



UWindsor Student Mental Health Strategy

Steering Committee Meeting April 27, 2017

MEETING NOTES

Attendees: Jennie Atkins, Dr. Mohsan Beg, Kerry Gray, Francine Herlehy, Kathryn Pasquach, Dr. Linda Patrick, Dr. Karen Roland, Denice Shuker, Emily Stadder, Sameena Sultana, Jessica Tetreault, Dr. Douglas Kneale, Dr. Pat McTaggart, Dr. Dusty Johnstone, Kaye Johnson, Ryan Flannagan

Regrets: Denice Shuker

Opening Discussion:

The discussion opened with opening remarks from Dr. Kneale and Ryan Flannagan, the co-chairs of the committee.

Dr. Beg, provided an overview of the work that had taken place to date to develop the documentation that was before the committee. Specifically, a large group of individuals from across the University had met on multiple occasions to discuss, craft and finalize the Mission, Vision and Principles that would be used to inform the development of the Mental Health Strategy. Regarding this consultative process and the other documents to be considered (the TOR, Working Group TOR and timeline) it was also indicated that Marcella Ciampa was an invaluable contributor to organizing and drafting these materials.

The Purpose, Vision, and Principles document Discussion:

Kaye Johnson indicated that perhaps the TOR needed to give consideration to the fact that programs and services on the UWindsor campus are not as diverse as they could be to address the community's diverse character. It was indicated that as much as possible, services should be individualized/tailored to meet the needs of individual students.

Dr. Johnstone also commented that while individualized approaches to support are crucial, there are structural issues/systemic barriers which need to be acknowledged within the Steering Committee TOR. For example, one structural issue that affects student mental health is poverty and the policies and societal structures that contribute to students' negative economic position. More counsellors, who provide more individualized services cannot address poverty and its consequences on students.

Dr. Beg indicated that structural issues do need to be considered and touched on how CACUSS' Framework for Post-Secondary Student Mental Health does include in the first of its six tiers Institutional Structure – Organization, Planning and Policy and that this particular working group (led by Kerry Gray) may give consideration to this particular area of concern.

Action Item: While close to being finalized, there was a suggestion that updated wording or additional wording could be proposed for Accessibility and Diversity Guiding Principle that is reflective of the comments above. The Purpose, Vision, and Principles document will be distributed and new language will be proposed; the document will be discussed and confirmed at the next Steering Committee meeting.

Steering Committee Terms of Reference (TOR) Discussion:

Kathryn Pasquach raised the issue about accountability. Among other questions, who and how will there be accountability in relation to the Strategy once it has been finalized. This accountability function is not currently outlined in the TOR.

It was indicated that accountability should be a key part of the Strategy, but that any accountability structure or process should be captured in the Strategy. It was indicated that the work that will inform the development of the Strategy will identify best practices regarding accountability processes.

Kerry Gray put forward the suggestion that it may be helpful to have an Alumni representative on the Steering Committee who has experience with our processes and someone who has experience or who works in the mental health field.

Action Item: It was agreed that an Alumni representative should be invited to join the Steering Committee and that this person should have experience within the mental health field. Ryan will follow up with Kerry to secure a recommendation for this person. Other possible Alumni representatives could be sought for this position.

Working Group Terms of Reference (TOR) Discussion:

Like the Steering Group TOR, there was a consensus that the Working Group TOR were very close to being finalized and that because of limited time remaining in the meeting, it was agreed that the current version of the document should be distributed for consideration with an aim to finalizing it at the next meeting.

Preliminary comments regarding the Working Group TOR included:

- Ryan indicated that 2-3 students would be hired to conduct work to help each of the Working Groups to discuss their respective areas and to develop recommendations. They would be divided between the 6 Working Groups and would do the following: look at UWindsor's current programming; look at other universities mental strategies and other best practices; using the CACUSS/CMHA Guide they will identify gaps and recommendations for the UWindsor strategy and each Working Group will discuss.
- Regarding the recommendations that come forward it will be important to indicate who will be responsible for implementing and what the timeline will be for recommendations – short, medium and long-term.
- Dr. Johnstone made the suggestion that more men should be invited to participate in the Working Groups as the current makeup of the groups was quite unbalanced.
- Francine Herlehy suggested that it may be helpful to have a mental health practitioner on her committee as it is examining the provision of direct mental health services.
- Dr. Beg indicated that a website has been created for the Mental Health Strategy and it will become live in the coming weeks.

Action Items:

- Ryan to send out the plan of action that will guide the students' research efforts to each of the Working Group leads for comment.
- Additional male colleagues and students will be invited to participate on the Working Groups.
- A counsellor will be invited to sit on the mental health services Working Group.

Next Steps:

The following next steps were identified:

- Send out the Mission, Vision, and Principles document for comment; obtain updated wording for the section Access and Diversity section; finalize new language at next meeting.
- Send out the Steering Committee TOR for final consideration; finalize at next meeting.
- Send out the Working Group TOR for final consideration; finalize at next meeting.
- Invite Alumni rep to Steering Committee.
- Student work plan to be shared with Working Group leads for comments/consideration – consider a separate meeting with the leads before the end of May to finalize this process.
- Additional male colleagues and students will be invited to participate in the Working Groups.
- A mental health practitioner will be invited to participate on the MH Services Working group led by Francine Herlehy.
- A Mental Health Strategy webpage is to be created in the coming months
- The next meeting of the Steering Group is proposed for June 9 from 2 to 4pm.
- The Working Groups will aim to have their first meeting meetings between June 12 and 23 (details on this process will be shared in the coming weeks).