



MSU Counseling: Conference-level analysis

Qualitative and quantitative comparisons of
counselling center websites for Big Ten universities

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Introduction & Background

Mental health services have always been lacking at Michigan State University (MSU), which led to the Office of the Provost contracting a consulting firm, Keeling & Associates to create a report¹. The firm's report ([Strategy & Recommendations: Designing a Continuum of Student Health and Wellness Services](#)) was released in September 2016.

The compilation of the information below was inspired not only by recent events at MSU but also by personal experiences with and anecdotal evidence of the severity of issues within MSU's mental health services. Ultimately, the lack of information on MSU's new Counseling & Psychiatry Services (CAPS) website² led to further examination of similar centers at other schools in the Big Ten athletic conference. The disparity in information and transparency between the MSU CAPS website and every other Big Ten schools' website is documented below.

The following document compares counseling centers at all fourteen Big Ten Universities primarily through a quantitative and qualitative analysis of each of the universities' counseling websites.

¹ <https://provost.msu.edu/student-health/index.html>

² <https://caps.msu.edu/>



Qualitative Comparison

Counselor Information

MSU is the only Big Ten university whose counseling website does not include a list of counseling staff. In fact, the CAPS website does not include even a number of counselors. The “About CAPS” webpage states³,

Counseling and Psychiatry Services are provided by staff from a wide range of professions, including care managers, social workers, licensed professional counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychiatric nurses.

This paragraph ([Figure 1](#)) contrasts with the “Meet Our Staff” pages found on *every other* Big Ten school’s counseling center’s online presence. (See, for example, [Figure 2](#) from the University of Michigan website.)

For the other Big Ten schools, the counseling services websites provide us with at least these details about each counselor:

- Name
- Degree (type, year, program, school)
- Position
- Interests/Specializations

See [Figure 3](#) in for an example of a minimally-detailed counselor summary from the Penn State counseling services.

More thorough staff listings may include these details:

- Picture
- Phone
- Email
- Therapy philosophies and styles

³ <https://caps.msu.edu/about-us/index.html>

- Professional or personal interests
- University involvement
- Pronouns
- Languages spoken

See [Figure 4](#) for a more thorough counselor summary from Ohio State University's Counseling and Consultation Service.

Emergency Services

MSU and the University of Iowa are the only Big Ten schools that do not provide an on-call counselor for 24/7 phone access. The University of Iowa, however, does provide 30-minute, same day, emergency appointments during business hours.

[Figure 5](#) summarizes the emergency phone lines provided specifically through the university's counseling services. Note that every center's website provides resources such as sexual assault hotlines and local hospital information.



Quantitative Comparison

The 2016 Keeling & Associates report found that the MSU Counseling Center's staff-to-student ratio in the 2014-2015 academic year was 1:5,000. To address this issue, Scott Becker, MSU Counseling Center Director, promised an improved ratio of 1:2,778 in March, 2017 for the 2017-2018 academic year. We compare this ratio to the current ratios of other Big Ten schools.

MSU's goal for a ratio of 2,778 students per counselor sets it at over 1,000 students per counselor more than the University of Maryland and over 2,000 more students per counselor than Northwestern University, the universities with the current highest and lowest ratios, respectively. See [Figure 6](#) for a full comparison.

Whether or not this goal ratio has even been met is unclear because of the opacity of staff information on the MSU CAPS website, but even if the goal has been met, the ratio is alarmingly higher than the 1,000-1,500 students per counselor recommendation by the International Association of Counseling Centers⁴.

⁴ <http://www.iacsinc.org/staff-to-student-ratios.html>



Future Research

Listed below are ideas for further analysis of these centers among the Big Ten schools:

1. Compare communication options for different counseling centers.
2. Compare response rates for different counseling centers and different communication.
3. Analyze connections between counseling centers and psychiatric services.
4. Retrieve information on the actual number of counselors at MSU⁵
5. Collect more anecdotal evidence of the quality of counseling services at MSU.
6. Quantify counseling center wait times at MSU in relation to other large universities.

⁵ A student requested this information through the MSU CAPS online contact form on January 24, 2018 and has not received a response as of February 11, 2018 despite the confirmation message stating “We will review your information within the next 2-3 business days.”

Figure 1

Who provides CAPS services?

Counseling and Psychiatry Services are provided by staff from a wide range of professions, including care managers, social workers, licensed professional counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychiatric nurses.

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MSU CAPS “staff list” (<https://caps.msu.edu/about-us/index.html>)

Figure 2

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STUDENT LIFE
COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Home ▾ Clinical Services ▾ Resources ▾ Outreach & Community Engagement ▾ A Complex World ▾ Especially For... ▾

Training Programs ▾

Meet Our Staff

Introduction

Welcome to our Meet the Staff pages -- we hope this information gives you a sense of "who we are" as well as "what we do". Our staff includes fully licensed professional staff in social work, psychiatry, and psychology. All CAPS clinicians identify as "generalists" and are comfortable working with issues such as anxiety, depression, eating concerns, family and relationship distress, hostility, substance abuse, and academic concerns, among others. Many of our staff also have specialized interests and expertise, which you can find in their individual biography pages below.

Diverse Staff

CAPS has a diverse staff with regard to race, ethnicity, country of origin, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, age, languages spoken, professional discipline, and intervention approaches that all contribute to providing excellent mental health services for students.
See: [CAPS Diversity Statement](#)


Contributing to the Campus and Profession of

2017

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CAPS

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University of Michigan “Meet Our Staff” page (<https://caps.umich.edu/article/meet-our-staff>)

Figure 3

Brendan Carr, Ph.D. (2016) Counseling Psychology, University of Georgia

Staff Psychologist

Interests: Working with student athletes

Minimal counselor information from Penn State (<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/counseling/staff.shtml>)

Figure 4

Alice Chi, Ph.D.

Title: Psychologist
Phone: 614-292-5766
Email: chi.155@osu.edu

Therapeutic Style:

As a trilingual (English, Mandarin, Spanish) therapist, I approach therapy from a psychodynamic perspective, giving importance to the cultural and developmental upbringing of each client. From this foundation, I incorporate techniques from other treatment modalities, including mindfulness-based practices, dialectical behavioral therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, expressive arts, and somatic practices. I also value the therapeutic relationship and present moment exchanges as avenue for change.

Supervision Style:

I have always believed that trust is one of the most important ingredients in a supervisory relationship. Along with trust, I strive to bring forth openness and acceptance to supervision because I believe safe and brave spaces allow supervisees to understand their style, strengths, and limitations. It is also through these shared spaces where I welcome feedback to better tailor my approach in facilitating the growth of each supervisee.

Professional Interests:

I am particularly interested in the intersection between family, culture, and food. My areas of expertise and interest include eating disorders, multicultural/bicultural identity formation, international students, first generation college students, and students of color.

Groups and Liaison Roles:

I facilitate 2 groups: [Graduate Student Group](#), which is a process group for graduate students; and [Surviving to Thriving](#), which is a group for survivors of sexual trauma. I am a liaison for Res Life (Brutus Area), and often partner with [Office of International Affairs \(OIA\)](#) and [Multicultural Center \(MCC\)](#).

Educational Background:


I received my Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from Palo Alto University. Prior to joining CCS, I completed my Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of California, Santa Cruz and my Predoctoral Internship at Columbia University Medical Center in New York City.

Personal Interests:

I practice yoga consistently to maintain a healthy spine and to find peace within. I also love salsa/bachata dancing, cooking, eating, sleeping, and catching up with friends/family who are far away on the phone.

My Pronouns:

She/Her



Alice Chi Ph.D.

Maximal counselor information from Ohio State University (<https://ccs.osu.edu/people/alice-chi>)

Figure 5

School	24/7 Counselor Hotline	24/7 Text Line
Indiana University	X	
University of Maryland	X	
University of Michigan	X	
Michigan State University		
Ohio State University	X	
Pennsylvania State University	X	X
Rutgers University	X	
University of Illinois	X	
University of Iowa		
University of Minnesota	X	X
University of Nebraska	X	
Northwestern University	X	
Purdue University	X	
University of Wisconsin	X	

Figure 6

