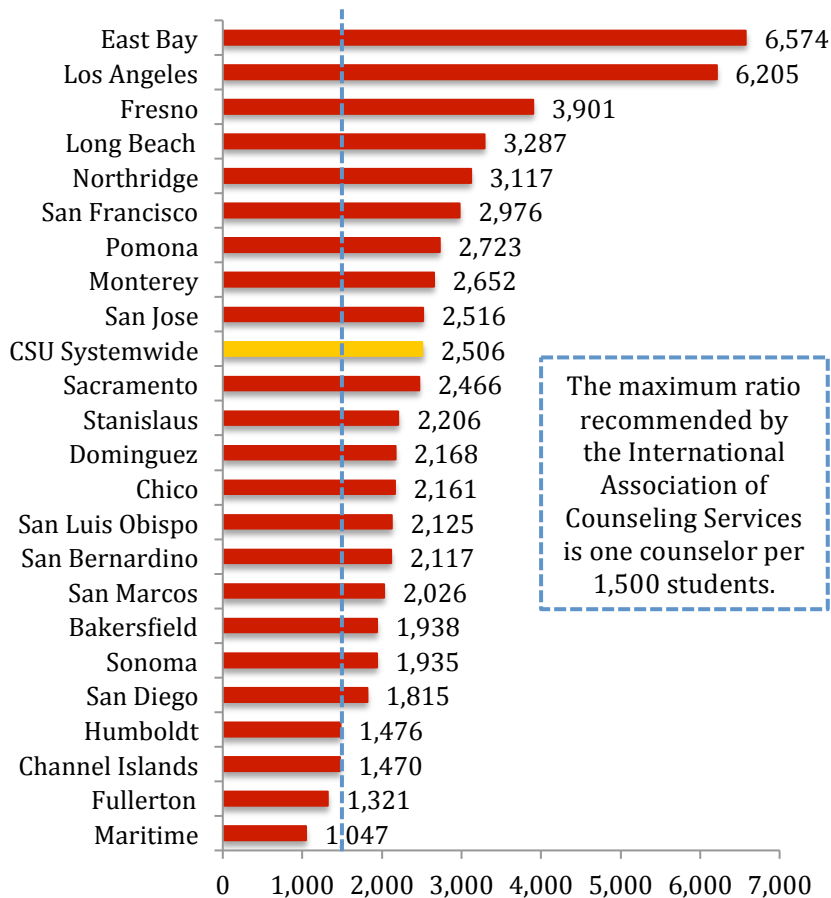


# Counseling in the CSU

“**Growing crisis**” is the phrase used by the American Psychological Association to describe the state of mental health on college campuses. The number of students seeking help for serious mental health problems has skyrocketed over the last decade. However, understaffed college counseling centers are often forced to turn students away from receiving crucial mental health support.<sup>1</sup>

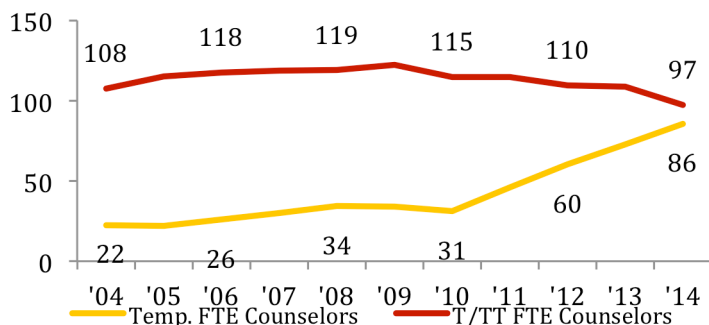
The International Association of Counseling Services (IACS), the accreditation body for college counseling centers, recommends a maximum ratio of 1,500 students for each full-time equivalent counselor on campus.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, most CSU campuses employ less than one FTE counselor per 1,500 students. In fact, **only four of the 23 CSU campuses meet the standard ratio of students per counselor**. East Bay and Los Angeles are most out of line, with more than 6,000 students per FTE counselor on each campus.<sup>3</sup>

**Students per Counselor by CSU Campus  
Fall 2014**



In addition to there being too few counselors to serve CSU students, the last decade has shown a **marked drop in the number of tenure-line counselors**. As shown in the graph below, between 2004 and 2014, the number of full-time equivalent tenure-line counselors decreased by 10%, while temporary counselors increased by 286%.

**Counselor Faculty by Tenure Status, 2004 to 2014**



Tenure-line counselors build connections with other faculty and provide **expert advice regarding students**. Tenure-line counselors also **respond to crises after hours** and perform crucial **outreach** functions, such as classroom visits and guest lectures. Simply put, the CSU’s shift toward the use of temporary appointments flouts the **role of student health in academic success**, undermining the CSU’s ability to create campuses which truly promote student success.

The CSU serves an incredibly diverse student body composed of many students of color and first-generation college students. In fact, CSU campuses grant more than half of all undergraduate degrees earned by California's Latino, African-American, and Native-American students.

It is a bitter irony that **the university system which educates the most black and brown students greatly underfunds student**

**mental health support**, staffing counselors below professional standards and many times below University of California (UC) campuses. As shown in the table at right, the **ratio of students to counselors in the UC system is 564:1**, nearly 4.5 times better

than the CSU system-wide ratio of 2,506:1.<sup>4</sup> UC-Los Angeles is the largest campus in the UC system and has

the greatest number of students per counselor. Yet, even its student-to-counselor ratio of 951:1 is more than 2.5 times better than the CSU's system-wide ratio.

**Students per Counselor by UC Campus  
Fall 2014**

| Campus             | Student-to-Counselor Ratios | CSU Average |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-------------|
| UC - Berkeley      | 854                         | 2,506       |
| UC - Davis         | 781                         | 2,506       |
| UC - Irvine        | 681                         | 2,506       |
| UC - Los Angeles   | 951                         | 2,506       |
| UC - Merced        | 142                         | 2,506       |
| UC - Riverside     | 490                         | 2,506       |
| UC - San Diego     | 698                         | 2,506       |
| UC - San Francisco | 72                          | 2,506       |
| UC - Santa Barbara | 524                         | 2,506       |
| UC - Santa Cruz    | 406                         | 2,506       |
| UC Systemwide      | 564                         | 2,506       |

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### Benefits of Counseling<sup>2</sup>

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- **Lower attrition.** *Students placed on a wait list for mental health services are more likely to drop out than students who obtain timely counseling.*
- **Improved academic performance.** *A majority of student clients report improved academic performance after counseling.*
- **Reduces legal liability for campuses.** *Counseling centers are required to adhere to the "standards of the profession." If they don't and something goes wrong, they*

**Join us on November 17<sup>th</sup> to demand a 5% GSI and an SSI  
from the CSU Board of Trustees!**

### References

<sup>1</sup> American Psychological Association, "The State of Mental Health on College Campuses: A Growing Crisis," September 2011, <http://www.apa.org/about/gr/education/news/2011/college-campuses.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> International Association of Counseling Services, Inc., "Statement Regarding Recommended Staff to Student Ratios," retrieved on September 14, 2015 from <http://www.iacsinc.org/staff-to-student-ratios.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Ratios were calculated by dividing the number of FTE counselors by student enrollment, or the number of students enrolled, not FTE students. This is the same methodology employed by IACS. Student enrollment figures were obtained from the CSU's annual fall term enrollment summaries and exclude students in international programs and CalStateTEACH. Enrollment summaries can be obtained at: <http://www.calstate.edu/AS/stats.shtml>. FTE counselor figures were obtained from the November Personnel Information Management System (PIMS) snapshots.

<sup>4</sup> Ratios for the University of California were calculated by dividing the number of counseling staff by student enrollment. Note that time-bases were not available, so these are actual counseling faculty, not FTE counselors. Student enrollment figures were obtained using the UC's Fall Enrollment at a Glance online tool, and exclude health sciences residents, which can be obtained at: <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/infocenter/fall-enrollment-glance>. UC counseling staff were obtained using the State Controller's Office (SCO) University of California payroll file for 2014, which can be obtained at: <http://publicpay.ca.gov/Reports/RawExport.aspx>. Counseling staff were obtained by filtering for "psychologist." The following classifications were included: Counseling Psychologist, Counseling Psychology Manager, and Psychologist. Interns were excluded.