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Campus Mental Health: A Statistical Profile

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Campus Mental Health: A Statistical Profile



Connie Horton (shown above): "While the vast majority of our students are stable in terms of mental-health issues, a large percentage, at some point in their academic career, will struggle with issues like stress, anxiety, and depression to a degree that it will interfere with their academics for at least a short time." *(Photo by Marc Featherly)*

- Percentages of the total student population seen by IWU's Counseling and Consultation Services (CCS) has steadily grown over the past three years. In 2001-02, 11 percent of the student body received counseling. That increased to 13 percent in 2002-03 and to 14 percent (or 292 total students) for the 2003-04 academic year.
- First-year students comprised a third of all the students seen by CCS in the 2003-04 academic year, followed by sophomores (26 percent), juniors (20 percent), and seniors (18 percent).
- When asked why they were seeking counseling (and allowed to give more than one answer) 58 percent of the students said "general stress. The second most common answer was depression (48 percent), followed by academic stress (46 percent), and anxiety (40 percent).
- Although men and women both experience stress in college, what causes that stress and what they do to handle it varies significantly between the sexes. In a 2001-02 study, first-year men told CCS that they were "significantly more likely than women" to have drunk beer, skipped classes, and turned in assignments late. When asked the same question, first-year women said they were significantly more likely than their male counterparts to have felt overwhelmed, depressed, or homesick, and worried about meeting new people, their safety, and their health.

- Another difference between male and female students is that “female students come to the counseling center far more often than male students,” says CCS Director Connie Horton. The ratio is typically two to one: out of the 292 students who scheduled appointments at Counseling Services this past academic year, 202 were female.
- When seniors from the class of 2002 were asked if they had ever seriously considered or attempted suicide during their time at Illinois Wesleyan, 13 percent answered “considered on occasion but never attempted,” almost 3 percent answered “considered frequently but have never attempted,” and .7 percent said they had actually attempted suicide.
- According to Horton, suicide and suicidal thoughts are all-too common problems among college students nationwide. A 1995 national survey of college students, the National College Health Risk Behavior Survey, found that in the 12 months preceding the survey, one-tenth had seriously considered suicide and approximately one in every 67 had attempted suicide.
- A total of 86 percent of Illinois Wesleyan students indicated that mental-health concerns have, at times, affected their academic performance, with 20 percent saying such concerns affected them “frequently or almost constantly.”

Concludes Horton, “While the vast majority of our students are stable in terms of mental-health issues, a large percentage, at some point in their academic career, will struggle with issues like stress, anxiety, and depression to a degree that it will interfere with their academics for at least a short time.” — *Tim Obermiller*