



# University of Windsor Student Mental Health Strategy

Implementation Committee Meeting #3 – Winter 2019

Wednesday, March 27, 2019

Oak Room, Vanier Hall (107)

2:00 – 3:30 pm

## Agenda

**Present:** Dr. Kathryn Pfaff, Lynette Kivisto, Dr. Debra Hernandez-Jozefowicz, Dr. Tina Pugliese, Ashley Vodarek, Jeremiah Bowers, Dr. Mohsan Beg, Jenessa Shaw, Kerri Zold, Sameena Sultana, Ryan Flannagan, Derrick Bisio, Evan Ripley-Mcneil, Quessia Mugabo, Muhammad Hussain, Ebenezer Sam

**Absent:** Healey Gardiner, Admira Konjic, Katie Chauvin, Sandra Ondracka, Darren Larue

## Key Documents for Discussion

- *Strategy Implementation Progress Tracking Sheet – updated as of March 21*
- *Updated Implementation Terms of Reference*
- *Report – Student Focus Group Regarding Academic Policies and Mental Health*
- *Draft Meeting Notes from Meeting #2 – January 16, 2019*
- *Membership List*

## Document Abbreviations

*Implementation Committee (IC)*

*Office of Student Experience (OSE)*

*Student Counselling Centre (SCC)*

*Terms of Reference (TOR)*

*Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)*

*Academic Policy Committee (APC)*

### 1. Introductions:

- Kathy welcomed the group to the third meeting. There was one new addition to the committee, therefore the group proceeded with individual introductions. Ebenezer Sam (Victor) was introduced as a new member to the committee. He is representing international students.

### 2. Confirmation of Agenda

- Kathy asked if there were any add-ons or edits to the agenda.

- Kathy called for a motion to finalize the minutes from the previous meeting. This motion was seconded by Mohsan and Ashley, before being approved by the IC.

### **3. Review Meeting Notes and Outstanding Action Items from January 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting**

**Action Item #1:** sub-committee regarding Mental Health Initiatives Fund proposal process – *to be discussed, see agenda item #5*

**Action Item #2:** Mix method approach to collecting student input regarding updates to University academic policies & mental health + update of student focus group from February 12 regarding academic policies (Ryan)

- Ryan explained that due to limited resources, he was unable to implement the additional suggestions (survey, one on one interviews) that were made at the previous meeting to complement the focus group data. He indicated that during this period, the individual in the position that was going to help to do some of this work took a new position outside of the University of Windsor. Ryan indicated that the focus group data that was produced was comprehensive and well done, so the Academic Policy Committee (APC) sub-committee that is examining mental health and academic policies will have been well served by the outputs of the focus group process.
- Ryan discussed that the focus group was comprised of 8 students and lasted two hours. The PhD student selected to run the focus group was under the recommendation of Dr. Charlene Senn. Notes were produced from the session and APC sub-committee met in early March to review the data from the focus group and share their input. The Senate sub-committee needs to see the final draft prior to tabling.

Ryan provided a brief overview of the focus group results and the draft responses that the APC sub-committee has produced for Senate:

#### **i) Availability of mental health resources and its dissemination**

- Ryan explained from the findings that reforms to Bylaw 51 should include a section on mandatory inclusion of mental health resources in the syllabus.
- Multiple IC committee members stated that more information needs to be provided to students, faculty, and staff regarding accommodations and resources, as it pertains to mental health at the university.

#### **ii) Access to support during and after mental health crisis**

- Ryan explained that the APC sub-committee took the position that focus group input pertaining to this issue is outside of the scope of academic policy, but action is needed on the part of the University to improve communications with those who are struggling with mental health issues during and after a mental health crisis.
- Ryan agreed with this point and indicated that initiatives have already been established, such as the mental health newsletter that is going to faculty and staff that has had a great response (sent out twice per academic term).
- Derrick voiced that during mental health crises, police often do not have the mental health tools and resources to be dealing with these situations. Derrick recommended to utilize police less in crisis situations, but continue to increase our relationship with mental health professionals and resources on campus, such as the Student Counselling Centre. Jenessa agreed, and suggested to implement a mobile crisis team of trained professionals to be on call to provide support and resources. Debbie also indicated that police often don't have the training for this kind of engagement and this can result in poor outcomes. She indicated that even in the School of Social Work, they struggle with these issues, so training and processes need to be carefully thought out and implemented. Mohsan indicated that the Windsor Police already have a model (the COAST team) that pairs a police officer and a social worker to do outreach for at-risk people and that we could consider doing something similar on our campus. Mohsan also stated that there is training for faculty, staff, and students that has been taking place for several years, but we should look to continue expanding this. The training is varied depending on need. It has included Mental Health 101 and Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) which is similar to SafeTalk. Mohsan further indicated that Residence Assistants, who will do a lot of the wellness checks receive specialized training each year and that Campus Police regularly receive similar types of training.
- Ryan and Mohsan talked about "Keep.meSAFE" and how this tele and text counselling service is good option for students and that in partnership with the UWSA, this is being expanded to the whole student population in the coming year. Jenessa indicated that in her experience of working on a crisis line that she's seen the need, and recognizes the value of students being able to text their feelings/emotions rather than have a conversation – "they're just not ready to verbalize their feelings."
- Jenessa suggested that the university needs to increase its training for executives for groups on campus to help increase the number of individuals trained, and spread awareness regarding mental health crises resources. There was a discussion that this training should be made available for UWSA groups

and that a training could be developed in the 2019 fall term. Discussions between the University and the UWSA will be pursued in the coming weeks.

- Moshan suggested that we have an available folder for “how to help a student/colleague in distress.” These folders have been used at several institutions and he mentioned that the University of Calgary is willing to share their version.

### **iii) Accommodation issues during exams**

- Ryan explained that the APC sub-committee indicated that the academic policies appeared satisfactory, and that their recommendation focussed on the notion that the University should do more work to raise awareness on accommodations issues to staff and faculty. Ryan indicated that this is a fair comment and that Student Accessibility Services is currently undertaking efforts to develop a new and improved SAS Faculty Handbook and a complimentary presentation that SAS staff will deliver to academic department in the 2019-20 academic year.

### **iv) Voluntary Withdrawal deadline issues and remedie**

- Ryan explained that it was suggested that the Voluntary Withdrawal date should be moved to last day of classes. This issue has been debated by the Deans and the Academic Policy Committee and the position taken was not to change the current policy. An increase of communication was suggested.
- Ryan stated that several institutions have moved the Voluntary Withdrawal date to last day of classes, and suggested that a potential solution would be to have student advocacy take on the issue.
- Kathy asked if there is any available data from other universities that have implemented this policy, and if we could use that data to illustrate the benefits of moving the deadline. Ryan stated that he will inquire with universities in Ontario regarding any data collected since this policy change at their institutions.

### **v) Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grade designation suggestion**

- Ryan explained that the focus group participants supported Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grade designation, because it would alleviate mental health issues. Ryan voiced that McGill has this policy in place and further indicated that the APC sub-committee indicated that they would refer this particular issue to the Office of the Provost for further consideration.

- Derrick agreed that the ability to select course for Pass/Fail credits would alleviate stress of students.

#### **vi) Consideration of Indigenous peoples and culture**

- Ryan indicated that the focus group gave consideration to Indigenous peoples and how their specific needs should be taken into account when engaging in dialogue about mental health and wellness on campus.
- Derrick suggested that the University of Windsor create a healing lodge or similar kind of place on campus to increase the availability of safe spaces for Indigenous peoples on campus. They further mentioned that the issue of smudging indoors is a particular area of concern and that the policy of preventing this cultural practice was legacy of colonialism.
- Mohsan voiced that more work needs to be done in regard to counselling Indigenous peoples on campus; having specific mental health Indigenous training, or having more Indigenous mental health specialists available to deliver services is something the University is giving consideration.

#### **Action Item #3:** additional international student on Committee (Ryan)

- Kathy called for a motion to add a new member to the committee, Victor. This motion was approved by the IC.

#### **Action item #4:** Updates to Implementation Committee Terms of Reference – *to be discussed, see agenda item #4*

#### **Action item #5:** Update of the Student Mental Health Strategy website to incorporate Implementation Committee work (Ryan)

- Ryan indicated that the webpage is ready to go within 2-3 weeks. Ryan will notify the IC when the website is live.

#### **4. Review and Confirm Terms of Reference (TOR)**

- Kathy called for a motion to accept the updated Committee TOR.

- Jeremiah voiced concerns regarding the value in taking a two week break where the IC could not come to an agreement by consensus. He indicated that the two-week cooling off period may not be helpful or practical.
- Derrick indicated that they had recently learned about an Indigenous model of decision making, where in the absence of consensus a vote would be taken and further indicated that whatever mechanism is put in place should ensure that the group works hard at gaining a consensus outcome. They also suggested that the two-week period could be beneficial to the group if that time was used by both sides of an issue to genuinely explore and learn about the other side's position. Increased knowledge could lead to better decisions and outcomes.
- After discussion regarding types of decisions needing to be made and timing of such discussions (two-weeks – is that reasonable?), Jeremiah proposed to change the wording of the Committee TOR item (highlighted text is new language; struck out text is to be removed language):
  - *When making decisions, the Committee will strive for consensus. Where consensus cannot be achieved, a vote will be taken.*
  - *Committee members must declare any conflict of interest they may hold in relation to issues being voted on and withhold their vote from that decision-making process. They will be considered a non-voting member on the issue for which the conflict of interest exists.*
  - *Votes require committee quorum, which is 50%+1 of committee members. Issues will pass with a majority vote. Any tied vote will be deferred to the next meeting to hold another discussion and vote on the issue. In the event of a tied vote on a time-sensitive issue, the vote will fail. Any tied vote will require the committee to reconvene to try to achieve consensus on the issue and a vote will re-occur if necessary.*

## 5. Update of Sub-Committee Working on Mental Health Initiatives Fund

- Ashley: there is a follow-up sub-committee meeting scheduled for April 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Jenessa: the sub-committee is hoping to announce the application for funds at the club summit in May. The application will require the applicants to state among other things:
  - the anticipated impact and reach of the event/project;
  - outline the expense reasoning in detail;
  - projects must be consistent with at least of the recommendations in the Student Mental Health Strategy;
- The allocation of funding and the successful projects/events will be listed on the website. Funding will be available for 1 full year (October – September).

- Ashley: one of the hopes with the funding is to promote collaboration. The Wellness Office will be aware of who was not successful in receiving the funding ~~and~~. This may allow those who are interested in delivering a mental health project but who don't have a successful application to be connected with other successful groups who are a part of projects/events that are similar in aim. Mohsan suggested that priority be given to students who incorporate the most collaboration (i.e., those who incorporate students, staff, and faculty in the event/project or who work past faculty or departmental silos).
- Derrick suggested making this available and known during Welcome Week. Ryan agreed and stated that this funding opportunity can be pushed through various school communication outlets during the first 2-3 weeks of school and even before.
- A general discussion was generated around the max amount of funding allocated to projects/events. Ryan indicated that any money not spent from the fund will carry over to the next year.
- General discussion regarding the details of the criteria for the application. More details to come following next meeting.

#### **6. Continue with Review of Strategy Recommendations (time permitting)**

- No discussion took place.

#### **7. Next meeting**

- Ryan to send out a doodle poll to committee members to establish the next meeting date for the purpose of finalizing the application process for the Mental Health Initiatives Fund.

#### **Kathy asked if there was anything else people would like to bring up.**

- Kathy called for a motion to close the meeting. Mohsan and Jenessa second the motion. Kathy closed the meeting.