



GEORGIAN COURT UNIVERSITY

THE MERCY UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY



2013-2014 STUDENT LIFE REPORT

Student Life Mission & Vision

Our Vision:

To fully engage students in a supportive, collaborative, and challenging learning environment by providing diverse opportunities for student learning, development, and success. Additionally, we promote students' intellectual, personal, professional and social growth through transformative educational experiences that encourage students to become responsible global citizens who will use their voices, talents, and abilities to advocate, lead, and serve both domestically and abroad.

Our Mission:

Strengthened by our Catholic identity and grounded in the Mercy tradition, Student Affairs contributes to the mission of the university by:

- Developing programs, activities, practices and policies that reinforce the Mercy core values and offer students opportunities for personal growth and development in all aspects of their lives;
- Promoting a dynamic campus environment that fosters the academic, spiritual, social and character development of each student;
- Emphasizing personal responsibility, deep respect for others, leadership development, and concern for the common good through service and volunteerism;
- Empowering and supporting students to persist in their academic efforts through graduation;
- Serving as an interface and resource for students to the myriad of services and support systems available at the University in a caring environment

Student Affairs Shared Values:

As educators and professionals, Student Affairs holds in high regard the following shared values:

Justice: as evidenced by recognizing the dignity of all human beings and educating students to be globally conscious.

Respect: as evidenced by personal responsibility to appreciate social and cultural differences as strengths.

Integrity: as evidenced by commitment to the highest level of professional, academic and personal values.

Service: as evidenced by campus and community partnerships geared toward civic engagement.

Compassion: as evidenced by reaching out empathically to those in need in the local community and beyond.

Dear Colleagues:

This annual report was prepared to give you a summary of the accomplishments within the Student Development areas for the 2013–2014 AY. The past academic year was marked with significant accomplishments and challenges as we positioned to meet the needs of our returning students while preparing to welcome the first fully co-educational undergraduate class into the Georgian Court community. As in all fields of higher education in the United States, Student Affairs has also been influenced by shifting social, economic, and political trends in its ever-changing environment.

In an effort to provide a seamless transition, the units under the umbrella of Student Development (residence life, health services, counseling, student concerns and case management, student activities, new student orientation, student leadership & engagement, and student government) met consistently to discuss the institution’s strategic plan, student life roadmap, and each unit’s role in aligning its goals and objectives with the overall strategic direction of the university, with keen emphasis on “expanding student life and campus programs for a coed population.”

After a year of preparation, in the fall of 2013, GCU experienced a relatively seamless transition to becoming fully coeducational. The student life staff for the most part was amply prepared and poised to welcome first-time, full-time freshmen and transfer students, both men and women. The Emerging Leaders Program was launched with 20 inaugural members to provide a coeducational leadership experience parallel to the Women in Leadership Development program. Men were also permitted to seek office within the Student Government Association, Campus Activities Board, participate as orientation leaders, and integrate fully into all campus clubs and organizations for the first time.

The national focus on Title IX and sexual assaults on college campuses and amendments to the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (Campus Save Act) necessitated a review of the institution’s policies, practices, protocols, and procedures surrounding Title IX sexual assault/ harassment/violence. The Student Code of Conduct was revised to be in accordance with the Department of Education (Office of Civil Rights) regulations and guidelines for postsecondary institutions. Prevention programs and educational outreach activities were offered throughout the year to bring awareness to students and to emphasize the importance of making responsible behavioral choices.

The Office of Civil Rights was also invited to offer a presentation to all staff during the spring 2014 semester. The presentation provided an overview of Title IX, the new amendments of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 (Campus Save Act) and the University’s responsibility to address incidents of sexual harassment/assault/violence. It should also be noted that Georgian Court had two reported student-on-student sexual misconduct cases for the 2013–2014 academic year.

By and large, the Student Life staff continues to adapt and respond to change with openness. Each unit has been vigilant and purposeful in administering programs and services to meet the growing needs of our students. While challenges were evident, especially with reduction in staff and limited resources, each member of the team continued to work diligently to provide opportunities aimed at integrating academic and student life to educate the whole person. Throughout the report are a few key accomplishments and highlights which demonstrate Student Life’s ongoing commitment to fully engage students in a supportive and dynamic learning environment.



Together in Mercy!

Karen Goff

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Summary

The student life staff for the most part was amply prepared and poised to welcome first-time, full-time freshmen and transfer students, both men and women. It was also the first time in residence that students had to be placed on a waiting list since we exceeded capacity due to the renovation of St. Joseph's hall. A new director of residence life, Gary Miller also joined the staff in June 2013, which left little time for training and adjustment. Nevertheless, the student life staff pulled together to plan, organize and execute a successful move-in process at the beginning of a new academic year. Subsequently, two additional professional staff members (Nicole O'Connell, Coordinator of Residence Life Operations, and Jaysree Chestnut, Coordinator of Residence Life Programs & Community Development) joined the Office of Residence Life in late October and November.



Student Activities

The Office of Student Activities (OSA) is committed to providing students with events and activities that meet the cultural, academic, and social needs of the students. The Coordinator of Student Activities (CSA) works with the Student Government Association (SGA), the Campus Activities Board (CAB) and over 40 clubs and organizations, as well as assists with the development and implementation of new student groups. The Office of Student Activities is also responsible for the planning and promotion of the university's traditional events such as Welcome Back Week, Club Day, Homecoming/Family Day, Back Porch Party, Halloween Celebration, Mercy Day Breakfast and other class-level sponsored events including Senior Week, Junior Ring Ceremony, Winter Formal, and both the Freshmen and Senior 100 Days.

Student Activities



Additionally, the Student Activities office held over 122 events. In a survey administered in Spring 2014, students listed three primary reasons for not attending events:

- 1) Work obligations (58%)
- 2) Inconvenient times of events (57%)
- 3) Nothing of interest (35%)

Students also reported the best time for events are Monday through Thursday from 6:00–9:00 PM and Friday through Sunday after 6:00 PM.

The Student Government Association made an intentional decision to focus more on governance and policy and less on social events; relinquishing control of such events to the Campus Activities Board. Some of the accomplishments and initiatives included, but were not limited to:

- Class of 2014 successfully launched a campaign in response to a student survey that highlighted the need for additional recreational spaces beyond the Wellness Center. As a result, the tennis court adjacent to St. Joseph's Hall was resurfaced and replaced with a full-scale basketball court for the students.
- Increased number of garbage cans around campus.
- Advocated for additional lighting in the Italian gardens.
- Increased participation for the annual Halloween Celebration.
- Worked with facilities to find additional storage space for clubs and organizations.
- Donated \$1,908 to the Sisters of Mercy Scholarship foundation.
- Worked with Chartwells to increase menu options in the Court Café.
- Hosted an overwhelmingly successful Student Appreciation Day.
- Hosted the first Covenant House Sleep-out for the Homeless fundraising event in order to raise awareness and funds for homeless youth
- Several new positions were added to the Student Government Association including—Commuter Chair, Transfer Chair, two Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC) representative.
- Assessment Data
- The Office of Student Activities launched its annual Student Activities survey in April of 2014. A total of 285 students responded to the survey with the majority being commuters (61%) and residents (39%); freshmen represented 40% of the respondents.
- Only 40% of students reported they were satisfied with events on campus; 29% indicated they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied; and 19% (moderately dissatisfied); and 12% very dissatisfied. Students reported they would like to see more events on-campus, especially on the weekends.

Student Activities

Challenges

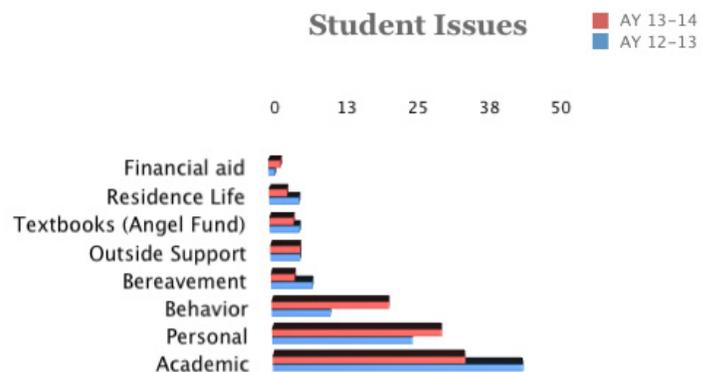
- **Lack of Space:** One of the biggest challenges the Office of Student Activities faces is the need for additional soft space for students. Given our large commuter population, there are very few places commuters can spend time in between classes other than the Court Café, which has limited seating and the Library.
- **Technology Support:** Implementation of software to effectively manage co-curricular involvement on campus. We currently track student involvement via Excel; these methods are outdated and ineffective.
- **Student Activities Funding:** In order to continue to provide quality programs and events for students (76% of students expect more events to be held on-campus) funding needs to be increased.

Case Management & Student Concerns

The Student Development office provides case management to students in distress. A case manager is assigned to the student to connect students to appropriate campus and community resources and foster student development. Referral to the case manager come from the Student Concerns Team, Early Warning System, faculty, staff and the Dean of Students. The case manager provides outreach to minimize the impact of distress on the academic and personal pursuits of at-risk students through effective case management, coordination of care, and communication between campus and community resources. Case Management services have increase by 56% from 12–13 (AY) to 13–14 (AY) academic year.

Key highlights for the 13–14 AY:

- Implemented the SEED program (Student Empowerment, Engagement and Development) with weekly focus on sexual assault awareness and prevention and anti-bullying programming.
- The NJ State Police and Providence House presented sexual assault awareness and the legal implications of sexual assault.
- Approximately 458 students have participated in the SEED programs during 13–14 AY. These programs provided service learning opportunities for ten students who implemented and led weekly programming. 511 students participated in Sexual Assault Awareness Month (SAAM) throughout the month of April.



Residence Life

The Office of Residence Life is committed to providing a safe and secure residential community conducive to personal growth, character development, and social interaction. Recognizing the potential for learning beyond the classroom, the Office of Residence Life draws upon the Mercy core values to foster a positive living and learning environment.



Key highlights for the 13–14 AY:

- Expanded Office of Residence Life professional staff through the hiring of a Director of Residence Life, Residence Life Coordinator for Operations, and Residence Life Coordinator for Programming & Community Development.
- St. Joseph Hall Renovation project completed including the Office of Residence Life Programming & Community Development Suite.
- Welcomed the first co-ed, and one of the largest, on-campus populations (398 residents) in the fall, including (70) men.
- Purchased Residence by Simplicity Software to streamline the assignment, room change, room selection, and occupancy verification processes, as well as provide students with more control over their experience in residence.
- Implemented the Residence Life Community Development & Programming model in the 2014 semester, with programming on the following topics: Community, iCampus (Campus Connections), Character & Wellness, Diversity and Culture, Mercy Madness (Mercy Core Values), and Civic Engagement & Community Service and requires resident assistants to do programming and bulletin boards focused each of these topics at different points during the year; In addition, resident assistants are responsible for doing one community building activity a month with their residents.

Overall Satisfaction

76% of students indicated that they were moderately or very satisfied with their residence hall experience.
75% of students indicated that they would recommend living in the residence halls to others.

Resident Assistant Staff

83% of students indicated that the Resident Assistants promoted a friendly, safe, and healthy atmosphere.
79% of students indicated that the Resident Assistants had a moderate-significant presences in the halls.

Academic Performance

64% of students indicated that living in the residence halls had a considerable to great impact on learning skills to assist in their academic development and success;
16% of students indicated that living in the residence halls had a moderate impact on learning skills to assist in their academic development and success.

Programming

61% of students indicated that they were moderately to very satisfied with the programming in the residence halls;
32% of students indicated that they were moderately to very dissatisfied with the programming in the residence halls;
7% of students were unable to judge.
61% of students indicated that there was not enough weekend activities;
34% of students indicated that there was an appropriate amount of weekend activities;
5% of students indicated that there were too many weekend activities.

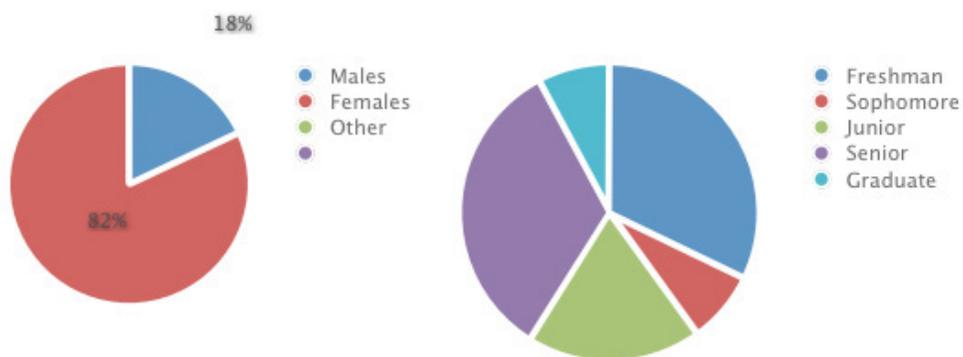
Facilities

When asked what would improve the residence life atmosphere, the students indicated the following:

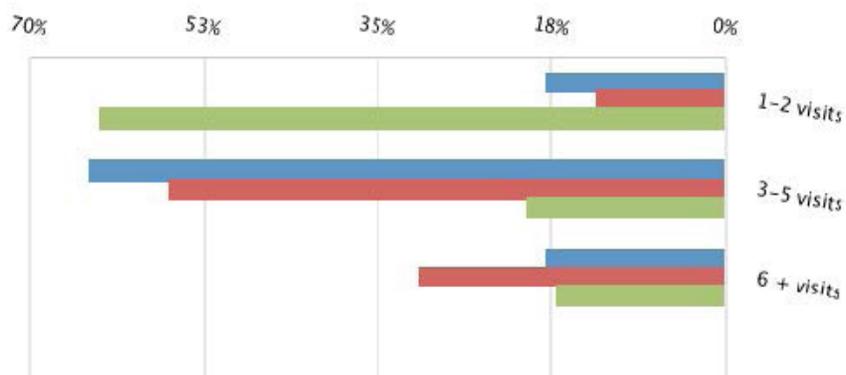
- 58.82% – Bathrooms
- 58.82% – Closets/Storage
- 55.88% – New Bedroom Furniture
- 52.94% – Color Painted Wall
- 35.29% – Lounge Furniture

Health Services

Health Services has a long standing commitment to provide quality health care services to students that will enhance the education process by modifying or removing health related barriers to learning. Our clinical services reached over 2,934 campus community members, 80% students and 20% staff, faculty, vendors, or visitors. In collaboration with the campus community, Healthy Campus 2020 Initiative was launched.



The complexity of patient healthcare needs continues to rise. Departmental records indicate a substantial increase in the number of students who report on their student health form one or more chronic or acute medical/psychological conditions.



Challenges

- Noted increase in the health care complexity of students with special medical needs.
- Student Health Services continues to operate out of the 2nd floor in the Casino Building, an older building in need of renovation that has inadequate space for current and the possible future expansion of services to meet the increasing complex health needs of the campus community.

Counseling Services

The Counseling Center provides quality therapeutic services through individual therapy, crisis intervention, faculty consultation and outreach. Forty outreach events were offered, reaching 1,279 participants. In addition, Counseling Center staff participated in year-long collaborations with DART, the Ocean County partnership to target substance abuse, and hosted one pre-doctoral psychology student for a year-long internship.

135 Total Clients (102 Undergraduate Students, 33 Graduate Students)
1,078 Overall Total Client Counseling Hours
1,029 hours individual therapy
0 hours group therapy
17 hours mandated assessments
28 hours crisis contact; **4** hours emergency evaluations
1,279 Overall Total Outreach Contacts
80 Overall Staff/Faculty Consultation Hours
92 Other Clinical Hours, including conferences, supervision, outreach, and training
7.62 sessions Overall total client counseling hours

Ethnicity	Percentage
African American	17%
Hispanic/Latina	18%
Asian/Pacific Islander	4%
Multi-ethnic	3%
Prefer not to answer	0
White (not of Hispanic origin)	58%
Gender	
Male	16%
Female	84%
Residence Status	
Resident	40%
Commuter	60%
Class Standing	
Undergraduate	76%
Graduate	24%

Single Diagnosis = **23%** Multiple Diagnoses = **77%**

Depressive Disorders	25%	Anxiety Disorders	48%
Adjustment Disorders	33%	Partner Relational Problem	22%
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	6%	Bereavement	8%
Eating Disorder	3%	Bipolar Disorder	1%
Substance Abuse (Includes Alcohol)	2%	Attention Deficit Disorder	7%
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder	2%	Personality Disorders	2%
Parent/Child Problem	30%	Other	13%

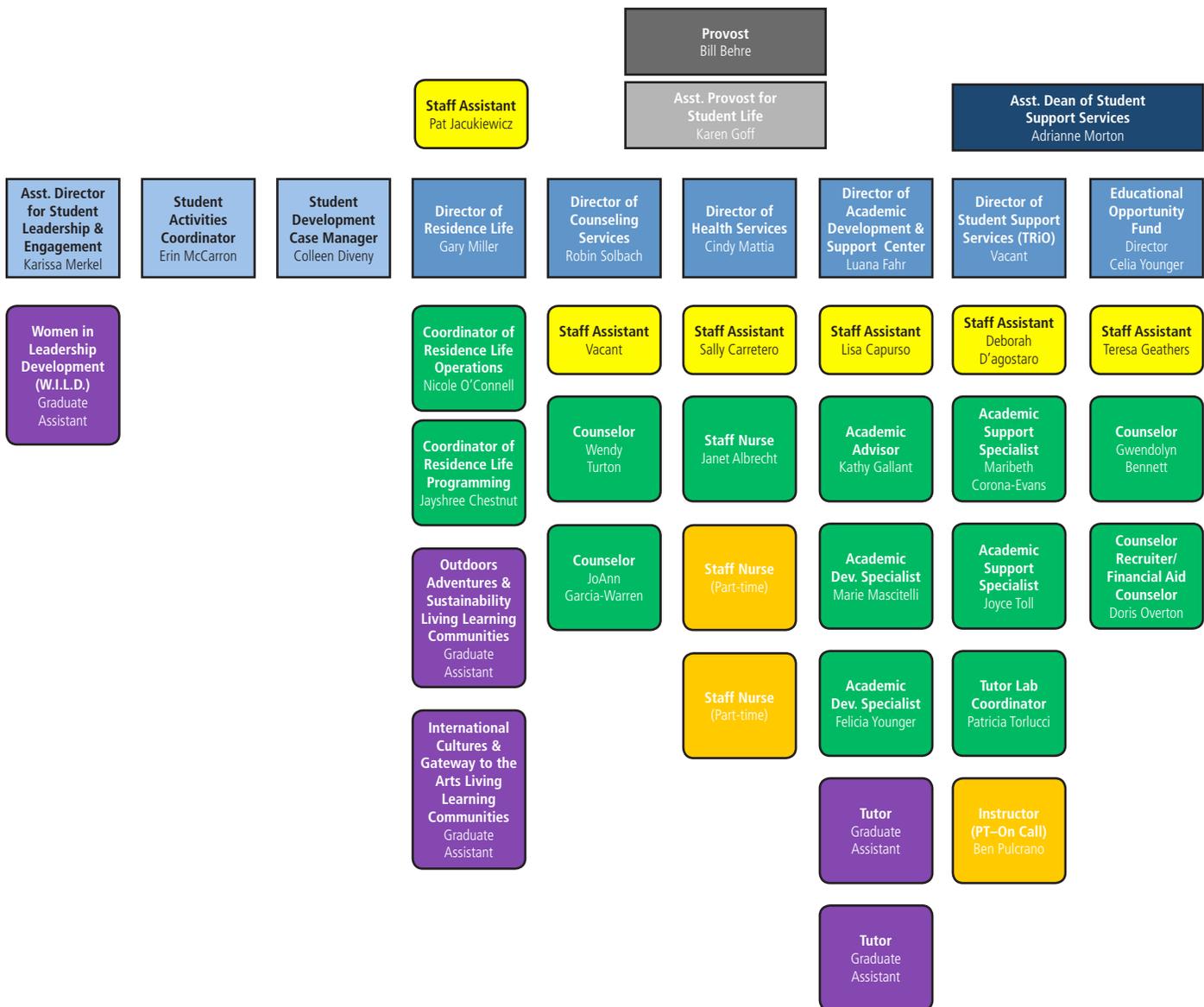
Frequency of diagnoses totals over 100%, given majority of clients admitted with multiple diagnoses

Challenges

- The lack of administrative support was an ongoing challenge to the functioning of the Counseling Center. Program development was negatively impacted, because counselors were unable to adequately promote programming due to excess time spent on daily clerical tasks.
- Increased Levels of Student Pathology: Increased levels of multiple diagnosed students (42% in 12–13 vs. 77% in 13–14); higher levels of anxiety in students (39% diagnosed with anxiety-related disorders in 12–13 vs. 48% in 13–14); fewer community resources available; higher levels of distress when entering treatment (33% moderately impaired when entering treatment in 12–13, vs. 58% moderately impaired when entering treatment in 13–14).

Student Life Organizational Chart

2014–15 Academic Year





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