

Review of past initiatives

**2012 Student Mental Health Review
and
2017 Student-led Petition**

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2012 Student Mental Health Review

Key findings and recommendations

What prompted the review?

- Recognition across North America that mental health in higher education is a crucial challenge
 - Canadian university presidents organize task force to address the challenge collectively
- More students entering university with significant mental health challenges
- There was awareness of a number of completed suicides of Waterloo students in the 2 years prior to this review and concern about National College Health Assessment (NCHA-II) revealing high numbers of student considering or attempting suicide
- Ontario College Health Association issues a report pointing out organizational barriers to providing the best services

Methods

- Stakeholder focus groups
 - Service staff (Counselling, Health, OPD (AccessAbility))
 - Undergraduate Operations Committee
- Student survey
- Key informant interviews
 - Service leaders
 - Service partners
 - Other University leaders

Stakeholder focus group themes

- Breaking down service delivery silos
- Prevention and early identification/intervention
- Enhanced student access to mental health services
- Staff/care giver well being
- Staff development and education
- Recognition of gaps in services

Student Survey – Top concerns

- Managing time effectively
- Getting enough sleep
- Managing anxiety
- Managing anxiety related to academic success
- Managing life stressors

Student Survey - Services that are important to students

- Programs or advice on managing stress
- Learning strategies to help manage depressed moods
- Support during a personal crisis
- Financial counselling
- Programs that help students connect with other students who have similar interests
- Support programs that are sensitive and user-friendly to a student's unique culture and language
- The survey also allowed students to comment on waitlists and perceived quality of services

Overall findings

- The pressing need for smoother working together of all mental health and support services on the Waterloo campus(es)
- Staff and particularly students' persuasive comments that there is a need for enhanced access to and availability of best practice mental health services
- The need to give special attention to prevention and early intervention regarding the distress of students

Recommendations

Organizational:

- Develop single leadership and administrative structure for Counselling and Health Services
- Create satellite Counselling location in Health Services building
- Create a senior leadership position related to Wellness Promotion and Education

Services:

- Hire a full-time psychiatrist
- Comprehensive, seamless range of services including integrated intake
- Enhance crisis response
- Review capability to address substance abuse concerns
- Review service levels as these relate to wait lists and staff stress

Recommendations, continued

Health Promotion:

- Develop strategies (across campus) for promoting health and prevention of mental illness (including addressing academic policies that are seen to be barriers to mental health)

Other:

- Addressing unique circumstances of international students, and those studying on co-op
- Staff development; trainee development
- Integration of electronic health record
- Improving partnerships with external providers and with academic units

Some specific changes since 2012

- Development of Campus Wellness Department
 - Common management teams
 - Mechanisms to improve collaboration among clinical professionals
- Common Electronic Health Record
- Intake/Triage to ensure immediate response for most urgent situations
- Increase range of service options (Groups, Coping skills workshops)
- Funding for psychiatric services (to promote collaborative model)
- Additional mental health staff (appx. 7 new positions)
- Hiring of Associate Director, Health Promotion

Recommendations scorecard

Date	Complete	Complete or Partially Complete
April 2013	0/47	0/47
April 2015	16/47 (34%)	26/47 (55%)
July 2017	27/47 (57%)	41/47 (87%)

Summary

- The 2012 Student Mental Health review was a significant catalyst for change in the planning and delivery of services on campus
- Many of the themes continue to be relevant; many of the in progress items need to continue
- The changes coming from the 2012 review place us in a good position to implement further improvements

2017 Petition and Web-form Themes

Key themes

- Data from the **March 2017 petition** and **web form inputs** were analyzed and coded for themes and patterns.
- 5 themes and their associated sub-themes emerged from the analysis.
- **Data set:**
 - 296 individual commenters
 - 521 Instances

Results – Top 5

Theme	Sub Theme	Percent of Instances
Service Access & Delivery	Funding/Resourcing	19%
	Gatekeeper Training	6.5%
	Quality of Experience	7.1%
	Integration of Services	5.4%
Academic	Impact of Curriculum Design & Pedagogy	8.6%
	Stress of Co-op	3.6%
Inclusive & Supportive Campus Culture	Anti-Stigma	4.6%
	Cultural & Diversity Considerations	2.3%
	Environmental Factors	9.8%
Mental Health Awareness & Communication	Health Promotion, Support, Education & Programming	18.6%
	Crisis Event Management	2.9%
Campus Systems & Structure	Leadership	6.1%
	Organization	2.5%
	Policy/Strategy	2.9%

Summary

- The petition responses are a constructive contribution and starting point for discussions about student mental health
- The themes will be useful for analysis by panel groups and are similar to themes being examined in other post-secondary mental health reviews

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Thank you