



Student Health and  
Counseling Services  
Grinnell College  
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Houston Dougharty  
Vice President, Division of Student Affairs  
Grinnell College  
Grinnell, IA 50112

Dear Houston:

I am writing in response to the Student Health and Counseling Services (SHACS) review team's Program Review report. I first want to let you know how much I value the entire review process: it has provided a terrific opportunity for the members of SHACS' staff to reflect on our goals, services, policies, procedures, resources, and challenges. In addition, we deeply appreciate the review team's thoroughness and investment in the review process, as well as the contributions provided by members of the campus and local communities who gave their time to enrich the review team's perspective on SHACS. We are grateful both for the team's many commendations of our work and for its recommendations regarding ways we could improve.

The review team's report offers comments and recommendations which address five dimensions related to SHACS' functioning: space; counseling services; health services; coordination, communication, and outreach; and administration and policies. The team wrote in some detail regarding SHACS' limited space and how this restricts SHACS' staffing and services; the team emphasized that many of its recommendations cannot be implemented without expanding SHACS' staff. Indeed, the team stated that: *"...As currently housed and structured, SHACS lacks the space and staffing to meet campus health needs. Solving these two challenges are SHACS' greatest priorities, and should be made among the highest priorities for Grinnell College in the coming year...Our top priority and key recommendation is to quickly address SHACS' space needs. All other recommendations flow out of this critical need."* I strongly agree with these comments and my responses, below, all are tempered by SHACS' inadequate space and limited staff and the pressing need to increase both.

### Space

The review team recommended that the College take a two-pronged approach to addressing SHACS' need for larger and more functional space:

- Begin a campus-level planning process to develop new space for SHACS
- Repurpose additional areas of the lower level of the Forum, currently adjacent to the north end of SHACS, into SHACS space

Regarding the first prong of this recommendation, as you know, I have devoted substantial time and attention during the 2013-2014 academic year to meeting with campus colleagues to explain SHACS' space limitations and needs. In response to the review team's recommendations, I will continue these endeavors, communicating in particular with members of the Academic Space Planning Committee, the Space Planning Committee, and administrators charged with managing campus facilities and services, as well as with a broad spectrum of other administrators, staff, faculty, and students. I look forward to our collaborative efforts to raise awareness, throughout the campus community, of SHACS' space and staffing needs, and to elevating them to the level of a "campus-level planning process."

Regarding the second aspect of this recommendation, I appreciate the review team's emphasis on SHACS' obtaining some sort of temporary additional space as soon as possible. Repurposing the middle third of the lower level of the Forum, as specifically recommended by the review team, might be one way to achieve this. Another would be for SHACS to be provided other temporary space, on or near campus, in the course of other campus building projects. I have already been advocating for the latter; in response to the review team's recommendations, I will also begin to promote the former. As with my endeavors to make SHACS' long-term space needs a campus priority, I will consult with key decision-makers and stake-holders to promote SHACS' receiving additional, temporary space in the Forum or elsewhere, and I look forward to working with you in this effort.

### Counseling Services

The review team made a number of recommendations regarding SHACS' counseling services, including:

- Expand SHACS' counseling staff, either through implementing a doctoral psychology internship program and/or by adding permanent counselor positions. I thoroughly endorse this recommendation. As part of SHACS' 2014-15 budget, I proposed adding one permanent, ten-month staff counselor/substance abuse services specialist position. If funded, this position will fill SHACS' last remaining possible office space. Preparations for a doctoral psychology internship program have been initiated, and in longer-term budget planning I have proposed a post-doctoral counselor position, as well. As indicated above, any further expansion of SHACS' counseling staff will have to wait until SHACS has a larger space.
- Increase participation in group therapy at SHACS. In response to the review team's recommendation, by the end of the Fall, 2014 semester, we will develop a campaign to better explain and promote group therapy. This will include consulting with students, as recommended by the review team, to gain insight into how best to explain and advertise SHACS' groups.
- Improve SHACS' after-hours services. Prior to the start of the Fall, 2014 semester, we will work with the staffs at ProtoCall and Fonemed to better customize their services for Grinnell. By the start of, and during, the Fall, 2014 semester, we will develop and implement an education and publicity program to improve awareness of these services across the campus community.

## Health Services

The review team commended SHACS' health services highly and identified only recommendations the team defined as "minor," including:

- Provide better signage for SHACS' sign-in kiosk. We will plan and, if possible, implement such signage before the end of the current semester and, if not, no later than the start of the Fall, 2014 semester.
- Improve publicity for on-line self-scheduling for nursing appointments. By the end of the Fall, 2014 semester, we will expand and improve advertising for on-line self-scheduling.
- Continue and expand collaborations, particularly with the Athletics trainers and with the Hall Wellness Coordinators. By the end of the Fall, 2014 semester, we will pursue both informal and formal conversations with campus colleagues about ways SHACS can collaborate with them to improve efficiency and services for students.
- Increase campus awareness of SHACS' after-hours Fonemed services. See above: the SHACS staff will work to improve the campus community's awareness of all of SHACS' after-hours services.

## Coordination, Communication, and Outreach

The review team noted that in order to do more in these areas, either SHACS' staff would have to do less of something else, or SHACS' staff would have to be expanded. One trade-off in staff priorities seems reasonable and feasible at present: responding to the team's recommendation that I try to educate faculty on SHACS' services by presenting during academic department meetings and other faculty gatherings. During the coming summer break and the Fall, 2014 semester, I will develop a brief program and contact each academic department and the Dean's office to offer opportunities to make the program available to all faculty, in various settings, during that time frame.

## Administration and Policies

As with most areas of its review, the review team noted that some of its recommendations regarding SHACS' administration and policies are dependent on expanding staffing. This is most pertinent regarding the review team's recommendation that SHACS expand its hours to be open some weekday evenings and Saturday afternoons, as well as during breaks within and between semesters, when this becomes feasible. I would like to note that expanding SHACS' hours in any fashion would require additional administrative support staff hours as well as clinical staff hours.

Further recommendations by the review team include:

- Plan, develop, and implement evaluation of our health and counseling services. By the end of the current semester, we will conduct client satisfaction assessments of our direct nursing services and counseling services. We will plan to conduct such assessments each

semester thereafter. We will plan to develop and implement a counseling outcomes assessment process by the end of the 2014-15 academic year.

- Collaborate with the Vice President of Student Affairs to clarify what student treatment information will be shared by SHACS, with whom, and under what circumstances, and seek the College President's understanding and approval of SHACS' related policies and procedures. By no later than the end of the current semester, I will schedule a meeting in which you and I can begin this important conversation.
- Continue our ongoing work to create a policies and procedures manual for SHACS' counseling staff. We will strive to complete the manual by the start of the Spring, 2015 semester. By the end of the 2014-15 academic year, we will develop and commence a plan for routine review and updates of our policies and procedures.

The review team alluded several times to the need for better tracking of SHACS' student-clients who are referred for services off campus. Under "Coordination, Communication, and Outreach," the review team suggested considering hiring a Case Manager. I would like to reiterate my recommendation that the College develop a Case Manager position. A Case Manager could provide a wide range of services across campus – which could include assisting SHACS' clients with continuity of care issues – to support the learning, success, retention, and graduation of students who are "at risk" for any number of reasons. Because a Case Manager would be most effective working collaboratively across departments, I would suggest that the Case Manager position report to the office of the Dean of the College or to the Dean of Students.

Finally, I would like to make a recommendation for SHACS' next departmental review. In order to most thoroughly review the specialized health and mental health services provided by SHACS, it would be helpful to include two guest members in SHACS' next review team: one who is a licensed health professional and one who is a licensed mental health professional, both of whom work in clinical settings in higher education. If both of these guest team members could come from integrated health and counseling centers at small colleges, so much the better!

I look forward to partnering with you in responding to the SHACS review team's recommendations, Houston. Thank you again for giving SHACS the opportunity for this deep review of our operations.

Sincerely,

Harriett

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