

**State University System
Education and General
2016-2017 Legislative Budget Request
Form I**

University(s):	State University System
Issue Title:	Mental Health Counseling Services
Priority Number	
Recurring Funds Requested:	\$4,111,644
Non-Recurring Funds Requested:	\$2,096,487
Total Funds Requested:	\$6,208,211
Please check the issue type below:	
Shared Services/System-Wide Issue	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2015-2016 Non-Recurring Issue	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Issue for 2016-2017	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

I. Description

The **SUS Mental Health Counseling Services** Legislative Budget Request is designed to increase campus counseling services in order to address the critical need for student mental and behavioral health coverage in a State University System that is steadily expanding in size, scope, and complexity.

Universities are directly responsible for providing a safe educational, working, and living environment for students, faculty, staff, and visitors. SUS leaders have identified a number of current campus security challenges and focused on two issues: (1) law enforcement staffing needs in an expanding State University System, and (2) the increasing need for well-trained, professional counseling services to address the mental and behavioral health of university students.

The SUS Counseling Centers provide a wide variety of clinical services, including individual and group counseling and psychiatric services and assessment. Professional staff provide substance abuse treatment and prevention efforts and consult with many campus constituencies to provide prevention and outreach services. University counseling services are integral to graduation and retention rates in that counselors directly assist students in their mental and behavioral health needs so they can reach their academic potential.

While the SUS centers are now fully imbedded in the overall health and wellness of their campuses, the centers are struggling to keep up with the demand for their services. Students are coming into counseling earlier, in larger numbers, and with more crisis issues than ever before. The SUS centers have experienced a 67% increase in student client sessions in the past six years for issues of anxiety, depression, academic stress, and relationship issues. Further, SUS centers recorded nearly 4,200 emergency or crisis visits during 2013-2014.

The LBR is designed to raise the staffing levels of the SUS Counseling Centers to the minimum staffing ratios that are recommended by the profession's accreditation association, the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS). IACS standards state that minimum staffing ratios should strive to be "in the range of one FTE professional staff member to every 1,000 to 1,500 students, depending on services offered and other campus mental health agencies." Currently, ten of the 12 SUS counseling centers (not New College and Florida Polytechnic) are operating above the IACS standard for minimum staffing of one professional staff member per 1,000 students, and eight of the 12 centers are operating above the high end of the range recommended by IACS of one staff member per 1,500 students.

The System request for counseling services appears below:

**SUS Counseling Services
Mental Health Counseling Services Legislative Budget Request**

University	# Positions (FTE)*	Salary	Other/Related Expenses**	Total
Florida A&M University	4.0	\$200,000	\$130,000	\$330,000
Florida Atlantic University	9.5	\$653,000	\$555,702	\$1,208,702
Florida Gulf Coast University	5.8	\$372,000	\$188,015	\$560,015
Florida International University	3.0	\$276,000	\$157,060	\$433,060
Florida State University	5.0	\$335,000	\$161,350	\$496,350
New College of Florida and USF Man.	4.0	\$249,000	\$176,690	\$425,690
University of Central Florida	12.0	\$872,400	\$30,000	\$902,400
University of Florida	6.0	\$315,000	\$445,050	\$760,050
University of North Florida	2.0	\$134,000	\$59,540	\$193,540
University of South Florida	3.0	\$201,000	\$99,810	\$300,810
University of South Florida St. Pete	3.0	\$117,000	\$55,770	\$172,770
University of West Florida	3.5	\$387,244	\$37,500	\$424,744
Total	60.8	\$4,111,644	\$2,096,487	\$6,208,131

*Positions include Psychologists, Mental Health Counselors, Psychiatric ARNPs, Case Managers, Prevention Specialists, Office staff.

**Other/Related Expenses include benefits, hiring expenses, professional development, overhead, technology, assessment.

II. Return on Investment

The SUS counseling centers are busy operations and their professional services are critical to a university's well-being and, more importantly, to student retention and success. The American College Health Association recently reported that over 50 percent of college students say that they have experienced "overwhelming anxiety" in the last year and 32 percent say they have felt so depressed "that it was difficult to function." Research has shown that students seeking university counseling services are more likely to maintain and improve their academic performance and persist to graduation. Student client surveys at state universities consistently verify that counseling services are enabling students to address their personal problems and remain enrolled to pursue a degree. As students are enrolling in state universities with a greater and more urgent need for mental health services, there is an increasing challenge for university counseling centers to provide immediate and appropriate professional services that will forestall serious behavioral incidents and reinforce academic progress and success.

The operations of campus counseling services maintain strong support for the Board of Governors performance funding model as the model provides a financial incentive for universities to prioritize student health and safety and to provide access to the academic and personal assistance needed by students to attain a degree and be successful in a career. Each state university recognizes that its reputation for academic quality and student success is dependent on its ability to provide a healthy and safe environment for those learning, working, and living on its campus.