

**Profile of
Counseling Services
University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire
2021 Regents Diversity Award Program Recipient**

Highlights from nomination materials:

- Counseling Services, led by Dr. Riley McGrath, develops resources and mental health services to support UW-Eau Claire’s efforts to make access to education equitable. The department fosters greater access and success for students of color, students with disabilities, first-generation college students, international students, as well as LGBTQIA students. Counseling Services has improved student outcomes by:
 - Reaching out and collaborating with other student-supporting organizations;
 - Diversifying its staff;
 - Creating staff growth plans to increase cultural competence; and
 - Providing relevant training to the campus community.
- In response to student feedback, Counseling Services has hired additional clinicians of color and multilingual clinicians. Counseling Services offers Hmong language and Spanish language services. This diversification of staff helps make Counseling Services a safe place for all students to feel heard.
- Staff in Counseling Services collaborate closely with colleagues in student-serving offices such as the Office of Multicultural Affairs, Center for International Education, and Gender and Sexuality Resource Center. Group therapy sessions, support groups, and other programming in collaboration with these areas increase access for students already comfortable in these programs who may not otherwise seek needed counseling services.
- Outcomes show the effectiveness of this approach: counseling use rates for students of color increased by 45% from the 2016-17 academic year to the 2019-20 academic year.
- Counseling Services values cultural competence as a part of assessing the personnel performance of its clinicians. Staff create growth plans to better implement the Counseling Services philosophy that strong equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) knowledge and skills increase the confidence and competence of clinical staff. To further bolster individual plans, staff regularly attend and facilitate campus EDI trainings. Recent trainings facilitated by Counseling Services include:
 - Campus Connect Suicide Prevention training;
 - How to Identify and Respond to Mental Health Concerns at UW-Eau Claire;
 - A Guide to Gender book club; and
 - Confronting Problematic Behaviors.
- Counseling Services created an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) coordinator position in 2017, staffed by Ashley Walton-Beal, a clinician who, in addition to her primary clinical responsibilities, is responsible for coordinating the EDI efforts of the department, including reaching out to underrepresented student groups, coordinating EDI efforts with other departments, facilitating internal diversity related trainings, and taking intentional efforts to make the department more welcoming and inclusive.

In the words of a colleague:

- “College student needs in the area of mental health have been growing in volume and complexity in recent years. Social justice concerns and identity-related issues have increasingly been part of students’ expressed stressors. Counseling Services at UW-Eau Claire is a vital campus contributor in supporting student success, and in making our community welcoming for all of its members. They recognize that our goal of equity in outcomes may necessitate different approaches for underrepresented students, who have the experience of being different from others around them on campus, and who navigate different and additional challenges on their way to graduation.” —*James C. Schmidt, Chancellor, UW-Eau Claire*