Ratio Subcommittee Report DRAFT

Introduction

In undertaking the work of the Taskforce specifically focused on ratios, the Ratio Subcommittee was asked to “examine…staffing ratios of counselors and students, including considering issues raised by a staffing ratio of no more than nine hundred students to one full-time equivalent [FTE] counselor.” In addition, pursuant to the guidance to the Taskforce, the Subcommittee report also includes data related to “each community college’s student-to-counselor ratio.”

Notwithstanding this introduction, this report is divided into three primary sections.

I. The first includes the findings in an expanded executive overview and summary, which includes committee details, a summary of findings, specific details on the ratio of 900:1 (per legislation), and cost implications;

II. The second provides the literature review that informed how we would approach the tasks of the subcommittee; and

III. The third presents the data and analyses that yielded the summary presented in the first section.

I. EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SUMMARY

A. Subcommittee Membership and Focus

The Subcommittee consisted of two Washington State Representatives, one community college faculty counselor, one community college vice president of learning and student success (instruction and student services), and one community college president. In addition, the committee was often supported by staff of the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges and other faculty counselors who were members of the Taskforce. Following the stated intent of examining ratios with regard to the community and technical colleges’ (CTCs) staffing to meet the mental health needs of students, the Subcommittee focused its work on examining ratios specific to mental health, though a broader analysis of comprehensive counseling is included throughout this evaluation.

The work of the Subcommittee involved two primary tasks:

1. Review of existing literature related to counselor ratios;

2. Collection and analysis of data related to counselor-to-student ratios;

Committee Members

Representative Lillian Ortiz-Self
Representative Robert Sutherland
Heidi Matlack, Counselor, Yakima Valley Community College
Sheila Edwards Lange, President, Seattle Central College
Matthew Campbell, Vice President of Learning & Student Success, Pierce College Puyallup


2 Ibid.
B. Summary of Considering a Ratio of 900:1
As demonstrated in the data and analyses below, considering a ratio of 900:1 is a complicated task. Of the 34 community and technical colleges:

- **Only 11 colleges achieve a ratio that is within 100 points of 900:1** across each of the categories, *excluding the service ratio* (a ratio of students served to the percent of counselor FTE dedicated to mental health service).\(^3\) Categories considered % of counseling FTE focused on mental health, overall counseling FTE, student FTE, and student headcount across multiple counseling models.

- **If we look to the service ratio, every college that reported data (excluding statistical outliers) is functioning within or well below the 900:1 ratio**, with an average well below 300:1, regardless of reporting individual students or total appointments. **However**, as mentioned above, it is unclear if this reflects need or capacity. Given the length of most academic terms (50 days), it is likely that service ratios above 250:1 are pushing a threshold of capacity for consistent and effective service. In most cases in the dataset, we believe these ratios were reported as unique students rather than appointments. A 250:1 service ratio would equate to roughly five student appointments per day for each day of the term. Thus, a ratio of 250:1 would provide limited opportunity for each student to have more than one appointment, which is quite common for students seeking mental health services. Further, such a ratio would likely prompt longer wait times for an appointment, particularly during high stress/anxiety times.

- **Depending on the variables used in the ratio analysis, mean ratios across the CTC system vary from 141:1 to 3566:1.** Thus, it is extremely important to examine the variable used in each examination (e.g. model type, FTE vs headcount, mental health focus, etc.).

- Additional takeaways/considerations can be found on Pages 10-11 of this report.

In summation, because the design of counseling service models varies, and because the needs of students vary, it may be ideal to explore a target service ratio rather than a more general ratio based on FTE (which averages students into an equivalency) or headcount (which presumes a consistent need across the total population of individual students). Further, location of college (i.e. rural, urban, suburban), particularly with regard to access to community mental health resources and the capacity of those resources, as well as model and focus on mental health are additional considerations. However, more research would be needed to confirm these interpretations, particularly within the CTC system. A cost analysis of 900:1 and 1250:1 is provided in the next section.

C. Overview of Cost Implications
One of the largest elements of this examination is to consider what would be required to achieve a ratio of 900:1. An estimate for 1250:1 is also included for comparison.

The **lowest cost estimate** would use the existing data in the service ratio and would suggest that the system has already met this ratio, notwithstanding statistical outliers (if the outliers were deemed to be accurate representations, those institutions would likely require funding to support 1.5-2.5 counseling FTE).

\(^3\) We saw this ratio used in some of the literature we reviewed and collected service data in the survey specific to the work of this Taskforce. Additional data and analysis of this ratio are included below.
If we use the highest cost estimate, which would use the ratio of Student Headcount to Counselor FTE x % Mental Health Focus, then all 34 colleges would require additional funding for between 1-12 counselors per college. The total salary cost for this would be estimated around $9.7-$10.3 million (plus the cost of benefits and other resources).\(^4\)

The intermediate cost estimate that maintains a focus on mental health is probably using the student FTE to Mental Health Counselor FTE. Using the same methodology as above, this reveals a salary need of roughly $6.3-$6.8 million (plus benefits/resource costs). This would support hiring between 80-85 mental health counselors across the system. To achieve a 1250:1 ratio on the FTE model would require $3.49 million (plus benefits/resources).\(^5\) It should be noted that these estimates are rounded to one decimal place for FTE. Funding to higher partial FTEs (particularly small fractions) could dramatically impact service model/design. A secondary model that rounds up to the nearest ½ FTE is included below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ratio</th>
<th>900:1 (unrounded)</th>
<th>900:1 (rounded)</th>
<th>1250:1 (unrounded)</th>
<th>1250:1 (rounded)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headcount to MH FTE</td>
<td>$9.72 million</td>
<td>$10.34 million</td>
<td>$5.71 million</td>
<td>$6.34 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTE to MH FTE</td>
<td>$6.28 million</td>
<td>$6.79 million</td>
<td>$3.49 million</td>
<td>$3.92 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Salary only; all amounts exclusive of benefits and other costs.*

In addition to salary costs, the dollar amounts above do not include costs for benefits, additional space required for providing confidential counseling services and the secure storage of protected files/documentation, ongoing professional learning needs, recruitment costs, and other elements requiring resources to fully implement.

**D. Summary Note**

It is important to note again the degree to which interpretation and philosophy have impacted the data reported by colleges (found below and summarized above). For example, some colleges indicated that they do not believe that advising is a counseling-related service, and thus only reported data related to the delivery of mental health services. Others believe in a more comprehensive model and reported data on a much broader spectrum of student services. Thus, interpretation and analyses of the data herein are particularly difficult with regard to clear conclusions that can be drawn. We have attempted to interpret the data to the best of our ability given the available resources and time constraints. Should the Legislature wish to explore this further, the ratio subcommittee and Taskforce undertaking this work recommend a more comprehensive exploration to clarify some of the new questions raised through this examination.

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\(^4\) This amount was calculated based on using the known average salary by college; then using those known salaries and contracted days to determine an average salary which was used for each of the colleges for which we did not have a specific salary, then these salaries were multiplied by the staffing gap and summed. The staffing gap was determined by (Student Headcount / 900) – (Student Headcount / Counselor MH FTE). Statistical outliers and colleges with missing data were calculated at the direct cost of Student Headcount / 900 without consideration of a gap.

\(^5\) This estimate removes negative funding to colleges at or above a 1250:1 FTE ratio.
II. REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE

While there are several published reports discussing counselor ratio in various educational sectors, few focus on counselor ratios in the CTC sector. That is, the literature is primarily focused either on a university-centric sector of higher education, or on ratios within the Preschool through 12th Grade (P12) sector. In addition, the higher education-focused reports primarily examined counseling in the context of mental health service delivery and not comprehensive models wherein counselors may have other student service duties not directly related to mental health services.

Two documents that specifically examined ratios in higher education included one from the International Accreditation of Counseling Services (IACS) and another was from the Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors (AUCCCD).

The IACS promotes itself as, “the only international organization that focuses solely on accrediting professional counseling centers on higher academic campuses.”\(^6\) While most CTCs across the country are not accredited through IACS, their development and promotion of standards represents a bar within higher education that can serve as guidance for institutions in shaping and providing professional counseling services. The IACS website maintains a page dedicated to counselor-to-student ratios. In their statement, they indicate a recommendation that the range of counselor-to-student ratio should be one to 1,000-1,500.\(^7\) They also note that the “average ratio of mental health professionals to students as reported in the National Survey of Counseling Center Directors (2013)\(^8\) is 1 to 1,600.”

The 2015 report from AUCCCD shows mean ratios across institutions ranging from 800-3500.\(^9\) An interesting note is that the trendline for counselor-to-student ratio increases as the size of the institution increases. This could point both to the cost of resources, monitoring of service need, or other variables. A second important note, as stated above, is that these data are largely representative of universities/four-year institutions; CTCs represented only 4% of respondents. Since forming this Taskforce, AUCCCD published their newest report including data from their 2018-2019 survey.\(^10\)

Interestingly, the 2019 Report separates out CTCs because they were outliers in the dataset. In the “Unique Number of Students Served by Center,” CTCs were an outlier because they served a lower number of students. However, there is no indication of whether this was due to lower demand, due to limited capacity, or another contributing factor. A related variable included in the 2019 report included the “percent of campus served by counseling services.” While this is not defined in the report, we interpreted this to be a service ratio equating to the number of students served to the total institutional FTE. Universities/four-year institutions reported an overall mean of 13.4% while the CTCs reported a mean of 3.8%. These means could be useful in determining an appropriate/ideal staffing level. The 2019 Report did not include ratios for CTCs.

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\(^6\) https://iacsinc.org/about/
\(^7\) https://iacsinc.org/staff-to-student-ratios/
\(^8\) It is unclear if they are referencing the survey conducted and published by AUCCCD as no citation is included in the statement.
In addition to these two data sources, we also consulted the overview of counseling models and ratios as compiled by the Washington Community and Technical College Counselor’s Association (WCTCCA),\textsuperscript{11} the 2004 dissertation by counselor and Taskforce member Earl Martin,\textsuperscript{13} and \textit{The Role of Counseling Faculty and Delivery of Services in California} (2012).\textsuperscript{14} While conveying a similar recommendation of 1:900, the documents highlight the 2003 survey of the California Community College system that reported a ratio of 1:1918.\textsuperscript{15}

Finally, given the close relationship of the CTCs to local school districts (most were funded through school districts until 1963), and given the large number of dual enrollment students attending CTCs, it is also worth noting literature pertaining to student-to-counselor ratios in the P12 system. While many university models are distinct in that they provide services through a dedicated clinic model, the P12 model also differs in the scope and nature of counseling, as well as some compulsory requirements that connect counselors with most students attending the school. And while the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) recommends a ratio of 1:250, its report on trends from 2004-5 to 2014-5 showed a national mean of 1:482, with Washington having a mean ratio over 500.\textsuperscript{16}

While the literature provides interesting insights into ratios and recommendations, information and guidance for community and technical colleges is a major shortcoming, especially given their unique, dynamic, and broadly diverse student population, their commitment to advancing racial equity both in education and in industry, and the contributions of the CTC sector to higher education and the workforce both directly and through transfer pathways.


\textsuperscript{12} The WCTCCA is an independent association of the WA CTC counselors. It is not a part of the WACTC organizational governance structure, though it does provide resources, support, and other professional guidance for counselors and others within the CTC system.


\textsuperscript{14} https://www.sbctc.edu/resources/documents/about/task-forces-work-groups/ctc-counselors/the-role-of-counseling-faculty-and-delivery-of-counseling-services-in-california.pdf

\textsuperscript{15} Page 3. As with some CTCs in Washington, all counselors in the California CTC system are part of a comprehensive service model.

\textsuperscript{16} https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/Publications/ratioreport.pdf
III. COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA RELATED TO COUNSELOR-TO-STUDENT RATIOS

As a fundamental part of the legislation and as referenced above, the Taskforce has been asked to report data on “each community college’s student-to-counselor ratio” and to consider the ratio of 900:1. To undertake this work, the Taskforce compiled a survey that was distributed to the presidents and chancellors of all 34 Washington CTCs, with the expectation that they would forward the survey to those responsible for implementing and supporting counseling services at their college(s). The survey included 44 questions and collected 100 fields of both quantitative and qualitative data to reveal staffing levels, credentials of those employees, the focus of their work, support for mental health counseling specifically, and promising practices and challenges faced across the system. The survey was constructed and deployed in SurveyMonkey, which allows for easy submission of online responses and for the collection and analyses of the data collected. The data received responses from all (100%) of the CTCs.

While the Taskforce aimed to create a simple survey, the design of counseling services at each college can be complex, particularly at larger colleges. Thus, there is not a simple calculation of a college’s headcount or FTE to the number of counseling staff FTE, especially when considering the degree to which each counselor is dedicated to serving the mental health needs of students specifically. In addition, many counselors are supported in their work through other professional staff (i.e. academic advisors, success coaches, educational planners, career navigators, etc., as well as interns or other counseling staff who may be earning a credential). Thus, there is some complexity in reporting each community college’s student-to-counselor ratio.

A. Counseling Model

We identified four primary models for counseling services across the CTCs:

- a. Faculty Counselors focused on comprehensive counseling services (personal, educational and career counseling);
- b. Faculty Counselors focused primarily on clinical mental health services;
- c. A mix of comprehensive and mental health dedicated counselors;
- d. Referral/partnering with an external provider/community network (no in-house counselors);

Eighteen (18) colleges reported having (a) a comprehensive model for counseling.

Five (5) of these did not provide sufficient data for complete the ratio analyses.

Thirteen (13) colleges reported having (b) dedicated mental health counselors.

Some of these reported having additional counselors who do not focus on mental health (c).

Two (2) colleges reported having no counselors (d).

However, one is co-located with a university counseling center to which students are referred.

In addition, two (2) colleges reported having counselors who do no mental health counseling.

B. Ratios

Points of consideration for reporting ratios include:

1. In examining ratios, we thought it was important to provide information related to both the model and the degree of mental health focus;

2. In these contexts, ratios are reported for counseling FTE to student FTE and counseling FTE to student headcount.

   a. There is little or no efficiency in serving counseling needs of part-time students compared to serving full-time students; indeed, part-time students may need additional support.

   b. However, national ratios are generally reported as an FTE to FTE ratio.

3. We have also included a service ratio.
a. We do not have enough information to determine whether the service ratio is fully meeting need or if it represents capacity at current staffing levels.

b. However, it is perhaps the most interesting data point, especially in looking at comparisons across the system.

4. Finally, there is not an analysis of need based on institution type or location (e.g. community college, technical college, rural, urban, suburban, large institution, small institution, etc.).

C. Data Reporting
Column 1: College
Column 2: College Student FTE
Column 3: Ratio of Student FTE to Total Counselor FTE
Column 4: Ratio of Student FTE to Counselor FTE x % Mental Health Focus
Column 5: College Student Headcount
Column 6: Ratio of Student Headcount to Total Counselor FTE
Column 7: Ratio of Student Headcount to Counselor FTE x % Mental Health Focus
Column 8: Ratio of Students Served to Counselor FTE x % Mental Health Focus (Quarterly Service Ratio)

(All ratios, FTE, and headcounts are reported as quarterly numbers. Winter 2020 data for student FTE and headcounts were used in these calculations. There tend to be more students in Fall, and fewer in Spring, though there tend to be spikes in counseling needs in Spring and to some degree Winter. Future analyses could use a more nuanced approach to represent FTE and headcount).

The bottom includes a mean of the entire column, as well as a mean that removes statistical outliers. Statistical outliers were calculated using a basic interquartile range methodology to identify upper and lower bounds. It is unclear if the outliers in this sample are related to a misreporting of data or a distinctly different staffing structure.

Ratios in the Comprehensive Model
The following chart includes the colleges that self-identified as having a comprehensive counseling model.

- Generally, in addition to mental health counseling, counselors are hired to undertake academic, career, and personal counseling.
- At least two of these colleges indicated that their counselors do not undertake any mental health counseling.
- Others indicated that while their counselors strive to meet the mental health needs of students, they are not hired to do this specifically and licensure is not a requirement.
- All 18 colleges have additional support for counselors, primarily in the form of separate/supporting academic advising centers, faculty mentors/advisors, or others who contribute to student academic and career planning and goal-setting. Six of the colleges indicated they do not have additional support, but this was likely a misinterpretation of the survey given evidence to the contrary from the college/college website.
- Please note that the ratios included below do not factor any additional support offered through these additional faculty/staff.
For all Washington colleges using a comprehensive model:

- The student to counselor ratio using total FTEs ranges from 89 – 2058 students to 1 counselor; the mean ratio for these colleges is 752 to 1.
- The student to counselor ratio when considering % of mental health and FTE ranges from 955 – 8088 students to 1 counselor; the mean ratio is 3319 to 1.
  - Colleges with high ratios reported that MH counseling is not the focus of their counselors, but that they support crisis intervention with quick referral as necessary. They often report about 10% focused on mental health.
  - Colleges with ** indicated that less than 20% of counselor time is dedicated to mental health services.
  - Colleges with * indicated that more 75% or more of their counselor time is dedicated to mental health services.
- Additional details for student headcount to counselor FTE can be seen below.
- For institutions that reported their tracked appointments per quarter, ratios ranged from 65 to 817 students to 1 counselor, with a mean of 295 to 1.
  - These data are a mix of unduplicated headcount (individual students) and total appointments (which included multiple appointments supporting the same student). This helps explain the large variance in the data.
  - Most institutions have a limit of appointments before referring to outside resources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comprehensive Model Institution</th>
<th>Student FTE</th>
<th>Student FTE to Total Counselor FTE</th>
<th>Student FTE to MH Counselor FTE</th>
<th>Student Headcount to Total Counselor FTE</th>
<th>Student Headcount to MH Counselor FTE</th>
<th>Quarterly Counselor Service Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Big Bend Community College**</td>
<td>1741</td>
<td>580.3</td>
<td>2901.7</td>
<td>2201.0</td>
<td>733.7</td>
<td>3668.3</td>
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<td>Centralia College**</td>
<td>2471</td>
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<td>2609.0</td>
<td>521.8</td>
<td>5218.0</td>
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<td>Clover Park Technical College**</td>
<td>4044</td>
<td>970.2</td>
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<td>3275.0</td>
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<td>6550.0</td>
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<td>Columbia Basin College*</td>
<td>5967</td>
<td>156.3</td>
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<td>575.0</td>
<td>1714.4</td>
<td>257.0</td>
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<td>Grays Harbor College**</td>
<td>1873</td>
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<td>Outlier: 12486.7</td>
<td>1792.0</td>
<td>1792.0</td>
<td>Outlier: 11946.7 Outlier: 2000</td>
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<td>7074</td>
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<td>Lower Columbia College*</td>
<td>2988</td>
<td>Outlier: 2718.8</td>
<td>3515.3</td>
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<td>2757.0</td>
<td>3243.5</td>
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<td>4240</td>
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<td>5900.0</td>
<td>2950.0</td>
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<td>Olympic College**</td>
<td>5468</td>
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<td>Null 227.0</td>
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<td>Walla Walla Community College</td>
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<td>Wenatchee Valley College*</td>
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<td>1515.5</td>
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<td>1567.0</td>
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<td>6963.1</td>
<td>4562.0</td>
<td>701.8</td>
<td>7018.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Means: 1487.0 3821.6 1434.0 3991.5 571.1
Outlier Adjusted Mean: 751.9 3318.7 1434.0 3566.0 295.3
Ratios in the Primarily Clinical Mental Healthcare Model

The following chart includes the thirteen colleges that self-identified as having a counseling model in which counselors are hired primarily to provide mental health counseling services to students. Note that the Pierce College District represents two colleges (Pierce College Fort Steilacoom and Pierce College Puyallup) with consolidated data.

- Generally, **specific counselors are hired to provide mental health services almost exclusively.**
- Some of these colleges hire additional counseling staff to undertake other counseling/counseling-related services, such as career counseling. These additional counseling staff are included in Columns 3 and 6.
- **All 13 colleges have additional support for counselors,** primarily in the form of separate/supporting academic advising centers, faculty advisors, or others who contribute to student academic and career planning and goal-setting. Two of the colleges indicated they do not have additional support, but this was likely a misinterpretation of the survey as revealed in other survey responses and information available on college websites.
- As above, **ratios included below do not factor non-counselor additional support** offered through these additional faculty/staff.

For all Washington colleges using a dedicated mental health model:

- The **student to counselor ratio using total FTEs ranges from 747 – 2673 students to 1 counselor; the mean ratio for these colleges is 1493 to 1.**
- The student to counselor ratio when considering % of mental health and FTE ranges from 1010 – 3064 students to 1 counselor; the mean ratio is 1907 to 1.
- Additional details for student headcount to counselor can be seen below.
- All institutions reported their **tracked services per quarter. Ratios ranged from 18 to 330 students to 1 counselor, with a mean of 141 to 1.**
  - These data are a mix of unduplicated headcount (individual students) and total appointments (which included multiple appointments supporting the same student. This helps explain the large variance in the data.
  - Most institutions have a limit of appointments (generally between three to six appointments) before referring to outside resources.
- There were no outliers in the entire dataset for this model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dedicated Model Institution</th>
<th>College FTE</th>
<th>Student FTE to Total Counselor FTE</th>
<th>Student FTE to MH Counselor FTE</th>
<th>Student Headcount to Total Counselor FTE</th>
<th>Student Headcount to MH Counselor FTE</th>
<th>Quarterly Counselor Service Ratio</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>2673.0</td>
<td>2673.0</td>
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<td>3910.0</td>
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<td>Bellevue College</td>
<td>10034</td>
<td>1254.3</td>
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<td>1806.6</td>
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<td>Bellingham Technical College</td>
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<td>1385.0</td>
<td>1385.0</td>
<td>2097</td>
<td>2097.0</td>
<td>132.0</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>1493.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>1907.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>2025.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>2563.0</strong></td>
<td><strong>141.2</strong></td>
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</table>
**Colleges with Alternative Models**

Three colleges identified alternative models to those listed above. The nature of their model does not allow for an assessment of ratios as included in this report, specifically as related to mental health counseling.

- Cascadia College partners with the University of Washington Bothell Counseling Center to serve the mental health needs of students. The model is most similar to the clinical mental health model and they serve roughly 150 students per term.

- Lake Washington Institute of Technology indicated that none of the models applied to them, thus no data were collected. However, the college website does indicate a dedicated mental health counselor who generally provides up to five sessions for short-term mental health support, followed by referrals. It is unclear whether there are additional counselors that provide other services, though the college does provide advising through navigators and other student support staff.

- Skagit Valley College has primarily served student mental health needs through referrals to community partners. However, they have recently hired a faculty counselor who has begun employment at the college this term (Fall 2020). The college has additional faculty counselors who provide direct student support through academic, career, and personal counseling, curriculum design and teaching of College Success Skills courses, and limited crisis intervention and referral. In addition, these services are supported by both exempt navigators and faculty advisors. Because of the selection of the referral model for mental health support, additional data on counselor support were not gathered.

**D. Key Takeaways of Ratio and Model Analyses**

In considering the data above, three key takeaways/considerations emerged:

1. While there are substantial differences between colleges with regard to ratios of counselors to students, as well as differences depending on the model, the **clearest ratio of Student FTE to Counselor FTE reveals an average ratio between 752 – 1493 to 1** (excluding statistical outliers).

2. In considering **mental health counseling specifically, mean ratios vary between 1907:1 when considering FTE, to 3366:1 when evaluating headcount**. However, when looking at the **service ratio of Students to Mental Health FTE, ratios are dramatically smaller, with means ranging from 141 – 295 to 1**. Indeed, the highest ratio in this category is 467:1 (excluding statistical outliers).

3. **None of the ratios included in this report are offset by the support for tasks that might be considered counseling/counseling-related**, including work such as career counseling and more broadly including academic advising. Every institution surveyed provides additional support in these areas that are provided by other employees, whether classified, exempt, or faculty, or combinations of these classifications. Indeed, between the two primary models, it is common for those with a primarily mental health focused model to have fewer counselors performing non-mental health-related duties, which can account for the substantially higher ratios when considering student populations to total counselors, and substantially lower ratios when considering student populations to total mental health counselors specifically.
These points lean heavily on the average ratios across the system. However, there are also data that reveal huge ratios, especially if outliers are considered. *The differences in how we look at the data are not to be ignored.*

As an example, Tacoma Community College (TCC), a medium- to large-sized college with a substantial part-time enrollment, employs six counselors who dedicate an estimated 40% of their time to specifically serving individual mental health needs of students (other time is spent supporting classes/workshops, session follow-up, professional development, etc.).

- Generally, TCC has a ratio of 335:1 when considering Student FTE to Counselor FTE.
- However, when examining the number of students on campus (headcount) to the total counseling FTE dedicated solely to mental health services, that ratio jumps to 2601:1.
- Yet, the service ratio for TCC, which represents total tracked appointments (rather than individual students served), shows a quarterly ratio of 235:1. This ratio suggests roughly 4-5 appointments per day.

**E. Summary Note**

Finally, it is important to emphasize the degree to which interpretation and philosophy have impacted the data reported by colleges. For example, some colleges indicated that they do not believe that advising is a counseling-related service, and thus only reported data related to the delivery of mental health services. Others believe in a more comprehensive model and reported data on a much broader spectrum of student services. Thus, interpretation and analyses of the data herein are particularly difficult with regard to clear conclusions that can be drawn. We have attempted to interpret the data to the best of our ability to give the available resources and time constraints. *Should the Legislature wish to explore this further, the ratio subcommittee and Taskforce undertaking this work recommends a more comprehensive exploration to clarify some of the new questions raised through this examination.*