

## **A History of the Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors**

This history is dedicated to all directors, past, present, and future, most of whom will go nameless in this text, but all of whom will have contributed to this narrative by virtue of their support, their ideas, their beliefs, their strong and clear voices, and their open hearts and minds. They have made this organization what it has been, what it is, and what it will be in the coming years.

### **Foreword**

The task of recording the history of an organization requires that decisions be made from the very outset. Answers to the following questions are important: What is the purpose of the project? Who is the intended audience? What sources of relevant information are available?

In this instance, the intent is to describe the developmental changes that have occurred in a group of representatives from institutions of higher education whose professional role it has been to provide support, guidance, and leadership for campus counseling centers and/or mental health units. Over time, this group has changed structurally, demographically, and culturally. Some of those changes are more apparent, well-defined, and easy to identify; other changes are more subtle in nature and become more apparent only with the passage of time. All such changes have influenced the journey that the Association for University and College Counseling Directors (AUCCCD) has taken over many decades.

The authors of this document intend to trace the history of what is now AUCCCD from its roots to its present form. It is important, we believe, to capture such history so that those who serve as representatives of their institutions understand what and who has gone before them. The primary sources of information will be drawn from the available proceedings of the annual conferences, minutes of steering committee meetings, and numerous kinds of reports that have been authorized by AUCCCD on a wide variety of topics. Using this methodology, the result will more likely reflect an objective historical document which will serve to inform all who have served, or will serve, as representatives of their institutions in the work of advancing mental health services in higher education. The more subjective interpretations of the AUCCCD history will be left to those who read the document and/or have lived through parts of this history.

To begin, a statement that was written in 2004 by Judy Mack, an Emeritus Director from the University of California at Davis, provides a context for what will follow in this history:

*The Association of College Counseling Center Directors (AUCCCD) was established in 1950 by a group of mid-western college and university counseling directors. Dr. Ralph Birdie, director of the Student Counseling Bureau at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis hosted the first conference on the UM campus. Annual meetings were hosted throughout the 1950s by several universities including the University of Illinois, Michigan State, The Ohio State University, State University of Iowa, University of Missouri, and the University of Minnesota. In the early days, the organization was referred to as the Annual Conference of College and University Counseling Directors. Conference attendance was based on invitation from participants and grew over time as directors around the country developed collegial relationships with each other. Initially membership was primarily drawn from mid-western institutions, but eventually the annual conference became a national affiliation of directors.*

*Following World War II, counseling centers were established in response to the educational and vocational needs of returning veterans. Directors were pioneering the development of organized counseling units and recognized their need to "talk shop" - to exchange information with each other and to develop a practical knowledge base on how to best to serve students. They gathered to discuss organizational issues, to share experience about how to work effectively with campus administration, and to discuss the nature of the work with students. An integral part of the annual meeting was the opportunity to develop and nourish collegial friendships through work and recreation in a restful setting.*

*Directors valued the opportunity to discuss confidential matters with their colleagues and trusted one another with sensitive details that they could not process with fellow administrators on their own campus. Directors were challenged with issues such as managing relations with campus administration and faculty who could be skeptical of the value of counseling students as well as issues related to the management of their staff. Conference attendance was restricted to directors with staffs of at least three full-time equivalents (FTE) to create a confidential environment for consultation.*

*The annual conference provided the opportunity for both formal and ad hoc presentations, roundtable discussions, and individual consultation. The group was loosely organized as a "non-organization" with a minimum of bureaucracy, and the pivotal activity was the annual meeting. A steering committee was elected annually to manage routine business, and a conference host was chosen from among competing institutions during the conference business meeting.*

*The formal structure of AUCCCD as we now know it, developed slowly through the 1980s with the decision to revise the organization's By-laws and to incorporate as a non-profit organization. Throughout the 1990s several initiatives have been undertaken to develop a formal organizational structure to advance the business of AUCCCD as a national professional organization, and to put significant emphasis on advocating on behalf of counseling and psychological issues in higher education. Conference membership increased considerably after the 3 FTE restriction was lifted in the 1990's.*

*Membership in AUCCCD is institutional with one director being selected to represent the member college or university. We have experienced significant growth with our current membership of over 900 universities and colleges throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia.*

### **The Beginnings**

As noted by Judy Mack, the first meetings of what was then a small group of counseling center directors were marked by their informal nature. As a result, it is challenging to find formal records of the earliest annual meetings, other than to identify the host institution and the geographic location. No recorded agendas or minutes have been found, which may be understandable given the emphasis on having collegial and private meetings among professional peers without an organizational structure.

Given the above, it is still possible to draw some conclusions about the early history of the organization. For example, it appears that the first meetings were hosted by directors who invited the group to their home institutions or nearby locations. A listing of conference hosts and locations can be found on the AUCCCD website ([www.aucccd.org](http://www.aucccd.org)).

Though it is unconfirmed, it is likely that the host of the annual meeting also served as the leader of the organization and the treasurer of the group for the given year. Those responsibilities would then be passed to the next host and institution. It was not until 1969 that the designated chair of the organization led the annual meeting at a location that was not at the chair's home institution. The records show that Harry Canon of Northern Illinois University led both the 1969 meeting in Berkeley, California that was hosted by Barbara Kirk (University of California, Berkeley) and the 1970 meeting in Lexington, Kentucky that was hosted by Harriet Rose (University of Kentucky). It appears that is the point where the chairperson of the group was not necessarily the host of the annual meeting and suggests that there was some division of labor within what was still considered a "non-organization."

Despite its' informal structure, it appears there were some opportunities to advance the collective welfare of the group. Perhaps the best example of that was begun in 1965 when the **Counseling Center Data Bank** was established at the University of Maryland. This annual survey provided counseling center directors with national and comparative data that proved invaluable to their efforts to gain support for their units. The types of item content included the number and types of staff members, their degree levels, the caseload of counselors, types and numbers of students served, budgetary funding and sources, the extent of teaching and carrying of academic rank, salary data, trends in center services and suggestions for items to be included in the following year's Data Bank. For many years thereafter, access to this Data Bank was one of the primary advantages of membership in the group and a presentation by Tom Magoon of the University of Maryland about the results of the latest survey was a standard part of every conference schedule.

The first conference proceedings that are available for review were published after the 1973 meeting in Morgantown, West Virginia, (James Carruth serving as host) with Tom Magoon of the University of Maryland acting as the chairperson. The minutes of that meeting show that there were 186 registered participants, including thirty-five spouses. The main agenda items were focused on the election of members to the steering committee (with twenty-five nominated individuals on the ballot for three open positions) and the selection of the next conference host. It deserves note, however, that Milt Foreman of the University of Cincinnati reported that Division 17 of the American Psychological Association had established a task force to create accreditation standards that would be germane to counseling centers and Roy Warman of Iowa State University explained how the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS) was developing accreditation standards for university and college counseling centers. The minutes of the meeting were provided by Harriett Rose of the University of Kentucky, who noted "In record time and with typical Magoon dispatch and éclat, the meeting was adjourned."

Another item of note from the 1973 conference is found in the minutes of the Steering Committee. Bill Chestnut of Indiana University raised concern about the non-organization status of the group as being "a weak position," presumably in relation to other organizations of higher education professionals. The minutes reflected "Much discussion but no resolution to any particular action."

Throughout the 1970s, the number of member institutions that held membership in the group grew steadily and some features of the annual meetings moved into the category of traditions. For example, one afternoon was reserved as "open," allowing for conference participants to explore the local attractions. Relationships among conference attendees were enhanced through friendly competitions (e.g., golf outings and fun runs), visits to local restaurants, and other impromptu gatherings of old and new colleagues. Similarly, a banquet for all participants, featuring local entertainment, would become the featured event on one evening of each conference.

It is also notable that Beulah Hedahl of the University of North Dakota was the first female to be elected as Chair of the Steering Committee for the 1975-1976 term.

At the 1977 meeting, steps were taken to define what would constitute various sub-groups that were emerging within the organization. Definitions were adopted as follows:

1. An **interest group** allows for mutual and informal sharing, with a chairperson making a brief report at the annual meeting. An interest group could become a task force through consultation with the Steering Committee.
2. A **task force** has a specific charge, with a report at the annual conference with any recommendations printed in the Proceedings. The Steering Committee had the authority to appoint a task force and the responsibility for coordinating the work of all such groups.

One of the first efforts to diversify the membership may have occurred in 1979, when it decided to send invitations for memberships to the directors of twenty-three “predominantly Black institutions” who had responded to a questionnaire from the group about their interest in an affiliation. At the same time, the Steering Committee (Roy Warman, Chairperson, Iowa State University) reconfirmed the policy that membership should be extended only to directors at institutions with three or more full-time equivalent (FTE) professional staff. Exceptions, however, could be made for any current member who did not meet that criterion.

Another organizational issue that emerged around this time was the relationship of AUCCCD to other groups of professionals in the field. At first, informal liaisons with groups such as the Association of Psychology Internships (now the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers at [www.appic.org](http://www.appic.org)) and the Association of Counseling Center Training Agencies (ACCTA at [www.ACCTA.net](http://www.ACCTA.net)) depended on directors who were members of both AUCCCD and these other groups to provide information exchanges. Such arrangements were formalized in 1979 when the Steering Committee stated that it would appoint liaisons with an expectation that they would “assume an active role in contacting the designated professional group and will attempt to attend appropriate meetings and/or be informed about issues.....to be reported back to AUCCCD at the annual meeting.” To reinforce this new outreach effort, the chairperson of the Steering Committee then sent a letter to each organization, explaining what AUCCCD represents and asking them to extend courtesies to the appointed liaisons. Additional liaisons in the 1980s included the American College Health Association (ACHA), the American College Personnel Association (ACPA) Commission VII on Counseling, the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS), and the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS).

### **The Developmental Years: 1980s and 1990s**

In response to what heretofore appeared to be an investment in informality and nominal organizational structure, the 1980s and 1990s were marked by a surge in efforts to establish an organization destined to become a force in the broad university landscape on the national level. The tipping point would appear to have occurred in the early 1980s and is continuing to the present.

By 1980, 279 colleges and universities were members of the group with 186 of those sending a representative to the annual conference. The annual dues for a counseling center were \$25, with \$15 of that being designated to support the operation of the Data Bank housed at the University of Maryland and created by Tom Magoon. The Steering Committee (John Bishop, Chairperson) noted that all institutions paid the same dues and had the opportunity to participate in the Data Bank, even though many were not allowed to send their directors to the annual meetings because of the 3 FTE requirement. The effect, intentional or not, created a two-tiered level of membership that denied smaller counseling centers the full benefits of the group. In addition, more reports were emerging where institutions questioned the appropriateness of paying dues to a group that did not appear to be a recognized organization. As an apparent response to this situation, some directors chose to submit personal checks for the annual dues, while institutional reimbursements for the cost of travel to the annual meetings were also reportedly being challenged. Understandably, these dilemmas fueled the discussions about the need to create a more traditional organization structure.

It should be noted that a new name for the group emerged before a different organizational structure was proposed. The 1980 conference was the first to be hosted by a collection of schools (Holy Cross College, Boston College, Suffolk University, Tufts University, the Coast Guard Academy, and the University of Rhode Island) rather than a single institution. In the effort to establish an accounting system to manage the funds for the conference, Matt Toth of Holy Cross contacted a local bank that suggested that a free checking account could be established “if the group had an impressive name.” The Steering Committee decided that the **Association of University and College Counseling Centers Directors (AUCCCD)** was impressive enough to serve that purpose.

So, what is in a name? As noted above, the original name of the organization used “of” as a preposition in the title of the organization. Currently, the organization uses “for” as a conjunction in its title. Whether that slight change in name was a part of the discussion/debate when the Bylaws were adopted in 1984 or just an editorial preference exercised by an individual contributor who may have helped write a draft of the Bylaws is unknown and not recorded in the available documents.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, AUCCCD gradually grew in membership and diversified in a variety of ways. For example, the 153 members who attended the 1979 annual conference had grown to a total of 276 attendees by 2001. A major change, however, was that the representation of female directors increased dramatically from 6.5% to 46.0% during this time span. In addition, the emergence of a variety of communication options (i.e., email and other technological advances), allowed for an improved and nimble communication network that eased information exchange among the membership. These co-occurring factors, together with the determined efforts of organizational leaders and a committed membership, contributed to a climate of readiness to formally organize and structure a professional organization in service to counseling center directors.

Primary evidence of the formalization of AUCCCD can be found in the Annual Conference Proceedings that were generated by each host committee from the mid-eighties through the nineties. The Proceedings provided detail on each annual conference and were distributed to all attendees. Copies of many of these documents are available on the AUCCCD website for members of the organization. In addition to background materials from each conference presentation, workshop and panel, proceedings from the conference business meetings (plenary sessions open to all attendees) and executive board meetings (limited to the AUCCCD President, members of the board and select invitees) were included in the Proceedings. The following chronology relies primarily on the available Conference Proceedings to reflect the tenor of the times on our campuses and the evolution of AUCCCD.

Common to each of the Conference Proceedings from the 1980s and 1990s were reports on various task forces, formed in response to concerns germane to counseling centers. For example, task forces represented at the 1985 Saratoga conference were the following:

1. **Accountability Task Force** (chaired by Dorothy Foster, University of Oklahoma and Clarke Carney, Ohio State University). The primary task of this group was to develop *a common description of presenting problems and problem severity*, to be used as a standard for broad use by university counseling centers. This early effort underscored our understanding of the value and desirability of comparative clinical data as the means to understand trends in the concerns of our clients.

2. **IACS/AUCCCD Task Force on Women** (chaired by Nancy Carlson, University of Rhode Island). Partnering with the International Association of Counseling Services, Inc., (IACS) this task force was established following concerns for women students on campus. Focal points included clinical services for women, training and in-service programs, and assistance to counseling services in conducting Title IX reviews.

3. **Crisis Task Force** (chaired by James Groccia, Worcester Polytechnic Institute and Bob McGrath, University of Missouri). Responding to campus crises in their various forms, the Crisis Task Force initiated efforts to develop a casebook on crisis intervention strategies, as well as a proposed listing of directors available for telephone consultation following campus crises at other institutions.

4. **Training Task Force** (chaired by Wes Morrill, University of Utah). This task force addressed the role of professional training offered by counseling centers. The task force contributed to a national conference on “Issues and Concerns of Graduate Education in Psychology.”

In the 1980s, support for additional select groups was offered. For example, the **New Directors Workshop** was established to meet the needs of new directors attending their first conference (organized by Steve Mullinax, University of Pennsylvania). Among other special interests served by AUCCCD were the **Suicide Assessment and Intervention interest Group** (coordinator Milton Foreman, University of Cincinnati), the **Legal Issues Interest Group** (coordinator, Bob Gallagher, University of Pittsburgh), and the **Small Counseling Center Interest Group** (co-chairs Janet Counce, Quinnipiac College and Larry Phillips, Franklin Pierce College).

An important development occurred in 1981 when Robert Gallagher of the University of Pittsburgh started conducting the **National Survey of Counseling Center Directors (NSCCD)**. It began as a project of the Urban Task Force, with Milt Foreman of the University of Cincinnati and Gerald Osborne of the University of Houston serving as co-chairpersons. The stated purpose of this annual survey was to track current trends in counseling centers and provide directors with access to the opinions and proposed responses of their colleagues to the problems and challenges in the field. Initially, only urban counseling centers were surveyed but, beginning in 1983, nonurban institutions were included as well.

A significant moment in AUCCCD history was the advancement of the association Bylaws, presented at the Annual Conference in New Orleans in 1984. In addition to formalizing the name of the organization as the **Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors (AUCCCD)**, the Bylaws addressed, among other things, the Purpose of AUCCCD:

*The purpose shall be to serve as a forum for Directors of Counseling Centers to discuss issues which bear directly on students' development and adjustment in higher education and higher education's means of fostering such development. Active participation in AUCCCD assures its members continuing professional education to deliver effective counseling services in four year and graduate institutions.*

Additional Bylaws addressed **Membership** (a minimum of three FTE staff at four-year institutions only), **Dues**, the establishment of an **Officer** (designated as chair of the Steering Committee and elected by other members of that group), the **Steering Committee** (elected by the membership for two-year terms), and the duties of each. Finally, annual meetings were formalized, and the array of Task Forces and Liaison representatives were outlined. The organization was intent on holding fast to its commitment to minimal membership expenses, given traditionally meager counseling center budgets for many would-be members. As evidence of the same, the steering committee announced at the October 15, 1987, Business Meeting (Rockport, ME) that dues for the upcoming year were set at \$35 per institution (\$20 for the data bank, \$10 for the conference written proceedings, and \$5 general dues).



Through the mid-eighties the organization was, to be sure, operating on a shoestring. That said, brighter days were on the horizon when Marvalene Styles (San Diego State University.) announced to the membership that last years' conference would yield approximately \$10,000 in profits! By 1989, it was reported at the Philadelphia Conference that the existing budget figure was up to \$21,220, following consecutive yearly increases in conference surpluses. As a result of firmly establishing funding sources, the Steering Committee agreed to pursue a Tax ID for the AUCCCD account.

Another notable development occurred in 1988, when the Steering Committee informed the membership that, due to their value and merit, "retired directors are eligible to continue their affiliation and to participate in the annual conference" as honorary members of the organization.

Given the extensive array of conference topics likely to meet the requirements of state professional accreditation bodies for continuing education (CE), Steering Committee Chair James Archer (University of Florida) outlined the costs (\$750 for application/activation fees, \$250 annual fee) and the "considerable paperwork" involved. Dennis Heitzmann (Pennsylvania State University) undertook that task and, on May 14, 1991, AUCCCD was granted a five-year full approval by the American Psychological Association. As AUCCCD grew and the professional identities of director members continued to diversify, additional accreditation CE options were added to include social workers and licensed professional counselors.

With the introduction of email technology, a considerably more robust platform for communication with colleague directors followed. As a result, email exchanges among directors quickly became the primary form of communication among colleagues. In addition to finding value in individual email exchanges, directors soon realized the value of a listserv to share ideas, information, and concerns quickly, broadly, and simultaneously with the broad spectrum of directors. Before long, the **Counseling Center Directors' Listserv**, originally managed by Michigan State University under the leadership of Gordon Williams, was formed as the official AUCCCD communication format, open to any university or college counseling center that is a member of AUCCCD. What followed (after a few awkward public exchanges prompted by a failure to distinguish between "reply" and "reply all"!) was a set of guidelines for use of the **Listserv**. In 2000, the responsibility for hosting the Listserv moved to UCLA under the leadership of Elizabeth Gong-Guy before it was subsequently moved to the management firm of CMC Global in 2007.

Throughout this period, technological changes in processing and transmitting data and information continued to evolve at a dizzying pace. Steve Brown and Kip Matthews of the University of Georgia were officially credited with serving as the hosts for the first AUCCCD website. Realizing the opportunities for advancing the organization's mission, several directors offered conference programs on topics designed to harness the energy of planned change and technological development. For instance, programs at the 1995 Newport, RI conference included Health Resources on the Internet, and The Web as a Developmental, Self-Help Tool for Counseling Centers.

Of greater importance, and reflecting the tenor of the times, programming for the 1990 conference (San Antonio) was organized around seven key themes, with contributions from many notable directors at the time:

1. Counseling Services for Ethnic Students. Coordinator: Rosie Bingham (Memphis State University).
2. AIDS and Related Issues and Services. Coordinator: Gary Neal (Trinity University).
3. Time Specified Therapy. Coordinator: Tom Magoon (University of Maryland).
4. Managerial Issues. Coordinator: Dave Drum (University of Texas).
5. Group Work. Coordinator: Jack Corazzini (Virginia Commonwealth University).
6. Alcohol and Drug Services. Coordinator: Don Paulson (Idaho State University).
7. Training Coordinator: Stewart Cooper (Valparaiso University).

The 1990s saw the continued refinement of the organizational structure of AUCCCD, led by James Archer (University of Florida) and Rosie Bingham (Memphis State University), who offered scheduled (but informal) Open Forums at consecutive conferences, where ideas were shared and feedback from the membership was encouraged. In addition, open forums for small and large centers were established to allow for a sharing of mutual concerns related to institutional size. Co-occurring at the same conferences were several scheduled luncheons and other focused informal gatherings for select groups, (i.e., Minority Directors, New Directors and first-time attendees, Women Directors, Catholic Colleges and Universities), as the organization made efforts to be more inclusive and recognize its growing diversity. For example, during this time, the Minority Directors Lunch was started by Vivian Boyd (University of Maryland), Teresa Branch (Arizona State University) and Vivian Jackson (Illinois State University).

In 1992, a Task force led by Donna Walsh (Ithaca College) was appointed to re-examine the 3.0 FTE requirement for membership in the AUCCCD. This set the stage for the criteria for membership to be eventually changed in the Bylaws to eliminate any FTE requirement.

From time to time, surveys on topics of importance were developed to determine the will of the membership in advancing the mission of AUCCCD, and/or its position on emergent social issues. For example, the results of the Governing Board Membership Survey, designed and distributed in 1992 by John Bishop (University of Delaware), Diana Pace (Grand Valley State University) and Jeff Pollard (Denison University), indicated a growing concern related to the passage of Amendment Two in Colorado. The latter was an effort by the legislature of Colorado “to set legal limits on the protection of homosexual behavior.”

Concerns expressed by the respondents to the survey, particularly in view of the upcoming 1993 Keystone, CO conference, shed light on the absence of a clear AUCCCD policy on explicit advocacy for human rights. During the year preceding the Keystone conference, President Jim Clack explored member sentiment on the issue, and members Diana Pace (State University of New York at Buffalo) and Louise Douce (Ohio State University) led the effort to highlight member concerns and to pursue an AUCCCD position on advocacy.

After consulting various resources, and following considerable deliberation, the Keystone conference proceeded, with select programming reflecting gay person student rights and needs as well as a keynote by Kathy Obeir (The Human Advantage Consulting Firm) on “Creating a Multicultural Campus: Combatting Homophobia.”

Following a presentation of the original survey results, a follow-up survey was distributed to the members at the Keystone conference and the results were presented for discussion at the second business meeting. Four discussion groups were formed at the meeting, and lively exchanges followed. The upshot of such discussions, prior to and throughout the conference, were reflected in the Keystone Conference business meeting minutes. Among the sentiments expressed were “Future priorities should be on professional issues and social issues affecting students,” “the board should commission people to write statements on these issues and then share them with the membership,” along with several questions and/or comments about the legal issues that were associated with this matter. This may be the first instance in which AUCCCD had a broad discussion about the need for AUCCCD members to advocate in a public way about issues related to student mental health.

To be sure, the members of AUCCCD took note of the importance of being heard across a broader spectrum of audiences and stakeholders. What followed the Keystone Conference was a surge in efforts to ensure that the organization would remain vigilant to the social issues of the day and share perspectives in the best interest of all university and college students

During this same time, the specter of managed care and outsourcing of counseling centers to private entrepreneurial entities, a concern advanced by David Drum of the University of Texas, continued to be an issue for university and college counseling centers. The latter played out at conferences throughout the 1990s, with programs, debates, and interest groups highlighting the potential threats to traditional campus-based counseling centers. On this issue, David Drum was the acknowledged leader in educating other directors about how the changes to the national healthcare system could have an impact in higher education settings. Among other things, he advised counseling centers to improve their fiscal efficiency, focus on the quality of their services through measures on outcomes and satisfaction, and develop treatment guidelines.

In response to these concerns, the Managed Care Task Force was formed in 1995 by then President Dennis Heitzmann, (Pennsylvania State University) with a group of twenty directors convening to address strategic plans for “managing managed care”. Following a presentation by David Drum, and robust related conversations, the group concluded that the best defense against the encroachment of outsource entities was to lose our fears and to tout our integral role on campus. “To be the best that we can be,” became the clarion call, a philosophy that had served and would serve in the organization’s best interest. This initiative-taking approach to defining the unique role of a campus mental health unit was a critical factor in the position of counseling center director becoming viewed as the chief psychological officer on many campuses.

As a result, the **Elements of Excellence Task Force** (E of E) was formed, led over the years by several co-chairs, and energized by a rotating group of participants, selected to represent the AUCCCD membership in all its forms. Following several years of convening in various venues, since 2005 the task force has met annually in Grand Beach, MI to brainstorm ideas, cultivate director-to-director consultation and support, and develop pre-conference workshops and program sessions in pursuit of its stated mission:

*The mission of the committee is to provide impetus and structure for the organization to address leadership development, management skill development, and creative thinking about current and future issues affecting counseling centers in a coordinated, consistent, and collaborative fashion.*

Ultimately, the threat of outsourcing at the time dissipated, as universities witnessed the limitations of private entities vis-à-vis the innate value of a dynamic, integral, campus-based counseling center.

As the E-of-E Task Force continued to evolve, a more stable committee structure and an ongoing relationship with the AUCCCD governing board were established and standard programs including the **New Directors Leadership Institute** were instituted. Issues tackled by the E-of-E included managed care concerns, benchmarks and comparator standards of quality, a national data collection system, and maintaining the viability and relevance of counseling centers.

## **AUCCCD at the Turn of the Century**

At the turn of the century, AUCCCD was changing in numerous ways. Some of those were reactive in nature, while others were more proactive and related directly to the mission of the organization. Among the factors that precipitated these changes were some dramatic campus events (e.g., a deadly residence hall fire at Seton Hall University, a bonfire collapse at Texas A&M University, a campus sniper at Penn State University and the mass shootings at Virginia Tech Institute and University) that brought campus mental health issues to the forefront of the discussions about higher education. The September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Centers in New York, the Pentagon in Washington D.C., and American Airlines Flight 77 over Pennsylvania brought with it a new level of national concern that touched on many mental health issues as well. During these times, many campus counseling center directors found themselves being required to engage in a wider range of professional responsibilities, with crisis management often becoming a top priority. Directors were also increasingly expected to help in the development of institutional risk management policies and/or function as a spokesperson on matters related to campus health and safety.

Some of these changes occurred suddenly in response to a particular incident on a campus, while others moved more gradually over time. As described by Greg Snodgrass of Texas State University, the AUCCCD President from 2001 to 2003 (personal communication),

*AUCCCD began to evolve from being primarily a consultative and support oriented organization, in which members shared the benefits of their experience and wisdom to help fellow members improve their operations and services and deal with specific challenges, to an organization more formally representative of the specialized profession of providing mental health services to college students. The change implied an expansion of the organization's focus on individual center challenges to an attention on a broader understanding of the mental health concerns of college students and how to address them. This evolution was given impetus in response to the growing public awareness of and attention to mental health issues in the public, attributable in part to increased media attention and advances in technology.*

### **2001 Through 2010**

As the environmental context was changing in higher education, the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century saw AUCCCD mature as an organization in several notable ways. The general themes were to place an emphasis on (1) increasing the quality of services and benefits to the growing membership, (2) recognizing the importance of diversity and inclusivity to the relevancy of the organization (3) promoting greater advocacy and visibility on policies related to student mental health and (4) addressing some recurring administrative issues of a growing organization.

**Services and Benefits.** The benefits of membership in AUCCCD increased in important ways during this time. For example, a formal affiliation with the **Journal of College Student Psychotherapy (JCSP)** was approved, giving AUCCCD members access to it through the organization's website. Beyond that, in 1999 Larry Long (Tarleton State University) observed that numerous job notices were being emailed to the listserv. Notably inefficient in producing results, at the time there was no other university/college counseling center job board. Using his own resources, he created **Positions in Counseling Centers (PICC)**, which served as the niche university counseling positions job board from 1999-2014. When Dr. Long became the director at the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC), the PICC transitioned to the KUMC server. In 2001, the AUCCCD Board agreed to allow PICC to add "sponsored by AUCCCD" to the front page of the website. At no cost to AUCCCD members, PICC yielded over six hundred job announcements annually. PICC was transferred in 2014 to a private company (University Counseling Jobs), where it remains in service to counseling centers. To provide another option, the **AUCCCD Job Board** was created to allow members to post job openings through its website.

The organization also established a **Lifetime Achievement Award** to "recognize and honor AUCCCD members who have provided service to AUCCCD and exemplary leadership in the field of college and university counseling centers" for those who have served the profession with distinction. The first such awards were given in 2001 to David Drum (University of Texas), Thomas Magoon (University of Maryland) and Wes Morrill (University of Utah). A listing of those who have since received this honor can be found on the AUCCCD website ([www.aucccd.org](http://www.aucccd.org)).

As cited above, AUCCCD benefited for many years from two different annual surveys of its membership: the **Counseling Center Data Bank** that began at the University of Maryland in 1965 (led by Tom Magoon and focusing on descriptive numbers) and the **National Survey of Counseling Center Directors (NSCCD)** at the University of Pittsburgh (led by Robert Gallagher and surveying the opinions and insights of directors). From the start, both home institutions provided some funding and staffing for these initiatives. The **Data Bank** also received an annual allocation from AUCCCD to assist in its data collection and publication. Beginning in 2002, the **NSCCD** also received funding from AUCCCD, before aligning with IACS in 1992 and ACCA in 2004 to gain additional funding. In 2006, a new survey was initiated by AUCCCD with the goal of combining the best features of the preceding seminal efforts. Robert Rando (Wright State University), Victor Barr (University of Tennessee) and Chuy (Jesse) Aros (Texas A&M International University) led that effort.

The call for data collection has been a common chorus among counseling center directors throughout the history of AUCCCD, particularly as it relates to staffing levels commensurate with the level of activity experienced by each center. The pursuit of a recommended student-to-staff ratio has pre-possessed directors for decades. The latter, together with a compelling need to describe the breadth and depth of activities engaged in by counseling centers, spawned several robust efforts to collect data focused not only on range of function, but also on the numbers and types of students served in numerous ways.

The value of developing discrete measures of counseling center functions to provide stakeholders and decision-makers with relevant data was frequently proposed and endorsed in numerous ways. It was also clear that a context for interpreting the data was a necessary part of such efforts, leading to even more targeted surveys. For example, Kenneth John (Franklin and Marshall College) managed a data collection effort exclusively for select private colleges and universities.

Related to affinity groups, Vivian Boyd (University of Maryland) took the initiative to create a data bank for counselors of color. That work highlights how counseling centers nationwide have grown to appreciate diversity, equity, and inclusion. Her associates at the University of Maryland support the **Vivian S. Boyd Mental Health Professionals of Color Databank** by collaborating with her to continue her legacy. The survey annually gathers comprehensive data on multicultural issues related to inclusivity, diversity hiring, and targeted services to historically underrepresented students of color. The survey continues to serve as a repository of archival data about the experiences of mental health professionals of color who work in college and university counseling centers nationwide.

While none of the efforts would have evolved were it not for the creativity and drive of their progenitors, AUCCCD provided not only occasional funding in support of these initiatives, but more importantly offered a platform for the promotion of these efforts among its members. As mentioned earlier, the current version of an annual AUCCCD survey of directors began in 2006 but evolved from these earlier pioneering efforts to document what was going on within college and university counseling centers and how directors perceived the environment that affected them. The results of these surveys are published each year on the AUCCCD website ([www.aucccd.org](http://www.aucccd.org)) in the form of a monograph, with Kimberly Gorman (Western Carolina University) currently coordinating those efforts.

In 2005, another entity joined the effort to collect data about counseling center services. With the collaboration and support of Dennis Heitzmann and the Pennsylvania State University administration, Ben Locke and associates established the **Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH; <https://ccmh.psu.edu/>)** as a counseling center-based, multi-disciplinary research organization designed to provide accurate and up-to-date information about the mental health needs of today's college students and the efforts to meet those needs. The broad mission of the CCMH is to connect practice, research, and technology to benefit students, mental health providers, administrators, researchers, and the public. Distinct from the heretofore traditional end-of-year retrospective surveys that preceded it, the CCMH can offer data snapshots of services rendered at any time, treatment trends, formulas for staffing, and a host of other deliverables. Exemplary of the reach of the CCMH, the 2020 annual report captured data from: 602-member counseling centers; 185,440 students receiving services; 3890 clinicians; and 1,395,685 sessions.

**Diversity and Inclusivity.** A second major emphasis in the early years of the new century was to expand the diversity and inclusivity of the organization. An example of these early efforts was chronicled in the minutes from the March 31, 2004, Board meeting which illustrated the surge in activities designed to show support for and leadership in addressing diversity causes. Among the initiatives noted were:

1. A proposal by Board member Harriett Haynes (University of Minnesota) that AUCCCD be a paid sponsor (\$750) for the upcoming **National Multicultural Conference and Summit** (Harriett, however, accepted a friendly amendment to raise the amount to \$1000)
2. An early gesture to advance **Globalization** efforts took the form of a sponsored conference breakfast for international members of AUCCCD, with a suggestion by President Jaquie Resnick (University of Florida) for a conference program in service to the interests of international members.
3. A **Diversity Leadership Mentoring Program** was established in 2003 to encourage diversity and inclusivity in the membership. The program offers scholarships to those of diverse identities who may be aspiring to become counseling center directors and provides awardees with a mentoring relationship with an experienced director and networking opportunities at the annual conference. In 2014, this program was renamed the **Harriett Copher Haynes (University of Minnesota) Diversity Leadership Program** to recognize her for the leadership she provided in establishing this initiative
4. Denise Hayes (DePauw University) updated diversity efforts, including the draft of a mission statement for the **Diversity Work Group**. In addition, suggested topics for sponsored conference programs at the 2004 conference included a call for programs related to “diversity issues that centers faced and how these are dealt with...”

A particularly memorable moment for many members of the organization occurred at the 2001 annual conference. As proposals for hosting the 2004 conference were being solicited, the Resort at Squaw Creek at Lake Tahoe was offered as one possibility. Initially, those in attendance seemed to react enthusiastically to that offer. Mary Clearing Sky (Michigan State University) then spoke to enlighten the membership of how offensive and painful the name of the resort was to Indigenous American women, since it was both sexist and racist. The membership then not only voted to decline that proposal but unanimously directed that a letter be sent to the manager of the resort to explain why AUCCCD would not consider it as an appropriate site for a conference.



There were several other examples of how the organizational culture was developing in more inclusive ways. In 2004, the first annual breakfast was scheduled for International Directors. In 2005, a group of GLBT directors formally thanked AUCCCD for making them feel welcome at the annual meetings. In 2007, AUCCCD co-sponsored a Multicultural Summit in Seattle. It seemed clear that the membership intended to remain vigilant to the inclusive interests of its members and would continue to pursue advocacy initiatives across the broad diversity spectrum.

**Advocacy and Visibility.** The importance of AUCCCD input on topics related to student mental health issues was a third area of increased activity in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Coinciding with the rapid development of various communication portals and differentiated forms of information technology, directors became better informed and more alert to emerging issues and social causes germane to counseling centers. Fueled by the calls to action of many advocacy pioneers within AUCCCD, it became clear that AUCCCD as an organization would continue to adopt an expanding platform of diversity and advocacy initiatives.

In a related development, the organization first established an annual **Public Relations and Advocacy Award in 2003** to “recognize the importance of disseminating information about college mental health issues to the public and our profession.” This title was later changed to the **AUCCCD Award for Excellence in Media** and specific qualifications were established to require a direct application to the current trends and issues of campus counseling centers and consideration of cultural issues relevant to the topic of the work.

Another form of advocacy was recognized in 2006 through the **Leighton Whitaker (Swarthmore College) Memorial Scholarship Award** to promote research and other scholarly activity that focuses on college and university counseling centers. Recipients are honored at each annual conference and press releases are sent to their home institutions.

The organization also formalized its relationships with other professional associations by establishing more liaisons with such groups (e.g., the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators) and encouraging members to seek accreditation for their centers through the International Association of Counseling Services, Inc. (IACS). Even individual members at the 2005 Minneapolis conference voluntarily contributed over \$1000 in support of the Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund.

Another step in adopting a more active advocacy role was taken as AUCCCD began issuing a series of statements to the media and educational communities on topics such as campus safety, acts of hate, and firearms on campus.

**Administrative Changes.** As the 1990s ended, it became more obvious how the growth of the organization in both size and complexity made its governance more challenging. The emergence of more special interest groups, task forces, efforts at greater advocacy and more services to member institutions all required more attention from the Board. Those who had experience serving on the Board understood that efforts had to be made to govern the organization more efficiently and effectively, requiring some new administrative strategies. Subsequently, the roles of the Governing Board, and those of the Secretary and the Treasurer were updated and in 1997 Board President Jack Corazzini (Virginia Commonwealth University) implemented a new structure for the Board by identifying specific tasks or work areas that were then the assigned responsibilities for individual Board members.

Sadly, Jack Corazzini died following heart surgery in September of 1999, the final year of his presidency. To address an unprecedented leadership void, immediate past president Pat Larson (University of Denver) served in the interim month in advance of the October conference, where Tom Seals (University of Illinois) was elected to serve as president. Geraldine Rockett (University of St. Thomas) convened a memorial program at the 2000 Miami conference to pay tribute to the legacy of Jack Corazzini.

It was also apparent that the primary connection for most AUCCCD members continued to be the annual conference. Board members who were on the Conference Planning Committee (Don Paulson of Idaho State University, Mary Doty of Utah State University, and Malcolm Kahn of the University of Miami) developed a template for conference planners so that host committees would know what to do. A revised version of that template is, as of this writing, included in the AUCCCD Policy and Procedures Manual.

The early 2000s saw other significant administrative changes in the organization, including the hiring of conference planners from outside the organization to manage the administrative aspects of the annual meeting. That evolved to the establishment of a partnership with **CMC Global** to manage the myriad of tasks that are associated with sponsoring a significantly large conference. That relationship proved to have positive ramifications for AUCCCD that were beyond that of sponsoring a national conference. It not only meant that the host committee could focus on the content of the conference program offerings, but it also provided a single contact point for the membership for questions and answers. Still, the dependence of the AUCCCD on individuals who are full-time employees of their respective institutions to voluntarily accept the added tasks of governing the organization became a popular topic of discussion among Board members. The frequent discussions of this issue, however, failed to produce any subsequent action at that time, primarily because of financial considerations.

AUCCCD also became better in keeping contemporary and detailed records of its own history of actions and activities. Minutes of the Board meetings since 2004 and other relevant documents are posted on the website and made accessible to all members.

In another positive development, at the suggestion of Tom Seals (University of Illinois) and Dennis Heitzmann (Penn State) and with the approval of AUCCCD President Denise Hayes (Indiana University), retired directors became eligible to become “Emeritus Directors” in recognition of their continued interest in the organization and their on-going contributions to it. Such individuals are now designated as non-voting members and, as such, do not pay membership dues and may attend the annual conferences at a reduced registration cost. Tom Seals was subsequently appointed as the first chair of the Emeritus Directors group.

### 2010 to 2021

As the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century began, the developmental changes that had occurred over the preceding years were exhibited in numerous ways.

One of the basic changes that was evident in the AUCCCD was the evolution of the membership itself. From the small number of pioneers who initially brought counseling center directors together, who were predominantly male and White/Caucasian, the 2020 membership had grown to 881. Of those, 69% were female and 9% were Black/African American, 6% were Asian/Asian American, 4% were Latino/Latina and 1.4% were Multiracial. More than forty directors represented international institutions. In addition, the group of Emeritus Directors had grown to 149.

In 2010, the AUCCCD altered its mission statement to place more emphasis on issues of diversity and multiculturalism. The revised statement is as follows:

*The mission of the Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors (AUCCCD) is to assist college/university directors in providing effective leadership and management of their centers, in accord with the professional principles and standards with special attention to issues of diversity and multiculturalism. AUCCCD promotes the awareness of mental health and development issues in higher education through research, advocacy, education, and training provided to members, professional organizations, and the public.*

In 2011, the AUCCCD initiated its **Special Presidential Commendation Award**. This allows the President of the AUCCCD, at his or her discretion, to recognize any individual or organization that provides exceptional service to AUCCCD or its member organizations. This mechanism provides for the work that many individuals do on a volunteer basis on behalf of the organization to be noted and officially appreciated. The history of those individual members of the AUCCCD who have received such commendation can be found on the AUCCCD website.

In 2015, the Board of Directors voted to pursue a strategic planning process for AUCCCD. Micky Sharma (The Ohio State University), Dan Jones (East Tennessee State University) and Mary Chandler Bolin (University of Kentucky) led that process. The purpose was “to provide an organizational focus and continuity, to provide context for organization-based decisions and commitments, [and] to align short-term actionable objectives with long term vision.” The vision was for AUCCCD to become “the higher education leaders for student mental health.” Concurrently, a new mission statement was adopted:

*We are a professional community that fosters director development and success. To advance the mission of higher education, we innovate, educate, and advocate for collegiate mental health. We are committed to inclusive excellence and the promotion of social justice.*

Along with the vision statement, the guiding values of the organization were identified as collaboration, collegiality, diversity, equity and inclusion, ethics and integrity, holistic wellness, and professional development.

In more recent years, directors from several member institutions cited tension among campus counseling and medical health entities. Traditionally, there have been distinctions between the two, citing the unique cultures of both counseling and health settings, as exemplified by differences in training and service models, the promotion of professional hierarchies, and the specificity of accreditation standards. Despite the above, a desire for administrative and budget efficiencies sometimes have fueled efforts to combine counseling and health services, typically into one administrative unit and physical location. In the best of circumstances, mergers have yielded the intended outcome; in others, mergers have appeared to have limited impact or, in some cases, have strained collaboration and marginalization between counseling and health centers staff and leadership.

Although members of AUCCCD had previously experienced the sudden death of the organization’s leader when Jack Corazinni passed away in 1999, the unexpected and stunning death of Greg Eells (University of Pennsylvania) in September of 2019 precipitated a momentous time of pause and reflection for all. Having already served as AUCCCD president from 2007 to 2009, Eells had stepped up once again to seek the presidency, a position that at the time was likely to go unfilled in the absence of nominees. Despite having recently accepted the director’s position at the University of Pennsylvania, he was nonetheless prepared to double down in service to AUCCCD. His death produced a cascade of emotional responses within the membership and generated a renewed organizational emphasis on the importance of self-care, resilience, and a greater appreciation of the stressors that go with being a director of counseling on a college campus. As a tribute to Greg Eells, a memorial service was convened during the 2019 conference to allow members of AUCCCD to honor their former colleague, share remembrances, and to lend support to one another.

Fortuitously, the current president Sharon Mitchell (University at Buffalo) agreed to continue serving the organization as President for what would be an unprecedented third consecutive year. In the months that followed, her leadership provided continuity as well as comfort as the organization proceeded through challenging times.

One of the greatest challenges to university and college counseling centers began in 2019 as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Without warning, the repercussions of a highly contagious and deadly virus rapidly spread across the globe, encompassing every state in the U.S. as well as the home countries of all AUCCCD international members. To address the medical conditions wrought by the virus, such as lengthy illness, debilitating symptoms, deaths, and the rapidity of the spread of the disease, all public settings were required to take measures to ensure the safety of their constituencies. For university and college officials, this required that radical changes be made beginning in the mid-spring of 2020, such as the closure of offices, the establishment of virtual and/or outdoor socially distanced meetings and classes, a plethora of students returning home, and a variety of heretofore untried workarounds in service to managing the pandemic on their campuses.

For campus counseling centers, the pandemic stimulated various alternatives to provide mental health services for a student population that was now dispersed in various directions, with some students returning home, some remaining in relative isolation on campus, and some still in the surrounding community. Because of the nature of traditional primary services, which require face-to-face engagement, alternative modes of service delivery needed to be established. As a result, virtually all counseling centers established on-line platforms for individual and group counseling and wellness programs, while bolstering the array of existing on-line psychoeducational options. AUCCCD often played an important communicative role in facilitating the sharing of knowledge as individual centers found ways to meet the numerous challenges posed by the pandemic.

As usual, when center directors were faced with unusual and challenging circumstances, they turned to the Listserv to communicate with their colleagues, and AUCCCD. Along with an active **AUCCCD Facebook** page, the Listserv quickly filled with lively and informative exchanges among directors with common concerns, and creative responses were often developed and shared. Among other things, interstate licensure issues that resulted from many students choosing to return to their home states, jeopardized the continuing treatment of students entrenched in therapy or at risk. Thanks to the keen awareness of many directors, the requirements for obtaining temporary licensure in other states were obtained, codified, and provided to all directors Listserv participants.

The multiple changes in service delivery wrought by the pandemic proved to be more enduring than expected. As of this writing, it appears that, even with the return to campus and the resumption of traditional campus practices, the shadow of the pandemic will remain central to counseling center practices. The reported convenience and apparent efficacy of virtual therapy (though yet to be researched in depth at this point) has encouraged many programs to continue this format in addition to on campus in-person services. Moreover, many staff report the advantage of working from home for certain responsibilities. Since the pandemic, such arrangements appear to be receiving increasing support.

In summary, despite consequences of the COVID pandemic across the world, counseling center directors and their staffs appeared to respond well to the challenges of their local settings, fashioning novel approaches to traditional services, creating new ways of being available for the students, and discovering along the way the promise of enduring innovative approaches to the delivery of service.

As the decade of the 2020s began, a proposal that had been discussed for many years finally came to fruition. Given the size of the AUCCCD membership, the efficiency challenges of time-limited leadership, and the myriad facets of organizational management, it was proposed that funding and support for an **Executive Director** be pursued. As a result of Board action, a position was established, a search was initiated, and on November 1, 2020, Thomas Cote became the first Executive Director of AUCCCD. The following reflects the breadth of responsibilities intended to be pursued by the Executive Director, under the direction of the AUCCCD Governing Board:

- Serve as a principal resource to the governing board, association managers and key committees, assisting them in matters of policy formulation and interpretation
- Implement the policies established by the Board of Directors through the administration of the organization and its activities
- Implement strategies for advocating on behalf of members and the collegiate mental health community with elected legislators and appointed government officials
- In conjunction with the Treasurer, ensure the association's finances are properly and effectively managed
- Ensure the association is structured to maximize its ability to deliver its services

As an aside, it should be recognized that the volunteer work of countless individual members of our organization for these many years is now crystalized and incorporated in the detail of the Executive Director job description found above.

### **A Concluding Note**

An annual picture of the organization and its membership can be found by viewing the most recent publication of the AUCCCD Annual Survey that is available on the website. The latest version of that survey (2021) paints a picture of an organization with a membership that is much different than the one that began so modestly in 1950. What started as mostly a regional gathering for mid-western directors has evolved into a national organization that now has international members. It is entirely reasonable to expect that such change will continue to occur, with the status and needs of the college student population always being the driving force behind it.

## Acknowledgment

To begin, our gratitude is extended to Emeritus Directors Vivian Boyd, Judy Mack, and Greg Snodgrass for their help in serving as our editors, proof-readers, advice-givers, and making their own contributions to the content of this document. Appreciation is also extended to the numerous members of the organization, both past and present, who responded to our requests for more information or facts about the assorted topics we attempted to chronicle.

The greatest challenge faced by the authors was finding a way to provide due credit for the notable moments in the development of our professional organization. Early on, it became clear that it would not be possible to recover nor cite each contributor to the full spectrum of historical events. As a result, we acknowledge that some contributors, for a variety of reasons, may have gone unrecognized. Thus, we apologize for any unintentional omissions or perceived slights. Let us add, however, that we recognize that the evolution of AUCCCD, and all that has been accomplished throughout its rich history, is the result of the collective efforts of all of us.

Our research, and the contributions of the colleagues who provided us with resource material, have confirmed for us that we are only as good as those who surround us and support us. What cannot be conveyed in a history of an organization is the time, energy, and spirit required not only to address the mundane of policy and procedure, but to also seek justice, respond creatively to change and need, and be ready to support its members when it is most needed.

This document should not be viewed as the complete story of AUCCCD. We acknowledge that we could not find verifiable data or documentation for everything that might have been relevant for inclusion. Given that, we have attempted to produce a history of the organization that is based on the available records and factual sources. To be sure, there are sources of information about the organization's history that are more dependent on the recollections of those who were present at a particular time or place. That type of information could be of immense interest, but we will leave that task for others to pursue.

Last, we now have a much greater appreciation of how difficult it is to write a history for an organization that often has been deficient in keeping records. We hope that our work will serve as a baseline for "an official historian" to constantly update the story of this unique, important, and valuable organization.

John Bishop and Dennis Heitzmann

February 2022

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