

SUBSTANCE ABUSE COUNSELING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

November 15, 2007

SUMMARY NOTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Dr. Bob Banks, Sharon Braddock, Cynthia Creswell,
Linda Dudley, Charlie McMordie, Chess Grant, Jim Cameron,
Jerry Moller

OTHERS PRESENT: Dr. Paul Matney, Sue Banks, Stephanie Wilkinson

BOARD MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS

- Cynthia Creswell, Executive Director, Amarillo Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
- Sharon Braddock, Genesis House
- Linda Dudley, Managed Care Center
- Charlie McMordie, with the Pavillion of North West Texas Hospital and past president of TAAP.
- Chess Grant, Community Supervision and Corrections Department for Potter, Randall and Armstrong counties
- Jim Cameron, Coordinator, Youth Center of the High Plains (Pride Program)

COMPLIANCE ISSUES TO MEET THECB REQUIRMENTS

Technical or workforce related programs must meet requirements set by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). There must be 15 graduates per each 3 year time period. The Substance Abuse Counseling program had 11 graduates from 2004-07. The chart included in the agenda shows an increase in enrollment from 2005 to the present.

Bob asked the committee for advice on how to increase the graduate numbers. Charlie McMordie stated that there aren't enough qualified counselors in this area. The monetary value of LCDC's has increased to more than agencies are able to pay. The average CI salary is \$25,000 and the average LCDC salary is \$32,000. Employment opportunities are better in larger cities but are improving in the Panhandle.

Area programs are increasing. Cynthia Cresswell said there will be a new inpatient indigent care center for Potter/Randall starting off with 16 beds. It will be under the direction of Amarillo Council of Alcohol and Drug Abuse and will be ready for use in a year or so. The staff will include two LCDC employees and five house managers (interns).

Chess Grant needs two LCDC counselors immediately. These are new positions with good salaries. Chess is a product of the SAC program at AC

Cynthia emphasized that she wouldn't have any staff if it weren't for the AC Substance Abuse Counseling program because all of her employees come from AC. She currently has six employees.

Jim Cameron said he currently has one intern but also has three paid positions that aren't filled.

Dr. Matney is hopeful that certificate graduates who go on to complete the AAS degree will count as two graduates. They would be easy to track and students wouldn't have to change to another track.. This would give us more graduates and be positive for everyone.

Jerry said that if that happens we could have 7-9 graduates per year instead of the current 5-6.

Charlie mentioned the possibility of partnering with the WTAMU graduate program. Graduate students from WT could come to AC to receive LCDC requirements. Stephanie said that we've had several students in that situation already. She also said that 19 SAC students are close to graduation. She said that it takes the average AC student three years to graduate.

Jerry said that with the current growth there appears to be enough internship sites and employment opportunities in this area. THECB can't put state money into programs that aren't viable.

Discussion continued on the various local agencies and needs.

Dr. Matney said that AC does not want to sunset the program but rather find a way to keep it because the enrollment is better than ever. We just need more graduates.

The committee agreed that the Substance Abuse Counseling Program has been beneficial to the area and should continue to provide much needed counselors for the field. The committee voted unanimously to keep the program.

Minutes taken by:
Cheryl Gailey