

## Self-Reflection

- My counseling philosophy is student centered. I want to make sure I learn as much as I can about the students I come across. I have a compassionate ear with the primary purpose of understanding the needs of the student. I try to learn their purpose, their strengths and the areas that need developing. By doing this, I am able to create solutions and a game plan that is unique to each student I come across. Counseling has been long thought of as a transactional model where education plans and petitions are all that takes place. Although these types of transactions occur, it is not the only thing that comes with counseling. It is my belief that a holistic approach is what allows varying levels of needs to be met. My methods include using the before mentioned strengths of a student as momentum to carry them throughout their academic careers.

- When I come across a student, the first thing they will notice is the smile on my face. I introduce myself as "Ronnie". For me, it seems that a safe haven is created when the student and I are on a first name basis. It is important to me to make it clear that I am here to serve and that they are free to express any and all academic concerns with me. Great efforts are made to be a good listener first and make sure that I understand the purpose of their visit. I write down notes on a pad to make sure that I don't miss any key points regarding their concerns. I am honest and refuse to give a "fluff" response. If I don't know the answer, I will make it known that I don't know the answer and will need to consult others to get a solution. Constant contact is another trait that seems to be appreciated by students. I will send a follow up email concerning those issues that have not been resolved highlighting the next steps that will happen. Last but certainly not least, I make sure to give my direct contact information should the student have any questions or concerns that they may have forgotten, so that the issues can be addressed.

- I desire to be the best counselor that I can be for the students I come across. I am not a counselor who knows it all. In fact, I pull on the experiences of my peers to improve my counseling skills. I believe in collegiality and creating a good working environment for my colleagues. Thankfully our Dean and Department Chair have an open-door policy. As a result, counselors have been able to come and ask about whatever concerns; to ensure the department goals are met. I make it a point to make weekly visits to check in and make sure that I absorb all that I can; to align myself with the goals of the department. I also lean on the veteran counselors who have been counseling and achieved that tenured status. They have given me some suggestions and tips on how to maneuver and adjust to this campus. The staff here has also been amazing and welcoming. I make sure to visit them and thank them for their hard work with scheduling and adjustments for our students. Efforts are made to make myself available to see a student when scheduling conflicts occur. The students see us as one group and I try to make sure to do my part in making this dream team work.

- My strengths as a counselor include transcript evaluations, education plans, academic and administrative petitions. My admissions background has prepared me for this. I also have a heart for our students which motivates me to go far and beyond to make sure services,

resources and funding is found. I am well versed in adapting to state, and district changes in counseling (changes in IGETC/CSU GE requirements). This is something I have been strengthening for over 10 years. I also find time to educate our students on the expectations of college; time management and how to utilize the tools here on campus. Teamwork and collaboration are also a strength of mine.

The area I would like to develop is career-based counseling. This is primarily for those students who are undecided about their major or academic goal. In a recent counseling session where I was observed, I came across a student who claimed they were interested in social work. It was obvious that the student was not too sure about that particular career path. It was pointed out to me how I could have probed the student as to how and when they've decided on social work to see if it was indeed their passion or a desired field of work. What I later found out was that social work was something that was influenced by their family members and was not a desire of the student. This is what makes probing of identifying careers and majors an area I want to strengthen.

- I have had the opportunity to participate in a few trainings, workshops and showcases. These events include the Climate Palooza (WLAC), the CSUDH Community College Counselor Showcase, the guided pathways meeting & the West Connect Faculty Development Academy. The climate palooza was an informative event. It featured an area where WLAC will be offering degree opportunities for our students. Climate is a new concept and as a counselor, it allowed me to get information regarding the types of degrees (curriculum) we will offer and how it relates to the work field locally, county and state wide. Climate change and "green" areas of study is something that will gain traction because of the dedication and amount of funding that has been put behind it. This leads into what was discussed in the guided pathways meeting. There is more to come but climate change is a possible new guided pathway that will be developed upon approval. The CSUDH community college showcase was a great opportunity to know aht programs that are offered in the health sciences area at CSUDH. I was able to meet with department leaders and get a clear understanding of primary requirements and how to get our students WLAC accepted into these programs. As explained during my public speech at this showcase, one of the best features was the ToroCare presentation that dealt with basic needs of students who attend CSUDH. A bridge to help ease the transition of students coming from a community college to a university. As an alumni at CSUDH it was great to see that their values aligned very much with the needs of our students. Finally the West connect Faculty Development Academy is where new hires get with other new hires and address the processes of what new hires encounter. From understanding health benefits, the rate in process, to the tenure review process etc. This has definitely been benefitting because I am not well versed on maneuvering as a full time faculty member.

- The primary way that I apply cultural responsiveness to my counseling session is by way of a needs assessment. One of the first things I do when I come in contact with a student is determine which counseling hat I need to wear during that session. There are often times it is revealed that students do not have access to food, clothes, shelter, computer or the internet. We should not assume that all students are adequately equipped to achieve their academic

goals. Some students are first generation college students & come from economic backgrounds that are disadvantaged. It is a responsibility of mine to address these areas and connect students to resources that assist with achieving academic goals. Understanding the cultural differences of our students is important. It also is an indicator that one can adapt to the various styles of counseling depending on the student's need.

- During my professional time, I have a break from seeing students, so I take advantage of this time to accomplish things that need to be finished. I used this time to answer and respond to emails which were sent to me. I also use this time to finish and send off petitions that were not completed during the counseling session. The task that seems to take up most of my pro time is reading and applying new policies and transactions that were sent via the weekly counseling emails. I take this seriously because when these instructions are not applied correctly, wrong information is given to our students. Following up with students who have been earmarked is something I also do during my ProTime. I make sure that "next steps" have been executed and send reminders to make sure specific tasks have been accomplished. Those weekly visits made to our Department Chair and Dean; mentioned above occur during my Professional Time.

-When I got hired here at WLAC, one suggestion that was given to me by a member of the hiring panel was to not be a stranger on campus. I was encouraged to not be the counselor that is in the office 100% of the time; that nobody knows. I took that suggestion and have added it to my list of responsibilities here at WLAC. I attend social functions and events on campus when I am able to. I collaborate not only with colleagues in the counseling department but in other areas all over the campus. In my short time here, I have been able to meet faculty and staff members over several different disciplines. In fact, the special project that I am a part of, will have me collaborating with the Arts and Performance department. I take suggestions and criticism as a means to get better and tighten up areas that need it. As mentioned before, I want to be as good of a counselor as possible. I am grateful for this opportunity to be a part of the WLAC counseling family. I will continue to strive and do my best to make sure that senior administration, colleagues and our students are proud of this counselor that resides at West Los Angeles College.