

Memorandum for Record (8)

To: Anna Walker, President of Student Government, Grant Epstein, VP of Student Government

From: Dr. Carolyn Lee, Dr. Lucy Duhon

Date: 15 March, 2022

Subject: Report: Faculty Senate Student Affairs Sub-Committee on Student Mental Health

I. Introduction

This memorandum is written to ease concerns that UT Student Government leaders expressed regarding Mental Health Services and support to University of Toledo's students.

II. Student Government Expression of Concern for Student Mental Health

On 24 September, 2021, Student Government President Anna Walker and Student VP Grant Epstein with their steering committee responded to Memorandum for Record (3), dated 7 September, 2021, from the Faculty Senate Committee for Student Affairs, stating the following:

- A. "Student well-being and mental health needs to be a priority of all individuals at the University of Toledo. While there are resources available such as the counseling center, many of these resources are overburdened and unable to support all students who need them. UTSC asks that Faculty Senate joins us in pushing for the improvement of current resource and addition of new resources that will continue to support the mental well-being of all members of the Rocket Community."
- B. University of Toledo Student Government Leadership later identified three issues related to Mental Health Services and support to students: Counseling Center Appointments, UTPD as Primary Response in Mental Health situations, and Proposal for Mental Health Days for students.

III. Faculty Senate Committee on Student Affairs' Sub-Committee Takes Action

During November, 2021, Committee Member Dr. Carolyn Lee presented three key topics in Web-Ex meeting with Dean Lewandowski (College of Nursing), Interim Inaugural Executive Director for University Campus Health Services. Summary:

A. Counseling Center Appointment Availability

- i. Recognizes issue of student reluctance for group appointments if 1:1 not available; ongoing efforts to increase counselor numbers.
- ii. Student wait time for scheduling appointments remains a challenge; availability at UToledo is faster than some community resources
- iii. Accrediting standard for counselors to student ratio is 1:1,000-1500
- iv. Counselor staffing difficult if they are hired on short-term annual basis, more difficult to recruit.
- v. Have been able to convert one wellness officer position to a full time position; aiming to fill a recent resignation.
- vi. Availability of psychology clinic on campus and psychiatry appointments (maybe need for more information to students about options).
- vii. Exploring options for third party vendors, possibilities of virtual counseling that holds some appeal for students (privacy, convenience, neutral party). May be an efficient model to provide timely access and services.
- viii. Key point: UToledo has been selected as a JED campus – a four-year strategic process to assess and build systemic change related to student mental health. Dean Lewandowski described a process that includes completing a comprehensive report on mental health issues/services, deploying a student assessment, having a JED 2022 site visit. Goal is to use data to inform effective campus mental health services. More information will be ongoing on about the JED effort. Website: <https://jedfoundation.org/jed-campus/>

B. Issue of UTPD as a primary response in crisis situation

- i. Appreciates nuance of police presence/ previous encounters with law enforcement for some students
- ii. UTPD have considerable amount of crisis response training

- iii. Reality is situations can pose a safety threat to party involved but also to others; UTPD also intersects with EMS system
- iv. Need to balance preference of response party with priority of safety of individuals and campus; UTPD as a primary response won't be changing
- v. Made suggestion that student government leaders meet with UTPD for conversation -campus education on why they come, remembering mutual goals is safety of others

C. Topic of “Mental Health” Days

- i. This has been discussed in other venues. Need to continue to assess and develop strategies related to mental health on campus (for students and others).
- ii. There are practical implications for inclusion of mental health days across all courses/programs. Considerations including how to adjust courses/assessments in high volume courses, possibility of misuse of mental health days if adopted widely.
- iii. There is a need for consistency in campus communications that we are interested in their mental health and invested in their individual needs and strategies to support.
- iv. Senate Student Affairs Committee member suggested syllabus template strengthening specific commitment to student mental health and providing availability of faculty/administrative support and campus resources. Dean Lewandowski recommended Denise Bartell, Associate Vice Provost for Student Success as a resource to develop syllabus/resource template.

IV. Other Actions By this Sub-Committee

- 2/1/22 E-mailed Dr. Latasha Sullivan/ Director University of Toledo Counseling Center providing summary of Dean Lewandowski's response inviting any further input with reply on 2/15.
- 2/15/2022 Dean Lewandowski replied that she and Dr. Sullivan will coordinate about connecting with students related to mental health topic.
- 2/15/2022 Committee -emailed UToledo Student Government Leaders – Grant Epstein and Anna Walker – to expect to hear follow-up from Dean Lewandowski/Dr. Sullivan

- 2/16/2022 Reply from Grant Epstein.
- 2/15/2022 E-mailed Denise Bartell, Associate Vice Provost or Student Success with inquiry about student government topic of mental health days for students and our sub-committee's idea to develop a template for inclusion in UToledo course syllabi affirming our commitment to mental health, providing availability of faculty/administrative support and campus/community mental health resources that would also leave room to address individual circumstances.
- 2/16/2022 Reply from Grant Epstein
- 2/17/2022 Reply from Denise Bartell reporting that the CETL (Teaching Center) Director is engaged with Dean Lewandowski and the JED leadership group on providing faculty more resources on these topics and beginning work on syllabus template more attuned to student needs and endorsing inclusion of a statement reinforcing institutional and instructor commitment to student wellness and links to resources. The process requires Provost approval to add to our standard syllabus template language and alternative syllabus template with the approval of CETL. Denise also cc'ed Dean Lewandowski and Dr. Jeanne Kusina.
- 2/17/2022 Dr. Jeanne Kusina, Interim Director, The Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning replied that the CETL advisory board is in discussions about how better to address student mental health including the need to be aware of potential biases related to mental health and the importance of considering ability and means of students to visit health care providers to provide documentation of health issues. Dr. Kusina expressed interest in continued collaboration toward the goals of addressing student mental health.
- 2/25/2022 Committee replied and thanked Dr. Bartells and Dr. Kusina for their replies and shared that we would report back to Senate our endorsement of explicit language addressing mental health in UToledo course syllabi and support a commitment to ongoing education for faculty to learn more about mental health, resources and how to help students. We also shared that our committee would be glad to facilitate time with Faculty Senate for any information they might want to present or discuss with Faculty Senate.

Cc: Members of Faculty Senate, Terry Bigioni, Gary Insch, Deborah CoulyerOHarris, Mohamed Samir Hefzy, Shery Milz, Berhane Tecleaimanot, Sally Harmych, Carolyn Lee, Sarah Aldrich, Lucy Duhon

Authors: Dr. Carolyn Lee and Dr. Lucy Duhon

Committee Sponsor(s): Faculty Senate on Student Affairs

Speaker of the Senate,

Colleen Palmer

President,

Anna Walker

Date Adopted _____

Date Vetoed _____