

One-pager on Counselling Services

Manager Counselling and Testing Services

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Mark MacAulay, Manager of Counselling and Testing Services

The purpose of Counselling Services is to assist students, full-time and part-time, in challenges they may be facing which affect their academic success. If a student is in obvious distress, the advisor is encouraged to walk the student down to the Centre or sit with the student as he or she makes an appointment.

Examples of issues addressed by counselors:

- Enhancing Life Skills
- Career assessment and academic exploration
- Mental health issues such as depression or anxiety
- Adjustments to challenging life changes
- Transitions caused by grief, loss, relocation
- Relationship with partner, friend, professor, family

- Counsellors abide by a well-defined code of ethics. The 3 main tenets are
 - confidential service
 - an objective, unbiased perspective
 - a non-judgmental attitude
- An advisor cannot request information about a particular student from a counsellor; however, a counsellor can discuss a student with a teacher if the student signs a release form to that effect.
- Faculty advisors are encouraged to consult with counselors about issues that affect students.

The key message from the counsellors is that they are not there solely for students with problems; they can help a student gain perspective on many issues where there is confusion. For example, students debating whether they are in the right program have access to the Strong Inventory and Myers Briggs tests for free; these provide non-judgmental assessments that can then be discussed further with both counsellors and advisors. When indicated, career counselling can be part of the academic advising process.

Tip from counselling: To help students make decisions, the advisor should spend 80% of the time listening, 15% reflecting back, and 5% making a good referral.