

NEWSROOM

[Home](#) / [News](#) / [2024](#) / [November](#) / CNU Expands Mental Health Services for Students

CNU EXPANDS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

NEW FUNDING MEANS MORE HELP FOR STUDENTS

by [Kelley McGee](#) | November 7, 2024*Read time: about 1 min*

As many students know all too well, college life can present challenges that extend well beyond academics.

“Nearly every day we’re reminded how essential it is for students to have supportive people and resources helping them along,” said Bill Ritchey, Executive Director of the [Office of Counseling Services](#) (OCS). “Our providers are dedicated and trained to help our students address the many and diverse challenges they endure.”

When it comes to need, the numbers tell a clear story. Ritchey notes the request for services on campus has been steadily increasing, and last year OCS offered a record amount of student counseling sessions. He expects the office will serve just as many students again this academic year.

OCS has been able to meet this increased need, in part, due to an ongoing two-year pilot program offered by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) in consultation with the Virginia Health Care Foundation. Christopher Newport was one of just a handful of schools to be awarded The Higher Education Mental Health Workforce Pilot grant. The grant underwrites the salary and benefits of two onsite licensed clinical social workers (LCSW) or licensed professional counselor (LPC) candidates.

The University has been able to hire, train and supervise the candidates while they work toward their licenses at the counseling center. The program serves the dual purpose of expanding mental health services for students while increasing the mental health workforce pipeline by offering supervised clinical hours for counselors in training.

Because of the current success, Christopher Newport has once again been selected as a partner in the newly expanded program. This means the University, beginning in January 2025, will be able to increase its team of professional counselors by two and help more students.

“As a result, OCS can support even more students in the Spring 2025 semester and beyond. Students need access to mental health support in a timely manner – and OCS has been delighted to be able to provide that. We intend to continue to provide that competent, compassionate, timely care that supports student development during their time at CNU and beyond,” Ritchey said.

The core message to Christopher Newport students, Ritchey said, is that they are “not alone,” which aligns with the University's mission of ensuring every student is seen, heard and valued.

“We know that mental health plays such a vital role in students’ lives,” Ritchey said. “We want each of our students to thrive at CNU and beyond.”

STUDENTS CAN ACCESS THE OFFICE OF COUNSELING SERVICES BY:

- Visiting OCS, located in the Freeman Center, in room H230
- Calling: (757) 594-7047
- Emailing: OCS@cnu.edu (please provide cell phone number)

In the event of a life-threatening or medical emergencies that require immediate medical attention, call 911 or University Police at (757)594-7777.
