

Student Mental Health Task Force Update

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National Context

- In 2021-2022, 51.7% of university students experienced moderate psychological distress, and
- 27.8% presented a high suicide screening score

National College Health Assessment conducted by the American College Health Association in 2022

NC State and North Carolina

- Between 2018-2022, NC State averaged 8 student deaths, ranging from 5-12
 - These included deaths by natural causes, accidents, and suicide
- NC State averaged 3 deaths by suicide during that time.
- In North Carolina, between 2016-2020 there were 878 deaths by suicide in people ages 15-24, of which 10 were NC State students

Task Force Approach

- Create a comprehensive list of recommendations to address student mental health
- Examine existing resources
- Review literature for best practices
- Examine campus policies that impact student mental health
- Engage the campus community

Campus Community Engagement

- Open survey collected feedback in November and December
 - 1,096 submissions
 - 51% students, 7.6% faculty, 11% staff
- Inventory of campus resources
 - Faculty and staff shared more than 400 existing resources, programs and initiatives
- Listening sessions
 - 13 sessions held in December and January
 - 550 participants
 - Listening sessions will continue throughout the year

Recommendations

Enhance Culture of Care ♦ Resources ♦ Review PRRs

Enhance Our Culture of Care

A culture of care is one kindness, caring, and respect for all.

We must:

- Identify root causes that are barriers to student mental health
- Continually assess the environment for emerging challenges, including:
 - Inability to meet basic needs
 - Rigid coursework expectations
 - Perceived lack of empathy and flexibility from faculty
 - Limited resources
 - Lack of sense of belonging
 - Policies that negatively impact mental health

Sample Recommendations

- Become a JED Campus
- Create a Dean of Students-type role in DASA
- Schedule Student Wellness Days each semester
- Ensure course expectations and workload align with credit hours earned.
- Create a campus-wide theme centered on wellness and belonging for the 2023-24 academic year
- Implement a peer mentoring support program
- Create a “one-stop shop” website for mental health and wellness resources.

Full list of recommendations: wellness.ncsu.edu/updates

Sample Resource Recommendations

- Embed clinicians across campus
- Create a faculty toolkit and other resources for faculty
- Hire and retain more clinicians and case managers
- Provide additional student support services and community engagement programming opportunities on Centennial Campus.

Full list of recommendations: wellness.ncsu.edu/updates

Review PRRs

- Policies, Rules and Regulations (PRRs) can be difficult to understand and navigate.
- Several PRRs create challenges and significantly impact well-being.
- Recommendations for review of PRRs fall into the following categories:
 - General recommendations
 - Academic regulations
 - Withdrawals, leaves of absence, and adding or dropping courses regulations
 - Grade regulations

Sample Recommendations

- Develop a user-friendly technology for students to access university policies and information regarding how those policies affect them, possibly including a chat feature.
- Review all PRRs to ensure that they use inclusive, non-gendered language. In addition, investigate methods to make PRRs more accessible and easier to understand.
- Consider moving all academically relevant information for students into a single PRR and be clear about differentiations between undergraduate and graduate students.

Full list of recommendations: wellness.ncsu.edu/updates

Path Forward

Implementation Process

- Identify and charge an Implementation Steering Committee
- Identify and charge implementation teams

Implementation teams will:

- Examine feasibility of recommendations
- Develop implementation timelines

Steering Committee

- Doneka Scott, Chair: Vice Chancellor and Dean, DASA
- Graduate Student Association President: Margaret Baker
- Student Body President: McKenzy Heavlin
- Communications: Justin Hammond, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Strategic Marketing and Communications, DASA
- Faculty Senate Chair: Herle McGowan, Teaching Professor, Dept. of Statistics
- Staff Senate Chair: Jill Phipps, OIT Business Services
- Office of the Provost: Katharine Stewart, Senior Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs
- Task Force Co-Chair: Lisa Zapata, Sr. Associate Vice Chancellor, DASA
- Staff Support: Tia Schulstad, Executive Assistant to the VCD, DASA