Counseling center director seeks to broaden community impact

Sacramento State’s Center for Counseling and Diagnostic Services, a provider of an array of services to the community since 1968, wants to increase its reach. Program Director Darryl Henderson is determined to make that happen.

Henderson came to Sac State five years ago, taking a complex professional route that included stops at Rikers Island in New York and a couple of California prisons. “I counseled adolescent males awaiting court cases at Rikers because of my knack for reaching youthful offenders,” Henderson says. Working with adults didn’t prove as rewarding, he notes, because so many were hardened criminals.

A San Francisco native who grew up in Oakland, he excelled in school, earned his bachelor's degree at UC Irvine and received his doctorate in clinical psychology from City University of New York. “I planned to stay in New York for two years and remained for 20,” Henderson says.

Several negative experiences with counselors prompted his career change to academia. “I didn’t believe that many graduates were getting what they required in practical experience to work with a diverse population,” he says.

The center provides affordable help to people, many of whom are in need during tough economic times, including counseling for children and adults, couples and families. Henderson’s goal is to prepare Sac State counseling grads to blend the theoretical with the practical so they can succeed in challenging workplaces.

The surest way to achieve that goal is to put the counseling center’s graduate students through the most exacting clinical training. And that means expanding an increasingly diverse client pool from the community. “We’re getting more students in our program,” Henderson notes, “which requires that we can place even more of them in the field to show what they can do for community refuges, such as St. John’s women and children shelter.”

The current economic crunch, coupled with the impressive track record of Sacramento State’s Center for Counseling and Diagnostic Services, makes Darryl Henderson’s quest a win-win for campus and community.
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