

A Resolution on Future Action to be Taken by Mental Health Services at the University of Waterloo:

The Science Society Board of Directors,

Highlighting that mental health concerns affect a significant fraction of students at the University of Waterloo but the help necessary is often not readily available,

Noting Mental Health Services are offered on campus but are woefully understaffed with only 2 counsellors and 2 psychiatrists servicing the 30,000 plus students,

Emphasizing wait times to see a psychiatrist after reporting suicidal thoughts have been up to three weeks (with a counsellor seen after one week)¹,

Understanding that hiring additional counsellors and psychiatrists is costly and requires the current facilities be extended to provide office space for additional staff,

Expressing disappointment that the University does not better promote the services available or make readily available the statistics pertaining to mental health of students,

Noting that FEDS Mental Health Services is funded by student fees,

Frustrated by the lack of clarity in how the University plans to address mental health in the future,

Noting the recent petition signed by over 15,000 University of Waterloo students (approximately half the student population) to, "Urge The University of Waterloo to Change [its] Approach to Mental Health",

Expressing support for the courageous efforts of those individuals in Mental Health Services who diligently work to address student concerns,

Determined to express the views of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Science and highlight concerns regarding the lack of both awareness and availability of mental health services on campus, the UW Science Society Board of Directors hereby:

1. Recommends a letter is included into each University of Waterloo admissions package reminding parents/guardians the importance of addressing both realistic expectations at

¹ Anecdotal from a Board Member

the academic level of Waterloo and their support regardless of academic success with the prospective student;

2. Requests more counsellors are hired even if this comes at an increase to student fees²;
3. Acknowledges the Federation of Students (FEDS) Vice President Internal role in overseeing the Mental Health Services at the University of Waterloo;
4. Expresses concern for the lack of awareness of what mental health services are provided by the university;
5. Recommends that a mandatory 10 minute meeting is set up for each student with a counsellor in their first month of first year to explain the services available to them³;
6. Recommends that the University provide additional assistive staff dedicated to assisting Don's in one-on-one sessions and mental health awareness sessions for students or increase the ratio of Dons to students in the UW Department of Housing & Residence;
7. Emphasizes increasing support staff (preferably a councillor per residence) dedicated to mental health;
8. Recommends increasing the number of one-on-one sessions to one session per month between first year students and their Dons in residence;
9. Requests that statistics pertaining to mental health at Waterloo be made publicly available including, but not limited to, estimated wait times for mental health services and transparent metrics regarding mental health and suicide of currently enrolled students;
10. Directs the Science Society Executive to:
 - a. Create a location designated to display events or initiatives pertaining to mental health (inclusive of mental health Wednesdays) to increase ease of access to information without concerns regarding over-cluttering by posters,
 - b. Continue to display events or initiatives pertaining to mental health in locations not designated for mental health,
 - c. Pursue brochures on services for mental health accessible to students and distribute them to the various clubs and societies under SciSoc, as well as encourage them to be distributed during Orientation,
 - d. Encourage the executive members of the various clubs and societies under SciSoc to acknowledge and pass on any specific complaints or solutions suggested to them;
11. Directs the Science Society Executive to have ongoing communication with the Science Undergraduate Office to convey any future action the Science Society feels should be taken to address mental health at the University,
12. Directs the Science Society Executive to have ongoing communication with mental health services about changes in their services or how to access them and distribute this information to science students

² Assuming counsellors are paid \$60,000 a year and there are 3,000 students, an increase of about \$44 per student per year would allow for twice as many counsellors on staff

³ Assuming 22 counsellors and 7,500 new students each year this would take approximately seven 8 hour work days of counsellor time

University of Waterloo Science Society
Board of Directors
2 April, 2017

Submitted by the Councillors O'Sullivan & Velling
Signatories: 10 Yay, 0 Nay, 0 Abstention
Passed by a Vote:

13. Decides to remain actively seized on the matter.