling Center staff, with respect to racial background and sex, to be related to adequately meeting student needs a survey was conducted. Answers to the following questions were sought:

1. To what extent were students who had been to the Counseling Center satisfied with the availability of staff and services ?
2. What were the major reasons more students were not using the Counseling Center ?
3. What were students' perceptions of the adequacy of the Counseling Center in meeting students' needs ?
4. Were students likely to seek out a counselor of a particular sex for help in dealing with specific kinds of problems ?
5. Were students likely to seek out a counselor of a particular racial background for help in dealing with specific kinds of problems ?
6. To what extent did the availability of staff of a particular sex alone govern students' decisions to come to the Counseling Center ?
7. To what extent did the availability of staff of a particular racial background alone govern students' decisions to come to the Counseling Center ?
8. Did students have accurate knowledge of the availability of persons of differing backgrounds and sex on the staff of the Counseling Center ?

9. Where did students get information about the Counseling Center ?
10. What were the purposes of students' contacts with the Counseling Center ?

A pilot study was carried out in order to design a final questionnaire and fulfill these objectives. A preliminary questionnaire was drawn up and administered to a sample of 100 students. From data collected in the pilot study a final questionnaire was designed and mailed to 420 students distributed as follows from students enrolled Fall Quarter 1972: 100 Caucasian males, 100 Caucasian females, 100 minority students, 50 Caucasian males who had been to the Counseling Center, 50 Caucasian females who had been to the Counseling Center, and 20 minority students who had been to the Counseling Center.

It was found that Caucasian females were more satisfied with the services they received at the Counseling than were Caucasian males or minority students. The majority of the students who had not used the Counseling Center services indicated that they had had no need. However, 35% of all students responding indicated they lacked information about the Center and the services offered. Generally, impressions of the Counseling Center were positive (3.66 on a 5 point scale). Sixty-five percent of all students responding would recommend the services to someone else. Caucasian students viewed the Center more positively than minority students did.

For most counseling situations the majority of the students indicated that sex and racial background of the counselor was unimportant. If the

counseling situation involved a personal problem related to sex, sex and racial background of the counselor were of more importance than in other counseling situations. If a preference were stated that preference was most likely to be for someone of the same sex or same racial background. Racial background seemed to be of less importance than sex. In a small number of cases the availability of a staff member of a particular sex or racial background alone would govern a student's decision to come to the Counseling Center.

Students lacked accurate knowledge concerning the racial backgrounds and sex of the staff of the Counseling Center. Only about 25% of the students responding had accurate information. Students who had some familiarity with the Counseling Center had most often gained their information through personal experience and through friends. Teachers and advisors were also rather frequently mentioned as sources of information. It appeared that informal communication was the primary means by which information about the Counseling Center was obtained.

Students in the sample came to the Counseling Center most often for testing information, followed in order by personal counseling, career counseling, and encounter groups.

Students surveyed made some suggestions for improvement of the Counseling Services. Two-thirds of all students responding indicated that they felt the Center should be more widely publicized. Since 35% of the students sampled either did not know the Counseling Center existed or did not know what services were available, this suggestion would seem to have merit. Publicity

and outreach programs should especially focus on serving minority students since these students have had less contact with the Center and their general impressions of the Services are less favorable.

A second suggestion made by students concerned improvement of career guidance programs. This concern was the subject of a recent study by Roost (1972). He suggested that career counseling services needed to be further developed. Certainly the availability of materials and programs which are unbiased and appropriate for women and minorities is an important concern.

Students also made an important suggestion concerning the availability of female and minority counselors. Study results stress that for some students, in particular counseling situations, sex and racial background of the counselor are crucial. Ewing (1974) suggests that Counseling Centers strive for variety in background of staff. Possible alternatives such as the training of "third world" students as peer counselors (Sue, 1973), the use of all women's groups (Halas, 1973), and other innovations should be investigated.

While achieving the ideal variety in staff may be economically and otherwise unfeasible, current staff should constantly strive to expand understanding of and empathy for cultural and sex differences in clients. Knowledge of current research and active involvement in anticipating and understanding student needs is essential.

The following recommendations are made:

1. The current methods of publicizing the Counseling Center should be reevaluated and improved.

2. A special outreach program to minority students should be undertaken.
3. Variety with respect to sex and racial background should be a primary consideration in filling future staff positions. A broader spectrum of counselor backgrounds than was available at the time of this study should be achieved as quickly as possible.
4. Special effort should be made by staff to be aware of current research and cultural information on differences, special needs, and techniques which are effective for working with females and various minority groups. It is also essential to understand when racial and sex bias is present in techniques and materials.
5. Career guidance programs which meet the special needs of female and minority students should be designed.
6. Further research on the special needs of female and minority students should be encouraged and carried out by the Counseling Center staff.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Questionnaire

## QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Mark the alternative(s) which describe your main contact(s) with the counseling center. (May choose more than one)

no contact  
 testing information  
 career counseling  
 personal counseling  
 encounter group  
 other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

2. If you have used the services of the counseling center, were you
- very satisfied  
 somewhat satisfied  
 very dissatisfied

3. Which statement best describes your general impression of the U.S.U. Counseling Center?

very effective, meets the needs of all students, including minorities and women  
 generally effective, meets the needs of most students, including minorities and women  
 OK for some, but ineffective for students with special needs such as minorities and women  
 generally ineffective, does not meet the needs of most students  
 very ineffective, does not meet the needs of students  
 no impression

4. Assuming you were to go to the counseling center with the problems listed below, with whom would you choose to counsel? (Please indicate the letters of your choices in the blanks)

- a. must be someone of the same sex  
 b. prefer someone of the same sex  
 c. the sex of the counselor doesn't matter  
 d. prefer someone of the opposite sex  
 e. must be someone of the opposite sex

questions about tests  
 concern over career choice  
 personal problem, not related to sex  
 personal problem dealing with sexual matters  
 academic difficulty

-2-

5. Assuming you were to go to the counseling center with the problems listed below with whom would you choose to counsel? (Please indicate the letters of your choices in the blanks)

- a. must be someone of the same racial background
- b. prefer someone of the same racial background
- c. racial background is unimportant
- d. prefer someone of a different racial background
- e. must be someone of a different racial background

\_\_\_\_\_ questions about tests  
 \_\_\_\_\_ concern over career choice  
 \_\_\_\_\_ personal problem, not related to sex  
 \_\_\_\_\_ personal problem dealing with sexual matters  
 \_\_\_\_\_ academic difficulty

6. To the best of your knowledge which of these people are available on the full-time staff of the counseling center?

\_\_\_\_\_ male counselor  
 \_\_\_\_\_ female counselor  
 \_\_\_\_\_ minority counselor (Black, American Indian, Chicano, or other American National minority)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ have no idea

7. Where did you get any information you have about the counseling center? (May indicate more than one choice)

_____ I don't have any information	_____ Personal experience
_____ Friends	_____ Orientation
_____ Teacher or advisor	_____ Help Line
_____ Bulletin board	_____ U.S.U. catalog
_____ Other, please specify _____	

8. If you have not used the services of the counseling center, what are your reasons?

9. Would you recommend the counseling center to someone else?

10. What changes do you think could be made to increase the overall effectiveness and availability of services of the counseling center?

Please check the category that applies to you:

\_\_\_\_\_ Male                      \_\_\_\_\_ Female



Appendix B: Cover Letter



May 17, 1973

Dear USU Student:

In an effort to improve the educational experience at Utah State University we are attempting to evaluate our Counseling Center services. As a part of this evaluation we are asking you to participate in a survey of student opinion concerning the Counseling Center by completing and returning the enclosed questionnaire.

Your name was randomly selected from a list of students enrolled during Winter Quarter, 1973. The questionnaire you have received is coded by a number in the right hand corner so that a follow up can be made on non-returned questionnaires. The information you give will not be examined or recorded for your individual responses. It will only be tabulated with data received from other students. In this way your responses will remain anonymous.

Please answer the questions as accurately and honestly as possible and return the questionnaire to the Counseling Center Office at your earliest convenience by using the enclosed stamped envelope. It is important to the evaluation that all questionnaires be returned.

We will appreciate your help.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard M. Swenson".

Richard M. Swenson  
Vice Provost

RMS:cp

Enclosures

Appendix C: Questionnaire

## QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Mark the alternative(s) which describe your main contact(s) with the counseling center. (may choose more than one)

no contact  
 testing information  
 career counseling  
 personal counseling  
 encounter group  
 other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

(If no contact, skip question 2)

2. If you have used the services of the counseling center, were you

very satisfied  
 somewhat satisfied  
 no opinion  
 somewhat dissatisfied  
 very dissatisfied

3. Which statement best describes your general impression of the U.S.U. Counseling Center?

very effective, meets the needs of all students, including minorities.  
 generally effective, meets the needs of most students, including minorities  
 OK for some, but ineffective for students with special needs such as minorities  
 generally ineffective, does not meet the needs of most students  
 very ineffective, does not meet the needs of students  
 no impression

4. Assuming you were to go to the counseling center with the problems listed below, with whom would you choose to counsel? (Please indicate the letters of your choices in the blanks)

- a. must be someone of the same sex  
 b. prefer someone of the same sex  
 c. the sex of the counselor doesn't matter  
 d. prefer someone of the opposite sex  
 e. must be someone of the opposite sex

questions about tests  
 concern over career choice  
 personal problem, not related to sex  
 personal problem dealing with sexual matters  
 academic difficulty

5. Assuming you were to go to the counseling center with the problems listed below with whom would you choose to counsel? (Please indicate the letters of your choices in the blanks)
- must be someone of the same racial background
  - prefer someone of the same racial background
  - racial background is unimportant
  - prefer someone of a different racial background
  - must be someone of a different racial background
- \_\_\_\_\_ questions about tests  
 \_\_\_\_\_ concern over career choice  
 \_\_\_\_\_ personal problem, not related to sex  
 \_\_\_\_\_ personal problem dealing with sexual matters  
 \_\_\_\_\_ academic difficulty
6. To the best of your knowledge which of these people are available on the staff of the counseling center?
- \_\_\_\_\_ male counselor  
 \_\_\_\_\_ female counselor  
 \_\_\_\_\_ minority counselor (Black, American Indian, Chicano, or other American National minority)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ have no idea
7. Would you recommend the counseling center to someone else?
8. Where did you get any information you have about the counseling center?
9. If you have not used the services of the counseling center, what are your reasons?
10. What changes do you think could be made to increase the overall effectiveness and availability of services of the counseling center?

Please check the categories that apply to you:

_____ male	_____ Caucasian	_____ Oriental American
_____ female	_____ Am. Indian	_____ Chicano American
	_____ Negro American	_____ Other, please specify

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Vita

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Master of Science

Thesis: Staffing the College Counseling Center to Meet the Needs of Minority and Female Students

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