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 (apprx. 7 new positions)
- Hiring of Associate Director, Health Promotion
# Recommendations scorecard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Complete</th>
<th>Complete or Partially Complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 2013</td>
<td>0/47</td>
<td>0/47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2015</td>
<td>16/47 (34%)</td>
<td>26/47 (55%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2017</td>
<td>27/47 (57%)</td>
<td>41/47 (87%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

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