From the Director’s Desk

While we have been faced with many challenges during the Fall 2008 semester, there is still much for which to be grateful. Despite tough economic times, we have managed thus far to avoid many of the pitfalls we have seen our sibling institutions face. That being said, the Counseling and Self-Development Center Staff wish you a safe and happy holiday season filled with gratitude, peace, and holiday cheer!

-- Dr. Taylor
During its pilot year, the Counseling and Self-Development Center offered practicum and internship training opportunities for SCSU graduate students seeking post-secondary degrees in counseling-related professions. The goal of the program is to provide students with practical clinical experience as they matriculate at the university. Graduate Practicum students receive guided training on counseling center policies and procedures, conducting intake interviews, building rapport with clients, and other basic skills relevant to being a competent counseling professional. The more advanced Graduate Interns receive supervised training on conducting individual and group interventions, providing community and campus-wide outreach programming, and case formulation. All trainees are provided with assignments that facilitate their development of skills, insight, and knowledge that is transferable to numerous counseling settings in the global workforce. Students receive weekly supervision in which they discuss goals, develop useful clinical interventions, and receive constructive feedback regarding their performance. This past year, the Counseling and Self-Development Center trained four graduate practicum students and one graduate intern from the Rehabilitation Counseling Department. These students (pictured above) spent several weeks in training at the center which culminated with case presentations at the final staff meeting of each semester. The students were presented with gifts as a token of the center’s appreciation for their excellent work and participation in the program. The center will continue to host these graduate level training programs for qualifying SCSU students to prepare them for careers in the counseling field.
On October 1st and 2nd from 12 p.m. until 2 p.m., South Carolina State University served as the host site for the first Domestic Violence Awareness Month Event to cater to the tri-county area. The SCSU Counseling and Self-Development Center, in partnership with CASA Family Systems, provided programming to heighten student and community awareness regarding domestic violence issues. The SCSU planning committee consisted of representatives from the SCSU Student Government Association and the Campus Activities Board. Counseling Center and student government association representatives from participating institutions also assisted with various aspects of the planning and advertisement. Participating guest institutions included Claflin University, Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College, Voorhees College, and Denmark Technical College. Participating agencies and sponsors included the Orangeburg Area Mental Health Center, the Department of Health and Environmental Control, The Department of Social Services, Campus Police, and Public Safety. The event was broadcasted by SCSU’s radio station (WSSB). Food, services, and complimentary domestic violence awareness information/paraphernalia were provided for student patrons and participants. Staff members from CASA and the Counseling & Self-Development Center, as well as student volunteers, distributed relationship surveys to participating faculty, staff, and students. Participants had the option of receiving free counseling after completing the surveys. In addition to complimentary food, gift bags were also given to those who participated in the event. A record breaking crowd from participating institutions came out to show their support and enhanced their awareness about domestic violence at this very important student event!!!
On October 14, 2008, The Counseling and Self-Development Center partnered with Mental Health America of Orangeburg County to provide free Depression Screenings for SCSU students and for the Orangeburg community. The event was held in the KW Green Student Center from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. in the Student Center TV Lounge on campus. Over 50 students participated in the event, completing mental health screenings and receiving confidential interviews to assess their mental health functioning. Students were also invited to schedule appointments with the counseling center at the event.

The First Annual Youth Suicide Prevention Conference sponsored by the Orangeburg Area Mental Health Center was held on October 24, 2008 at Orangeburg Calhoun Technical College. The Counseling & Self-Development Center helped to plan the event and provided their W.A.T.C.H.O.G. Peer Mentors as ushers, room facilitators, and hall monitors. Various agencies, schools, educators, and other human services professionals attended and shared information at the event. SCSU students attended educational sessions to enhance their mental health awareness and functioning. Topic discussions included: substance abuse, gang violence, suicide prevention, teenage pregnancy, and parent-student communication. The keynote speaker for the event, Akitunde, entertained participants with edgy urban humor while encouraging their hopes and dreams with valuable life lessons and personal accounts about his career journey.
During the Fall 2008 semester, the W.A.T.C.H.D.O.G. Peer Mentoring Program began its pilot year at the Counseling & Self-Development Center. Eligible students for this undergraduate paraprofessional training group were recruited during the summer and early fall. Qualifying students had to be sophomores, juniors or seniors and maintain minimum academic requirements in their designated area of study, in addition to regularly practicing appropriate behavioral conduct. Throughout the fall term, these students assisted with various campus and community outreach events, including the Domestic Violence Awareness Outreach Event, the Youth Suicide Prevention Conference, and initial planning for the Active Minds Mental Health Awareness Group. At the end of the fall semester, an appreciation ceremony was held at the Counseling & Self-Development Center to honor the students for their tremendous participation and service during the academic year. The W.A.T.C.H.D.O.G. Peer Mentoring Program will continue to provide students with opportunities to gain paraprofessional and community service experience through their participation in various campus and community events. Interested students are invited to apply for the Spring 2009 group!
The Counseling & Self-Development Center’s Substance Education Group was designed to educate students about substance use and related behaviors and consequences. At the conclusion of the fall term, the group culminated its six week course with a presentation to the University 101 Marching Band on substance abuse. The primary purpose of this group was to promote the expansion of participants’ awareness about the behavioral, medical, and psychological consequences of substance use. One of the major goals of the substance education group was to provide assistance to students as they learned to incorporate information designed to help them establish and maintain healthier attitudes and behaviors related to substance use and guide them toward more productive choices. Students are primarily recruited via campus referrals, but may also opt to voluntarily enroll in the group to enhance their awareness of substance abuse issues.

**The Student Circle**

A Professional Development Group for Undergraduate Psychology Majors
Hosted by the SC ABPsi Chapter
Co-Advisors: Dr. Cherilyn Y. Taylor – Director, Counseling and Self-Development
and Dr. Marilyn D. Lovett, Associate Professor of Psychology
This fall, representatives from the Counseling & Self-Development Center participated in a number of university sponsored programs, councils and committees which met several times during the semester to discuss methods of enhancing customer service and standard operating procedures at the institution. Staff representatives were appointed to the following councils and committees throughout the Gall 2008 semester and will continue to serve during the spring term as well:

   Shades of Promise Program  
   Staff Grievance Committee  
   Student Activities Committee  
   Institutional Review Board  
   Student Activities Committee  
   Student Affairs Service Learning Committee
The Counseling & Self-Development Center continues to incorporate FISH principles into daily office activities. Pictured above are members of the Counseling & Self-Development Center Staff in front of the Center’s FISH bulletin board. The FISH principles are derived from a leadership development series espoused by the Division of Student Affairs which includes the following components: