

Self-Evaluation Year Two

Much like last year, my philosophy remains to be student centered. I have added on to what I previously considered my entire counseling philosophy. The addition to my counseling philosophy focuses on execution. The counseling department has stretched its wings to now becoming the most talked about department at West LA College, in a positive manner. I continue the journey to be the best counselor that I can. Student needs are extremely important to me. This aligns with the desires and needs of the counseling department as a whole. Our Dean and Department chair have promoted a counseling presence campus wide. An example of the counseling department stretching its presence is designating full-time counselors to various departments/pathways. I have been chosen to serve the STEM & Aviation departments. I represent counseling in these areas. This move was part of an initiative to answer the call of meeting the needs of our students. Executing this objective meant I needed to adapt to a style of counseling where I was the primary contact for faculty staff and students for the above-mentioned areas. Taking on this role brings a lot of responsibilities. You become an extension representing the counseling department. This style of counseling is new to me thus adding to my counseling philosophy. The additions include accountability and stability. Stability is important because there is a constant and well-known presence where it didn't exist before. When students become familiar with a specific counselor, it encourages them to make frequent visits throughout their education journey making sure they are aligned with the requirements of their program. When referencing the importance of working well with

others inside and outside of the department, this is a model that focuses on that. I have had the opportunity to work with deans, teaching faculty and staff members outside of counseling who help make a program run. Together we make sure that the students at West Los Angeles College are best served and that they are able to accomplish their goals efficiently.

My counseling sessions are somewhat different than they were during the first school year. I rarely come across a student who has not had some type of introduction to me. I am the assigned counselor for the Aviation/Avionics & the STEM departments. My contact information is displayed on each departments webpage and my counseling card is there for students to make appointments and learn about me. Normally by the time a student comes to see me for counseling services, we have already had a preliminary discussion or have met at an in-person orientation. In the event I meet a brand new student, I always introduce myself on a first name basis and greet each student with a smile. I wear a name tag to make sure the student remembers and can always identify me. My goal is to create a calm and welcoming environment. There is a needs assessment that is also done. I try to find out as much possible about the reason of the visit, so that I am able to come up with the best possible solution. I am still a traditional counselor; I take notes on a notepad. I write everything down to make sure I do not miss anything important the student is trying to convey. I take thorough notes in our cranium system so that any counselor who deals with the student after me understands what occurred. I definitely think of my peers and try to make it as smooth as possible should they have to deal with

student afterwards. What tends to happen often is that students get comfortable and prefer to stick with me throughout their academic journey. I always give my contact information and respond to emails and phone calls in a timely manner. I take it as an honor when a student trust that I will serve them well.

The engagement of those who I work with are very important to me. I have an open-door policy for everyone. I do not believe in tacit knowledge. I equip and share any knowledge I may have that can improve the skills of other counselors. We as a department are only as strong as our weakest link. I have been fortunate to be in a position where senior staff has trusted me with various projects and assignments. I am extremely grateful that I have been trusted to train new adjuncts and full-time counselors. This speaks volumes to how much our department chair, and dean trust my work and my approach to counseling. These practices of mine extend outside of the counseling office. I have collaborated with other offices I work with; working events and assist with recruiting and onboarding projects. One example of this was accepting the task of being a DJ for the 55th anniversary event for EOPS. I was able stretch outside of my counseling mode to help create a welcoming atmosphere for faculty, students and staff to know that we exist, and we are putting in the work to bring services to our students. The goal is to make sure it is known that I don't mind doing what it takes for the overall goal to get accomplished.

My strengths include understanding personal counseling, educational planning and career planning. Career planning was a weakness of mine that I mentioned last year. I

made great improvements in that area. This was accomplished by attending workshops and gaining some insight/trainings from other counselors who possessed the tools in that area. I understand the admissions process as it relates to students trying to apply and register for school. I am also well versed with financial aid and how to access resources to help students offset expenses. These strengths have proven to be beneficial to our students. Areas that I would like to improve include innovation and execution of new ways to bridge the education gaps that exist among our students. I have been awarded the opportunity to work with senior management on addressing issues that face our students on a different platform. Understanding the challenges that certain groups face is something I would like to improve on. With understanding comes the ability to identify the issues, and more importantly come up with equitable ways to address said issues. This is important because without action from those of us who serve the campus, our students will suffer. So far, I have only been able to attend meetings for start-up projects that have not been carried out. My desire is that I am able to maintain connections throughout the initial process until the end where results are visible.

I make it a point to visit with not only the chair of counseling but with our dean as well. I normally make these visits during PT times throughout the week. During these meetings many topics are discussed. Included in these topics are updates from the Aviation and STEM pathways. There are also conversations regarding best practices for the counseling department. These check-up sessions are not mandatory, but I take advantage of them because it gives me an opportunity to see counseling from a managerial view. This

is where I see most of my growth as a counselor. I try to make sure that I am fulfilling my duties as a counselor and get one on one time with our leaders. This is also a time I attempt to sharpen my skills and gather criticism and suggestions. There is always room for improvement, and I have made it a passion of mine to identify areas that need attention and address them properly. I welcome any and all criticism and suggestions that will make me a better counselor. One of the points made last year to me by our president (Dr. James Limbaugh) was to make sure that I was not a stranger to this campus. I have made it a point show my face at various events to meet faculty from all disciplines. I was also featured on our WLAC Instagram site 10/16/2024 and was previously featured on “Meet out faculty”. That was a fun event where a YouTube video was made so that everyone can get to know me more on a personal level.

Responding culturally is an element that I take pride in. As mentioned earlier it is important for me to understand a student from as many angles as possible. Find out their needs and to identify any barriers that may be preventing them from accessing the services they require. I was once a student and wish my first experience with a counseling was as helpful and rewarding as counseling at WLAC. There is a standard that has been taught since I first got here, and I intend to maintain that standard. Our president Dr. James Limbaugh gave a speech and mentioned that the success or failure of WLAC is going to be based heavily on counseling. We preach “Go West, Go Far”. This is for ALL students regardless of where they come from. That means that counseling must be able to adapt to meet the needs of all students.

The most effective thing I do during my PT time is address emails from students concerning secondary counseling transactions and follow ups. I also use my PT to review and apply new rules and regulations that may come from various departments (senior administration, admissions, financial aid etc). This is extremely important because without the knowledge that is emailed weekly, I wouldn't be able to deliver correct and up to date information to students. It is common knowledge that when anyone wants to get news or a new policy to the students, an effective vehicle to do so is via counselors. We have new policies and procedures that often change. It is the responsibility of counselors to stay up to date with these changes. Collaboration is also an important thing I do during my PT time. Whether it is with other counselors or members of the WLAC community, discussions occur to determine best practices that best suits our students.

Since I have started at WLAC, there have been many changes. There have been plenty of new full-time counselor and staff hires. There is an agenda to create a counseling department that makes the WLAC community proud to speak of. Our Dean (Angeles Abraham) has taken a lead and brought these resources and new hires in to create the "Dream Team" to turn around this department. The game plan has been laid out and explained by senior management. I have accepted the call, and I am willing to do what's necessary to accomplish the plan. Senior management has given me the tools and support to perform to the best of my ability and I intend to give it my all. The encouragement has been great from everyone. My goal is to be here wholeheartedly and give my best efforts. I

want to see this turn around through to the end so that not only our President, Vice President, Dean, Department Chair but our students are pleased at what the counseling department has to offer.