



## Student Affairs Update

### COUNSELING CENTER VIRTUAL OUTREACH

#### The Internet as a Resource for Students

Students increasingly use the Internet to enhance their personal and academic development. They correspond with family and friends, engage in research through online libraries, fulfill course requirements, and communicate with faculty and classroom peers. Several popular Internet sites provide students a means for socializing and participating in virtual communities. According to the Facebook.Com website launched in 2004, there are 13 million users over 40,000 regional, workplace, college and high school settings.

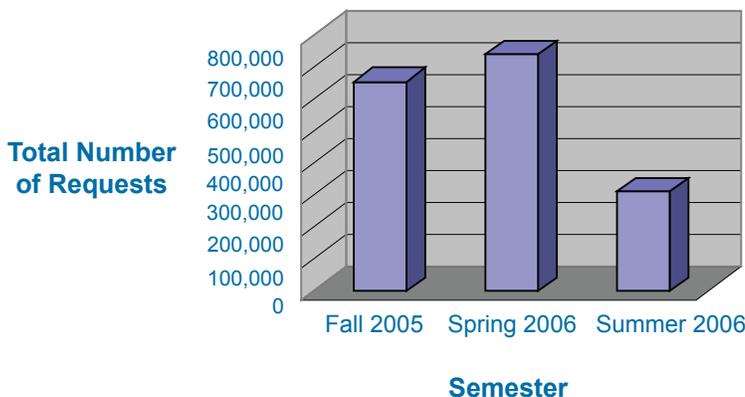
#### The Internet as Outreach

To keep abreast of these developments, the Center's website has evolved into a significant means of outreach and education. Information is regularly provided regarding Counseling Center programs and access. Communication with students, faculty, staff and parents has been greatly enhanced. Online resources for self-enrichment include the Center's theme centered brochure series, special topic materials, and links to other educational sites. Since its inception in 1994, significant increases in requests at the Center's website have occurred annually. Analysis for the past academic year indicates the Center's website pages were accessed 1,695,274 times. Requests originated from all 50 states, the District of Columbia and 144 countries. Table 1 shows requests by semester for 2005 - 06, reflecting the change in enrollment by semester.

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Top Ten Most Requested Self-Help Brochures AY 2005-06	
Title	Brochures Accessed
1. Time Management	71,977
2. How to Deal w/Loneliness	58,273
3. Hndlg. Com. Relationship Probs.	38,822
4. Bldg. Self-Esteem/Confidence	32,508
5. Test Anxiety	31,756
6. Relaxation Exercise	29,929
7. Dealing w/Anger	23,027
8. Stress and College Students	22,222
9. Dlg. w/Alcoholic Family/Friend	20,967
10. Male Sex Role: Changes/Stressors	17,379
Other Titles Combined (42)	214,285
<b>Total Request for Brochures</b>	<b>561,145</b>

**Table 1 Semester Web Requests 2005 - 2006**



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#### Virtual Self-Help Brochures

Self-help materials are the most accessed resources. All Counseling Center psychoeducational publications can be found in virtual form, providing much greater dissemination of information at a reduced cost. The information within

\*This publication is available in alternative print format upon request.

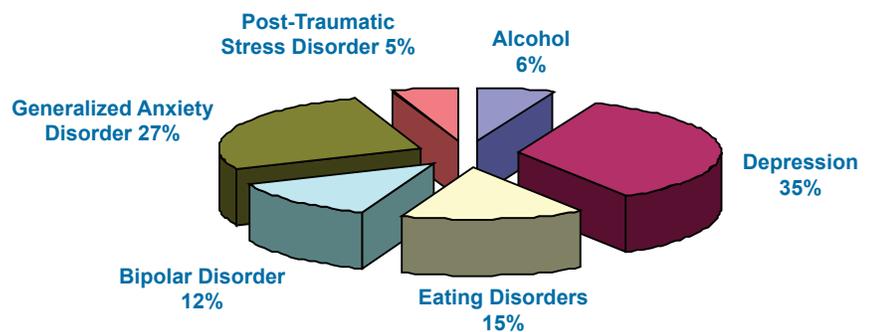
the brochures often provides a foundation for students to understand their well being and a linkage for seeking personal consultation. The chart on the front page lists the 10 most requested brochure titles of the 42 available. By far the most popular topic is *Time Management* followed closely by *How to Deal with Loneliness*. The top 10 topics mirror many of the concerns of students who actually come to the Counseling Center seeking help. To meet the needs of an increasingly diverse constituency, the Center has translated some brochures into alternative language formats with more translations planned.

## Mental Health Screening Programs

A recent addition to our website is a free and anonymous online mental health screening program where users may find out – in a few minutes – whether or not a problem exists and if professional consultation may be indicated. The Center uses programs developed for college populations by *Screening for Mental Health, Inc.* The online screening provides a form of outreach to students with mental health concerns. It permits easy access to psychoeducational and referral information for those with psychological problems as well as those who are worried about a friend or family member. The screening areas include *Eating Disorders, Alcohol Problems, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Depression, Bipolar Disorder, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)*.

Figure 1 shows that 633 screens were taken during the six month period beginning January 2006, with *Depression* and *Anxiety* being the most frequently accessed. In all areas except *Alcohol*, the majority of responders were women; for *Eating Disorders*, 90% were women. It is of interest to note that in all areas but *Bipolar*, the majority of those screened showed were considered likely or very likely to have a problem (56% *Eating Disorders*, 79% *Anxiety*, 60% *PTSD*, 63% *Alcohol* at harmful or dependent levels, and 84% *Depression*).

**Figure 1 Online Screening 2006**



## Conclusion

The Counseling Center's website continues to evolve to address growing student use of the Internet as a resource for self-development. Recently, online access to the DISCOVER program was implemented to assist students in computerized, web-based career exploration. The Center's next project is to develop online exercises for stress management and relaxation that can be downloaded to mobile playback devices. Please visit the Counseling Center online at [www.counsel.ufl.edu](http://www.counsel.ufl.edu).