

Student Welfare Committee Meeting

December 6, 2018

Notes

Meeting called to order at 2 p.m.

Attendance was taken. Present: Adams, Korbel, Gattalia, Fuller, Bartlett, Armstrong, Bacher, Reel, McCarthy, Curry, Wilson

Reviewed / approved last month's meeting notes.

Elizabeth Cracco, Director of Counseling and Mental Health Services will be joining today's meeting.

GSS Update

- Erin Curry—GSS has had a few meetings since the last SWC meeting. Provost Kennedy spoke at last night's meeting. Grad students have negative feelings toward some professors with negative feelings, feel that there is an "academia vs. industry" atmosphere.
- In the process of gathering data on where PhD graduates end up
- Goal is to cater programs/classes toward where people are going to work
- Can't limit students' opportunities when they leave UConn; we need to be more concerned with where students end up than with rankings
- Referenced Atlantic article, "PhD Students and Stress"

Introduced Elizabeth Cracco, Director of Counseling and Mental Health Services

- What CHMS is doing for students and how this adapts over time
 - Handout distributed—"Connection is Prevention"
- 1) All are connected, all systems work together to help students
 - 2) Sharing stories is important; anxiety is normal
 - 3) When tragedy happens, there is a lot of overlap (i.e., student car accident with deaths), like a family, there is follow up, staying connected, brings up other stories. Important to remain a connected community.
 - 4) Extreme situations fall under CMHS.
- Mediation Studies – Muse devise measures brain waves, for training meditation. Findings: Students saw benefit of mediation whether they were believers or not.
 - Suicide Prevention Committee – Student shared story of father's struggle all his life. Never sought help from others, just tried methods on his own (meditation, mantras, etc.) Ultimately, he committed suicide. Student was studying neuroscience. Went on to research this.
 - Connections heal; isolation doesn't.
 - Teaching mindfulness and where resources are can be life saving.
 - Unrest, disease, distress—All students feel this, not just clinical cases—it's a public health issue.
 - UConn students are interested in mental health advocacy.
 - Crises are red flags. We need to be aware of warning signs and what the referral services are.

Continuum is used:

- 1) Regular issues (anxiety)
 - a. Use coping skills
 - b. Consult with family/friends (talk to someone)
 - c. Can lead to more serious problems
- 2) Injury/Physical Issues/Illness
 - a. More intensive care
 - b. Can't just "push through"
 - c. Need treatment

- 3) Severe/Persistent Impairment
 - a. Eating disorders, depression, suicidality, etc.
 - b. Requires a PLAN involving many parties.
- 4) What is the expectation for support? Student can still be successful with significant mental health impairment.
 - There are many student organizations and groups related to mental health issues. Anyone can join Suicide Prevention Committee.

Numbers

- More people are being trained in suicide prevention
- 92 campus workshops
- RAs, faculty, GAs, department heads—all are getting trained

Services and Stats

- Consultation and Support Drop-In
- Can go and ask questions, ask about services
- Between 1-3 p.m.
- Get recommendations
- 2 hours on Tuesday mornings in the Union
- Racial differences exist as to who seeks therapy/help. Some stereotypical cultural barriers exist.
- We do more and more every year for suicide prevention.
- There is a growing demand for therapy/encounters.
- *5% of caseload gets referred out.
- CMHS Circle of Care (p. 11) – based on level of acuity.
- *Normalizing the struggle/early intervention
- Workshops – Coping Skills – Standardized Curriculum
- Peer Graduate Student Support Group is needed. Many graduate students complain about their advisors.

Measurement

- Transports (involuntary, for evaluation), hospitalizations, post-hospital continued care
- Anxiety and depression is primary diagnosis
- CCAPs given to all who come in
- Depression, anxiety, and social anxiety are climbing.
- Loneliness and isolation can be public health issue among 16-24 year olds primarily.

Confidentiality vs. Privacy

- There is some misunderstanding about confidentiality
- Cannot promise confidentiality in certain cases, but will keep as private as possible under the circumstances, involve as few people as “need to know.”

What about regional campuses?

- Is there proactive outreach? Is that possible?
- Health history forms are used for proactive outreach.
- Fewer H forms are turned in at regional campuses.
- People tend to self-diagnose more today, which makes it harder to help them.
- Students are determined to label themselves.

Graduate Students

- Graduate students never want to leave school, no matter what, they want to see it through.
- Graduate students have to be strong to handle the stress they are under.
- Would peer training be helpful for grad students?
 - Erin will do some questioning
 - What do they need? What will they do? What do they want?

- Medical programs force long-term disability policies on students ???

UConn Café Survey – closes tomorrow. Students will meet early next semester. Over 1000 people responded. Had pop-up food pantry, there was traffic. Box added to Dean of Students website with locations of food pantries. How do regional campuses and transfer students have access to food services or know about food services?

Students living at Storrs and going to Hartford, AP; Spring to Storrs students

- How are the two groups doing? Waterbury wants a larger conversation.
- Do they get orientating?
- Storrs Spring Admission is mandatory?
- Christine will see of something can be done so that transfer students can go to convocation. They can no longer move in early.
- Transfer Connection Site
- WOW – Welcome breakfast
- Have to reach out to them, the ones who are not participating.
- Dean of Students did outreach to transfer students, readmitted students, location changers. Will soon examine data and will do again next year.
- We need to look at the big picture for transitioning students.
- Nature/scope
- Outreach
- What are the problems that we know about?
- What are we doing?
- Programs

Will review remaining agenda items next meeting.

Christine asked group to please get remaining suggestions to her before she leaves for Costa Rica after the first of the year.

Meeting adjourned at 3:12 p.m.