Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy

Working Document

Student Development & Services | 2013
UBC Vancouver Campus

Student mental health and wellbeing
is instrumental in students' academic engagement and success, and recognizing its importance is fundamental to student life at UBC.

UBC's focus on people, undergraduate and graduate student experiences, and the development of a vibrant intellectual community is strengthened significantly through a commitment to enhancing student mental health and wellbeing.

Student learning goals

1. Enhance the quality and impact of teaching for all students.

2. Expand educational enrichment opportunities, including research, a first year small class experience, international learning, community service learning, and co-op / practicum / internship opportunities.

3. Support student wellbeing, personal development, and positive affiliation with UBC through outstanding campus life programs and service excellence.

Place and Promise: *The UBC Plan*

Levels

3 Students needing professional intervention / care.
Students with more complex and serious concerns.

2 Students wanting / needing skill development.

1 All students.

While it is important to focus on students in need of professional intervention and care, without a more integrated approach to mental health and wellbeing we will not structurally and systemically impact our community in ways that broadly support mental health and wellbeing for all students.

LEVELS

1   **1&2**   **2**   **3**

STRATEGIES

Intervention Pyramid adapted from: US Department of Education Approach for School Health Grants Continuum of Services.

1

ALL STUDENTS
Policies & practices

Policies & practices

Institutional policies and practices can have a significant impact on student mental wellbeing. They reinforce certain values and behaviours which in turn affect student experience.

Objective

Align policies and practices with goals of transforming student learning and interaction. Review, revise, and/or develop policies and practices to reinforce values and behaviours that support student learning and wellbeing.

POLICIES & PRACTICES

Priority Areas	Current Progress	Opportunities / Action Items	Responsible
Policy Review	AMS and Mental Health Network initiative to review UBC policies and procedures in terms of their impact on student mental wellbeing.	Incorporate assessment of impact on student mental wellbeing into ongoing review, revision, and/or development of policy and procedures. The Faculty of Graduate Studies will review graduate student specific policies and practices. (!)	Faculties
Policy 14: Response to At-Risk Behaviour	**Complete:** Revised policy extends scope to include threat of harm to self and clarifies who is responsible for responding.		Vice President Students Office
Academic Concessions Policy & Practice	Draft plan to guide documentation required for concessions, developed by a committee of Associate Deans, Counselling Services and Student Health Service, has informed aspects of the last revision of the Concessions Policy. However, the ongoing practice of granting concessions continues to be overly reliant on health professional's documentation without a clear set of principles to guide practice across courses, departments and faculties. This has the unintended effect of reinforcing visits to health care professionals for documentation while missing opportunities for transformative student interactions within faculties to reinforce student accountability, goal setting and skill development.	Develop consistent, clear guidelines and practices regarding the granting of concessions within and across faculties to reinforce student accountability and self-management and to facilitate more transformative student interactions within academic advising and support services. Revised policy also needs to address the specifics of graduate students' experience. Currently, graduate students request academic concessions both within coursework and with regard to non-course-based academic milestones such as comprehensive exams and advancing to candidacy. (!)	Faculties
Policy 73: Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities.	Practice of referral to Access and Diversity regarding accommodations for students with chronic, ongoing mental health problems is inconsistent across academic programs.	Develop clear expectations/criteria for referral to Access and Diversity regarding academic accommodations for students with chronic, ongoing mental health problems to enable more consistent implementation of Policy 73 across faculties and student services. Consider the way in which the cost of assessment for certain disabilities may act as a barrier.	Student Services, Faculties
Student Learning Plan	Identified as a key strategy recommendation in the Excellence in Advising Report and Assist BPR as a means of facilitating transformative student interactions with faculty and staff. Facilitates proactive planning across all dimensions of student development to support student success. Learning plans are being piloted in Arts, Science and Kinesiology.	Complete development of a common student learning plan and implement as a framework informing and supporting all advising work across faculties and student services. Determine how the Learning Plan can be applied to the graduate student context. Determine what kind of training this might require for student services, undergraduate, and graduate advisors. (!)	Faculties & Student Services, VPA

(!) = priority faculty action item.

1

ALL STUDENTS
Policies & practices

Policies & practices (continued)

Institutional policies and practices can have a significant impact on student mental wellbeing. They reinforce certain values and behaviours which in turn affect student experience.

Objective

Align policies and practices with goals of transforming student learning and interaction. Review, revise, and/or develop policies and practices to reinforce values and behaviours that support student learning and wellbeing.

POLICIES & PRACTICES (CONTINUED)

Priority Areas	Current Progress	Opportunities / Action Items	Responsible
Program structure and curriculum design	Align structure, organization and culture of academic programs with student learning and wellbeing goals.	• Review credit requirements in terms of optimal load to promote student learning and wellbeing over the course of an academic program. • Provide clear articulation of learning objectives and expectations for each course • Embed more enriched educational experiences into curriculum requirements. Incongruence: Grad st. funding period and ave. time to grad • Support positive grad student-advisor relationship development	Faculties & Student Services
Student Code of Conduct Diversionary Discipline Residence Standards	**Complete:** Brings transparency to behavioral expectations and consequences of non-compliance to reinforce student responsibility and accountability.		

1

ALL STUDENTS
Supportive environment

Supportive environment

Student engagement and connection/belonging to the campus community has a positive impact on student mental health.

Objective

Create a campus environment that supports meaningful student engagement and connection to the campus community.

SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

Priority Areas	Current Progress	Opportunities / Action Items	Responsible
Reward & Recognition	The following are examples of alignment of UBC's rewards & recognition systems with initiatives that promote student engagement and positive affiliation with the campus: • CABSD Awards • Student Leadership and Peer Program reward and recognition events. • Deans Reception for graduating student leaders, Faculty of Arts	Continue to look for opportunities to reward engagement promoting initiatives. Graduate student recognition might include: • Encouraging students to engage in the three-minute thesis. • Graduate student intellectual community development funds (under consideration).	
Space Development	The following are examples of spaces that have been intentionally developed to support student engagement and to foster a sense of connectedness/positive affiliation with the university: • Residences • Centre for Student Involvement • Global Lounge • Abdul Ladha Science Student Centre	Develop standards for space development that reinforce student engagement and positive affiliation. The following offer opportunities to foster enriched learning experience through the creation of space: • SUB space re-development to include a focus on student wellness • Collegiums • Develop opportunities for both graduate as well as undergraduate students to come together to promote connectedness.	Faculties & Student Services
Promotion of Student Involvement and Engagement.	Orientation, peer, leadership, mentorship and first-year programs that promote student involvement and engagement, reduce students' isolation and enhance their sense of belonging. Examples include: • Undergraduate and graduate societies • SCI Team, Science Mentoring Program, First-Year Seminar in Science • Arts One, CAPS, Arts Mentoring programs • Student Housing: Fostering living/ learning community through programming supported by Residence Life Managers and Advisors. • Enrolment Services Professionals (ESPs) • My Undergraduate Groups (MUGS); Jump Start • Student groups and programs (Mental Health Network, AMS Speakeasy, Kaleidoscope). • Recreational Programming (i.e., Free Drop-in programs, "Just For Fun" program, free agent teams creating increased opportunities for student participation. • Graduate student online forum; "Winter Connections" for new international students beginning Term 2; St. Johns and Green Colleges.	Look for opportunities to extend and integrate peer and student leadership training and development across student services, faculties and student organizations. Graduate student peer and leadership programming might include: • Graduate student peer writing groups • Research Commons • Development of local (dept. and faculty) based societies by graduate students. • Enhanced peer orientation, possibly funded through the Teaching Learning Enhancement Fund (TLEF).	Faculties & Student Services

1

ALL STUDENTS
Supportive environment

Supportive environment (continued)

Student engagement and connection/belonging to the campus community has a positive impact on student mental health.

Objective

Create a campus environment that supports meaningful student engagement and connection to the campus community.

Priority Areas	Current Progress	Opportunities / Action Items	Responsible
Enhance Student Advising	The Excellence in Student Advising report outlines a range of recommendations for strengthening student advising to facilitate transformative student interactions between students and faculty/staff across the campus community. The Student Interaction Transformation Project has been established as a means of acting on these recommendations and consists of a number of specific initiatives including: • Advising Standards and Philosophy • Online Advising Management System (OAMS) • Knowledge Base System	Integration of Advising Standards and Philosophy throughout faculty and student services advising interactions with students. Determine applicability of the OAMS for graduate student advising (preliminary discussion has been held between the OAMS project group and the Faculty of Graduate Studies). The Faculty of Graduate Studies is expanding supervisor training with both online materials and department visits. Partner with Counselling Services/Student Health Service to develop and deliver resources specifically to graduate student supervisors for supporting student mental health and responding to student mental health difficulties.	Faculties & Student Services

1&2

ALL STUDENTS & STUDENTS WANTING/ NEEDING SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Increase mental health awareness & self-management skills

Increase mental health awareness & self-management skills

Builds students' capacity to maintain wellness and prevent mental health difficulties.

Objective

Increase students' awareness of the impact of mental health on academic success, how to maintain mental health, early signs of poor coping and strategies, resources and services to help regain mental wellbeing.

INCREASE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS & SELF-MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Priority Areas	Current Progress	Opportunities / Action Items	Responsible
Awareness & Skill Development	**Resources:** The following are examples of resources currently being implemented to build students' awareness of the impact of mental health on academic success. They are also aimed at building students' capacity to understand signs and symptoms of poor coping and to intervene on their own behalf in a more timely way to prevent the onset of more serious mental health difficulties: **Annual Awareness Campaigns:** • Live Well to Learn Well campaign • Healthy Minds at UBC • Suicide Awareness Campaign focusing on reducing stigma and building awareness of signs/symptoms of suicidality, and resources/services available. **Comprehensive Web Resources:** • Live Well Learn Well launched in 2010 • Programs offered through the Learning Commons **Programs & Resources:** The following are examples of current programs and resources that build capacity through skills development and supportive resources. • Science Peer Academic Coaches, Science mentoring programs • Wellness Centre: Collaboration with other units such as Athletics on health promotion • Learning Commons • Centre for Professional Skills Development , APSC • Jump Start for international and aboriginal students • Nurse on Campus • Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Key Messages Handbook: to support awareness programming. • AMS/SHHS Academic Team: tutoring program • Wellness Mobile App: in development • FoGS integrates information about wellbeing resources into orientation events. GPS offers sessions on time/stress management. **Peer Programs:** A number of peer programs operate across student services, faculties, and student led groups. These offer a range of support including information, advising, coaching and advocacy.	Faculty have full shared ownership of mental health promotion to reinforce its value as integral to academic success and to influence behaviour. This involves adopting and integrating key messages regarding the importance of mental wellbeing for academic success through existing student information sources within faculties. A short statement in course syllabi offers significant opportunities to reinforce the importance of maintaining mental wellbeing. **(!)**	Faculties
		Student Roles and Responsibilities Statement: Integrate key messages regarding responsibility for maintaining wellbeing as well as regarding reaching out when a friend and/or peer is in distress.	Student Services
		Reinforce mental health awareness through the development of a credit elective course, open to all students on maintaining mental health and wellbeing. Determine applicability to graduate student experience (possibly part of GPS).	Faculties
		Collaborate with student led programs and initiatives to maximize impact where possible	Faculties; Student Services

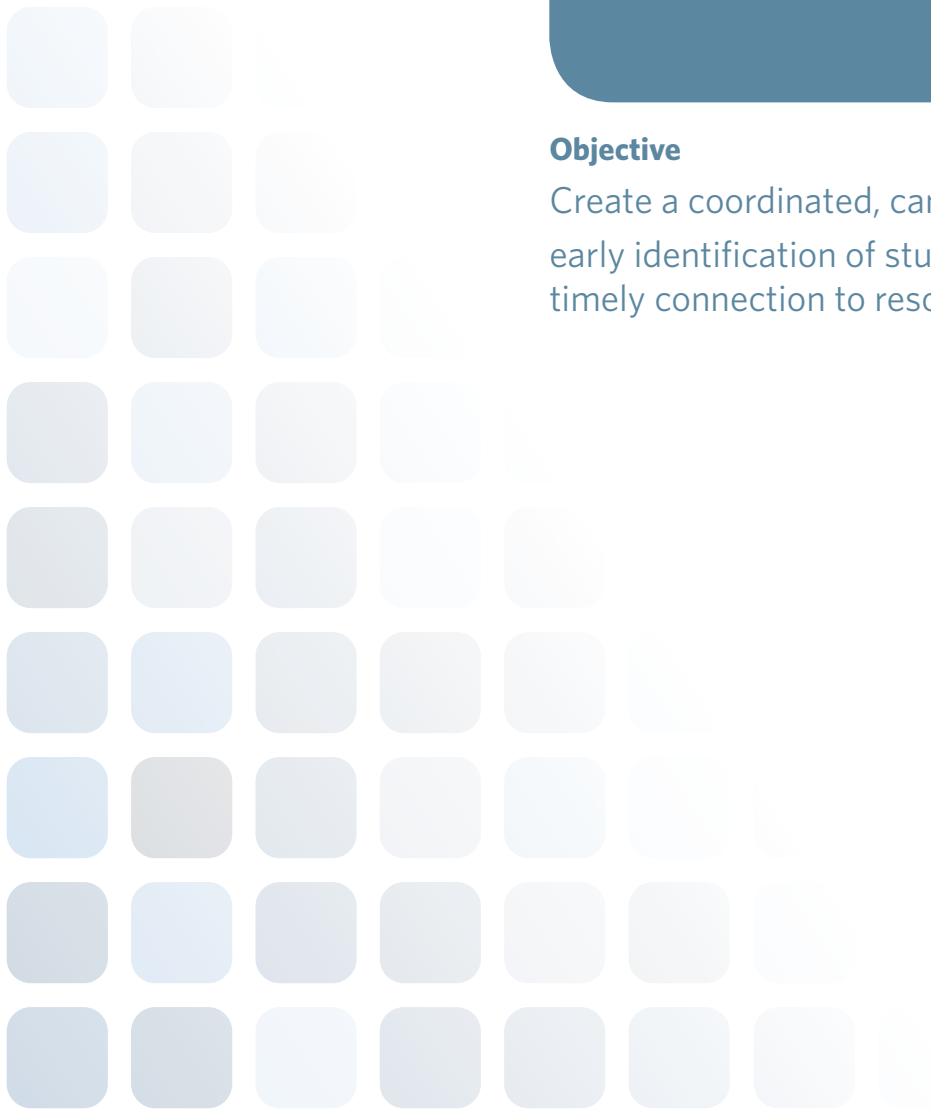**(!)** = priority faculty action item.

2

STUDENTS WANTING/ NEEDING SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Early identification of students needing assistance and connection to appropriate resources

> # Early identification of students needing assistance and connection to appropriate resources

Objective

Create a coordinated, campus-wide system to enable early identification of students who may need support and timely connection to resources and services.

EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS NEEDING ASSISTANCE AND CONNECTION TO APPROPRIATE RESOURCES

Priority Areas	Current Progress
Early Alert System	Early Alert: Implementation of a centralized, coordinated approach to identifying students who may be in need of assistance and connecting them to resources and services to address any concerns in a timely manner. Enables a caring, coordinated and holistic approach. Maximizes the potential for helping a student address any concerns before they become barriers to academic success and minimizes the possibility of students falling through the cracks. This is a multifaceted program that involves: • Training faculty, staff and students in indicators of concern and how to report this to the early alert system. • Creating a centralized database capable of tracking student concerns, actions taken, and follow-up. • Developing clear protocols for assessment, and response to student. • QPR: Question, Persuade, Refer (Identification of suicide warning signs and how to reach our and refer). • Residence peer staffing model: Facilitates early identification, reach-out and referral

Opportunities / Action Items	Responsible
Promote the Early Alert System within Faculties; establish clear expectations and supports for participation. (!)	Faculties
Coordinate faculty and staff training with the three-day mental health training program being developed through Health Promotions.	UBC Human Resources, Health Promotions Program; Faculty of Graduate Studies; Student Services
Provide Mental Health First Aid training for advisors who work more directly with students in need of assistance, including graduate advisors and graduate secretaries.	

(!) = priority faculty action item.

3

STUDENTS NEEDING PROFESSIONAL INTERVENTION / CARE

Adequate, timely mental health services

Adequate, timely mental health services

Objective

Provide timely access to an initial assessment and referral to the most appropriate level of professional intervention. Establish a streamlined continuum of care.

ADEQUATE, TIMELY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Priority Areas	Current Progress	Opportunities / Action Items	Responsible
Triage System	Implemented in 2010, the Triage System provides access to initial assessment within 24 hours and rapid matching to services and resources. This functions as the initial point of contact for admitted and registered students needing professional mental health care.	Continue to evaluate and strengthen the program as indicated.	Counselling Services
Streamlined continuum of care: Clear point of contact, assessment, and referral to the appropriate level of intervention	Counselling Services and Student Health Service function as the initial point of contact for mental health and physical health concerns respectively. These units operate a collaborative shared care approach to the treatment of depression consistent with stepped care provincial guidelines and apply this general approach to the full range of mental health concerns. As such, irrespective of which office a student accesses initially, they will be assessed and referred to the most appropriate level of treatment/office, including referral to community resources, depending on the nature and severity of their presenting concerns.	Clarify referral/access points for services with faculty advising offices, faculty, and staff.	Counselling Services, Student Health, Faculties
Readily accessible group counselling focusing on most prevalent student mental concerns.	Group counselling providing immediate and ongoing support for students needing assistance to manage anxiety, depression and stress.		
Mental Health Crisis Response	Access to emergency appointments (Counselling Services and Student Health Service) anytime during office hours. Direct phone link to Vancouver Crisis Line on Counselling Services after hours phone message.		
Coordinated re-entry after hospitalization.	Streamlined referral to campus services and after discharge from Vancouver General Hospital and liaison to support transition back to a student's academic program.		

3

**STUDENTS WITH MORE
COMPLEX AND SERIOUS
CONCERNS**

**Case management and
risk mitigation protocols**

Case management and risk mitigation protocols

Objective

Establish clear protocols to mitigate risk and manage more complex student concerns requiring a level of coordinated response which is beyond the capacity of individual departments and units.

CASE MANAGEMENT AND RISK MITIGATION PROTOCOLS

Priority Areas	Current Progress	Opportunities / Action Items	Responsible
Case Management and Risk Mitigation Approach	Protocols within this approach are designed to: • Support students with mental health difficulties whose academic status is in jeopardy. • Facilitate more extensive liaison with community resources where necessary. • Effectively balance student and university needs in cases of significant ongoing risk to self or others and/or behaviors that significantly impact other's ability to learn/teach. The following are key areas of protocol development: • Timely notification of concern regarding academic jeopardy, clarification of expectations, identification of options to support student academic success and wellbeing. • Behavioral contracts • Mandated psychological assessment • Voluntary and involuntary leave • Re-entry process.	Establish consistency across faculties regarding implementation of protocols to provide greater clarity and guidance for faculty and to reinforce implementation of an institutional approach to more complex, serious student concerns. The Faculty of Graduate Studies has developed an internal team to track and discuss complex student cases, including those with mental health considerations. The case management approach in combination with the early alert system will enable aggregation of data relating to student concerns across departments and facilitate a coordinated response to the broad range and severity of student concerns. Ongoing full partnership in collaborative efforts to promote student mental wellbeing. ❗	Student Services, Faculties
Case Manager Position	A Case Manager has been hired to facilitate the case management approach. The Case Manager also plays a central role in the Early Alert System.		Student Development and Services
Mental Health Advisory Committee	A Mental Health Advisory Committee has been established to provide consultation support to the Case Manager in the implementation of case management protocols and to determine the most appropriate course of action in all cases involving significant ongoing risk to self or others and/or behaviors that significantly impact other's ability to learn/teach.		

❗ = priority faculty action item.

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