

GSA Council Meeting AGENDA  
Monday, November 18, 2013 at 6 pm  
Telus 1-34

**A light, vegetarian dinner will be served at 5:15 pm**

In accordance with the Standing Orders of Council, **substantive material** (the bulk of agenda materials) is sent to all Council members at least one week prior to the date of the meeting to give members abundant time to review. Any additional substantive material received after this mailing will be emailed as soon as possible.

**Reports** from committees, Directly-Elected Officers, and management are emailed the Friday before a Monday meeting so that the content is as current as possible.

**OPEN SESSION**

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of the 18 November, 2013 Agenda
3. Approval of the Minutes from the 21 October, 2013 GSA Council meeting  
*Attachments:*
  - Minutes from the 21 October, 2013 GSA Council meeting
4. Changes in Council Membership
  - i. Introduction of New Councillors (*If you are new to Council, please let us know it is your first meeting*)
  - ii. Farewell to Departing Councillors (*If this is your last Council meeting, or if your last Council meeting is approaching, please let us know*)

**Attached  
Numbered Pages**

**3.0-3.11**

**Presentations and Councillor Announcements**

5. Student Mental Health Report: Presentation of Report  
**Brent Epperson (GSA President) will introduce the guest and the item.**  
Guest: Robin Everall (Associate Dean of Students)  
Presentation will begin at 6:15 pm.  
*Attachments:*
  - Student Mental Health at the University of Alberta Summary
  - Student Mental Health at the University of Alberta Final Report
6. "Health and Dental 101"  
**Brent Epperson (GSA President) will introduce the guest and the item.**  
Guest: Kristin Foster (Pacific & Western Director, Studentcare)  
Presentation will begin at 6:35 pm.
7. Athletics and Recreation Fee: Information Session on Proposed Increase

**5.0-5.10  
5.11-5.55**

**Brent Epperson (GSA President) will introduce the guest and the item.**  
Guest: Kerry Mummery (Dean, Faculty of Physical Education & Recreation)  
Presentation will begin at 6:50 pm.

8. Professional Degree Programs: Draft Proposal  
**Brent Epperson (GSA President) will introduce the guest and the item.**  
Guest: Mazi Shirvani (Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies & Research)  
Presentation will begin at 7:20 pm.  
*Attachments:*

9. Councillor Announcements

**To Be Distributed as  
Soon as Possible  
Upon Receipt**

**Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business**

10. GSA Elections and Referenda: Proposed Changes to GSA Bylaw - **Second Reading** (unanimously passed at first reading in October 2013)

**Isaac Odoom (GSA CRO) will present the item.**

*Attachments:*

- Outline of Issue
- Cover Letter from the GSA CRO
- Triple Column: Proposed Changes to GSA Elections Bylaw
- Proposed Changes to GSA Election Bylaw if Approved
- Triple Column: Proposed Changes to GSA Referenda Bylaw
- Proposed Changes to GSA Referenda Bylaw if Approved

**10.0**  
**10.1-10.2**  
**10.3-10.6**  
**10.7-10.8**  
**10.9-10.11**  
**10.12-10.13**

11. Special Business (**none at this time**)

**Reports**

12. President

- i. President's Report
- ii. GSA Board
- iii. Budget and Finance Committee (**no meetings this reporting period**)
- iv. Governance Committee (**no meetings this reporting period**)

**To Be Distributed  
To Be Distributed**

- a) Nominating Committee

- i. Nominating Committee Report

**To Be Distributed**

13. Vice-President Academic

- i. Vice-President Academic's Report

**To Be Distributed**

14. Vice-President Student Services

- i. Vice-President Student Services' Report
- ii. Student Affairs Advisory Committee (joint chair: Vice-President

**To Be Distributed**

Student Life) (no meetings this reporting period)

15. Vice-President Student Life

- i. Vice-President Student Life's Report
- ii. Awards Selection Committee

To Be Distributed  
To Be Distributed

16. Vice-President Labour

- i. Vice-President Labour's Report
- ii. Negotiating Committee
- iii. Labour Relations Committee

To Be Distributed  
To Be Distributed  
To Be Distributed

17. Senator

- i. Senator's Report

To Be Distributed

18. Speaker

- i. Speaker's Report

To Be Distributed

19. Chief Returning Officer

- i. Chief Returning Officer's Report
- ii. Elections and Referenda Committee (no meetings this reporting period)

To Be Distributed

20. GSA Management

- i. Executive Director's Report

To Be Distributed

**Question Period**

21. Written Questions

22. Oral Questions

**Adjournment**

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**Presentations and Councillor Announcements**

5. Student Mental Health Report: Presentation of Report  
**Brent Epperson (GSA President) will introduce the guest and the item.**  
Guest: Robin Everall (Associate Dean of Students)  
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**Attached  
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***Previously  
Distributed***

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7. Athletics and Recreation Fee: Information Session on Proposed Increase  
**Brent Epperson (GSA President) will introduce the guest and the item.**  
Guest: Kerry Mummery (Dean, Faculty of Physical Education & Recreation)  
Presentation will begin at 6:50 pm.

**CLOSED SESSION**

8. FGSR Update  
**Brent Epperson (GSA President) will introduce the guest and the item.**  
Presentation will begin at 7:20 pm.  
*Attachments: CONFIDENTIAL*

*Councillors - Please  
see Second Council  
Mailing e-mail*

**OPEN SESSION**

9. Councillor Announcements

**Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business**

10. GSA Elections and Referenda: Proposed Changes to GSA Bylaw - **Second Reading** (unanimously passed at first reading in October 2013)  
**Isaac Odoom (GSA CRO) will present the item.**  
*Attachments:*
- Outline of Issue
  - Cover Letter from the GSA CRO
  - Triple Column: Proposed Changes to GSA Elections Bylaw
  - Proposed Changes to GSA Election Bylaw if Approved
  - Triple Column: Proposed Changes to GSA Referenda Bylaw
  - Proposed Changes to GSA Referenda Bylaw if Approved

*Previously  
Distributed*

11. Special Business (**none at this time**)

**Reports**

12. President
- i. President's Report **12.0-12.3**
  - ii. GSA Board **12.4-12.5**
  - iii. Budget and Finance Committee (**no meetings this reporting period**)
  - iv. Governance Committee (**no meetings this reporting period**)
- a) Nominating Committee
- i. Nominating Committee Report **12.6-12.7**

13. Vice-President Academic

i. Vice-President Academic's Report	<b>13.0-13.1</b>
14. Vice-President Student Services	
i. Vice-President Student Services' Report	<b>14.0-14.1</b>
ii. Student Affairs Advisory Committee (joint chair: Vice-President Student Life) <b>(no meetings this reporting period)</b>	
15. Vice-President Student Life	
i. Vice-President Student Life's Report	<b>15.0-15.1</b>
ii. Awards Selection Committee <b>(none at this time, report to follow in December)</b>	
16. Vice-President Labour	
i. Vice-President Labour's Report	<b>16.0-16.1</b>
ii. Negotiating Committee	<b>16.2</b>
iii. Labour Relations Committee	<b>16.3</b>
17. Senator	
i. Senator's Report <b>(no written report)</b>	
18. Speaker	
i. Speaker's Report <b>(none at this time)</b>	
19. Chief Returning Officer	
i. Chief Returning Officer's Report <b>(none at this time)</b>	
ii. Elections and Referenda Committee <b>(no meetings this reporting period)</b>	
20. GSA Management	
i. Executive Director's Report	<b>20.0-20.1</b>

### **Question Period**

21. Written Questions **(none at this time)**

22. Oral Questions

### **Adjournment**

**Meeting Minutes**  
**21 October 2013**  
**GSA Council Meeting**

*[Note: All materials referred to in these Minutes are stored in hard copy in the Official File, as well as electronically]*

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Brent Epperson (President)	Maria Padilla (Cell Bio)	Keitha Langston (SLIS)	Heather Stewart (Poli Sci)
Colin More (VP Academic)	Tinu Abraham (Chem and Materials Eng)	Rebekka Puderbaugh (Linguistics)	Erin Martin (Psychiatry)
Monty Bal (VP Labour)	Zhendong Li (Chem)	Ninad Mehta (Med. Microbiology & Immunology)	Jiyun Chung (Psychiatry)
Hasin Haroon (VP Student Life)	Jeremy Wohland (Civil and Enviro Eng)	Laura Zenith (Medicine)	Dimitar Oudey (Psychiatry)
Megha Bajaj (VP Student Services)	Pengfei Wang (Comp Lit)	Salman Reza (Medicine)	Allison Hahn (Psychology)
Daniel Prins (Speaker)	Brendan Nearey (Drama)	Axel Trujillo (MLCS)	Jessica Laubach (Psychology)
Isaac Odoom (CRO/Councillor-at-Large)	Leanne Labossiere (Earth & Atmos Sci)	Micaela Santiago (Nursing)	Jaqueline Torti (Public Health)
Qiang Li (Councillor-at-Large)	Connie Yuen (Ed Psych)	Chelsea Gordon (Occ Therapy)	Arnold Wong (Rehab Med)
Qian Tang (Councillor-at-Large)	Sulya Fenichel (Elementary Ed)	Gina Hargreaves (Occ Therapy)	Allan Wright (Religious Studies)
Shiv Vembadi (Councillor-at-Large)	Amanda Daignault (English & Film Studies)	Ole Tietz (Oncology)	Alison Murata (Renewable Resources)
Lacey Fleming (Anthro/Vice-Chair Nominating Cmte)	Eve Robidoux-Descary (Faculte Saint-Jean)	Geetha Venkateswaran (Pediatrics)	Pamela Sabbagh (Renewable Resources)
Aaron Veldstra (Art and Design)	Gino Canlas (History and Classics)	Roxana Akhbari (Philosophy)	Curtis Rollins (Res Eco and Enviro Sociology)

## 3.1

Joe Primeau (Biochem)	Sumit Mandal (Human Ecology)	Jennifer Crawford (Phys Ed and Rec)	Kerry Rose (Secondary Ed)
Michele DuVal (Bio Sci)	Sarah Vela (Hum Computing)	Juliana Mollins (Phys Therapy)	Susan Cake (Sociology)
Patricia Leighton (Bio Sci)	Mahima Kumar (Internetworking)	Burkhard Ritter (Physics)	Terra Kaskiw (Speech Path and Audiology)
Ephrem Zewdie (Biomed Eng)	Elsan Hasanov (Internetworking)	Vanessa Marensi (Physiology)	
Claire Deng (Business PhD)	Solomon Aomateng (Law)	Richard Kanyo (Physiology)	

**GUESTS:** Kris Fowler (Helping Individuals at Risk Coordinator, Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights)

**REGRETS:** Roy Coulthard (Senator and Deputy Speaker), Richard Zhao (Councillor-at-Large), Michael Akinwumi (Math. and Stats. Sci.), and Emily Douglas (Philosophy)

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

B Epperson introduced two new staff members, Megan Caldwell (Acting Communications Assistant) and Jesse Grigor (Executive Administrative Assistant).

### Approval of Agenda

**1. Approval of the 21 October, 2013 Agenda**

Members had before them the 21 October 2013 Consolidated Agenda, which had been previously distributed on 18 October 2013.

**B Epperson MOVED to approve the agenda. SECONDED by C. More.**

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### Approval of Minutes

**2. Minutes**

**i. Minutes from the 23 September, 2013 GSA Council meeting**

Members had before them the 23 September 2013 GSA Council Minutes, which had been previously distributed on 10 October 2013.

**M Bajaj MOVED to approve the minutes. SECONDED by H Haroon.**

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

### Changes in Council Membership

Prepared by M. Caldwell, J. Grigor, and C. Thomas, 21 October 2013

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### 3. Changes in Council Membership

#### i. Introduction of new Councillors

This was the first meeting for a number of Councillors: A Veldstra (Art and Design), M Padilla (Cell Bio), N Mehta (Med Microbiology and Immunology), G Venkateswaran (Pediatrics), J Chung (Psychiatry), D Oudey (Psychiatry), J Torti (Public Health), and A Murata (Renewable Resources).

#### ii. Farewell to departing Councillors T Kaskiw (Speech Path and Audiology)

### Presentations and Councillor Announcements

#### 4. Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights and the Helping Individuals at Risk Program

B Epperson introduced the guest: K Fowler (Helping Individuals at Risk Coordinator, Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights), and presented the item.

K Fowler passed along Wade King's (Advisor, Office of Safe Disclosure) regrets for not attending Council, and then spoke about the Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights, stating:

- The Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights is a safe, neutral and confidential space to disclose concerns about unsafe or unethical practices on campus;
- The Office provides information and referral based services, and serves as the first point of contact;
- The Office covers two main areas. First, as a place of safe disclosure, it is the place you come to identify and report misconduct at the University of Alberta. You can report on things you observe or witness that are inappropriate, a safety risk, financially or ethically questionable, or issues of a personal nature;
- The second area is that of human rights, where the Office plays a role in education and creating awareness around human rights at the University of Alberta and in making the campus a safe place to work, live and study;
- Visit the website (<http://disclosure.ualberta.ca/>) for more information about their services; *and*
- Currently holding a photo contest about breaking stereotypes (see website for more information); the Office also offers Human Rights Awards to students and faculty.

K Fowler then spoke about the Helping Individuals at Risk Program, stating:

- The program is intended to identify people who are at risk of harming themselves or others, and to connect them to resources before situations escalate;
- The program is report based, and relies on reports to K Fowler, department chairs or other administrators about individuals on campus who are showing signs of distress or changes in

patterns of behaviour that might indicate they need help; it provides a centralized location to gather reports and connect situations that might otherwise be isolated; lots of concern about a particular individual will result in the program contacting that individual to offer help;

- University of Alberta Policy defines risky behaviour as: words or conduct that lead to a reasonable apprehension that the individual might be at risk of harming themselves or someone else; *and*
- Reporting risky behaviour is voluntary and is up to the judgment call of the reportee; use your own experience to determine if an individual needs help.

Following the presentation, the following question was asked:

- S Cake asked about the list of grounds for discrimination on the Office of Human Rights and Safe Disclosure website, noting that sex is not listed. K Fowler responded that sexual harassment is listed under gender. S Cake followed up that as written, there may be gaps that are not being addressed, such as the experience of a transgender individual. K Fowler responded that discrimination policy is structured by government and that something like transgender would fall under sexual orientation. She agreed that there are gaps but that the government has to change their policy for the Office to be able to change their own. She offered to have Wade King follow up directly with S Cake.

**There were no further questions.**

#### **5. Councillor Announcements**

- I Odoom informed Council that the Department of Middle Eastern and African Studies would be holding an event on Thursday, October 24 from 12:30 - 1:30 pm in Tory B 70 to discuss the recent terrorist attacks in Kenya. Anyone interested was welcome to attend.

#### **Action Items, Elections, Appointments, Special Business**

##### **7. GSA 2013-2014 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report**

B Epperson, E Schoeck, S Ball, and D Sheikh presented the item. Members had before them the outline of issue, the GSA 2013-2014 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report High Level Summary, the GSA 2013-2014 Restricted and Other Funding Budget and Expenditure Report (Narrative), and the GSA 2013-2014 Operating Budget (Including Capital Budget) Report (Narrative), which had been previously distributed on 10 October, 2013. In addition, B Epperson noted the following:

- The report is very good, and shows the results of GSA rebuilding since 2010 in that this year's budget finally shows an external focus instead of internal;
- The budget is in line with both the GSA's immediate and long-term planning focus;

- Three things to highlight about the report is that it shows accountability to Council, fiscal responsibility, and prudent financial management; *and*
- The material before members was a high level summary, any specific questions about the budget could be addressed by scheduling a meeting to talk with the President and management where they can explain the decision making process for any individual budget line concerns.

B Epperson then invited management to speak to the quarterly budget report, and E Schoeck noted the following:

- In 2010 the GSA was ready to dissolve; staff were underpaid and the GSA could not retain anyone for longer than a year; budgets for lawyers and consultants were both much higher than they are now, and being overspent; and the GSA Council voted on a budget but there was no reporting back to Council about how money was actually spent; *and*
- The norm now is to present quarterly reports and keep Council up to date about the GSA budget; lawyers and consultants budget lines are much smaller and currently under target; the GSA lead lawyer and auditor are both very pleased with the financial management currently in practice at the GSA.

**B Epperson MOVED that the GSA Council receive for information the GSA 2013-2014 Budget and Expenditure (Quarterly) Report. SECONDED by H Haroon.**

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **8. GSA Awards and the GSA Awards Selection Committee: Proposed Changes to GSA Policy**

H Haroon presented the item. Members had before them the outline of issue, the proposed changes to the GSA Policy on the Awards Selection Committee, and the proposed changes to GSA Policy on GSA Awards, which had been previously distributed on 10 October 2013. In addition, H Haroon noted the following:

- Changes to the GSA Awards Policy is part of an ongoing review of all of the GSA policies that have not been consistently reviewed as items are changed or added over the years, and so are inconsistent or redundant;
- The GSA is in the process of tightening up bylaws and policy, removing policy items from the GSA Bylaw in order to shorten the document and creating a GSA Policy Manual separate from the bylaws; *and*

- The current changes are outlined in the triple column documents and accompanying cover letter.

**H Haroon MOVED that the GSA Council approve, on the recommendation of the GSA Board, the proposed revisions to GSA Policy on Awards and Adjudication Criteria and GSA Policy on the Awards Selection Committee, as outlined in the attached triple-column documents, effective immediately. SECONDED by M Bajaj.**

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **9. GSA Elections and Referenda: Proposed Changes to GSA Bylaw and GSA Policy**

I Odoom presented the item. Members had before them the outline of issue, the Proposed Changes to the GSA Elections Bylaw and Policy, and the Proposed Changes to the GSA Referenda Bylaw and Policy, which had been previously distributed on 10 October, 2013. In addition, I Odoom noted the following:

- The Elections and Referenda Committee has gone through a number of revisions of GSA Bylaw and Policy regarding elections and referenda;
- Changes were initiated by the past CRO, who left a detailed list of 47 recommendations for elections and referenda policy and bylaw review;
- Wanted to thank the ERC members, Micaela Santiago, Hamman Samuel, Virginia Pimmet and Richard Kanyo, past-CRO Daniel Prins, Ellen Schoeck, and Lisa Hareuther (GSA Groups and Nominating Specialist) who worked on the changes; *and*
- The proposed changes are outlined in the triple column documents and accompanying cover letters.

After the presentation there were a number of questions:

- N Mehta asked why it was necessary to take away the CRO's power to disqualify someone from running for office; larger departments have enough students in them to sway votes and it is possible that an unqualified person could be elected; someone should have the power to judge if a candidate will be able to do their job; and has the power to disqualify ever been used? I Odoom replied that it should be up to the electorate to decide if someone is capable of doing their job; the five signatures required for nomination attest to that person's availability and qualifications, and with these changes it will no longer be the CRO's duty to assess a person's qualifications;
- N Mehta followed up asking why did it even need to be changed. R Kanyo replied that there are rules in place to do something if things go wrong, and it does not matter if it

has been used in the past, sometimes a thing can happen only once and you need to be prepared to deal with it. E Schoeck added that the CRO power was originally granted when VPs on leave were trespassing at the GSA offices and it was thought necessary for the CRO to have that power; now that the GSA is three years past that event, it is time for the electorate to be able to make decisions on whether or not candidates are qualified for office; the power has never been used; *and*

- N Mehta followed up by stating that it is easy to get five signatures without the signers actually assessing your qualifications; the clause should stay so that if it does happen in the future the GSA does not have to return to Council to have that power returned; if it hasn't been used, why does it have to be removed? I Odoom answered that if a person is elected and does not perform their job, there are still means by which a directly-elected officer can be removed from office.

**There were no further questions.**

**I Odoom MOVED that the GSA Council approve, on the unanimous support of the GSA Board and the unanimous advice of the GSA ERC, the proposed revisions to GSA Bylaws, Part III: Elections, as outlined in the attached three-column documents, effective upon the second reading in November.**

**SECONDED by H Haroon.**

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**I Odoom MOVED that the GSA Council approve, on the unanimous support of the GSA Board and the unanimous advice of the GSA ERC, the proposed revisions to GSA Policy on Elections and Referenda, Elections and Referenda Committee, Judicial Committee and Officer Portfolios, Section 8, Chief Returning Officer, as outlined in the attached three-column documents, effective immediately.**

**SECONDED by B Epperson.**

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

#### **10. Elections: Deputy CRO Election**

L Fleming presented the item. Members had before them the outline of issue, including the nominee's biography and resume, which had been previously distributed on 18 October, 2013.

In addition, L Fleming noted the following:

- The current deputy CRO will be going on parental leave starting November 2013 and an interim DRO is needed. Only one nomination was received and there were no additional nominations from Councillors as of the 7 October, 2013 deadline.

L Fleming MOVED that Council elect Richard Zhao to the position of Deputy Returning Officer, effective November 1 and ending upon return of the current DRO. SECONDED by I Odoom.

Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

11. **Appointments** (none at this time)

12. **Special Business** (none at this time)

## Reports

### 13. **President**

#### i. **President's Report:**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 October, 2013. In addition, B Epperson made the following comments:

- Wanted to address the issues of non-confidence in University administration. Students and faculty members have been raising concern with the president's and Acting Provost's leadership;
- People are unhappy with what they view as mixed messages, cuts to faculties and programs, and a lack of a clear vision from administration;
- It has been proposed by some that motions go through at GSA Council and GFC to declare non-confidence in administration;
- My position is that a vote of non-confidence will not make the situation better and it will not fix the budget situation;
- The GSA Board has discussed the issue and has decided not to lead a non-confidence motion;
- However, this does not mean that the GSA supports unconditionally the actions of university administration; the GSA will continue to oppose administration actions that we do not agree with.

Following the presentation, there were a number of questions:

- S Cake asked if the GSA would be making a public statement to this extent. B Epperson replied that this statement was made in open session and will be recorded in the GSA Council minutes; as well, the GSA Board will discuss making a public statement;
- L Labossiere followed up, stating that a public statement regarding the GSA stance on non-confidence would be helpful so that students know that the GSA is hearing and considering their concerns. B Epperson said the Board will take the request into consideration;

- L Fleming asked what the result of asking the Provost to return would be. B Epperson replied that he likely has a say in whether or not he returns, and is currently seconded to the Conference Board of Canada so would likely be unwilling to return at this point; *and*
- N Mehta asked if other constituencies can go ahead with a non-confidence vote without the support of the GSA. B Epperson replied that it's unlikely that any non-confidence motion would be supported; GSA Council members could still try to push it through Council, but the Directly-Elected Officers would oppose it; and the same would likely happen at GFC.

**B Epperson MOVED to go into closed session. SECONDED by M Bajaj.**

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**C More MOVED to go into open session. SECONDED by H Haroon.**

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

- A Daignault asked if B Epperson could speak to the Government of Alberta rejection of the proposed MA in Women's and Gender Studies. B Epperson replied that the GSA is surprised and disappointed in the decision and he has already made public statements to that effect; the GSA Board will work towards a more formal public statement.

**There were no further questions.**

**ii. GSA Board**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 October, 2013. The report stood as submitted.

**iii. Budget and Finance Committee**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 October, 2013. The report stood as submitted.

**iv. Governance Committee**

No meetings this reporting period.

**13. a) Nominating Committee**

**i. Nominating Committee Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 October, 2013. The report stood as submitted.

#### 14. Vice-President Academic

##### i. Vice-President Academic's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 October, 2013. The report stood as submitted.

#### 15. Vice-President Student Services

##### i. Vice-President Student Services' Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 October, 2013. The report stood as submitted.

##### ii. Student Affairs Advisory Committee (joint chair: Vice-President Student Life)

No meetings this reporting period.

#### 16. Vice-President Student Life

##### i. Vice-President Student Life's Report

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 October, 2013. The report stood as submitted.

In addition, H Haroon noted the following:

- There is an initiative from administration for an increase to the Athletics and Recreation Fee. The GSA does not know what the increase will be, but it looks like it will be considerable; we also do not know that there will be new services offered for the fee. We will keep you informed, and may have to ask Council to support an increase, or fight it if necessary.

The following question was asked:

- Z Li wanted to know an approximate amount for the increase. H Haroon replied that the level of the increase has not been announced, but it has been stated in discussions that, if the fee is increased by \$60, it will bring the U of A to the mid-level of athletics fees charged in Canada.

**There were no further questions.**

##### ii. Awards Selection Committee

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 October, 2013. The report stood as submitted.

#### 17. Vice-President Labour

##### i. Vice-President Labour's Report



Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 October, 2013. The report stood as submitted. In addition, M Bal noted the following:

- In a recent meeting with HR the ongoing payroll issues were discussed; problems appear to be the result of local training issues and recent high turnover in departments; payroll issues are recognized as a problem, and the GSA will be working with HR and FGSR to establish a task force to look at consistency in pay and scholarships.

**ii. Negotiating Committee**

No meetings this reporting period.

**iii. Labour Relations Committee**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 October, 2013. The report stood as submitted.

**M Bal MOVED to go into closed session. SECONDED by B Epperson.**

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**M Bal MOVED to go into open session. SECONDED by B Epperson.**

**Motion PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**16. Senator**

**i. Senator's Report**

No report was required at this time.

**17. Speaker**

**i. Speaker's Report**

No report was required at this time.

**18. Chief Returning Officer**

**i. Chief Returning Officer's Report**

Members had before then a written report, which had been previously distributed on 18 October, 2013. The report stood as submitted. In addition, I Odoom noted the following:

- There is currently one CAL vacancy due to resignation; there is technically supposed to be a by-election, but because the GSA is in the process of changing policy so that Council can fill vacant positions, Speaker and management have agreed to wait until Council can elect someone to the position rather than holding a by-election.

**ii. Elections and Referenda Committee**

The report for the Elections and Referenda Committee was included as part of Item 9.

**19. GSA Management**

**i. Executive Director's Report**

Members had before them a written report, which had been previously distributed on 10 October, 2013.

In addition, E Schoeck asked the following of Council:

- How many Councillors have an email list available for distributing information from Council to other graduate students in their departments? (The majority of Councillors answered affirmatively; three Councillors did not); We want to make sure that all Councillors have a means of distributing information to other students available to them.
- Z Li asked why E Schoeck had asked that question. E Schoeck replied that the History and Classics Councillor had been having issues getting access to a mailing list to distribute information, and wanted to make sure other students were not also having issues.
- E Schoeck made sure that students having issues found someone in the same Faculty to discuss how to get a list established with; suggested Faculte Saint-Jean Councillor speak with management directly.

**There were no further questions.**

**Question Period**

**20. Written Questions**

No written questions were received prior to the meeting.

**21. Oral Questions**

No questions were asked.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:52 pm.

# Student Mental Health at the **University of Alberta**

FINAL REPORT (SUMMARY) OF PROVOST FELLOW

Dr. Robin Everall

Edmonton, Summer 2013

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In alignment with the University of Alberta's initiative to delve into the state of student mental health services on its campuses, a Provost Fellow, Student Mental Health was tasked with examining services available to University of Alberta students, exploring best practice at other institutions, and producing a report to guide relevant, responsive and accessible mental health strategies and initiatives.

Fifty four recommendations are organized into 10 categories.

### MAKE OUR COMMITMENT VISIBLE

Emphasizing the importance of student mental health at the University of Alberta requires a strong and visible endorsement by senior administrators. The renewed commitment will provide a lens that will be considered in policy and procedures development across the institution.

### EXPAND WELLNESS INITIATIVES AND RAISE THEIR PROFILE

The importance of removing structural barriers and the importance of increasing peer support are addressed. Encouraging student-initiated mental health programming is an important area to focus upon in the future.

### ALLOCATE DEDICATED RESOURCES

Sustained and cohesive initiatives require secure funding envelopes. Recommendations include the need for more physical space and financial sustainability.

### MOVE TOWARDS COHESIVE MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS PROGRAMMING

All student services, including disability services, academic services, spiritual services, ombud services or mental health and/or wellness services, deal with students impacted by mental health issues. Reducing silos will hasten the movement to more streamlined and adequate access and will allow diverse units to collaborate more effectively. Less visible services for students, whether available at the department, faculty or unit levels need to be included in the larger conversation about student mental health.

### ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITY

Recommendations include developing workshops and training sessions for faculty, staff and APOs to educate them about the changing needs and expectations of students, creating handbooks and resources for parents and students. Modifications to the mental health training programs offered at the University of Alberta are recommended.

## **ENHANCE STUDENT-CENTRED COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES**

An efficient and effective and integrated communication strategy is essential to ensuring that information about the availability and breadth of mental health services at the University of Alberta is accessible to students, parents, and university personnel.

## **CREATE INSTITUTION-WIDE INFRASTRUCTURE**

A university infrastructure needs to be created to develop campus-wide mental health initiatives. Recommendations include the creation of a committee structure tasked with prioritizing, developing, and overseeing the implementation of mental health initiatives across the institution. An expansion of the Helping Individuals at Risk program is strongly recommended as is the development of a new policy for dealing with students severely impacted by mental health issues.

## **REVIEW AND ENHANCE ORIENTATION**

A thorough overview and evaluation of all departmental, faculty, service unit, and association orientations needs to be completed. Orientation content, delivery models, and scheduling need to be carefully

scrutinized to ensure that students are receiving accurate and adequate guidance as they embark upon their academic careers.

## **SERVE THE NEEDS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

In conjunction with the increasing numbers and cultural diversity of international students comes the need to re-evaluate how targeted services are designed and delivered. Recommendations focus upon augmenting the ability of international students to become meaningfully engaged in the university-at-large as well as the general community.

## **ENHANCE OUTREACH INITIATIVES**

Alumni are a most valued resource of the University of Alberta. Augmented involvement in student mental health initiatives, specifically, would benefit the university community. A formal relationship with Alberta Health Services would facilitate the provision of ongoing medical and psychological supports for students with serious mental health issues.

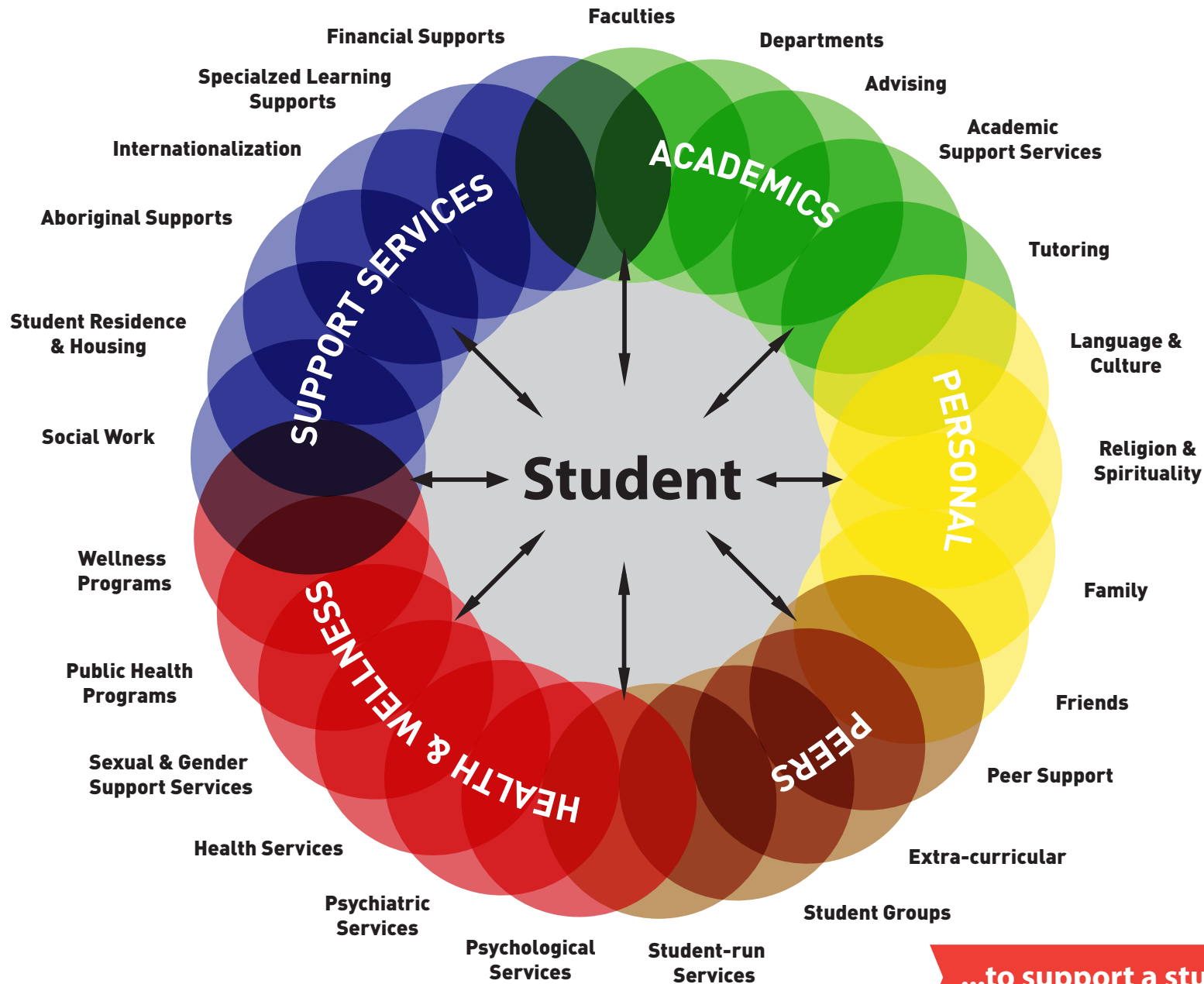
## THE WAY FORWARD

In 2003, the University of Alberta Senate Task Force on Wellness was created to make recommendations that would guide future initiatives to create a healthy and vibrant community. In 2005, the Senate Task Force on Student Engagement built upon the Wellness report and made specific recommendations to enhance the student experience and student connection with U of A campus communities. The U of A Comprehensive Institutional Plan (2012) reinforces the institutions commitment to ensuring that student experiences remain forefront in the institution's initiatives. The groundwork has been laid, and it's time to seize the opportunity and build the mentally healthy, well University that we want and need.

Progress has been made, and there are a lot of the right pieces of the puzzle in place. However, we need more, much more. The U of A's priority commitment to student wellness must be made more visible, both within our institution and to the community stakeholders. There are any number of negative impacts on post-secondary institutions that are unresponsive and inflexible to students' needs, or are seen to be, particularly in a time when public expectations regarding both mental health and universities are rapidly changing. Providing support services that enhance students' ability to be successful sends an important message in a competitive market; at no time has there been a greater need to maintain our appeal to prospective and current students.

While clinical, counselling, and other acute care services on campus are necessary, they alone are not sufficient. No one unit or service holds the key to ensuring students are mentally healthy and well. Demonstrating our commitment to a high quality student experience requires holistic planning and strategic management more than predominantly reactive responses to crisis. Creating a campus that supports mental health and wellness requires an institution-wide, community-based network of supports and services that has multiple points of entry for students. It also requires an environment that considers student wellness integrally in the design of policy, procedures, and decision-making on campus. It is not overstating to say that the success of all students at the U of A requires a renewed commitment to support students as they strive to meet their personal and academic goals.

**It takes a campus...**



**...to support a student.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### MAKE OUR COMMITMENT VISIBLE

1. Student mental health issues must be a visible priority of the University of Alberta
2. Ensure that the U of A community recognizes the importance of student mental health on learning, academic success, academic persistence and program completion
3. Review policies and procedures to ensure they are consistent with mental health initiative
4. Encourage faculties, non-teaching, and student service units to review their policies and procedures to ensure that they align with the larger institutional initiatives
5. Reconsider student services across the University from the students' point of view

### EXPAND WELLNESS INITIATIVES AND RAISE THEIR PROFILE

6. Rename the Mental Health Centre
7. Develop and deliver addictions and substance abuse student services and support groups on campus
8. Promote health and wellness for all students
9. Student groups should be encouraged and provided with support mechanisms by the university.
10. Promote peer-to-peer mentoring and support services

11. Expand Health and Wellness Team (HaWT) involvement in student health initiatives

### ALLOCATE DEDICATED RESOURCES

12. Align an increase in required physical space with the increased demand for services
13. Ensure sustainable funding
14. Allocate necessary resources to support the growing demand for support services
15. Office of Advancement should engage in fundraising initiatives that support student mental health and wellness services

### MOVE TOWARDS COHESIVE MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS PROGRAMMING

16. Reduce the fragmentation and "siloeing" of student mental health services
17. Recognize the roles that the Specialized Support and Disability Services (SSDS) and the Student Success Centre (SSC) have in addressing student mental health issues
18. Enhance the profile of the chaplains and the value of spiritual support
19. Dedicated prayer and meeting spaces should be made available to the campus community



- 20. Profile wellness programs across campus

## **ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITY**

- 21. Provide regularly updated comprehensive information about student services to all faculty and staff
- 22. Develop an orientation and refresher sessions for faculty and staff that focuses on the student landscape
- 23. Increase online resources for faculty and staff
- 24. Adopt a modified Mental Health First Aid program
- 25. All faculty and staff should participate in revised Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training
- 26. Provide resource information and handbooks for parents, students, and staff
- 27. Develop resources for sessional instructors

## **ENHANCE STUDENT-CENTRED COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES**

- 28. Fundamentally reconsider the way student services are marketed and communicated at the U of A from a student's point of view
- 29. Renovate the online space for current students at the U of A

- 30. Implement a university-wide approach to increasing awareness of student services
- 31. Conduct a University-wide communications campaign emphasizing mental health

## **CREATE INSTITUTION-WIDE INFRASTRUCTURE**

- 32. Create a University Health and Wellness Committee
- 33. Create a Student Health Advisory Committee
- 34. Develop a Crisis Counselling Team
- 35. Create an outreach protocol to students directly impacted by a crisis
- 36. The Helping Individuals at Risk policy and program should be augmented to include a more comprehensive early intervention program
- 37. HIAR training must be provided in a systematic way to the university community
- 38. Consider Implementing a voluntary/involuntary leave policy, developed by members of the HIAR and Article 91 Protocol Teams
- 39. Encourage the Graduate Student Association (GSA) to complete a cost/benefit analysis of the supplementary counselling contract.

40. Evaluate programming effectiveness and impact regularly

## **REVIEW AND ENHANCE ORIENTATION**

- 41. Orientations should be re-designed to adequately orient students to our complex institution.
- 42. Design orientations for students transitioning from other institutions
- 43. Design culturally meaningful orientations
- 44. Coordinate schedules and examine content of student orientations delivered across campus
- 45. Make orientation information accessible throughout the year

## **SERVE THE NEEDS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

- 46. Integrate international services within the larger university community
- 47. Expand institutional involvement with international students
- 48. Re-design acculturation workshops
- 49. Encourage help seeking in the international student body

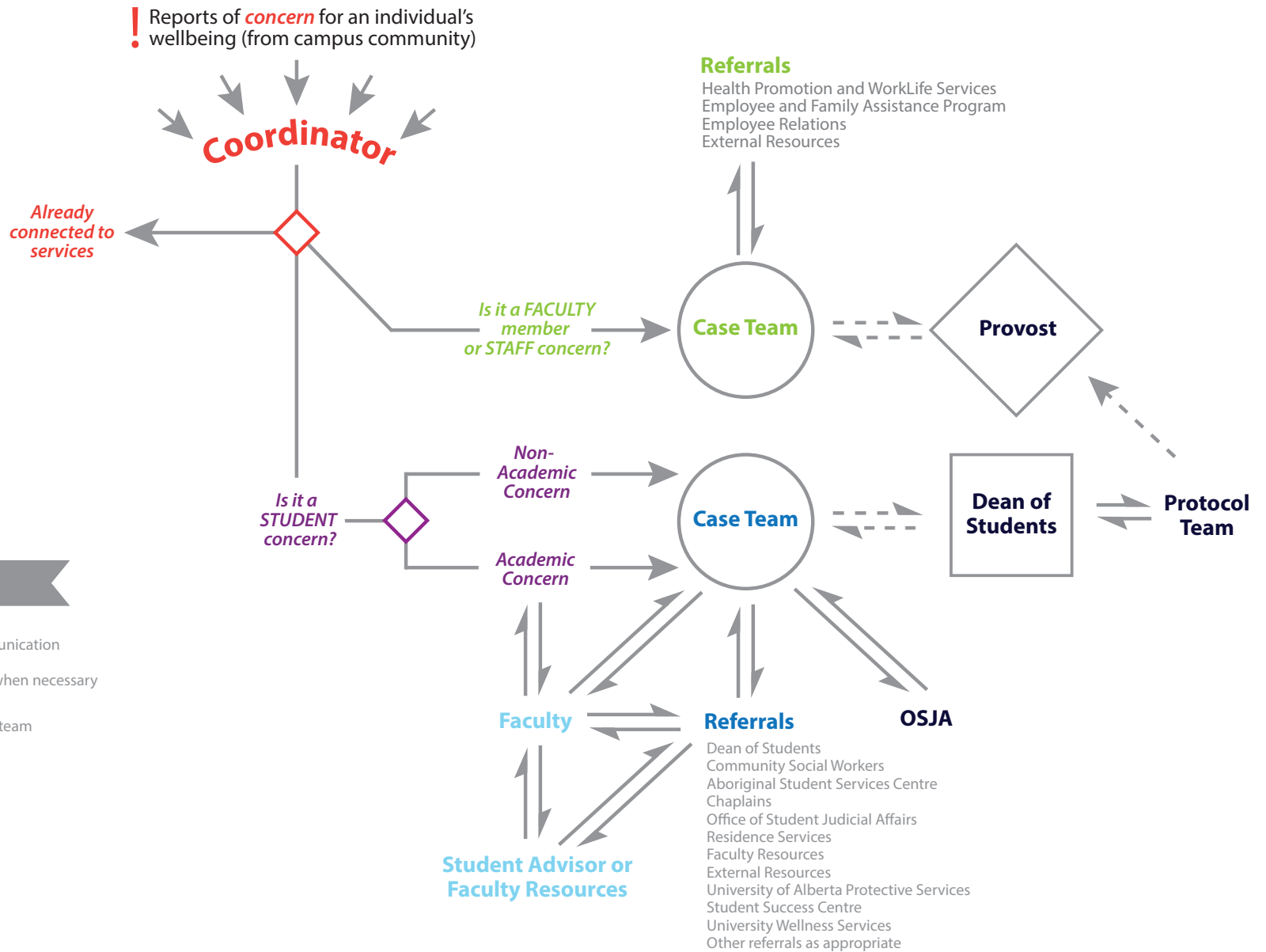
50. Expand social interaction and support structures for international students

- 51. Create opportunities for community participation during extended holiday periods
- 52. Provide routinely scheduled acculturation opportunities with alumni, faculty, and staff

## **ENHANCE OUTREACH INITIATIVES**

- 53. Engage alumni in supporting mental health initiatives on campus
- 54. Explore a Memorandum of Understanding between Alberta Health Services and the University

# Proposed Helping Individuals At Risk (HIAR)



## Legend

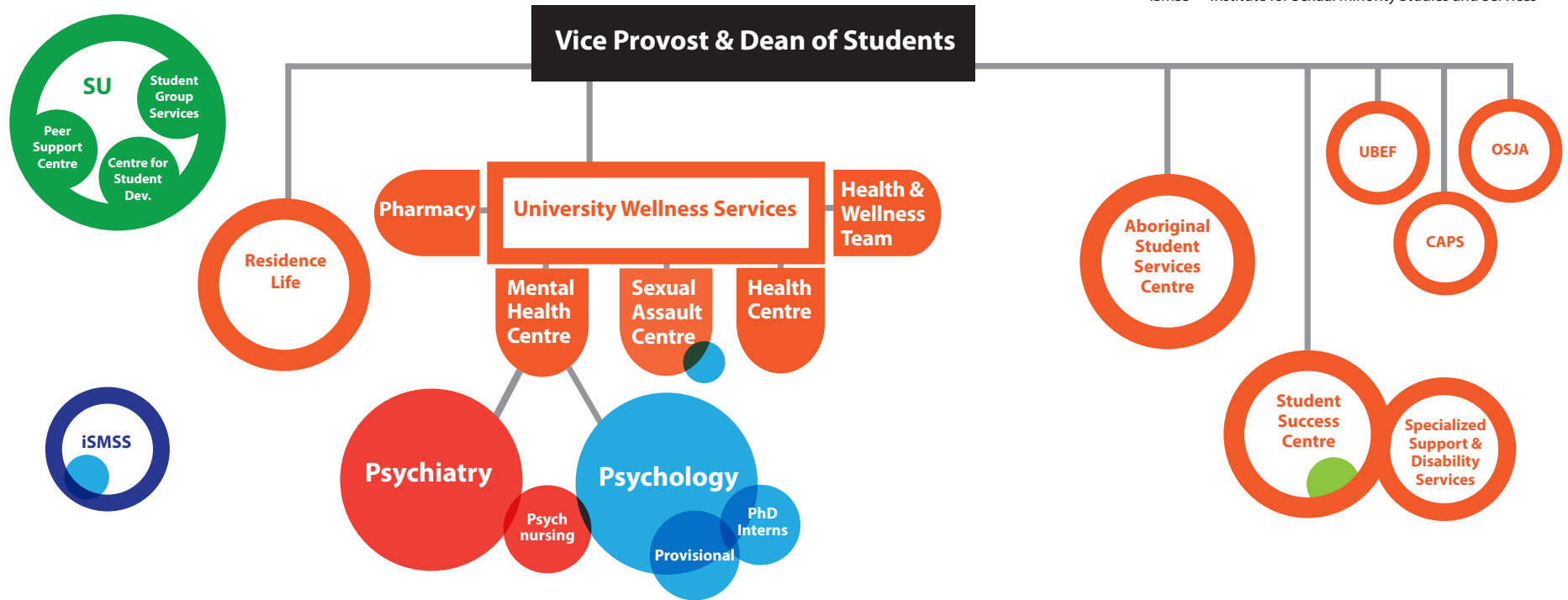
- Interactive communication
- Communication when necessary
- Staff and faculty steam
- Student stream
- Severity level 1
- Severity level 2
- Severity level 3

# Mental Health Services - Old Structure

University of Alberta, prior to 2013

## Legend

- Social Worker
- Psychologist/Counsellor services
- SU Students Union
- GSA Graduate Student Association
- OSJA Office of Student Judicial Affairs
- CAPS Careers and Placement Services
- UBEF University Bursaries and Emergency Funding
- iSMSS Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services

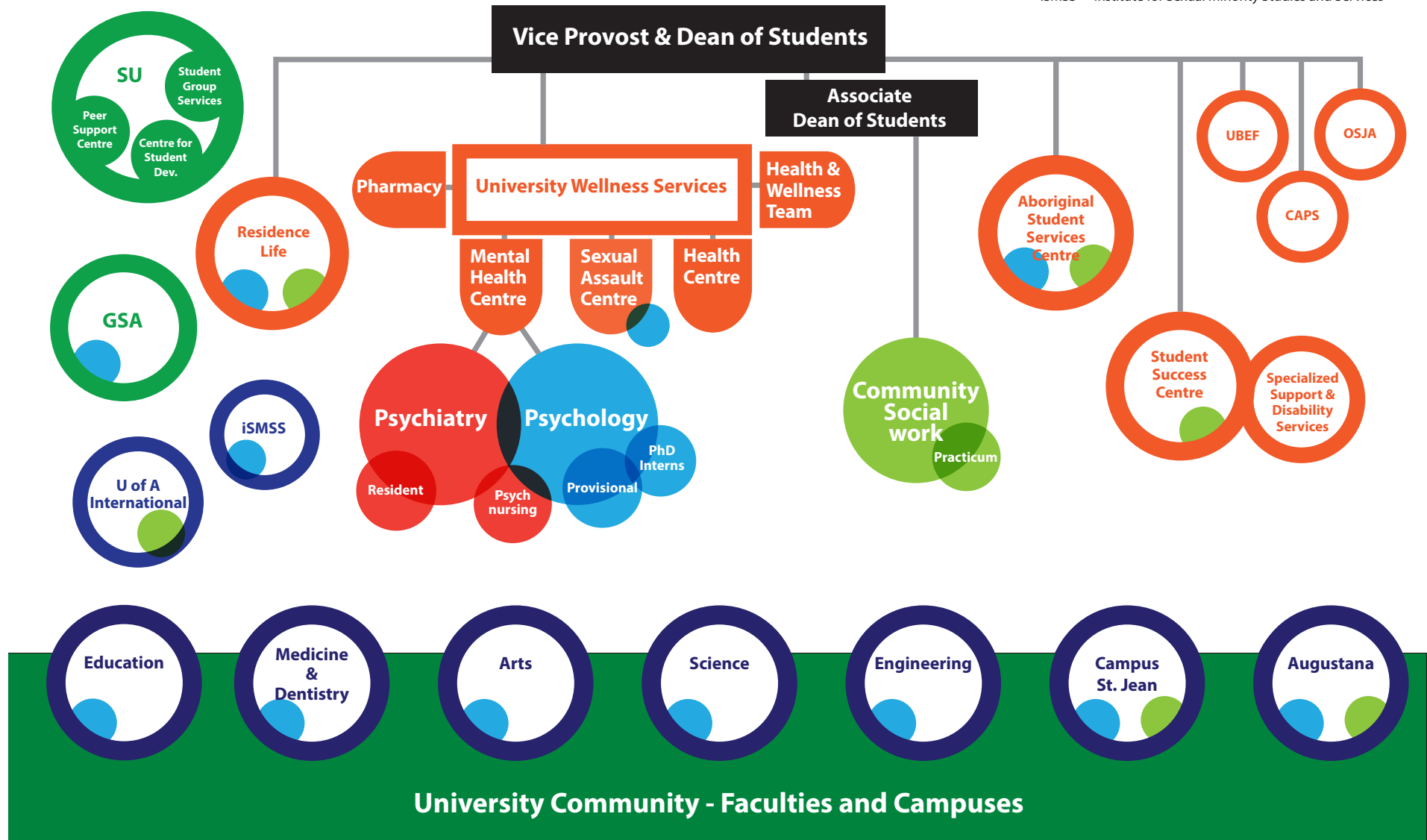


# Mental Health Services - New Structure

University of Alberta, Summer 2013

## Legend

- Social Work team involved
- Psychologist/Counsellor services
- SU Students' Union
- GSA Graduate Students Association
- OSJA Office of Student Judicial Affairs
- CAPS Careers and Placement Services
- UBEF University Bursaries and Emergency Funding
- ISMSS Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services



# Student Mental Health at the **University of Alberta**

FINAL REPORT OF PROVOST FELLOW

Dr. Robin Everall

Edmonton, Summer 2013



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In alignment with the University of Alberta's initiative to delve into the state of student mental health services on its campuses, a Provost Fellow, Student Mental Health was tasked with examining services available to University of Alberta students, exploring best practice at other institutions, and producing a report to guide relevant, responsive and accessible mental health strategies and initiatives.

Fifty four recommendations are organized into 10 categories.

### A VISIBLE CAMPUS COMMITMENT

Emphasizing the importance of student mental health at the University of Alberta requires a strong and visible endorsement by senior administrators. The renewed commitment will provide a lens that will be considered in policy and procedures development across the institution.

### EXPAND WELLNESS INITIATIVES AND RAISING THEIR PROFILE

The importance of removing structural barriers and the importance of increasing peer support are addressed. Encouraging student-initiated mental health programming is an important area to focus upon in the future.

### DEDICATED RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Sustained and cohesive initiatives require secure funding envelopes. Recommendations include the need for more physical space and financial sustainability.

### COHESIVE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS PROGRAMMING

All student services, including disability services, academic services, spiritual services, ombud services or mental health and/or wellness services, deal with students impacted by mental health issues. Reducing silos will hasten the movement to more streamlined and adequate access and will allow diverse units to collaborate more effectively. Less visible services for students, whether available at the department, faculty or unit levels need to be included in the larger conversation about student mental health.

### EDUCATING OUR COMMUNITY

Recommendations include developing workshops and training sessions for faculty, staff and APOs to educate them about the changing needs and expectations of students, creating handbooks and resources for parents and students. Modifications to the mental health training programs offered at the University of Alberta are recommended.

## COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

An efficient and effective and integrated communication strategy is essential to ensuring that information about the availability and breadth of mental health services at the University of Alberta is accessible to students, parents, and university personnel.

## STRUCTURAL RECOMMENDATIONS

A university infrastructure needs to be created to develop campus-wide mental health initiatives. Recommendations include the creation of a committee structure tasked with prioritizing, developing, and overseeing the implementation of mental health initiatives across the institution. An expansion of the Helping Individuals at Risk program is strongly recommended as is the development of a new policy for dealing with students severely impacted by mental health issues.

## ORIENTATIONS

A thorough overview and evaluation of all departmental, faculty, service unit, and association orientations needs to be completed. Orientation content, delivery models, and scheduling need to be carefully scrutinized to ensure that students are receiving accurate and adequate guidance as they embark upon their academic careers.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

In conjunction with the increasing numbers and cultural diversity of international students comes the need to re-evaluate how targeted services are designed and delivered. Recommendations focus upon augmenting the ability of international students to become meaningfully engaged in the university-at-large as well as the general community.

## OUTREACH

Alumni are a most valued resource of the University of Alberta. Augmented involvement in student mental health initiatives, specifically, would benefit the university community. A formal relationship with Alberta Health Services would facilitate the provision of ongoing medical and psychological supports for students with serious mental health issues.

In addition to the recommendations, the report outlines structural changes to student mental health services that were completed in 2012 that provide the foundation for restructured services in 2013 and onward.

## INTRODUCTION

The desire to enhance and improve the way the University of Alberta approaches and deals with student mental health and wellness is rooted in the institution's ongoing dedication to fostering student success and student retention. One needs to look no further than the integral commitment made by our founding president Henry Marshall Tory, that the University of Alberta would serve to 'uplifting the whole people.' Indeed, our current president, Dr. Samarasakera has recently recast this promise in individual terms, stating that "we begin by uplifting the whole person, one person at a time" (speech, March 15, 2013). This pledge is infused into the Dare to Deliver, Academic Plan, 2011-2015: "It is also important...that students have the range of effective and appropriate supports that allow them to fully realize their potential during their time at the University of Alberta. ... When we focus on our students, we consider the student holistically."

In alignment with the University of Alberta's initiative to enhance the student experience, my appointment as Provost Fellow, Student Mental Health was created in January, 2012 to examine services available to our students dealing with mental health issues. This initiative aligns with the increased public scrutiny of North American post-secondary institutions to ensure that adequate mental health services are available to their students. It also correlates with increased attention on mental health issues in the public sphere. The creation of the Alberta Lieutenant Governor's Circle on Mental Health and Addiction is just one example of the focus on the impact of poor mental health on society at large.

The importance of mental health issues and their impact upon student engagement and academic success is receiving increasing attention in post-secondary institutions across North America. The academic experience occurs in the larger context of a student's life that has increasingly complex demands and pressures. Personal expectations, interpersonal challenges, academic demands, and life transitions, represent psychosocial or environmental stressors that may impact academic success. Although traditionally mental health issues in post-secondary populations were undervalued and an often dismissed influence upon academic achievement, there is growing consensus in the research community that these issues are becoming more complex, chronic, and severe. In a report completed by the Canadian University Survey Consortium (2011), more than 1% of Canadian undergraduate students identified themselves as having a learning or mental health disability that created obstacles to academic success and 18% reported using student counselling services that were available on campus. It is not a stretch to surmise that for some students already struggling with mental health issues, academic demands may negatively impact their mental health over the course of their academic careers. Because of the breadth and severity of documented student mental health challenges, post-secondary institutions have a seemingly overwhelming task of providing adequate services to their students and providing support structures that facilitate academic success. For a university as large and complex as the University of Alberta, this is a critical issue that requires careful scrutiny and strategic planning and constant assessment.

In order to fulfill the mandate assigned by the Provost to investigate student mental health services, the following questions were asked:

- How does the University of Alberta provide relevant, responsive and highly accessible mental health services to its students?
- Is there a need to increase capacity and offerings for the delivery of mental health services?
- How does the U of A increase its capacity to provide adequate mental health services to its' students?

To answer these questions, it was necessary to: identify the landscape of mental health services on our campuses to determine if there were overlaps or gaps in services; develop a model or models to enhance service availability; and propose a strategy to enhance support and mental health services for students. To ensure that perspectives from a spectrum of stakeholders had input into the report, senior administrators, faculty members, APOs, sessional and contract staff, support staff, mental health specialists, graduate students, undergraduate students, and external stakeholders were consulted. What follows includes: the results of an examination of the University of Alberta's current mental health services and delivery models, recent modifications to services based upon these findings, and recommendations for further improvement on our campuses.

To identify best practices suitable for the University of Alberta, the search needed to be completed with institutions that are comparable in structure, mandate, and size. A one-size-fits-all model is not appropriate for our large, research and teaching intensive university, therefore it was important to think creatively about how to best meet student mental health needs in our complex institution. Institutions large and small are challenged to develop strategic plans that will guide student service initiatives within the contexts of the size and nature of the institution and its access to sustainable funding sources. The emphasis on mental health grows as a burgeoning body of

research provides evidence that meeting student service needs creates a safe and supportive learning environment in which students thrive and succeed in their personal and academic endeavors. Health - physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental - are integral to realizing one's potential and achieving one's goals. Moving the University's initiatives forward requires insight into the connections between student mental health, learning and academic achievement, and student engagement as a constellation of factors that contribute to student success. In 2003, the Healthiest Campus Taskforce was created to make recommendations on moving toward a cultural shift. In 2009, the Provost's Advisory Task Team on Student Engagement built upon previous reports and made specific recommendations that would enhance the student experience and forge strong connections between student communities and our university. With this in mind, examining mental health and institutional best practice cannot be investigated in isolation.

## WHY NOW?

The revelation that mental health impacts student learning and success is not new. In fact, the 1911, the Joint Committee on Health Problems in Education identified health education, health services, and a healthy environment as the three components required to support student mental health (Silverman, Underhile, and Keeling, 2008). More recently, following tragic incidents on university campuses that were perpetrated by students with mental health difficulties, the importance of the issue has again been highlighted and high profile incidents in other countries have garnered considerable attention. While fewer in number, significant incidents closer to home have increased attention and raised concerns about mental illness, particularly the relationship with harm to self and to others, on campuses across the country. With increasing evidence that mental health has a significant impact upon on students' learning, discovery and citizenship, universities are responding to the new reality and more demanding expectations from students, parents, and society.

### Mental Health, Mental Illness and Mental Wellness

The terms 'mental health' and 'mental illness' are often used interchangeably and often call to mind those individuals who are suffering from severe and incapacitating disorders. Likewise, within post-secondary institutional contexts, the concepts of 'mental health' and 'well-being' are frequently disconnected. The World Health Organization (2011), however, connects the concepts of mental health

and mental wellness closely by defining mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his own community." The Mental Health Commission of Canada (2011) clarifies the definition by stating that "'mental health problems and illnesses' refer to the full range of patterns of behaviour, thinking or emotions that bring some level of distress, suffering or impairment in areas such as school, work, social and family interactions or the ability to live independently." More generally, mental wellness refers to proactive, supportive environments with approaches that are fundamentally more community-based. These definitions emphasize how the environment influences mental health within the context of everyday experiences and events. Clearly then, individual, systemic, community, and social factors influence mental health, for better or for worse. By extension, the responsibility for mental health does not fit directly into the jurisdiction of any one sector or service, but rather is a responsibility of all who participate in a community. Within the PSE context, an institutional commitment to the promotion of mental health and wellness requires cohesion between policies, procedures, organizational structures, and services.

### Academic Success and Mental Health

The simple fact is that learning, academic achievement, and mental health are intertwined. An emerging body of research demonstrates relationships between mental illness, mental health, academic problems, and academic success (e.g., Heiligenstein & Guenther, 1996; Hunt, Eisenberg, & Kilbourne, 2010). In response to the increased understanding about these interactions, Canadian and American post-secondary organizations have developed compelling plans that

are designed to maximize student mental health initiatives in an academic environment and tie the plans to how they facilitate student success (Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS), 2012; American College Health Association (ACHA), 2012). Not surprisingly, comprehensive strategies closely link individual mental health and wellness with the environment in which students function and emphasize that piecemeal, predominantly reactive strategies lack the power to build healthy campuses. The CACUSS (2012) conceptual guide to student mental health is based upon the premise that mental health is an essential component for student academic success and engagement; these are symbiotic relationships. There will be minimal success in improving student engagement and success in the campus community if mental health issues are overlooked.

Therefore, mental health and wellness strategies and plans need to include every level and each individual of the institution. Post-secondary wellness frameworks encompass programs that benefit all who attend an institution by building a strong foundation that supports engagement, community involvement, support for success, personal growth, and academic achievement. Whether institution-specific or more global, services, supports, and opportunities influence the full community. The intent is to make a large campus feel small enough to be engaging and for each student to find a place where they feel they fit and belong. Post-secondary institutions are charged with strengthening all students through opportunities to be involved in peer programming and support, undergraduate and graduate clubs and interest groups, cohorts within specific programs, a learning environment that provides a sense of identify and multiple methods of engagement with the institution, and opportunities for involvement in research such as those supported by the Undergradu-

ate Research Initiative. Every student should be able to find a niche to be “more active and engaged with the Academy” (Dare to Deliver, 2011-2015).

## Changing demographics and mandates

Over the past ten years, societies have begun to acknowledge the prevalence and impact of mental health issues. With the increasing number of societal initiatives to de-stigmatize mental health issues, when speaking to the Canadian Mental Health Association, Dr. John Kirby contended that universities have a “moral obligation” to attend to the mental health needs of their students (Tamburri, 2012). Rising to the challenge, post-secondary institutions are acting proactively and systemically to meet the emerging mental health needs on campuses rather than solely reacting to critical incidents.

On top of this, the 15-24 age range is the single largest group of Canadians who face mental health challenges ( Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2011; Eisenberg, Gollust, Golberstein & Hefner, 2007). This is an age when many mental health issues begin to emerge and are most malleable to intervention and amelioration. However, while the post-secondary demographic is the most likely to develop disorders, it is the least likely to seek help. The good news is that parents, faculty, staff and students on campus are increasingly aware of the indicators of mental health issues and are acknowledging students’ struggles when they are observed. By raising the profile of mental health in the society at large, there is an increased acknowledgement of the significant impact of mental health on performance, persistence, and the ability to contribute to society overall. Thus, there

is a perception that mental health issues are more prevalent now than in past generations. Simply put, with growing awareness comes growing demand for services. It is incumbent upon the University and post-secondary institutions to provide these services to ensure that students are able to meet their goals, successfully complete their programs of study, and become contributing members of society.

The demography of today's student population is in flux, changing as it draws from a broader population than ever before. Kitzrow (2009), Zivin, Eisenberg, Gollust & Golberstein (2009), the American College Health Association (ACHA, 2012), the Canadian Association of College and University Support Services (2012) and the Royal College of Psychiatrists (2011) concur that the changing composition of the student body has a dramatic impact upon a university community. The major forces of change include student characteristics, parental expectations and oversight, and increasing numbers of international and non-traditional students, and an increasingly complex world. The environmental impact of financial concerns, developmental challenges, family responsibilities, psychological distress, as well as academic pressures affect the learning experiences of many students.

All post-secondary institutions are grappling with the responsibility to ensure that they are providing safe environments for students and staff to learn, develop, and grow. As such, they face the challenge of determining the extent to which student mental health issues are accommodated in policies and procedures. The University of Alberta, through its *Dare to Discover* and *Dare to Deliver* documents, clearly makes student health and wellness a priority of the institution. The organizational structure of student mental health, welfare and wellness services must reflect the philosophy of a focus on student success. The vision and mission of each faculty, department, and unit

must align with the institutional mission: the value of its students. The U of A is dedicated to fostering an institutional culture based upon a shared commitment to student health, wellness, and success.

## Student Expectations

For most students, pursuing post-secondary studies is far more than obtaining just academic credentials. Students come to campus expecting to become members of a community in which they grow academically, developmentally, and personally. Rodolfa (2008) states "The goal of a campus community that cares is to develop an environment where students feel welcome, feel that they can reach their potential in a healthy supportive environment, and feel they can come to a greater understanding of who they are, who they want to be with, and where they are headed in life." The University of Alberta addresses the aspirations of students in *Dare to Deliver 2011-2015*: "When we focus on our students, we consider the student holistically... How will we know we are making progress? Students report they have the tools and support they need to succeed, including a more student-friendly bureaucracy."

As the diversity of undergraduate and graduate students increases, it is incumbent upon the academy to adapt and deliver services that will contribute to meaningful student engagement and academic opportunities for all. Wellness services, the structures for providing services, and a diversity of available resources are required to keep pace with the changing demographics of our student population. The contemporary challenge is to recognize and accommodate the individual as well as the common aspects of our students. At the U of A we want to create spaces for learning and inquiry that allow our students to feel comfortable in being themselves as well as identify-



ing as U of A students. In striving for this balance, we improve the quality of the university experience while harnessing the full benefit of diversity in our community.

Our programs and services need to be delivered in a coordinated and consistent fashion that meet the needs of all students, avoids duplication and is not sequestered into silos of administrative units. When one becomes a U of A student, her/his individual background comes as well, and this diversity enriches our community. Students need to believe that their culture, religion, gender, and/or ethnic backgrounds are valued and that our institution strives to provide meaningful services that are easily navigable for all students. Fracturing services based upon student status or background creates inadvertent barriers or fosters the perception that mental health support or academic success services are differentially available. This appears to be particularly true for international students who feel disconnected from this institution.

## The U of A Reality

In the spring, 2011, the National College Health Assessment (NCHA) was completed at the University of Alberta for the first time. The NCHA is a research-based student survey that was developed in 2000 and has since been used by major American and Canadian universities to determine and track changes in student mental health, as well as to identify factors that impact student performance, engagement, and success. The survey asked respondents about their alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use, sexual health, weight, nutrition, exercise, mental health, personal safety, and violence. This was the first comprehensive snapshot the University of Alberta had obtained to understand the breadth and depth of mental health issues that our students contend with.

## NCHA data, 2011

Students experienced the following issues within the 12 months prior to the survey:

	<b>U of A Spring 2011</b>	Ontario Cohort 2009	North American Reference Group, 2011	U of A Students (35,500) - survey data extrapolated to a campus statistic
Felt overwhelmed by all you had to do	<b>87.5%</b>	86.3%	89%	31,062
Felt exhausted (not from physical activity)	<b>87.1%</b>	81.6%	N/A	30,920
Felt very lonely	<b>61.7%</b>	57.3%	61.9%	21,903
Felt very sad	<b>65.6%</b>	61.1%	67.7%	23,288
Felt so depressed it was difficult to function	<b>34.4%</b>	31.1%	N/A	12,212
Felt overwhelming anxiety	<b>52.1%</b>	50.6%	52.9%	18,495
Felt overwhelming anger	<b>40.7%</b>	37.1%	N/A	14,448
Seriously considered suicide	<b>6.8%</b>	6.4%	7.2%	2,414
Attempted suicide	<b>1.2%</b>	1.1%	1.2%	426
Intentionally cut, burned, bruised or otherwise injured yourself	<b>4.8%</b>	5.2%	N/A	1,704
Felt things were hopeless	<b>51.4%</b>	45.1%	54%	18,247



Within 12 months prior to survey, students were diagnosed or treated by a professional for the following:

	U of A Spring 2011	Ontario Cohort 2009	North American Reference Group, 2011	U of A Students (35,500) – survey data extrapolated to a campus statistic
Anxiety	<b>8.1%</b>	10.4%	8.8%	2,875
Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder	<b>1.7%</b>	3.9%	N/A	603
Depression	<b>8.2%</b>	9.7%	7.5%	2,911
Insomnia	<b>3.2%</b>	3.7%	2.8%	1,136
Panic Attacks	<b>3.8%</b>	5%	4.6%	1,349
Substance Abuse or Addiction	<b>0.7%</b>	1.2%	N/A	248

These statistics are concerning given that depression and anxiety have been shown to be associated with academic impairment and are related to drop-out rates and lower GPA (Eisenberg, Golberstein & Hunt, 2009).

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is conducted yearly to measure the level of student engagement and to track the impact of institutional initiatives that foster engagement at the University of Alberta. “Students perform better and are more satisfied at colleges that are committed to their success and cultivate positive working and social relations among different groups on campus.” (NSSE, 2011). The student engagement category is comprised on responses to the following statements:

- Campus environment provides the support you need to help you succeed academically
- Campus environment helps you cope with your non-academic responsibilities (work, family, etc.)
- Campus environment provides the support you need to thrive socially
- Quality of relationships with other students
- Quality of relationships with faculty members
- Quality of relationships with administrative personnel and offices

### The National Survey of Student Engagement

Agreement that the U of A is a Supportive Campus Environment

Degree Completion	2008	2011
Year One	52.6%	55.1%
Year Four	47.4%	51.3%

### The National College Health Assessment

	Affirmative response	Negative response
The University has a sincere interest in students’ health and wellbeing	61%	39%
Experience a sense of belonging to the U of A	66%	34%

The results demonstrate that the ongoing efforts and new initiatives taken to improve student supports and engagement have resulted in improvements in the campus culture. Taken together with the NCHA data, these surveys provide us with the evidence that enhancing student services and supports is critical to the student experience.

Whether students are at a crisis point or getting through the ups and downs of student life, the means and methods by which they access or receive information from the University can have a dramatic effect: on their wellbeing as well as their academic success. Students need to be able to find help when they need it and in many cases, before they need it. They need to be able to readily access the information and/or assistance required to take action to mitigate the situation in which they find themselves.

Some initiatives such as the soon to be launched Student Connect within the Registrar's Office are moving toward organizing and offering services as defined by the students' points of view and needs. For instance, current and future cohorts of students expect websites to be functional and mobile, to provide useful and up-to-date information, and to be relevant, engaging and accurate. They expect the U of A programs and services, whether online or face-to-face, to be effective, accessible and coordinated.

In order to be successful, effective communication with students requires an ongoing commitment that works in coordination with all aspects of health and wellness programs and services and continually adapts to the newest technologies and communication methods. While communication efforts need to be targeted to increasing mental health and wellness, they must also include the other programs and services that we offer including the physical, spiritual, academic and social.

## University Structure and Commitment

To be truly effective, post-secondary mental health initiatives require an ongoing commitment from the institution. This requires:

- a sustained focus on the impact of health and wellness on academic achievement
- identification of institution-wide priorities
- flexibility to address constituent needs as they evolve
- adequate resource allocations
- appropriate delivery models
- and active oversight of outcomes

Universities must adapt as evidence increasingly supports the impact of mental health and wellness upon retention rates, student engagement, learning and development, and ultimately academic success. Mental health and wellness initiatives must be championed at all levels of the institution, including senior administrators and the topmost echelon. A sustained initiative needs to be visible to faculty members, APOs, support staff, sessional, and contract workers as well as by undergraduate and graduate students. Student groups, the Students' Union and the Graduate Students Association have peer credibility that can create momentum for action that reaches out to all students on campus.

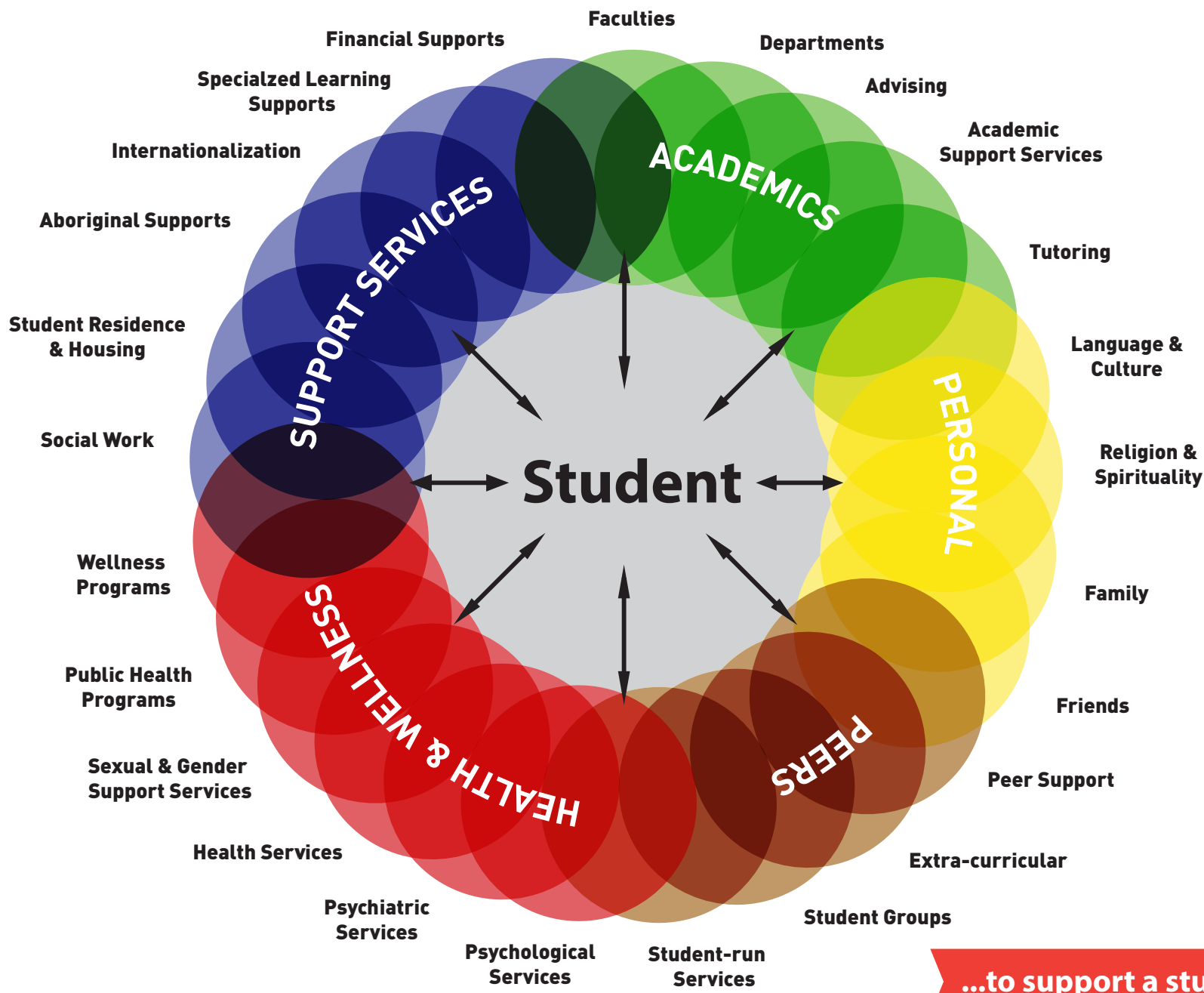
## THE WAY FORWARD

In 2003, the University of Alberta Senate Task Force on Wellness was created to make recommendations that would guide future initiatives to create a healthy and vibrant community. In 2005, the Senate Task Force on Student Engagement built upon the Wellness report and made specific recommendations to enhance the student experience and student connection with U of A campus communities. The U of A Comprehensive Institutional Plan (2012) reinforces the institutions commitment to ensuring that student experiences remain forefront in the institution's initiatives. The groundwork has been laid, and it's time to seize the opportunity and build the mentally healthy, well University that we want and need.

Progress has been made, and there are a lot of the right pieces of the puzzle in place. However, we need more, much more. The U of A's priority and commitment to student wellness must be made more visible, both within our institution and to community stakeholders. There are any number of negative impacts on post-secondary institutions that are unresponsive and inflexible to students' needs, or are seen to be, particularly in a time when public expectations regarding both mental health and universities are rapidly changing. Providing support services that enhance students' ability to be successful sends an important message in a competitive market; at no time has there been a greater need to maintain our appeal to prospective and current students.

While clinical, counselling, and other acute care services on campus are necessary, they alone are not sufficient. No one unit or service holds the key to ensuring students are mentally healthy and well. Demonstrating our commitment to a high quality student experience requires holistic planning and strategic management more than predominantly reactive responses to crisis. Creating a campus that supports mental health and wellness requires an institution-wide, community-based network of supports and services that has multiple points of entry for students. It also requires an environment that considers student wellness integrally in the design of policy, procedures, and decision-making on campus. It is not overstating to say that the success of all students at the U of A requires a renewed commitment to support students as they strive to meet their personal and academic goals.

**It takes a campus...**



**...to support a student.**

## THE U OF A LANDSCAPE: RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS

### Mental Health Centre

The Mental Health Centre (MHC) has adopted a new philosophy regarding how to provide effective and efficient services to students on the main campus. In 2010, psychiatrists that worked in the University Health Centre were amalgamated into the Mental Health Centre that had previously housed psychologists alone. Integration of the two professions into a single unit was intended to facilitate consultation, collaboration, and seamless service provision. A psychiatric nurse, hired in 2011, bridges the gap between psychological and psychiatric services by providing clinical support to students with psychiatric illnesses. A triage intake process is available four hours per day to assess students' levels of need and appropriate service requirements. In addition, the MHC is an important training site for graduate students pursuing advanced degrees in counselling psychology and clinical psychology. Doctoral interns are required to be enrolled in accredited programs.

#### Resources as of December 31, 2012

The Mental Health Centre is located centrally on the main campus. The Centre is comprised of:

- 7 full-time psychologists
- 2.5 full-time contract psychologists
- 2 full-time psychology interns
- 3 full-time psychology interns (on 8 month contracts)
- 1 full-time psychiatric nurse
- 7 part-time psychiatrists (2.5 FTE)

### Community Social Work Team

In January, 2012, two social workers were housed within student services. One was affiliated with the Student Success Centre and the other was utilized as a resource for students who required intermittent support services as well as being responsible for the implementation of the Community Helpers initiative. There is less stigma associated with the social work profession than psychologists and psychiatrists, thereby making them more appealing to many students seeking help. In fact, most students who currently use the services of the social workers on campus are unaware of their professional designation.

In October, 2012, two additional social worker positions were created and all four positions were reorganized to create a single unit reporting directly to the Office of the Dean of Students. The role of the social work team was grounded in preventative action that supports resiliency and fosters a sense of connection to strengthen capacity, provide bridges to resources, and advocate for greater inclusivity on our campuses. The team's work is focused within the contexts of Community Education, Community Building, Community Outreach and Resources, and Community Advocacy. With the restructuring, their roles expanded across the U of A campuses.

The revised team mandate:

- Provides mental health training and workshops across campus
- Delivers the Community Helpers program

- Links students to university and community resources
- Provides informal services to students rather than rigidly scheduled, formalized services
- Collaborates with the Peer Support Centre to guide content and delivery of volunteer training programs.
- Ensures consistency of training year over year through the development of a comprehensive, mental health component for student volunteers
- Provides training to residence coordinators and residence assistants across campus
- Delivers workshops to faculty and staff about student mental health and intervention strategies
- Works closely with international students in the International Centre. Engaged social workers facilitate stronger relationships for students in difficulty who are unwilling to seek out or access formalized professional services.

### **Resources as of December 31, 2012**

- 4 community social workers (4.0 FTE)

## Institute of Sexual Minority Studies and Services (iSMSS)

The Institute of Sexual Minority Studies and Services was created in 2008 and absorbed other sexual and gender minority youth programs on the U of A campus. The institute provides a framework for a network of programs and services that support sexual-minority students. Through its work, students have access to specialized psychological support and advocacy including Sideright, a student residence support group and Inside/OUT. It provides numerous outreach educational programs across campus. Under its banner, research,

community service, and equity programs are offered. In the past year, a part time psychologist has been added to the compliment of employees to provide confidential services to students, faculty and staff. The Institute also spearheads the Safe Spaces initiative that, in combination with lectures and workshops, educates the campus community to create an inclusive campus climate. This places the U of A in an enviable position as a recent study found that only 30% of campus counselling websites mentioned individual counselling for sexual and gender minority students (Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, 2012). Even fewer (12%) had personnel trained to provide services to this specialized population.

### **Resources as of December 31, 2012**

- 1.0 FTE psychologist: provides services to the campus and City of Edmonton communities

## Aboriginal Student Services Centre (ASSC)

Aboriginal students require a unique set of supports to facilitate enhanced academic engagement and student experience. With the focus on ensuring that aboriginal students have access to appropriate services, it is increasingly important that tailored mental health services be available. The ASSC offers culturally appropriate student advising, social and emotional support services, access to community elders, study space, and social and cultural events that are inclusive to the campus community.

### **Resources as of December 31, 2012**

- A psychologist from the MHC provides service in the Centre three hours per week.

## Aboriginal Students Office

Augustana Campus has an Aboriginal Students Office that provides similar culturally appropriate services, academic advising and social events. They also offer an Aboriginal Student Mentor Program, pairing senior level aboriginal students with new incoming aboriginal students to assist with the adjustment to university life.

## Sexual Assault Centre

The Sexual Assault Centre (SAC) was the first free-standing independent institution-supported centre at a university in Canada. Other universities are using it as a model in the design of sexual assault centres at their own institutions. The SAC currently offers crisis intervention and short-term counselling to students, staff and faculty who have been impacted by sexual violence, harassment, and stalking. The SAC is active in innovative education and awareness programs across campus including Yoga for Healing, education workshops for classes or student groups, 'Don't Be That Guy' campaign, @You, a program for aboriginal students, safe house access, and informal community support workshops. They spearhead activities and information campaigns during the campus-wide Sexual Assault Awareness Week. The SAC delivers training workshops and seminars to student support units, student groups, as well as undergraduate classes across campus. Their student volunteers reach into the university community, deliver training sessions across campus to faculty and students, and provide support to those impacted by sexual violence.

### Resources as of December 31, 2013

- 1 counsellor (1.0 FTE)

## Faculty In-House Mental Health Support

Four faculties provide in-house student psychological services that extend beyond student advising services. The psychologists are well versed in the issues relevant to their specific student body and faculty programs, thus enabling them to tailor services.

### Campus St Jean

- .8 counsellor/psychologist counselling services in French and English (650 students)
- Psychiatric services in French available in the community

### Augustana Campus

- .8 FTE registered psychologists (1000 students)
- Psychiatric services are available in Camrose

### Medicine/Dentistry

- .4 FTE counselling services available in the Learner Advocacy and Wellness Department

### Faculty of Education

- 1.0 FTE registered psychologist provides services to undergraduate students

## Health and Wellness Team

The Health and Wellness Team (HaWT) supports student public health initiatives. The team oversees the Unwind Your Mind initiative implemented in the university's libraries during final examination periods and the Heroes for Health, a competitive student program that provides funding for outstanding student-initiated projects to foster wellness on campus. The team is also collaborating with the Students' Union and the Office of the Dean of Students in the Furry Friends pet-assisted therapy program. The HaWT team is responsible for the organization, distribution, and analysis of the bi-annual National College Health Association student survey.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS IN 2013

### Mental Health Centre Restructure

Supplementary government funding has provided the opportunity to revise the delivery model for student mental health services. The MHC will be able to increase its ability to meet the needs of previously underserved students by offering more flexible hours, four additional locations and types of interactions with students and staff that reduce barriers inherent in our current service structure. In October, 2012, a proposal was presented to the Vice Provost Council that outlined a change in the MHC delivery model for the main campus. The recommendation was based upon the philosophy that the U of A needs to put services where the students are most apt to access them. The revised model includes satellite offices that are located in large faculties and units thereby expanding access of mental health services to multiple locations across campus. In addition to making the services more easily accessible and visible to the student body, placement within faculties or centres provides the opportunity to develop collaborative relationships between faculty members and service providers and to tailor services to specific student groups. The hours of operation would be extended to enhance access.

With additional resources, the following additions are underway:

#### **Four new satellite offices are being created.**

- 3 satellite offices will be placed in faculties with large undergraduate populations
- 1 satellite office will be created for graduate student access



**Additional mental health providers:**

- 4 full-time psychologists will be located in satellite offices
- 2 psychiatric nurses will conduct intake interviews throughout the day which will increase available counselling hours for psychologists
- Service hours in the Centre will be extended two evenings per week

With the acquisition of the Government of Alberta \$3,000,000 grant announced in January, 2013, new psychologists will be hired to work in the satellite offices that will be located in the three largest faculties on campus: Arts, Science, and Engineering. The fourth largest faculty, Education, has had a full-time on-site psychologist since 1996. The Graduate Student Association has indicated the need for services tailored to graduate students who comprise approximately 19% of the clientele currently served at the MHC. To accommodate this need, a fourth satellite office will be placed in Triffo Hall.

## Community Social Work Team

With additional resources, the following additions to services are underway:

**Additional mental health providers:**

- 1 clinical social worker (.4 FTE)

Aboriginal students have been identified as a group in need of additional mental health support therefore clinical social worker services will be extended into the ASSC on a part-time basis. International students have also been identified as a group in need and the appropriate services are currently being evaluated.

## Sexual Assault Centre

With additional resources, the following additions to services are underway:

**Additional mental health provider:**

- 1 psychologist (.75 FTE)

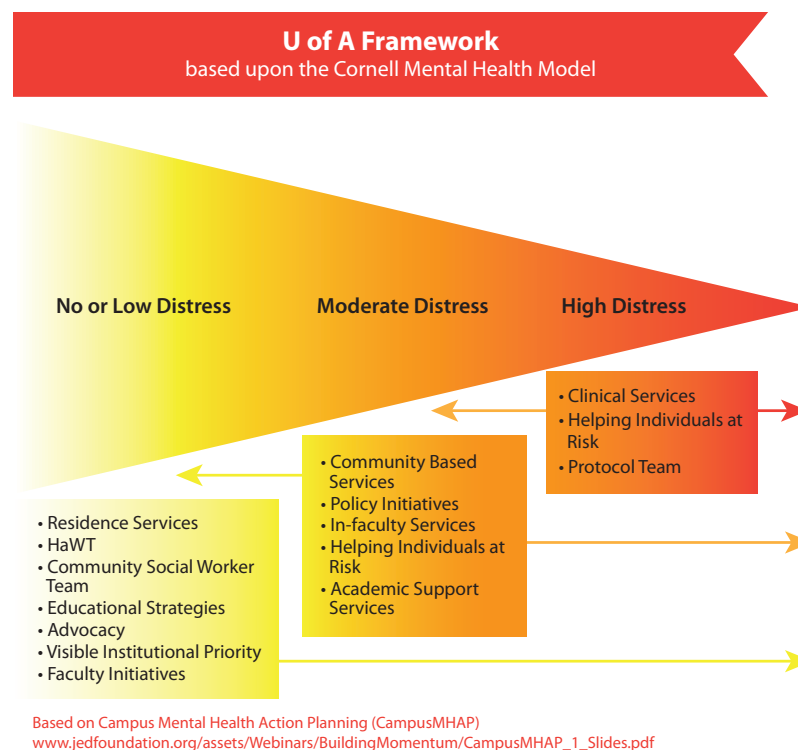
Government funding has provided the financial resources to hire a part-time psychologist for a three year period, beginning September, 2013. The current counselling program will be revised to include ongoing individual counselling and group counselling.

## THE MODEL

A model developed by Cornell University provides a useful framework for developing and implementing student services and information delivery that includes engagement at all levels of the campus community. Historically, student mental health and wellness services have been approached from the perspective of providing mental health interventions by clinicians and medical facilities and have functioned within silos (Eisenberg, Golberstein, & Hunt, 2009). Operating parallel or uncoordinated services lacks efficiency, risks duplication of resource allocations, and impedes the delivery of impactful programs and services. With a health-promoting approach, the totality of students will be impacted by an emphasis on promoting, maintaining or regaining their mental health. Creating an environment that is intentionally designed with a breadth of services and avenues of access “foster[s], support[s] and sustain[s] a campus culture in which students’ growth, resiliency and learning are fostered.” (p. 9, Silverman, Underhile & Keeling, 2008).

The right side of the triangle represents those students who require direct clinical support services from doctors, psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychiatric nurses in the Mental Health Centre, community social workers and existing in-faculty psychological services. These are the students that are forefront in people’s minds when conversing about student mental health occur.

The middle segment of the triangle encompasses access to services by students who require a variety of non-clinical supports to facili-



tate their academic success. It focuses upon providing targeted interventions for non-traditional and academically struggling students on campus and enhancing the ability to access the breadth of student support services. Non-traditional groups include First Nations, Metis and Inuit students, second career students, international students, and gay-lesbian-bisexual-transgender students, while more-at-risk groups include first year and transfer students. At the U of A, the existing Helping Individuals at Risk (HIAR) program can be extended to identify students with declining mental health and/or academic difficulties in order to facilitate early intervention and access to support

resources. Developing institutional awareness of the link between student mental health and learning and academic success could be facilitated by designing workshops that provide faculty, staff, and administrators with awareness training to assist them in identifying and responding to distressed students. Awareness of the available support services on campus needs to be enhanced. A focus upon mental health and wellness issues during student orientations could be incorporated in such a way as to encourage resilience and adaptation to the U of A.

The left side of the model focuses on the quality of the culture and learning climate of the institution, and the level of student engagement. Given that the U of A is committed to the development of citizenship, its institutional commitment to personal growth and development as well as academic success should be visible to the campus community and community at large. While the following statements by the Senate Task Force for Student Engagement are framed within that context, the power of feeling valued and belonging is critical to fostering and maintaining student health and wellness.

*There can be an extraordinary value in a single positive encounter with another person in such a large and diverse campus community. Feedback from focus groups suggests that front line campus personnel play a central role in ensuring that students are not only informed, they are also valued as contributing members of the campus community. ...*

*Each encounter with a student is an opportunity to promote and support student engagement in social and academic campus life. Students who want to get involved and search for resources are also in the process of defining their role in the university community.*

*Students are not just seeking information - they are also seeking a sense of place and a sense of belonging.” (2005, p. 43)*

As institutional policies and procedures are developed, their impacts upon mental health and wellness cannot be discounted. Importantly, peer-to-peer support has been shown to be highly effective for assisting students with overcoming personal challenges and therefore plays a crucial role in fostering a healthy and supportive campus.

Given the insight and usefulness of the model in both range and scope, the recommendations that follow in later in this report have been developed based upon the Cornell framework.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### MAKE OUR COMMITMENT VISIBLE

1. Student mental health issues must be a visible priority of the University of Alberta

*"...the university supports the development of the whole student and dedicates resources to both academic and student life development." (University of Alberta, Comprehensive Institutional Plan, 2011, p. 40)*

Creating a University that supports, nurtures, and promotes student mental health and wellness requires a pledge that the institution is mindful of mental health and wellness in policy, procedure, practice, and all levels of decision-making. An explicit statement in the U of A strategic plan affirming that mental health and wellness impacts academic achievement, retention, and success is required to send a strong message to both internal and external communities. It will provide the foundation for a sustained commitment to student mental health services and wellness programs, and reaffirm the importance of ongoing campus initiatives and administrative support to student success.

2. Ensure that the U of A community recognizes the importance of student mental health on learning, academic success, academic persistence and program completion

Senior level advocacy is essential to maintain a focus on the impact

of student mental health on learning, academic achievement, retention, and success. Mental health and wellness are foundational to students' abilities to reach their full potential and achieve their aspirations. Acknowledging that mental health impacts the student experience, academic success and community engagement must be at the forefront of a comprehensive approach that includes enhancing awareness, education, and training for faculty and staff, offering sustained support programs, and developing supportive policies and procedures.

3. Review policies and procedures to ensure they are consistent with mental health initiative

The Academic Policy and Process Review (APPR) Task Force has a mandate to review current policy. "The mandate of the Academic Policy and Process Review (APPR) Task Force is to facilitate students' learning by ensuring that the University's academic policies and processes for academic programs do not present unnecessary barriers to student engagement and do not prevent students from having positive and rewarding experiences at the University of Alberta." [www.provost.ualberta.ca/en/CommitteesandTaskForces/APPR.aspx](http://www.provost.ualberta.ca/en/CommitteesandTaskForces/APPR.aspx)

Their mandate should be expanded to ensure that policies and procedures are consistent with fostering and maintaining student mental health and wellness by reducing bureaucracy and institutional impediments

4. Encourage faculties, non-teaching, and student service units to review their policies and procedures to ensure that they align with the larger institutional initiatives

The effects of programs, policies, and procedures on students must

be a fundamental consideration for all academic and non-academic units. Including a health and wellness ‘lens’ should be encouraged in the development of programs, policies, and procedures that are more student-friendly and student-centred. By seeking better alignment between institutional and faculty policies and procedures, the U of A can remove unintended barriers that impede the ability of students to navigate the bureaucracy of this large institution.

#### 5. Reconsider student services across the University from the students’ point of view.

The contemporary challenge for delivering student services is to recognize and accommodate both the particular and the general, the individual and the common aspects of our students. At the University of Alberta, we want to create a space for learning and inquiry that allows our students to feel comfortable in being themselves as well as identifying as a U of A student. In striving for this balance, we will at once improve the quality of the university experience for our students while harnessing the full benefit of diversity in our community.

Our programs and services need to be delivered in a coordinated and consistent fashion, but that is not incompatible with a truly heterogeneous, diverse student community. When one becomes a U of A student, their individual background comes with them and enriches the U of A community, and the community needs to respond with its programs and services that are no more or less than are offered to a student coming from any other background.

The sense of care and interest that the institution shows in its students needs to come through to students as individuals, who share in common the experience of being students. We need to be respectful of their backgrounds (cultural, language, religion, gender, ethnicity,

etc), and strive to be relevant and engaged in *their* transformative experience—in who they are now and who they want to be after their time at the U of A.

This is not just about administrative and bureaucratic efficiency and effectiveness; this is about the best way to approach the organization and delivery of programs and services to students.

## EXPAND WELLNESS INITIATIVES AND RAISE THEIR PROFILE

### 6. Rename the Mental Health Centre

The name “Mental Health Centre” has been identified by students, support staff, and faculty as creating a barrier for many who require counselling services but are reluctant to seek services there because of the stigma associated with the term ‘mental illness’. While the name was intended to represent the spectrum of services provided in the Centre, it creates an unintended barrier for many students seeking services. The name of the Centre should change to Counselling and Clinical Services, which will accurately reflect the psychological and psychiatric services that are being provided, but reduce the stigma associated with the current name.

### 7. Develop and deliver addictions and substance abuse student services and support groups on campus

Addictions and substance abuse services are considered to be crucial student services and are becoming standard on many North American campuses. It is strongly recommended that a comprehen-

sive addictions and substance abuse program that includes ongoing education campaigns, student support, and direct student services be developed for implementation by the 2013/2014 academic year. This initiative could build upon existing resources, such as the online “Check Yourself” resource.

#### 8. Promote health and wellness for all students

Despite the tendency to focus upon acute care and student crisis, we need to focus upon promoting mental health and wellbeing for all students on campus. In order to be truly proactive and comprehensive, mental health and wellness strategies need to encompass all aspects of campus life to facilitate enabling and nurturing communities that support student wellness. Ensuring that mental health and wellness stays at the forefront of institutional decisions and policies will help to create a culture of care, while continuing to demonstrate to students that their welfare is important to the institution.

#### 9. Student groups should be encouraged and provided with support mechanisms by the university.

A rich diversity of student groups is a strength the U of A enjoys, but we are not making full or best use of this strength; we need to try to find better ways of activating and extending the many benefits that come from a dynamic and participatory student population. In essence, this is about student driven student engagement; we need to look for these ways to engage students with our large, comprehensive campus, whether they commute or live in residence, come from elsewhere in Alberta, Canada, or around the world. The trust and connection that students make with their peers is often crucial to a student’s individual wellbeing and sense of community.

#### 10. Promote peer-to-peer mentoring and support services

Beyond the immediate impact to individuals, the full value of peer-to-peer interactions lies in the development of community across the student body. Many students identify turning to peers for advice, support and assistance as their preferred choice, as it provides multiple avenues for trusted and trustworthy engagement without the stigma of seeking professional services. Peer support and student-to-student engagement opportunities should be enhanced by:

- promoting and expanding the Peer Support Centre;
- engaging senior level students to become ambassadors for student mental health and wellness;
- compiling a student-to-student guide about “Everything you need to know about adjusting to the challenges of being at the U”, including one that is graduate-student specific;
- encouraging student-driven health and wellness groups to work more collaboratively across the university so that mental health and wellness campaigns are more impactful for a broader student audience;
- developing a network for collaboration between mental health clubs on campuses; developing graduate student specific “What I wish I knew about grad school”; and
- facilitating the development of campaigns designed for targeted student populations (mature students, transfer students, international students, aboriginal students, rural students).

Unfortunately, institutional structures are too often impeding student group collaboration; the development of cohesive programs should be considered to determine whether procedures could be modified and streamlined to improve effectiveness. There are also potential connections with Recommendation #9.

### 11. Expand Health and Wellness Team (HaWT) involvement in student health initiatives

By virtue of its role to oversee all-things-students, the Office of the Dean of Students (DoS) houses expertise and maintains connections throughout the university community that can augment health promotion initiatives. The Health and Wellness Team, housed within University Wellness Services, plays an important role in facilitating student-lead public health initiatives on campus. To achieve the goal of developing strong collaborative relationships, the HaWT and DoS should ensure that a close working relationship is developed that will enhance campus-wide initiatives. Team leaders have the expertise to design campus-wide student health promotion campaigns and the leadership ability to expand their involvement in student-lead mental health programming. It is important that the HaWT team work in close collaboration with the DoS communications office to maximize campus awareness of mental health initiatives. Eliminating organizational barriers that interfere with cohesive, seamless, and broad-based implementation strategies is essential.

## ALLOCATE DEDICATED RESOURCES

### 12. Align an increase in required physical space with the increased demand for services

Despite the growing numbers of students on campus and the increasing demand for services provided by mental health and wellness units, restricted space precludes the ability of some units to provide accessible and timely services. It is strongly recommended that adequate space be provided to allow support units to fulfill the ever-increasing demand for services. It is incumbent upon Facilities

and Operations to work collaboratively with the Office of the Dean of Students to ensure that space availability does not restrict the U of A's ability to provide mental health and support services that are in alignment with the U of A mandate.

### 13. Ensure sustainable funding

The U of A has already committed to providing access to mental health and wellness services for students. As stated in the Comprehensive Institutional Plan, the University will "provide foundational support structures for students in order to create a nurturing environment that allows for positive student experience and engagement." (Access Goal 14, p.40) With an increasing focus upon the importance of mental health on learning, student success, academic achievement, and retention, post-secondary institutions are being charged with an additional mandate to provide adequate access to supports. Adequate student services require stable, predictable funding envelopes to develop strategic plans to address the need. Cohesive, comprehensive, and integrated services require short-term and long-term strategic planning.

### 14. Allocate necessary resources to support the growing demand for support services

As the student population at the U of A increases, the demand for services will assuredly grow. The concern about student mental health has grown exponentially in post-secondary institutions over the past decade. A new commitment to providing mental health and wellness services has resulted in the development of a number of comprehensive and strategic documents intended to guide long range plans. Initiatives are designed upon services already in place, the size and nature of the institution and access to sustainable funding. The U of



A has a solid foundation upon which to continue to advance its student mental health initiatives, thus ensuring that they are accessible and effective. All student services, including the ASSC, MHC, SAC, Student Success Centre (SSC), and Specialized Support and Disability Services (SSDS), contribute significantly to providing mental health support to students, both graduate and undergraduate.

15. Office of Advancement should engage in fundraising initiatives that support student mental health and wellness services

Fund-raising campaigns to enhance student services and mental health supports are strongly recommended. There are few individuals in society that have not been directly impacted by a loved one or acquaintance struggling with mental health issues. Student mental health has been brought to increased public attention through the media. In the context of the reality of tight budgets and competing realities, the University needs to commit to a directed and high profile fundraising effort to provide financial support that will help build and sustain student health and wellbeing services. It is important to communicate the value that the U of A places upon providing mental health services as it focuses upon supporting students, facilitating success, and fulfilling its commitment to enhancing the learning experience for all students.

## MOVE TOWARDS COHESIVE MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS PROGRAMMING

16. Reduce the fragmentation and “siloeing” of student mental health services

The creation of a Student Mental Health Coalition comprised of mental health service providers housed across the U of A campuses would facilitate strong working relationships between faculties and service units. It is strongly recommended that a committee be struck that comprises representatives of Campus St. Jean, Augustana, Mental Health Centre, community social workers, as well as faculty-based and institute-based psychologists and counsellors. Regularly scheduled meetings would facilitate campus wide collaborative initiatives and best practices across units. As the structures for providing mental health and wellness services change to become more infused into faculties, stronger relationships between diverse providers will ensure continuity and cohesiveness between services.

17. Recognize the roles that the Specialized Support and Disability Services (SSDS) and the Student Success Centre (SSC) have in addressing student mental health issues

SDSS and SSC have observed an increased number of students requesting accommodations because of mental health concerns. Less psychologically robust students often turn to academic services rather than mental health or wellness services for support. In addition, a large percentage of students who initially present with physical disabilities or learning disabilities are also compromised by secondary mental health challenges. Complex cases involving multiple disabilities require increased resource allocation to facilitate academic



success and student wellbeing. In addition, accommodations and adherence to the university's commitment to provide learning supports to all students needs to be consistently applied across all faculties.

#### 18. Enhance the profile of the chaplains and acknowledge the value of spiritual support

Spiritual and faith based guidance is valued by many students and staff on campus. Chaplains and religious leaders have contributed their services and support to the U of A community for many years; however, their contributions to student health and wellness could be made more visible. Despite having the capacity and mandate to provide counselling and spiritual guidance, they are, for the most part, an untapped resource. Chaplain services should become a standard referral to students by mental health providers, student support personnel and student advisors. The partnership between the Chaplain's Office and the University should be officially recognized with established roles, responsibilities and mandate to acknowledge their value on campus.

#### 19. Dedicated prayer and meeting spaces should be made available to the campus community

As the diversity of the campus community increases so does the need for space to accommodate the needs of students and staff who practice their faith. International students, in particular, have expressed concern about the lack of dedicated prayer spaces (iGrad survey, 2011) at the U of A. A dedicated prayer space on campus would not be restricted to any one faith, nor would it be restricted to student use alone. By providing spaces for prayer and spiritual events the university will acknowledge the multiple needs of its' members, providing resources that support its campaigns for an ever-increasing diversi-

fied population, as well as recognizing the value of spiritual health in mental health and wellbeing.

#### 20. Profile wellness programs across campus

Physical wellness programs are offered through the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation and a multitude of student groups. As part of a coherent health and wellness initiative, it would be beneficial to highlight the importance of physical health, sleep, eating patterns, the impact of stress, mind breaks, and drug and alcohol use. The Heroes for Health program, sponsored under the auspices of the Health and Wellness Team (HaWT) also organizes the Unwind Your Mind initiative that could be expanded beyond examination periods. Raising the profile of the breadth of healthful opportunities provides multiple points of access to health promotion activities on campus. Collaboration between faculties and the HaWT would be assist in advancing mental health initiatives.

### ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITY

#### 21. Provide regularly updated comprehensive information about student services to all faculty and staff

The structures and roles of student service units across campus as well as in the Office of the Dean of Students have undergone significant re-alignment and name changes in the past two years. Lack of updated information hinders faculty and staff referrals of students to appropriate services. The dissemination of updated information should be provided to faculties, departments, support staff and student organizations for broader distribution. Regular updates of stu-

dent services and presenting institutional initiatives being addressed will keep student mental health and wellness issues in the limelight.

## 22. Develop orientation and refresher sessions for faculty, APOs, and staff that focus on the student landscape

It is important that faculty, APOs, and staff understand the changing expectations of the student body. Faculty and/or APO orientations should be designed to focus extensively on the student experience and the university's commitment to creating a supportive environment. At minimum the content should include information on the Helping Individuals at Risk program, the role of the Office of the Dean of Students, student support services and resources, procedures for referrals, and University policy for accommodations. A rotational schedule of orientations and education sessions should be available throughout the year through a variety of avenues including online information, face to face seminars, social media, etc., to facilitate ready access of updated information.

## 23. Increase and improve online resources for faculty and staff

As the internet and social media has become a common first point of access to information, we need to ensure that we are providing high-quality online resources related to health education and health promotion that educates faculty, staff, and even parents. Online education programs designed for faculty, APOs and staff have been introduced on campuses across North America. They include basic information regarding mental health and wellness, common disorders in emerging adulthood, suicide, appropriate interventions, listings of university supports and services and the impact of mental health problems upon academic success.

## 24. Adopt a modified Mental Health First Aid program

The U of A takes pride in the success of the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) program on campus. While many faculty and staff have completed the training, the necessary time commitment precludes a large number of employees from participating in the program. It is strongly recommended that a revised MHFA program be made available to campus community members. A commitment by senior administration to encourage faculty and staff to participate in mental health education through on-line and workshop training opportunities would demonstrate the University of Alberta's pledge to student wellness. A recommendation to modify the program was made by the Senate Task Force on Wellness in 2003.

Several universities have found that the MHFA training program is not suitable for an institutional setting and have turned to creating their own modified versions. The University of Guelph has developed shorter modular versions that range from a one hour sessions for faculty that focus on warning signs and how to refer appropriately to campus services, to a full day training for residence assistants, peer helpers and front-line staff in the registrar's office. The Council of Ontario Universities, in conjunction with the University of Toronto, York University and Guelph, is developing an online training program for faculty that, with permission, could be used by any university.

## 25. All faculty and staff should participate in revised Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training

In alignment with the University's commitment to attending to student mental health and wellness, personnel at every level of the community, from senior administrators and faculty members, to

APOs, to ongoing sessional instructors and contract staff, to support staff should be expected to participate in revised awareness training. Educating incoming deans, associate deans, chairs and APOs could be delivered through online modules or in face-to-face orientation sessions. This is the most direct way to highlight changing characteristics and demographics of students and ensuring that mental health initiatives are visible, valued, and sustained.

#### 26. Provide resource information and handbooks for parents, students, and staff

Comprehensive parent, student, and staff handbooks have been developed at major North American institutions. In the spirit of sharing best practice documents and programs, permission will be granted to sister institutions to adapt these materials for their use. While each handbook would require modification to reflect the University of Alberta reality, it would be useful to investigate, and amalgamate these resources to provide comprehensive need-to-know information. In particular, the availability of a faculty-specific resource handbook for parents is becoming common practice as parental involvement and parental support is recognized as beneficial to first year students and students transferring between institutions.

#### 27. Develop resources for sessional instructors

Sessional instructors and contract staff are actively engaged with incoming undergraduate students; however, they are overlooked as important gatekeepers of student mental health. Resources should be made available to sessional instructors and contract staff to update them on signs of behavioral or academic distress, intervention procedures, university resources, and mechanisms for referring students to available supports. Those sessionals and contract staff with

regular involvement would benefit from participating in education sessions and mental health awareness training with faculty, APOs, and staff.

## ENHANCE STUDENT-CENTRED COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

#### 28. Fundamentally reconsider the way student services are marketed and communicated at the U of A from a student's point of view

If there is one thing that we should change about the current situation, it is the way we communicate with our students. There needs to be a concerted and coordinated effort at improving the way we communicate with current students, both undergraduate and graduate. Students need to be at the centre of our communication processes, and we need to consider all student services as contributing to the mental health and wellbeing of our students, regardless of who they are and where they find themselves on the spectrum of mental health and wellness. Perhaps the most obvious example of this need for improvement can be found in the University's online space, particularly in the 'current students' or 'student life' areas.

#### 29. Renovate the online space for current students at the U of A

Students (and others) expect our online platform to be a dynamic and reliable source of information, venue of discourse, and functional tool for being a student in the 21st century. However, the online space ostensibly aimed at current students is currently underwhelming despite having the potential for being our most important tool of awareness, dialogue, and outreach. Even when focussing directly on health

and wellness services, information, activities, and programs are often promoted within the organizational frame of reference, and not from the point of view of a student.

Students should not need to understand the organizational structure in order to get reliable information and access programs and services. Students need to be at the centre of our communication processes, and the online renovation should be a first priority at the outset. Redundancies and duplications can be reduced; information about programs and services that are relevant and useful to students should be clarified and organized, made more engaging, student-focussed, and more easily findable.

### 30. Implement a university-wide approach to increasing awareness of student services

Both graduate and undergraduate students commonly report that they are unaware of many aspects of the university's support services, particularly in the first two years of their programs and other transitional stages during a post-secondary education. However, there are a lot of valuable and effective student programs and services already in place and operating at the U of A. The Office of the Dean of Students should be charged with coordinating a comprehensive awareness strategy with up-to-date, and need-to-know information for all students. Faculties and departments should be consulted to assist in developing information and strategies to best communicate with specific student groups.

All tools, channels, and platforms should be considered, including: the creative and active use of social media; more comprehensive and current information on University websites, including the homepages, with a particular focus on improving the findability of information

and accessibility of services; engaging various methods of delivering information electronically; and, developing university/student association partnerships. Other ideas raised included power point slides prior to the beginning of classes in large lecture halls or including student services information on course syllabi.

### 31. Conduct a University-wide communications campaign emphasizing mental health

This campaign needs to be coordinated and collaborative across campuses, and founded firmly on public and mental health and wellness principles. It should aim to de-stigmatize mental illness while also building awareness and educating our campus communities about mental health and wellness from a 360 degree perspective. It would also support, directly and indirectly, the work of the various parts of our institution that are dealing with mental health and wellness issues on a day-to-day basis.

## CREATE INSTITUTION-WIDE INFRASTRUCTURE

### 32. Create a University Health and Wellness Committee (UHWC)

Comprised of senior administrators, faculty, APO, staff and student representatives this committee will be responsible for the development of a comprehensive framework that is consistent across all U of A campuses, harnessing resources, and shepherding mental health and wellness programs forward. It would also be tasked with ensuring that modifications to the framework accommodate changing stu-

dents needs. This high level committee will sustain the University's commitment to mental health and wellness issues. Once priorities are identified, sub-committees or task forces would be created to identify the scope of an identified issue, develop a strategic plan, pinpoint resource requirements, and submit recommendations to the UHWC. The committee will report yearly to the provost, Board of Governors and University Senate on initiatives and indicators of success.

### 33. Create a Student Health Advisory Committee

Reporting to the Health and Wellness Committee, the Student Health Advisory Committee membership would represent all levels of the institutional structure to ensure adequate representation and diverse perspectives including the Dean of Students office, Registrar's office, Physical Education and Recreation representatives, senior academic administrators, chaplains, UWell, psychologists housed within faculties, student advisors, and student representatives. It would be tasked to identify arising issues of concern, monitoring the need for adaptations to student services, ensuring that supports are appropriate for diverse populations, designing mental health programming, and making recommendations to the UHWC for new initiatives. The committee would also work in conjunction with communications officers to design updated social media outreach for students. Members of a newly constituted Healthy Campus Working Group could potentially provide the foundation for an expanded Student Health Advisory Committee.

### 34. Develop a Crisis Counselling Team

Under the auspices of the Crisis Management Team Action Plan, a Crisis Counselling Plan has been developed by Risk Management to

coordinate the delivery of student mental health services in the case of an emergency. A Crisis Counselling Team (CCT) will be created. Answering to the Operations Section Chief, the CCT would be tasked with determining the appropriate counselling and support services necessary for affected students in an emergency situation as well as tasked with developing post-crisis protocols for providing ongoing assistance to affected students.

### 35. Create an outreach protocol to students directly impacted by a crisis

Once an imminent crisis has past, ongoing support services should be available to students who have been directly impacted. Processes to facilitate access to services should be designed to include all mental health service providers on campus, regardless of their position or assignment. In addition, a standard procedure and communication plan for making students aware of the availability of service without needing to go through the routine screening process needs to be developed.

### 36. The Helping Individuals at Risk (HIAR) policy and program should be augmented to include a more comprehensive early intervention program

The HIAR policy is designed as a 'connect the dots' program to identify behavioural concerns of individuals at risk of harming themselves and others and to refer them to appropriate services on and off campus. Increasingly, institutions are utilizing alert programs that include both behavioural and academic at-risk behaviours. The identification of academic concerns, in addition to the current focus on behavioural issues, extends our program and policy and will allow us to identify students at risk of academic failure who are struggling

so that we can connect them with the appropriate university or community resources to mitigate their issues. The addition of a software program will make the process of identifying individuals of concern more streamlined, transparent, comprehensive and manageable. In addition, a case management team will be created that evaluates complex cases to ensure that individualized and appropriate interventions are provided to the student. (See revised structural graphic in Appendix A)

### 37. HIAR training must be provided in a systematic way to the university community

It is important that a schedule be developed to provide workshops and training for the newly revised HIAR platform. Education workshops for all faculty, staff and instructors must be regularly available and training sessions should be delivered through department councils, faculty councils, graduate teaching assistant training sessions, and community workshops. The role and processes of the extended HIAR software program should be an issue worthy of focus at chairs school, deans school, and faculty and staff orientations.

### 38. Consider Implementing a voluntary/involuntary leave policy, developed by members of the HIAR and Article 91 Protocol Teams

An involuntary leave policy is a comprehensive safety net that would be used only in those cases in which a student presents a potential harm to him/herself or others and/or is so incapacitated as to be unable to function within a community. "Determining whether involuntary leave is in the best interests of the student [is based upon] balancing his/her desire to stay in school with what services and support your college is able to provide" (The Jed Foundation, 2006, p. 3). The

benefit of an involuntary leave program is that it allows the university to make decisions that address the safety and security of all students when a student who is in need of extensive mental health services refuses them or the illness prevents her/him from continuing in a program of studies.

The voluntary/involuntary leave policy should be developed by a strategically selected subgroup drawn largely from the HIAR and Article 91 Protocol teams. This team would be responsible for developing transparent criteria for leave that can be triggered by the student or the institution; determining protocols for return to the institution; and, developing the specific criteria for a re-admission committee. The policy and procedure would include a standardized non-punitive re-admission and re-entry protocol that allows for the return to the university when the student's health is stabilized. Evaluation on a case-by-case basis would be considered by a committee comprised of the Dean of Students or representative, leader of the Mental Health Centre, and a faculty member.

### 39. Encourage the Graduate Student Association (GSA) to complete a cost/benefit analysis of the supplementary counselling contract.

The GSA has a health benefits contract with Homewood Human Solutions to provide supplementary wellness, financial, legal, and medical services. Graduate students interviewed in focus groups and individually consistently reported that they were generally unaware of the availability of these services. It is strongly recommended that the Supplemental Health and Dental Plan be made more visible to students as well as a cost/benefit analysis completed to ensure that graduate students are receiving value for their participation in this program. [www.ihaveaplan.ca](http://www.ihaveaplan.ca)

#### 40. Evaluate programming effectiveness and impact regularly

To provide evidence of the impact of service delivery modifications and to guide program and future initiatives, student surveys should be conducted regularly. It is recommended that NCHA, Healthy Minds, and NSSE scores be utilized to guide institutional decisions about student mental health services and innovative approaches to providing on-going student supports. Faculty, staff, APO and student focus groups would be beneficial in augmenting survey results.

### REVIEW AND ENHANCE ORIENTATION

#### 41. Orientations should be re-designed to adequately orient students to our complex institution.

In conjunction with the Dean of Student's Office, the Students' Union has been working to incorporate changes into first-year student orientations. Residence Services has re-designed their orientation for first year students by developing a one-week 'Basecamp', a first-year curriculum program. While this is an important addition to the cadre of U of A orientations, all relevant information and guidance cannot be provided to students acclimatizing to post-secondary demands in a short time period. In addition, 'Basecamp' is only available to students moving into first-year residences.

The Senate Task Force on Student Engagement (2005) recommended that orientations for first year students be extended "to include small group sessions throughout the first term" (p. 45). That recommendation was based upon feedback from students that re-engaging with others in the same orientation group would foster social support networks and build relationships that would assist with the transition

into the academy. In 2012, students reported having difficulty differentiating relevant and critical orientation information that would be helpful on a personal level, from general information. They also reported that it was common to feel higher levels of being overwhelmed and anxious following orientation rather than confident and informed as they began to embark on their university studies. This is counter to the purpose of orientation as a vehicle to ease the transition to the U of A.

#### 42. Design orientations for students transitioning from other institutions

Increasingly, the U of A accepts students who are transferring from smaller post-secondary institutions; however, they are not provided the level of support that first year students receive, or do not avail themselves of the orientation services offered to them. While they may have adapted to their previously attended institution, the transition to the U of A can be difficult because of the differences in size, culture, and academic expectations. To facilitate student engagement and a successful transition to the U of A, further attention should be directed to orientations designed to address transitioning students' needs would be beneficial.

#### 43. Design culturally meaningful orientations

During focus group conversations, international students provided insights into how orientations should be strengthened to address the needs of specific cultural groups. They indicated a willingness to help design and participate in culturally meaningful orientations that would provide insights into Canadian culture and academic standards by 'adding the personal touch'. While it is unrealistic to expect that every cultural group requires its own orientation, this proposal



should be considered for groups that have significant numbers on campus. Students returning to the U of A should be consulted to ensure that the delivery of orientation information is best designed to be meaningful and beneficial to specific cultural groups. Graduate students indicated an interest in facilitating orientations and being involved, even to the extent of attending to provide minimal translation if required.

#### 44. Coordinate schedules and examine content of student orientations delivered across campus

Faculty, department and university orientations, many of which have required attendance, are frequently scheduled simultaneously, placing students in a difficult situation. Further, orientations provided by different sources tend to reiterate similar information. Rarely do they include insights into the personal demands of academic studies, managing stress and time management, or adapting to life in Canada which is information students indicated would prepare them for the diverse, and often competing, demands of being successful in their academic pursuits. These results are consistent with those reported by the U of A Senate Task Force on Student Engagement (2005). A priority should be placed upon scrutinizing the content, scheduling, and delivery of orientations for all students.

#### 45. Make orientation information accessible throughout the year

Both undergraduate and graduate students expressed the need to find avenues for social support, to learn how to become involved in a meaningful way, and to access resources should they be needed. They looked to the orientation to provide this information. A commonly reported observation was the inability to differentiate between important versus unimportant information until the information was

needed. Students suggested that orientation content be delivered through multiple methods that would be accessible to them throughout the year, including online.

## SERVE THE NEEDS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

#### 46. Integrate international services within the larger university community

International students are expected to navigate between two somewhat-connected, somewhat-distinct, somewhat-similar streams of programs and services. To navigate bureaucracy and administration they are required to go to a separate set of offices from domestic students. While international students require some specialized services, many do not. Students interviewed indicated that there was confusion about whether they were permitted to access students services outside of those specifically designated for international students. This is not just about administrative and bureaucratic efficiency and effectiveness; it is important to re-evaluate the best way of organizing the delivery of U of A programs and services to students with the goal of ensuring international students feel they can be both themselves and be a full part of the U of A.

#### 47. Expand institutional involvement with international students

The international student body at the U of A is comprised of a wide range of national, cultural, and religious backgrounds; a one-size-fits-all approach to fostering and enhancing good mental health and student engagement is inadequate to meet diverse needs. It is



strongly recommended that the University broaden its engagement with international students beyond the International Centre and University of Alberta International (UAI). While the International Centre is a valued resource, students reported that engagement at multiple university levels would enhance their sense of belonging to the institution.

#### 48. Re-design acculturation workshops

Designed by a committee comprised of faculty, staff, and students, a series of workshops should be offered to acculturate international students to Canadian cultural expectations, as well as prepare them for the personal challenges of adapting to a new culture that inevitably pop up. Graduate student focus group participants strongly endorsed this approach. Graduate students indicated they felt overwhelmed by receiving critical information in a short time frame and would have appreciated receiving information incrementally over the academic term to reinforce the acculturation information delivered in orientations. By virtue of their interactions with undergraduate and graduate students in a multitude of settings, faculty members, support staff, and senior students have insight into acculturation issues that international students face. The addition of diverse perspectives into orientation seminars was identified as important to include in the future.

#### 49. Encourage help seeking in the international student body

Research indicates that help-seeking rates are lower in international students than in domestic student populations. In interviews and focus groups, international students indicated that many are unaware that they can access health and wellness services on campus that are

available to other students. Student advisors should be well versed in directing students to the appropriate mental health services on campus and peer support groups. It is also important to reinforce that all students have access to all student services on campus and that international students are not excluded from using these services because of their status.

#### 50. Expand social interaction and support structures for international students

Social supports are critical to adjustment to Canadian life. It is recommended that peer support structures be facilitated on campus through enhanced mentorship programs and peer-to-peer outreach programs that are facilitated by and engage, the whole university. In addition, facilitating informal programs that encourage alumni/faculty/student engagement through 'Adopt a Student' programs are recommended. While large, well-developed cultural associations exist, they tend to have minimal involvement in mental health related initiatives. Students indicated their willingness to be involved in the development of online resources that include information about culture shock and adjustment to Canadian society. This would allow students to access information despite a reluctance to seek face-to-face assistance.

#### 51. Create opportunities for community participation during extended holiday periods

Programs to meet the needs of international students who remain on campus during extended holiday periods should be developed. The lack of availability of food services, building access and community involvement are issues of concern. International students reported feeling overlooked, abandoned, and experienced a heightened sense

of isolation, alienation and loneliness when the University was closed.

#### 52. Provide routinely scheduled acculturation opportunities with alumni, faculty, and staff

Regularly scheduled informal gatherings that involve domestic faculty and staff are strongly recommended. The iGraduate International Student Barometer (2011) survey results indicated that a sense of isolation and lack of community involvement with Canadians are issues of concern for many. While international students reported that they received support for administrative issues related to enrolment, visa acquisition, and procedural issues, they would benefit from enhanced support for acculturation challenges. Alumni, faculty, and staff can provide significant support and mentorship to international students through the development of programs designed to increase the opportunities for social interactions. The International Centre is well suited to taking the lead on this initiative.

### ENHANCE OUTREACH INITIATIVES

#### 53. Engage alumni in supporting mental health initiatives on campus

The U of A Alumni Association is an active and visible organization that represents the face of the University in the public arena. As such, alumni campaigns that focus specifically on the student mental health and wellness would be seen as highly credible and could raise the profile of the University's initiative to be seen as a student-friendly post-secondary institution of choice. Alumni could become advocates and ambassadors in the community-at-large to assist in endorsing mental health initiatives on the U of A campuses. Well es-

tablished student outreach programs such as the hosting program by alumni for students should be expanded to include the provision of mentorship programs for students who require social support to be successful in their academic pursuits. Simple outreach programs, such as the Alumni Association sending letters of welcome to students upon admission to the university would help incoming students to feel part of, and connect with, the institution-at-large prior to stepping foot on our campuses.

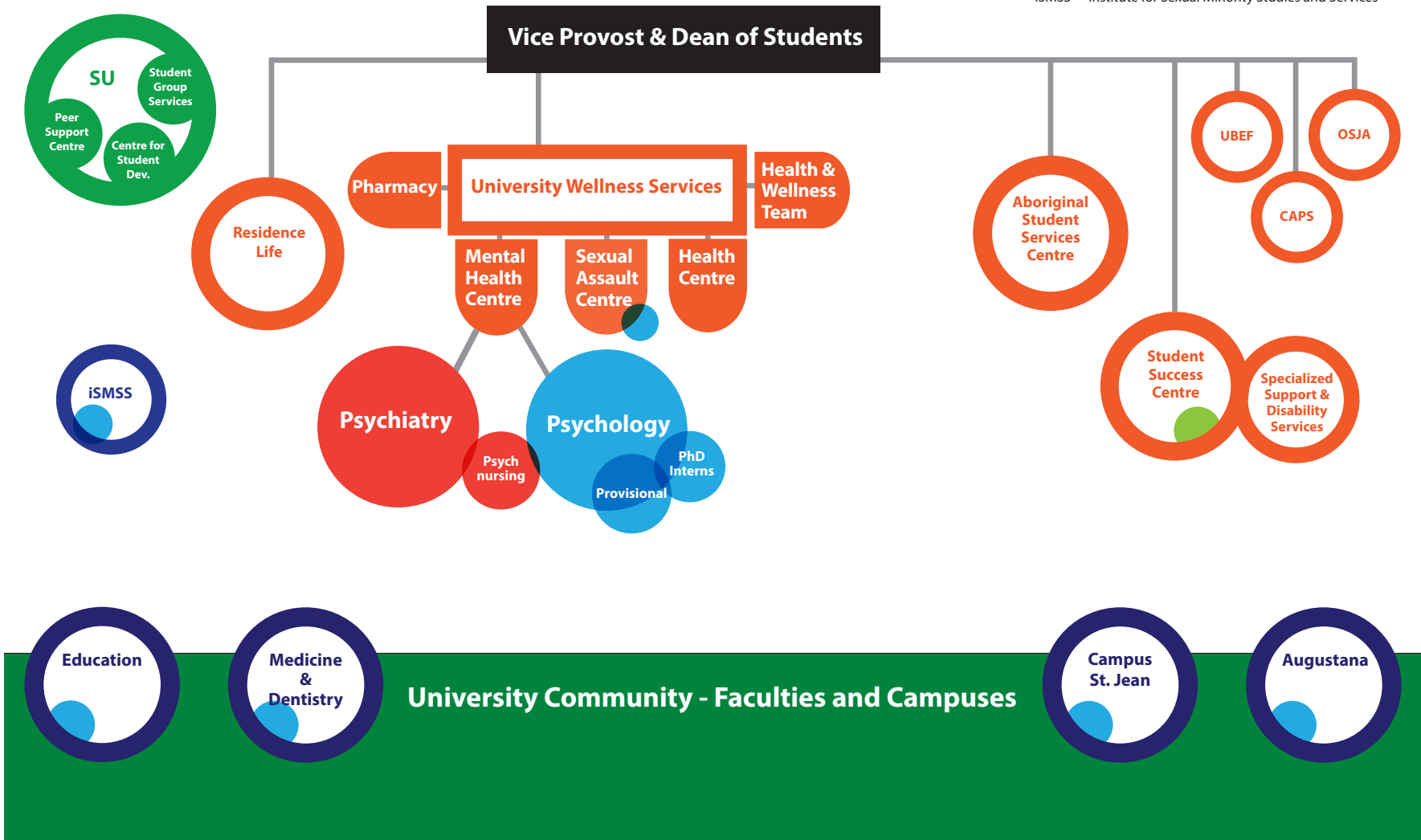
#### 54. Explore a Memorandum of Understanding between Alberta Health Services and the University

Currently, students return to campus following hospitalization for mental illness without notification to the institution. A formalized relationship with Alberta Health Services would ensure that students receive the care they require following hospitalization for suicide attempts or severe psychological problems. A protocol for obtaining student consent to share information would need to be developed. Networks for consultation and communication of relevant information would allow the University to determine whether the students' needs can be met within the institution or whether the student be encouraged to seek resources in the community. Of particular concern are international students and students in residences who may not have the necessary family or community supports available to them when they are released from hospital.

## Mental Health Services - Old Structure University of Alberta, prior to 2013

### Legend

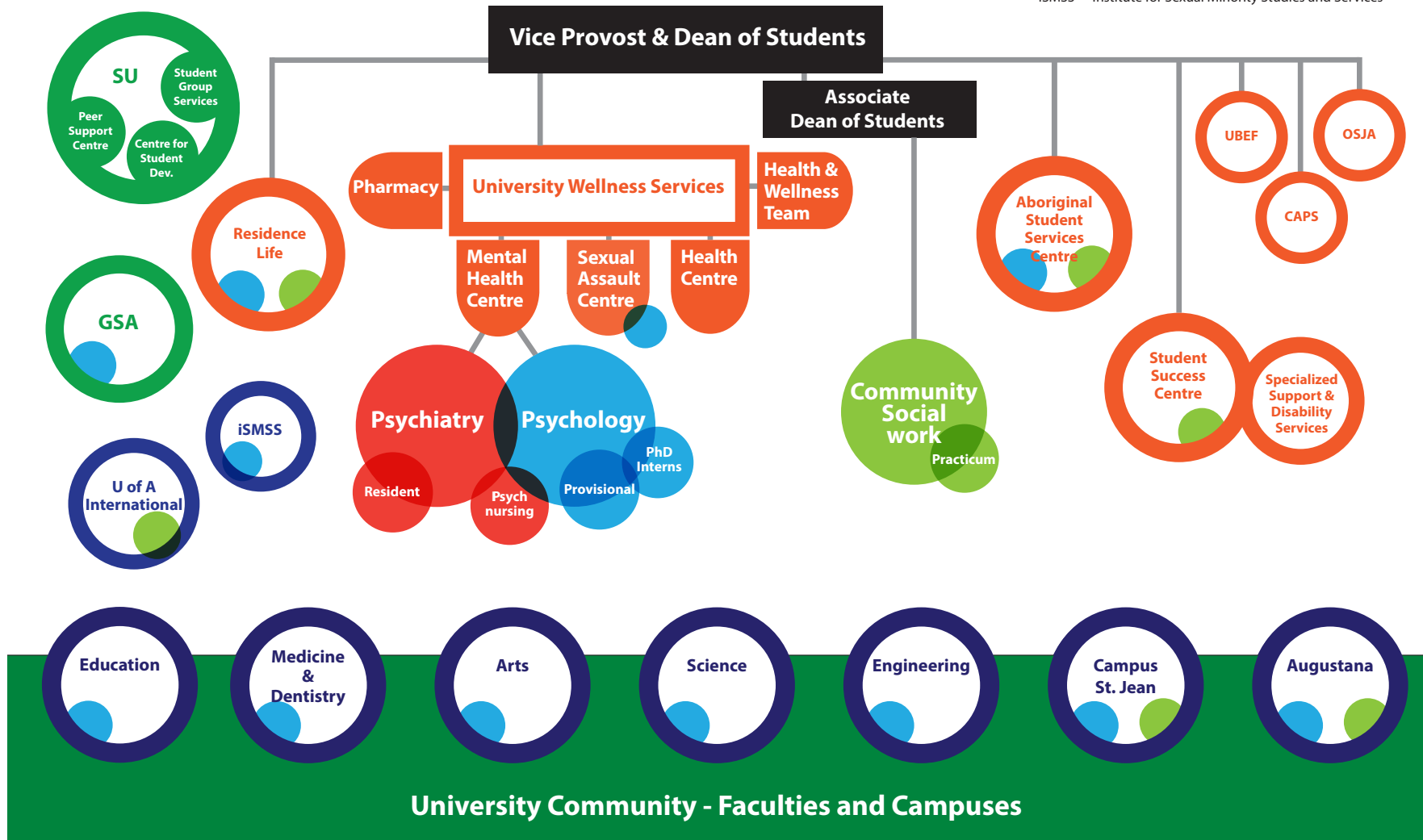
- Social Worker
- Psychologist/Counsellor services
- SU Students Union
- GSA Graduate Student Association
- OSJA Office of Student Judicial Affairs
- CAPS Careers and Placement Services
- UBEF University Bursaries and Emergency Funding
- iSMSS Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services



## Mental Health Services - New Structure University of Alberta, Summer 2013

### Legend

- Social Work team involved
- Psychologist/Counsellor services
- SU Students' Union
- GSA Graduate Students Association
- OSJA Office of Student Judicial Affairs
- CAPS Careers and Placement Services
- UBEF University Bursaries and Emergency Funding
- iSMSS Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services



## APPENDIX C

### Extend and Augment HIAR initiative

The University of Alberta developed the Helping Individuals at Risk policy and procedure housed within the Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights in 2010 that helps identify students and staff who demonstrate disturbing behaviors. “The purpose of this Policy is to: Provide assistance to individuals at risk of harming themselves or others, before a situation escalates; Facilitate early identification of At Risk Behavior; and Provide a confidential, centralized location for reports of At Risk Behavior to be received and consolidated.” (Retrieved from [www.osdhr.ualberta.ca/HIAR.aspx](http://www.osdhr.ualberta.ca/HIAR.aspx).) It is designed as a ‘connect the dots’ program for behavioural issues and has been positively received across campus. In addition to the HIAR program, the faculties of Science and ALES currently have structures in place to monitor first year students’ academic progress and offer assistance to them if they are at risk of academic failure.

Early alert programs designed to identify behaviourally and academically at-risk students have emerged on campuses over the last 10 years. A confidential and secure software program is used to facilitate comprehensive early intervention outreach programs that flag struggling students with the intent to provide the earliest possible referrals to support services (Education Advisory Board, 2012). The programs are not intended to be punitive but rather to identify students who may benefit from early intervention, whether psychological, medical or academic. Collecting information from disparate sources across campus into a centralized, secure and confidential

database prevents students from falling through the cracks. Early identification allows the University to engage the student earlier rather than later so that they can receive referrals to academic supports or mental health assistance.

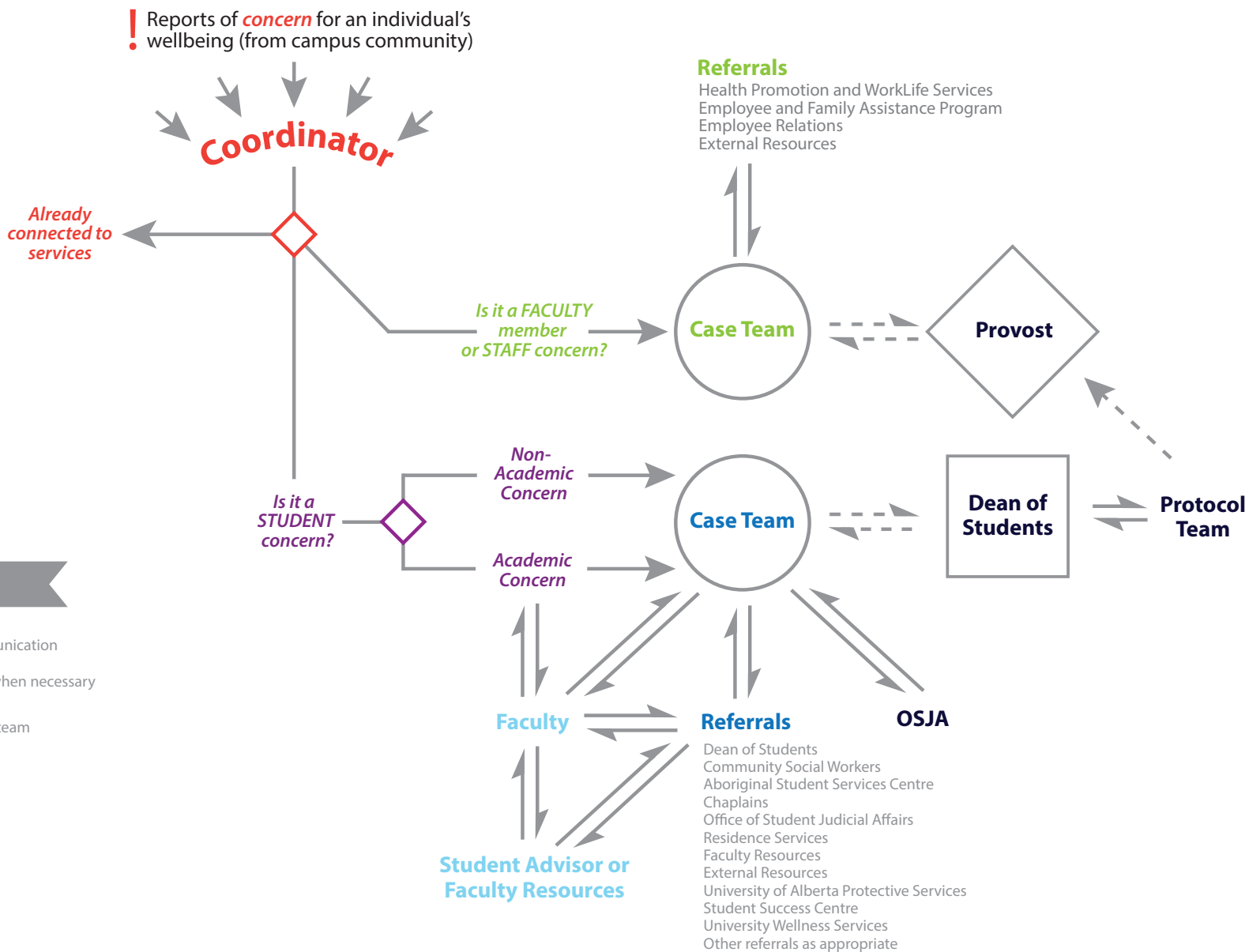
The identification of academic concerns, in addition to the current focus on behavioural concerns extends our current HIAR program and policy and will allow the identification of students who are struggling so that they can be connected with the appropriate university or community resources to mitigate their issues. The addition of a software program will make the process more streamlined and manageable. A case management team will be created that evaluates complex cases to ensure that individualized and appropriate interventions are provided to the student. In order for the extended initiative to be successful, there must be a comprehensive and extensive education strategy designed to teach the benefits to students and the institution.

The process following identification of a struggling student allows for a case-by-case response that is appropriate to the individual situation using a decision making framework that provides a defensible structure. In order to educate the campus community that the true intent of the program is to provide information and support to struggling students, consistent outreach and training for everyone in the academy is required. An easily accessible system to identify students needing support facilitates coordination and communication across the campus thus breaking down the silos of information (The Jed Foundation, 2006)

The successful implementation of an extended HIAR program will require:

- 1 A revision of the mission and mandate of the Helping Individuals at Risk program
- 2 Modification of HIAR policy to include the academic component
- 3 IT involvement to integrate Early Alert software to Peoplesoft (underway)
- 4 Working with the U of A general counsel, information and privacy officer, and VP Finance and Administration to ensure appropriate procedures and record keeping issues are adequately addressed (Business Plan and Personal Information Assessment) (underway)
- 5 Modifying university policy to ensure that the program has adequate ability to enforce decisions consistently across our campuses (ie: medical leave policy; faculty policies; medical information upon re-admission or re-entry to university)
- 6 Creating two multidisciplinary case management teams: One case management team deals with student issues; A separate team deals with faculty, APO and staff issues
- 7 The development of a decision tree to guide intervention strategies: one decision tree for student issues; one decision tree for faculty and staff issues
- 8 Preparing orientations, training and education programs for faculty, APOs and staff across the University

# Proposed Helping Individuals At Risk (HIAR)



## Legend

- Interactive communication
- Communication when necessary
- Staff and faculty stream
- Student stream
- Severity level 1
- Severity level 2
- Severity level 3

## CONSULTATIONS

Over the term of my appointment, I regularly consulted with, and/or interviewed, service providers and stakeholders, both individually and collectively. This included graduate student and undergraduate student focus groups; the Graduate Student Association Executive and Graduate Association Council; individual graduate students; Student's Union Executive and Student's Union Council; University Wellness administrators; Mental Health Centre psychologists, psychiatrists and psychiatric nurse; Director of Student and Residence Services, Augustana; Campus St. Jean, faculty and mental health counsellors; International Centre administration and advisors; social workers; Peer Support Centre directors; Student Success Centre personnel, Sexual Assault Centre personnel, Aboriginal Student Services Centre personnel; social workers; Health and Wellness Team members; Helping Individuals at Risk coordinator; Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights; International Centre personnel; international graduate students; Residence Services including the Director, Associate Director, Residence Coordinators and residence administrators; Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services personnel; senior university administrators; support staff in the Dean of Students office; support staff from across the University; Ombudservice; HPaWs; the Office of Sustainability personnel; Associate Deans; Deans; Vice-Provosts; Chairs; and in-faculty mental health service providers.

The external stakeholders that were consulted included personnel from Alberta Health Services; hospital administrators; Canadian Mental Health Association; Canadian Association of Colleges and University Student Services directors; American College Health Association members; and senior administrators, service providers, and students from national and international post-secondary institutions.



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Outline of Issue:

**Elections and Referenda: Proposed Revisions to GSA Bylaws**

**Suggested Motions**

GSA Council is asked to consider the following Motion:

That the GSA Council **approve**, on the unanimous **support** of the GSA Board and the unanimous advice of the GSA ERC, the proposed revisions to GSA Bylaws, Part VIII: Elections, and GSA Bylaws, Part XI: Referenda, as outlined in the attached three-column documents, effective immediately.

**Note:** This is the **second** reading of this proposed change to GSA Bylaw. The **first** reading occurred at the 21 October, 2013 meeting of GSA Council. At that meeting, GSA Council unanimously passed the following motion: That the GSA Council approve, on the unanimous support of the GSA Board and the unanimous advice of the GSA ERC, the proposed revisions to GSA Bylaws, Part III: Elections, as outlined in the attached three-column documents, effective upon the second reading in November.

**Jurisdiction:**

Policy, Standing Committees, Sections 9.2.a and 2.3.a

*“The ERC shall advise the CRO on all matters pertaining to elections, referenda and by-elections.”* The GSA Executive Director initiated lengthy meetings with the former CRO on his 47 suggested changes to the elections and referenda regulations, followed by joint meetings with the former and current CRO. ERC met in-person on August 20, 2013 and September 20, 2013 to review key issues and decided to review the remaining changes electronically. In between ERC meetings, a great deal of refining was done by the CRO and DRO, ending with the 20<sup>th</sup> draft being sent to GSA Council. Several changes proposed by the GSA Board were agreed to by the CRO and sent to the GSA ERC.

*“The GSAB is the senior administrative authority of the GSA as delegated to it by Council.”* GSAB unanimously **supported** the unanimous advice of ERC at the 09 October, 2013 GSAB meeting.

Bylaws, Part I, 1.2:

*“These Bylaws [...] may be amended by two two-thirds majority votes of Council held on seven calendar days’ notice of motion and no less than one week apart.”*

**Background:**

Elections and Referenda Bylaws and Policies have not been revised in some time. Following the 2013 General Election, By-Election for Councillors-at-Large, and U-Pass Referendum, the former CRO, Daniel Prins, **submitted a report comprising 47 recommendations for an Elections Bylaw and Policy Review**. The current CRO, Isaac Odoom, has been working with the GSA Executive Director, GSA Nominating Committee Coordinator, and Elections and Referenda Committee to revise Elections Bylaws and Policies. In drafting the proposed changes outlined below, feedback from the former CRO Daniel Prins, current CRO Isaac Odoom, DRO Esther Adequyi, and the GSA ERC was solicited and incorporated **over a number of months**. **The major changes are outlined in the letter from the GSA CRO (Item 8.1).**

November 7, 2013 (letter previously distributed to GSA Council October 10, 2013)

Dear Council,

Elections and Referenda Bylaws and Policies have not been revised in some time. Following the 2013 General Election, By-Election for Councillors-at-Large, and U-Pass Referendum, the former CRO, Daniel Prins, **submitted a report comprising 47 recommendations for an Elections Bylaw and Policy Review**. The current CRO, Isaac Odoom, has been working with the GSA Executive Director and Elections and Referenda Committee to revise Elections Bylaws and Policies. The GSA Nominating Committee Coordinator assisted with research and drafting. In drafting the proposed changes outlined below, feedback from the former CRO Daniel Prins, current CRO Isaac Odoom, DRO Esther Adequyi, and the GSA ERC was solicited and incorporate **over a number of months, with the 20<sup>th</sup> draft being sent to GSA Council. The following major changes are suggested:**

- GSA Policy (Officer Portfolios, General Qualifications) **currently states** “If the CRO feels a candidate is not qualified or will not be able to attend preset University meetings, the CRO must consult with the Elections and Referenda Committee; that Committee may direct the CRO to refuse to accept a nomination from such a candidate. The decision of the Elections and Referenda Committee is final and binding.” **The former and current CRO and ERC agree the CRO should not be able to disqualify a candidate from running in the General Election on these grounds.**
- **Re-wording** language and procedure to **reflect shift from paper balloting to electronic balloting** (bringing policy in line with **practice**).
- The election appeals process has been **completely revamped** with extensive input from **Ellen Schoeck** and **Heather Hogg** who both have **appeals experience**. Election appeals are currently part of the **Judicial Policy**, which also needs also to be **reviewed and re-written** at a later date. The **election appeals process is now fast and simple**, since rapid appeals decisions are needed for the **tight time frame of an election**.
- Nomination forms will be made available in **hard copy at the GSA Office** (not online). The CRO will be able to decide **whether any exceptions to this will be made for candidates** on a **case-by-case** basis.
- Previously, nomination forms asked for **10 signatures from 10 graduate student nominators for both Directly-Elected Officer and Councillor-at-Large positions** but this is currently **not part of GSA Bylaw/Policy**. Nomination forms will now require **Directly-Elected Officers** to include **five (5) signatures with their nomination forms**. Councillors-at-Large **will no longer be asked to provide signatures** in order to **remove barriers** for graduate students to run for the CAL positions, **which historically are not fully filled during a General Election**.
- Currently a **By-Election** must be held to fill any vacant **Councillor-at-Large positions**. Bylaw and policy has been **amended** so that **GSA Council will elect any Councillor-at-Large vacancies following the GSA General Election**, with the assistance of the **GSA Nominating Committee**, with the aim of electing CALs from **as broad a range of disciplines as possible**.

- **Guiding principles and rules of conduct for elections** have been drafted, and include **language outlining that candidates should take into account the GSA's multiple roles under the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*** when drafting any election platforms.
- Current **Directly-Elected Officers not running for office can endorse candidate(s) or slate(s)** and cannot use the **GSA office or resources (eg GSA email addresses)** for endorsement purposes.
- The composition of **ERC has been reviewed and modified**. While all graduate students are eligible to serve on **ERC, conflict of interest language has been developed to emphasize that ERC members cannot campaign for or endorse any candidates in an election**. If an ERC member intends to run for office, **they must resign from ERC**.
- The former CRO identified that the current **Referenda bylaws and policies are extremely unclear**. The proposal is to move the **GSA Board Policy Manual** detailing the initiation of a referendum into **GSA Policy** as the Board Policy Manual currently contains **recently drafted (December 2012) and clear steps**.
- A separate **Referenda** policy has been drafted, which closely parallels the proposed **Elections** policy. Previously **Elections and Referenda** Policy only made a few references to Referenda. The new referenda policy will provide a **clear set of requirements for a referendum, registration of a Yes or No Campaign, campaigning, etc.**
- Currently a referendum can be held **at any time of the year**. Now, **Referenda will normally be held once a year, concurrently with the General Election**. The **GSA Board can still decide to hold a referendum if they deem it urgent to do so**.
- An **incorrect reference to student petitions** from the *Post-Secondary Learning Act* has been removed from the **Referenda Bylaw**.
- Proposed Bylaws for both Elections and Referenda were **condensed** so that they only contain the **framework** for guiding Elections and Referenda. **The Elections and Referenda policies focus on details requirements and steps**.
- The Elections and Referenda policies have been drafted **so that they tell a complete chronological 'narrative'**, starting with initiation (in the case of a Referendum) or nomination forms (in the case of Elections), and ending with results and reporting for a Referendum, and ending with possible By-Elections following the General Election.
- **The names of candidates shall now be provisionally listed on the GSA website once the CRO or DRO receives and verifies candidates' nomination forms**.

**Elections Bylaw Review: Triple Column**

Current Bylaw / Policy ( <i>deletions noted by a strikethrough</i> ) -	Proposed Changes ( <i>additions underlined</i> )	Rationale/Background
<b><u>GSA Bylaws, Part VIII Elections</u></b>		
<b>1 Election Period</b>	<del><b>1 Election Period</b></del> <b><u>Guiding Principle</u></b>	Added the guiding principle for Elections to Bylaws as it provides the overarching framework for elections. Moved the Election Period to point two.
1.1 The timeline for elections shall be set out in GSA Policy.	<del>1.1 The timeline for elections shall be set out in GSA Policy.</del> <u>1.1 The fundamental principle underlying GSA elections is that they are to be fair, respect the wishes of voters, and conducted in a manner that reflects the excellent, positive reputation of the GSA.</u>	
	<b><u>2 Election Period</u></b>	
	<u>2.1 Elections shall consist of a nomination period, a campaign period, and a voting period.</u>	
	<u>2.2 The timeline for elections shall be set out in GSA Policy.</u>	
<b>2 Nominations</b>	<del><b>2-3 Nominations</b></del>	
2.1 Nominations for Directly-Elected Officer or Councillor-at-Large positions shall be submitted in writing to the GSA office to be signed by the CRO or an election officer, with the original being held by the CRO, one (1) copy by the nominee, and one (1) copy by the GSA office.	<del>3.2.1 Nominations for Directly-Elected Officer or Councillor-at-Large positions shall be submitted in writing to the GSA office to be signed by the CRO or an election officer, with the original being held by the CRO, one (1) copy by the nominee, and one (1) copy by the GSA office.</del> <u>The requirements for the nomination forms shall be set out in GSA Policy.</u>	Outlining the framework for Nominations, and have moved any details re: what needs to be in the nomination forms to GSA Policy.
2.2 The Electoral officers will have the discretion to determine the form and layout of the nomination forms but the forms shall include a space for the candidate to:	<del>3.2 The Electoral officers will have the discretion to determine the form and layout of the nomination forms but the forms shall include a space for the candidate to:</del> <u>Candidates for Directly-Elected Officer positions shall</u>	In the 2012 and 2013 General Elections, candidates campaigned in slates. However, it is not mechanically possible with the design of the election software to <b>elect</b> slates, since voting is dependent on individual CCIDs.

	<u>declare whether they are running as a member of a slate or as an individual. Platforms and slates are not a requirement for running in a GSA General Election. While candidates are able to campaign as a slate, candidates cannot be elected as a slate. Each position shall be elected on a per ballot basis.</u>	Previous CROs have noted that there is little structure around slates, so it is ideal to define them more clearly in bylaw/policy.
2.2.1 declare whether they are running as a member of a slate or as an independent; and	<del>2.2.1 declare whether they are running as a member of a slate or as an independent; and</del>	Incorporated into the new 3.2
2.2.3 indicate the name and telephone number of the individual who will act as the official agent of the candidate.	<del>2.2.3 indicate the name and telephone number of the individual who will act as the official agent of the candidate.</del>	In practice, candidates have never used an official agent.
	<u>3.3 Candidates are not allowed to run for multiple positions.</u>	Previously candidates had asked if they could run for two positions (CAL and a Directly-Elected Officer Position). Making explicit that candidates cannot run for multiple positions (would give them two votes at Council if elected as a CAL and Directly-Elected Officer simultaneously).
<b>3 Voting</b>	<del><b>3 4 Voting</b></del>	
3.1 All voting shall be done electronically as set out in the Policy Manual.	<u>4.1 All voting in the General Election and By-Elections shall be done electronically as set out in the Policy Manual, except in the event of a failure of the electronic system in use.</u>	
<b>4 Conflict of Interest</b>	<del><b>5 4 Conflict of Interest</b></del>	
4.1 If any member of the GSA office environment is also a candidate standing for election, he/she is strictly forbidden from using the GSA office for campaign purposes except as permitted for any candidate under the GSA Bylaws.	<u>5.1 If any member of the GSA office environment is also a candidate standing for election, he/she shall not use the GSA office for campaign purposes is strictly forbidden from using the GSA office for campaign purposes except as permitted for any candidate under the GSA Bylaws. This includes any current Directly-Elected Officer(s) running in a General Election or By-Election.</u>	Candidates use of the GSA office for campaign purposes is not outlined anywhere in the GSA Bylaws.  Needed firmer guidelines regarding Directly-Elected Officers with regards to endorsement. Never in bylaw/policy but is an issue that came up the last few years.
	5.1.a Current Directly-Elected Officer(s) running in a	

	General Election or By-Election shall not campaign during any GSA or university committee meetings.	
4.2 Election officers cannot campaign whatsoever.	<del>5.2 If a current Directly-Elected Officer not standing for election chooses to endorse a candidate(s) or slate, he/she shall not use the GSA office, resources (eg GSA email accounts), and shall not speak for the GSA as an organization. Election officers cannot campaign whatsoever.</del>	Previously current Directly-Elected Officers have endorsed candidates; proposing some regulations for this.
	<del>5.3 The CRO, DRO, Speaker, and members of ERC shall not campaign for or endorse any candidate whatsoever.</del>	Moved from 4.2 and extended to include ERC members.
<b>5 By-Elections</b>	<b><del>5 6 By-Elections</del></b>	
5.1 In the event that a Directly-Elected Officer or Councillor-at-Large position is not filled by the end of the General Election, or if a position is vacated at any time prior to December 1st, a by-election shall take place as soon as possible.	<del>6.1 The procedures governing a By-Election shall be the same as those governing regular elections, except the dates of nominations, campaigning, and polling periods shall be determined by the CRO. In the event that a Directly-Elected Officer or Councillor at Large position is not filled by the end of the General Election, or if a position is vacated at any time prior to December 1<sup>st</sup>, a by-election shall take place as soon as possible.</del>	New 5.1 sed to be 5.3; Verbatim, moved to first point for clarity. 5.1 becomes 5.2.
5.2 In the event that an Directly-Elected Officer or Councillor-at-Large position is vacated between December 1st and the end of the General Election, Council shall strike an <i>ad hoc</i> committee designed to nominate an individual to the position on an interim basis to Council for ratification comprised of the Speaker (as chair), the President and Vice-Presidents, and the three Councillors appointed by Council to the GSA Board, with the ex-officio support of the Executive Director and GSA management.	<del>6.2 In the event that an Directly-Elected Officer or Councillor at Large position is vacated between December 1st and the end of the General Election, Council shall strike an <i>ad hoc</i> committee designed to nominate an individual to the position on an interim basis to Council for ratification comprised of the Speaker (as chair), the President and Vice-Presidents, and the three Councillors appointed by Council to the GSA Board, with the ex-officio support of the Executive Director and GSA management.</del>	Previously in By-Elections for CAL positions there had been a very low voter turnout. Better use of time and resources to have GSA Council, with the assistance of the NoC, fill any vacant CAL positions following the General Election.



	<p>In the event that a <b><u>Directly-Elected Officer position or Councillor-at-Large position</u></b> is not filled by the end of the General Election (ie no candidates run for a position or None of the Above is elected), or a <b><u>Directly-Elected Officer position or Councillor-at-Large position</u></b> is vacated any time prior to December 1 (or the next working day), the CRO and Council will follow the GSA Policy on By-Elections (GSA Policy, Elections, Section 13).</p>	
<p>5.3 The procedures governing a by-election shall be the same as those governing regular elections, except the dates of nominations, campaigning, and polling periods shall be determined by the CRO.</p>	<p><del>5.3 The procedures governing a by election shall be the same as those governing regular elections, except the dates of nominations, campaigning, and polling periods shall be determined by the CRO.</del></p>	<p>Moved up to 6.1.</p>

**ELECTIONS BYLAW WITH THE PROPOSED CHANGES IF  
APPROVED**

**RE-WRITE 2013 DRAFT 20**

**GSA Bylaws**

Elections Bylaw (Part VIII) Re-Write.

**1 Guiding Principle**

- 1.1 The fundamental principle underlying GSA elections is that they are to be fair, respect the wishes of voters, and conducted in a manner that reflects the excellent, positive reputation of the GSA.

**2 Election Period**

- 2.1 Elections shall consist of a nomination period, a campaign period, and a voting period.
- 2.2 The timeline for elections shall be set out in GSA Policy.

**3 Nominations**

- 3.1 The requirements for the nomination forms shall be set out in GSA Policy.
- 3.2 Candidates for Directly-Elected Officer positions shall declare whether they are running as a member of a slate or as an individual. Platforms and slates are not a requirement for running in a GSA General Election. While candidates are able to campaign as a slate, candidates cannot be elected as a slate. Each position shall be elected on a per ballot basis.
- 3.3 Candidates are not allowed to run for multiple positions.

**4 Voting**

- 4.1 All voting in the General Election and By-Elections shall be done electronically, except in the event of a failure of the electronic system in use.

**5 Conflict of Interest**

- 5.1 If any member of the GSA office environment is also a candidate standing for election, he/she shall not use the GSA office for campaign purposes. This includes any current Directly-Elected Officer(s) running in a General Election or By-Election.
  - 5.1.a Current Directly-Elected Officer(s) running in a General Election or By-Election shall not campaign during any GSA or University committee meetings.

- 5.2 If a current Directly-Elected Officer not standing for election chooses to endorse a candidate(s) or slate, he/she shall not use the GSA office, resources (eg GSA email accounts), and shall not speak for the GSA as an organization.
- 5.3 The CRO, DRO, Speaker, and members of ERC shall not campaign for or endorse any candidate whatsoever.

## 6 By-Elections

- 6.1 The procedures governing a By-Election shall be the same as those governing regular elections, except the dates of nominations, campaigning, and voting periods shall be determined by the CRO.
- 6.2 In the event that a **Directly-Elected Officer position or Councillor-at-Large position** is not filled by the end of the General Election (ie no candidates run for a position or None of the Above is elected), or a **Directly-Elected Officer position or Councillor-at-Large position** is vacated any time prior to December 1 (or the next working day), the CRO and Council will follow the GSA Policy on By-Elections (GSA Policy, Elections, Section 13).

**Referenda Bylaw Review: Triple Column**

Current Bylaw / Policy ( <i>deletions noted by a strikethrough</i> ) -	Proposed Changes ( <i>additions underlined</i> )	Rationale/Background
<b><u>GSA Bylaws, Part IX Referenda</u></b>		
	<b><u>1 General Principle</u></b>	
	<u>1.1 The fundamental principle underlying GSA referenda is that they are to be fair, respect the wishes of voters, and conducted in a manner that reflects the excellent, positive reputation of the GSA.</u>	This statement will provide a guiding framework for GSA referenda.
<b>1. Initiation</b>	<b><u>1-2. Initiation</u></b>	
1.1 A referendum on a clearly worded “Yes” or “No” question related to the affairs of the GSA may be initiated by a simple majority vote at any meeting of Council.	2.1 A referendum on a clearly worded “Yes” or “No” question <del>related to the affairs of the GSA may regarding</del> <u>any dedicated, on-going fee for a service, facility (eg PAW Centre), or lobbying effort can be initiated by a simple majority vote at any meeting of Council. Normally a referendum will be held in conjunction with the GSA General Election, unless a question is determined to be of an urgent nature by the GSA Board.</u>	At the recommendation of the 2012-2013 CRO, it is ideal to hold referendum in conjunction with the General Election if possible, though GSAB will have the ability to make exceptions to this.
1.2 In accordance with Section 98(1) of the <i>Post-Secondary Learning Act</i> , if the Speaker receives a petition signed by at least three percent of members of the GSA, a motion to initiate a referendum as in 1.1 shall be considered at the next regular meeting of Council at least eleven calendar days following receipt of the petition.	<del>2.2 In accordance with Section 98(1) of the <i>Post-Secondary Learning Act</i>, if the Speaker receives a petition signed by at least three percent of members of the GSA, a motion to initiate a referendum as in 1.1 shall be considered at the next regular meeting of Council at least eleven calendar days following receipt of the petition.</del> <u>Clearly worded referenda questions shall be developed in consultation with the CRO, GSA Board, and GSA Council. GSA Council shall approve the holding of a referendum and the wording of a referendum question.</u>	The GSA Executive Director identified that this is an <b>incorrect</b> reference to, and interpretation of Section 98(1) of the <i>Post-Secondary Learning Act</i> .  Also incorporated into GSA Bylaw, the previous Board Policy Manual detailing the Initiation of a Referendum by an External Organization. This Board Policy Manual outlines very clear steps, and was recently drafted (December 2012), so it has been incorporated into the re-write of the Referenda Bylaw.

	<u>2.3 The required steps for a person acting on behalf of an external organization or a graduate student wanting to initiate a referendum shall be outlined in GSA Policy.</u>	
<b>2. Referendum Period</b>	<b>3. Referendum Timeline Period</b>	
2.1 The procedures governing a referendum shall be the same as those governing all elections, with the following exceptions, and noting that the nomination period for referenda is the registration period and that all things applying to the nomination period apply to the registration period:	<del>3.1 The procedures governing a referendum shall be the same as those governing all elections, with the following exceptions, and noting that the nomination period for referenda is the registration period and that all things applying to the nomination period apply to the registration period:</del> <u>Referenda will occur in conjunction with the GSA General Election, unless a question is determined to be of an urgent nature by the GSA Board as denoted in 2.1. In all cases the referenda question shall be submitted to GSA Council for approval no later than the first mailing for the November Council meeting, unless a referendum is determined to be urgent by the GSA Board.</u>	Need to provide a few months for Council to approve a Referendum question, in advance of the GSA General Election. This doesn't mean that a referendum question cannot be submitted to an earlier Council meeting.
2.1.2 Referenda may be set at any time as so directed by Council; and	<del>3.2 Referenda may be set at any time as so directed by Council; and</del> <u>A referendum shall consist of a registration period, a campaigning period, and a voting period.</u>	Reflects move to normally holding a Referendum with the General Election
2.1.3 Referendum polling shall be set by a majority vote of Council.	<del>2.1.3 Referendum polling shall be set by a majority vote of Council.</del> <u>The timeline for a referendum shall be set out in GSA Policy.</u>	
2.2 The CRO must provide:	<del>2.2 The CRO must provide:</del>	Moved to the new GSA Referenda Policy
2.2.2 due notice of the requirements for registration of a referendum question; and	<del>2.2.2 due notice of the requirements for registration of a referendum question; and</del>	Moved to the new GSA Referenda Policy
2.2.3 a 500 word brief electronically to every member	<del>2.2.3 a 500 word brief electronically to every member</del>	

two (2) days prior to advance polling.	<del>two (2) days prior to advance polling.</del> <b>4 Voting</b>	
	<u>4.1 All referenda voting shall be done electronically, except in the event of a failure of the electronic system in use.</u>	
	<b>5 Registration of a Yes or No Campaign</b>	
	<u>5.1 Only currently registered graduate students can register a 'Yes' or 'No' Campaign during a referendum.</u>	Previously not made explicit in GSA Bylaw or Policy who would be eligible to register a referendum campaign.

REFERENDA BYLAW AND POLICY WITH THE PROPOSED  
CHANGES IF APPROVED  
RE-WRITE 2013 DRAFT 20

**Referenda Bylaw and Policy Reform**

**Purpose:** To outline policies and procedures related to GSA referenda.

**Background and Preamble:**

The intent of re-evaluating GSA Referenda Bylaw and Policy is to ensure that referenda are being held in a consistent manner and that those referenda which come to a vote reflect the capabilities and needs of the GSA as an organization. Additionally, this reform will allow the CRO to monitor and regulate the activities of referendum campaigns fairly and consistently. Within the last twenty (20) years, twelve (12) out of thirteen (13) referenda held by the GSA involved a fee for a service or facility (eg PAW, U-Pass). As such, it seems in keeping with the needs of students to amend Referenda policy to reflect the nature of the referenda that are brought up by students or external organizations.

**Definitions:**

**Graduate Student:** As defined by the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*, “graduate student” means a person enrolled in a program of graduate studies at a university.

**Graduate Students’ Association:** As defined by the *Post-Secondary Learning Act*, “graduate students association” means a graduate students association of a university established under section 94 or continued under Part 5.

## **GSA BYLAWS: Part XI Referenda**

### **1 General Principle**

- 1.1 The fundamental principle underlying GSA referenda is that they are to be fair, respect the wishes of voters, and conducted in a manner that reflects the excellent, positive reputation of the GSA.

### **2 Initiation<sup>1</sup>**

- 2.1 A referendum on a clearly worded “Yes” or “No” question regarding any dedicated, on-going fee for a service, facility, or lobbying effort can be initiated by a simple majority vote at any meeting of Council. Normally a referendum will be held in conjunction with the GSA General Election, unless a question is determined to be of an urgent nature by the GSA Board.
- 2.2 Clearly worded referenda questions shall be developed in consultation with the CRO, GSA Board, and GSA Council. GSA Council shall approve the holding of a referendum and the wording of a referendum question.
- 2.3 The required steps for a person acting on behalf of an external organization or a graduate student wanting to initiate a referendum shall be outlined in GSA Policy.

### **3 Referendum Timeline<sup>2</sup>**

- 3.1 Referenda will occur in conjunction with the GSA General Election, unless a question is determined to be of an urgent nature by the GSA Board as denoted in 2.1. In all cases the referenda question shall be submitted to GSA Council for approval no later than the first mailing for the November Council meeting, unless a referendum is determined to be urgent by the GSA Board.
- 3.2 A referendum shall consist of a registration period, a campaigning period, and a voting period.
- 3.3 The timeline for a referendum shall be set out in GSA Policy.

### **4 Voting**

- 4.1 All referenda voting shall be done electronically, except in the event of a failure of the electronic system in use.

### **5 Registration of a Yes or No Campaign**

- 5.1 Only currently registered graduate students can register a ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ Campaign during a referendum.

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<sup>1</sup> Passed by the Annual General Meeting on March 28, 2011 (R20110328.1).

<sup>2</sup> Passed by GSA Council on March 10 and April 14, 2008 (R20080310.1 and R20080414.2).



**GSA President  
Report to Council**

To: GSA Council  
From: Brent Epperson, President  
Date: November 15, 2013

Dear Council Colleagues,

I will report orally on my recent attendance at the Conference Board of Canada Summit on Skills and Post-Secondary Education, the Canadian Association of Graduate Studies Annual Conference, and the Royal Society of Canada Annual General Meeting-Symposium.

As well, please find attached a press release statement regarding the proposed tuition and fee increases that was released on November 14, 2013. I will speak more to these proposed increases on Monday.

Best Regards,

Brent Epperson, GSA President

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between October 19, 2013 and November 15, 2013:*

October 21	Meeting with Vice-Dean, Faculty of Arts
October 21	Meeting with Minister and Student Leaders
October 21	GSA Council
October 22	Meeting with Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education
October 22	Meeting with Marilyn Steers
October 23	Meeting with Vice-Provost and Dean of Students
October 23	GSA Board
October 23	Meeting with Dean of FGSR
October 28	Meeting with Dean of Physical Education and Recreation
October 28	Meeting with Dean of FGSR
October 29	Meeting with MLA
October 30	GSA Board
October 30	LRC/NC Meeting
October 31	Meeting with Associate Registrar
October 31	PIA Task Force Meeting
November 3	CAGS Conference
November 4	CAGS Conference
November 5	CAGS Conference
November 6	CAGS Conference
November 6	Conference Board of Canada
November 7	Conference Board of Canada
November 8	Conference Board of Canada
November 12	M-BAC/T-BAC
November 13	GSA Board
November 13	GFC APC

November 14	Royal Society of Canada Symposium
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GSA statement on proposed tuition and fee increases:

**The University of Alberta Graduate Students' Association (GSA) opposes across-the-board graduate student tuition increases beyond the Consumer Price Index (CPI), international student tuition differential increases beyond CPI, the introduction of new market modifiers that are not part of a clear regulatory framework to define professional masters programs, and the introduction of new mandatory non-instructional fees (MNIFs) that do not result from a new regulatory framework negotiated between the University of Alberta administration and the GSA.**

The GSA believes in the value of the education received at this institution, and understands that there are costs associated with obtaining an education that are, in part, recovered through tuition fees. For example, **the GSA has and does support tuition increases directly tied to the Consumer Price Index (CPI)**, and supported the 2.15% tuition increase approved by the Board of Governors for the 2013-2014 academic year. Furthermore, the GSA believes that the Government of Alberta's introduction of a post-secondary education tuition freeze without student consultation, while the University faces cuts to its operating budget, is unsustainable.

Despite the fact that postsecondary education costs have increased over 300% since the 1990s, threatening to progressively burden students with insurmountable debt and push university education out-of-reach for hard-working Alberta families, the GSA understands that in the face of this year's devastating provincial budget cuts, as the University of Alberta evaluates potential sources of revenue, university administrators may be tempted raise tuition and fees. However, graduate students should not be punished for the failure of the Government of Alberta to sufficiently fund the province's postsecondary education institutions or the failure of the university administration to collect its fair share of indirect research costs or to secure adequate philanthropic support in preceding decades.

**Instead, the GSA believes that the Government of Alberta and the University of Alberta need to work together to provide predictable and sustainable funding that keeps university education accessible and of the highest quality, without across-the-board tuition increases beyond CPI or the introduction of sweeping market modifiers outside of a sensible framework to define professional programs.** Although everyone in the University community faces uncertainties and difficulties in the current financial situation, this proposal to increase international tuition differential fees across-the-board as a means of recovering finances is an unimaginative solution to complex challenges in the postsecondary education sector. As a policy decision, it is completely divorced from Alberta's context of prosperity and capacity for public and private investment in our postsecondary institutions.

**This decision contradicts the university administration's own stated goal of increasing the ratio of graduate to undergraduate students.** International students already pay higher tuition fees, have access to fewer awards and grants, and are restricted in the types of employment they can hold. Further, international students often live at or below the low-income cut-off. Significantly raising the international student tuition differential beyond CPI will make the University of Alberta unaffordable for more potential international applicants and force more of our current international graduate students—especially those from developing countries—below the poverty line, threatening their academic progress. The overall effect of raising tuition might be that fewer graduate students choose to attend the University of Alberta.

## 12.3

**Despite our frustration with the university administration's proposal, the GSA is not unsympathetic to the financial challenges that the institution faces. As an alternative, the GSA is willing to work with University administration to negotiate new, temporary MNIFs to help offset the costs of government budget cutbacks until public and philanthropic contributions can ensure a sustainable funding model or market modifiers for professional masters programs in a clearly defined regulatory framework negotiated between University of Alberta administration and the GSA. Any new MNIFs in response to the current budgetary challenges should have an agreed upon end-date and should not be a permanent addition to the tuition and fees that University of Alberta graduate students pay.**

**While the GSA believes that graduate students can contribute to stabilizing the current financial situation, long-term solutions should not be carried on the shoulders of graduate students.** Graduate students deserve better from our government and our university administrators.

**GSA Board**  
**REPORT TO COUNCIL for November 18, 2013 Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council

From: Ellen Schoeck, Executive Director and Coordinator of the GSA Board; Heather Hogg, Director of Operations; and Courtney Thomas, Associate Director

Date: November 18, 2013

The Board reports regularly to Council by listing its agenda items, motions/agreements, and main items of discussion. Motions of Agenda approval and approval of the Minutes are not included unless there were amendments made. Closed session items are not minuted. The President, Vice-Presidents, Director of Operations, Director of Services and Governance, Financial Manager, and I will be happy to answer any questions or provide more information at the Council meeting.

**23 October, 2013 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

Student Mental Health at the University of Alberta; Leadership College Initiative; Program Denial, International Students' Association; External Relations Travel Expenses: Actual Expenses Incurred Through Attendance at Alberta Graduate Council – Related meetings in Lethbridge and Calgary.

Motions and Agreements:

None at this time.

**30 October, 2013 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

Professional Degree Programs; Leadership College Initiative; Crowd Sourcing, Athletics fees, Provincial Funding for Graduate Students; Harassment and Bullying Statistics at the University of Alberta; Revenue Generation and International Student Enrollment.

Motions and Agreements:

None at this time.

**November 6, 2013 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

Approval of Special Registration for Graduate Students' on Approved Leave; Graduate Student Payments; Residence Lease Agreement Changes; HUB Security; Mental Health Assessment Survey; University Budget Update; Graduate Supervision

Motions and Agreements:

None at this time.

**November 13, 2013 GSA Board Meeting**

Main Agenda Items:

Senate Task Force; Studentcare Change of Coverage Report (2013) and Annual Claims Report (2012-13); Gender Inclusive Washroom Initiative; External Relations Travel Expenses: Actual Expenses Incurred Through Attendance at a CASA–Related Meeting in Lethbridge and an Alberta Conference Board Meeting in Jasper; North Power Plant; RA/TA Employment and Merit Pay.

Motions and Agreements:

Board Members **AGREED** to support the efforts for a gender-inclusive washroom

Members had questions surrounding the expenses and **AGREED** to defer the item to the November 27, 2013 GSA Board agenda.

**GSA NOMINATING COMMITTEE (NoC)  
REPORT TO COUNCIL for November 18, 2013 Council Meeting**

To: GSA Council  
From: Lacey Fleming, Vice-Chair of the NoC  
Date: November 15, 2013

Dear Council Colleagues,

The report from the GSA Nominating Committee is a summary of discussion/decisions the NoC has made since its last report together with a list of all vacancies filled.

The Bylaw governing the NoC is located in Part V (Standing Committees). Policy governing NoC is found in the GSA Policy Manual, in the sections titled "Nominating" and "Standing Committees." As provided for in its terms of reference, the GSA Nominating Committee (NoC) has been conducting business via e-mail.

## **Early Call for Talent**

GSA Policy states "The NoC will actively seek out potential candidates for all GSA Directly-Elected Officers and Council-Elected Officers positions." The **third year** of the GSA NoC Early Call for Talent is in progress. The advertisement went out through the GSA Newsletter on **November 1, 2013**. While there is no deadline, the initial dinner and training program will begin on or about **the week of November 18, 2013**. **Five** responses have been received to date.

## **Bodies External to the GSA**

As noted above, Council has delegated to the NoC the responsibility of filling positions on all committees external to the GSA. Normally, all vacancies are advertised. According to the Policy Manual, "advertising may be waived in instances where, in the NoC's view, it is urgent to fill a vacancy" (GSA Policy Manual, Nominating, 5.2).

### **1) Campus Wellness Grants Adjudication Committee**

This position was advertised through the GSA newsletter. One bio and resume was received. **Sarah Treit (PhD, Neuroscience)** was elected to serve as the graduate student representative on this committee.

### **2) Information Technology Advisory Committee**

The second graduate student position on ITAC was advertised in the GSA Newsletter. No bios and resumes were received, so the GSA NoC is carrying out a pro-active search for the second graduate ITAC representative.

**3) GFC CLE Working Group on Consistency in Teaching Evaluation**

As this working group is meeting soon, the NoC waived advertising and pro-actively approached a student from the Bank of Names. **Nathan Andrews (PhD, Political Science, CAL)** was elected to serve as the GSA's representative on this working group.



**GSA VP Academic  
Report to Council**

To: GSA Council  
From: Colin More  
Date: November 15, 2013

Hello everyone!

Well, winter has finally arrived in fits and bursts. As a professional physicist, I've already confirmed experimentally that ice is still low-friction material. Be careful out there!

There are several interesting items currently proceeding through the governance system. The first of these is the **Peter Lougheed Leadership Initiative**. This was presented by Peter Meekison to the General Faculties Council (GFC) in September, and an oral update will be given to them by the University President next Monday. A much more comprehensive discussion of the Initiative, supported by documents, is planned for the February GFC meeting. The Initiative is primarily undergraduate-focused and funded through private donations, but it's still worth keeping an eye on as graduate students in terms of programming and fiscal responsibility by the University.

Second, in more directly-concerning news, you may have heard that **administration is proposing a 5% increase to total tuition for international students**. The proposal is being justified as keeping up with the rising internal costs of running the institution; whether or not that's reasonable is open to interpretation (see the President's Report for more on this). However, the proposal has not been yet been approved (that will be for the Board of Governors in December), so your feedback one way or the other on the issue is welcome!

Third, **work on a professional development program for graduate students continues**. Renee Polziehn at FGSR is organizing an advisory committee composed of students, several other University stakeholders, and a large contingent of leaders from businesses, charities, nonprofits, government, and so on. When this group meets at the end of this month, we hope to learn what organizations outside of academia perceive as the value of a graduate education, and which skills students should develop further. It should be fun!

Finally, some good news. **It was announced a little over a week ago that the provincial government is pouring \$14.4 million in base funding back into the institution**. While this unexpected cash infusion is certainly welcome, plans on how to use it are somewhat underdeveloped. Discussions will continue over the next few weeks, but hopefully some of it will be coming our way in the form of an increase (or, at least, smaller decrease) to graduate student support.

That's all for now. Have a great month, and enjoy the holidays if I don't see you before then!

Colin More, VP Academic

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between October 21, 2013 and November 15, 2013:*

October 21	Meeting with SU VP Academic
October 21	GFC/FGSR
October 21	GSA Council
October 23	GFC Caucus
October 23	Meeting with Provost's Fellow
October 23	GSA Board
October 23	Meeting with Dean of FGSR
October 25	SACIE
October 28	Meeting with Dean of FGSR
October 28	GFC
October 29	PRC
October 29	Meeting with MLA
October 30	GSA Board
October 30	LRC/NC Meeting
October 31	PIA Task Force Meeting
November 4	GFC Exec
November 5	CLT Advisory Committee Meeting
November 6	GSA Board
November 12	M-BAC/T-BAC
November 13	GSA Board Meeting
November 14	APPR Task Force Meeting
November 15	Meeting with SU VP Academic
November 15	Meeting with Student

**Vice-President Student Services  
Report to Council**

To: GSA Council  
From: Megha Bajaj  
Date: November 15, 2013

Dear Council Colleagues,

Hope you are well. Last month has been really busy for me academically and I am looking forward for the semester ending so I can take a break from work.

I attended a number of meetings since the last Council and below are the highlights from some of the meetings:

**University Research Policy Committee:**

The AB government is forming an **institute for applied research and commercialization** in the province that will help boost the province's economy. Currently **a panel consisting of experts in innovation and research systems has been struck** to support development of this institute. This is something to look out for as the discussions on the development of this institute move forward.

**Joint GSA-SU meeting with AVP, F&O for North Power Plant (NPP):**

The SU and GSA met with AVP F&O this month to discuss the visioning document that was prepared by us earlier this summer. The **central driver in redevelopment of NPP** is the need to **bring students, faculty and alumni together socially**. Another key vision of both student associations is to **make the NPP a hub for community involvement and a venue to host small events and workshops with a focus on student engagement, innovation, and entrepreneurship**. Next year will be very important, as discussions will be focused on the details of the building design and how it fits with the vision of the student associations. I will keep you updated as this takes shape further.

This month I also worked together with the student representatives on the Athletic and Recreation Fee Advisory Committee and formed a set of questions involving the proposed fee increase. Among other questions, we have asked the Dean and the Director of Athletics and Recreation to **provide us with detailed budget for the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation and how student fees are used for various services**. We will be having our next ARFAC meeting in a couple of weeks where these questions will be discussed. In any case, you will have a chance to directly ask questions to the Dean and Director of Athletics and Recreation in Council on Monday.

Also, a follow up on the **'special registration for graduate students on approved leave'** from my September Council report. This special registration for graduate students **has now been approved by the Registrar's Office and will go through the GFC governance route for final approval**. We are hoping that this will be in place starting in the Winter 2014 term.

Sincerely,

Megha Bajaj, VP Student Services

**14.1**

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between October 21, 2013 and November 15, 2013:*

October 21	Meeting with OSDHR Advisor
October 21	GSA Council
October 21	Meeting with OSDHR Advisor
October 23	Meeting with Provost's Fellow
October 23	GPAC
October 23	GSA Board
October 25	URPC
October 29	Meeting with ARFAC Representative
October 29	Meeting with MLA
October 30	Student Groups Meeting
October 30	GSA Board
October 30	LRC/NC Meeting
October 31	HCAG
October 31	Onecard Meeting
November 5	North Campus LRDP Focus Group Meeting
November 6	GSA Board
November 7	Meeting with SU GM and VP Operations and Finance
November 12	Meeting with SU GM and VP Operations and Finance
November 13	GSA Board Meeting
November 13	Facilitated Coaching and Learning Session
November 15	Meeting with staff of the Office of the Dean of Students

**GSA Vice President Student Life  
Report to Council**

To: GSA Council  
From: Hasin Haroon  
Date: November 15, 2013

Dear Council Colleagues,

I hope you are all doing well and keeping warm now that winter is here. I will not be able to attend the Council meeting as I will be in Ottawa, attending the CASA conference as the U of A GSA representative. Here are a few highlights of what I have been working on over the past month –

- Flexible leases for graduating graduate students in residences. Problems with leases in residences is a recurring issue that the GSA has been facing, as graduate students in their final year often are unaware of exactly when they will be graduating. I have spoken to residence services and central administration, and have their assurances that this is something we can achieve very soon. I am currently in the process of setting up a meeting with them in the next couple of weeks to begin the process of formalising a policy around this, and will keep you informed as it proceeds.
- Collective agreement negotiations. Monty Bal, our VP Labour leads the LRC. We have been working on our asks for the next CA and have finalised and submitted them to central.
- Athletics and Recreation Fee Advisory Committee – I mentioned the issue of a proposed increase to the athletics and recreation fee in our last council meeting. The GSA and SU, along with grad student reps on the committee have submitted a detailed list of questions covering all aspects of the proposal, and we expect to be able to bring you answers by the next council meeting.
- Prayer Space – I continue to work with Ben Louie, the university architect, to obtain a feasible solution to the issue of a shortage of accessible prayer space on campus.

If you have any questions regarding any of these initiatives, feel free to drop me an email.

Sincerely,  
Hasin Haroon, GSA VP Student Life

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between October 21, 2013 and November 15, 2013:*

October 21	GSA Council
October 22	Interfaith Chaplains Meeting
October 23	GSA Board
October 23	Meeting with Dean of FGSR
October 24	COSA
October 25	SACIE
October 25	LRC

October 29	Meeting with MLA
October 30	GSA Board
October 31	LRC/NC Meeting
November 5	RAC
November 6	GSA Board Meeting
November 13	GSA Board Meeting

## GSA VP Labour Report to Council

To: GSA Council  
From: Monty Bal  
Date: November 15, 2013

Dear Council Colleagues,

I attended a number of meetings since last GSA Council. Below are highlights from some of these meetings in chronological order.

### **Western Ombuds Conference**

Courtney Thomas and I attended the Western Ombuds Conference held at the UofA by the Association of Canadian College and University Ombudspersons. This conference brought together ombuds representatives from across western Canada, though only the UofA and SFU were there representing grad programs. **There were a number of interesting panels, including those on mental health issues, campus bullying, and student appeals.** We were able to present on the graduate issues panel, where we discussed **current GSA initiatives including an effort to develop an academic bullying policy.** We also were able to reflect on the **unique problems which are faced by international graduate students and how it may be possible to better cater to their needs with support services at the university.**

### **EAS/HR payment issues meeting**

Heather Hogg and I met with students and representatives from HR to discuss many of the continued problematic issues regarding pay processing within the department. **We were able to recognize that there is a definite problem in the communication channels** which often multiply problems for students as they are unable to get consistent answers. HR will look into the payment patterns in departments to determine why there has been such inconsistency in the level of pay for students over the years. **The GSA will continue to work with HR to develop better pay reporting system allowing students to better understand the nature of pay.**

### **CA Compliance**

Heather Hogg and I will continue to work with representatives from the Provost's Office this year to ensure that changes in the current CA are being implemented. **In light of these efforts, we have been notified that there are certain departments where non-compliance to the new CA has become an issue.** HH and I will work in the near future to meet with students from these departments to better understand the current situation. **We will work with our partners in the Provost's Office to stamp out these problems.** Further, as a part of these ongoing efforts, the Provost's Office is **developing an information sheet to be provided to both students and departments, providing clear and concise notice of important changes.** We will continue to work with them to ensure all departments remain compliant with the new CA.

### **LRC/NC**

To be discussed in closed session.

As I have highlighted repeatedly over the GSA Council's over the past months, with the collective bargaining process being in play over the next year, **it is absolutely essential that we at the GSA be made aware of any concerns, problems, or ambiguities in the current CA.** With your help, we hope that

we can find and resolve any hiccups which may have appeared as unintended consequences from the previous agreement. Once again, if you have any concerns regarding your TA/RA contracts, please contact Heather or I and we will work to resolve these concerns.

Thanks,

Simarjit S. Bal (Monty), VP Labour

*Please find below a list of meetings I attended between October 19, 2013 and November 15, 2013:*

October 21	SAW
October 21	GSA Council
October 23	GSA Board
October 24	GFC Campus Law Review Committee
October 24	GFC FDC
October 25	OSDHR
October 25	LRC
October 28	ACCUO
October 29	ACCUO
October 29	Meeting with Student
October 29	Meeting with MLA
October 30	GSA Board
October 30	LRC/NC Meeting
October 31	Graduate Student Payments Meeting
November 6	GSA Board Meeting
November 7	Meeting with Associate Chair of Graduate Studies
November 7	Polymer Bill Release
November 12	Presentation to Chinese University Leaders
November 13	GSA Board Meeting
November 15	Student Groups Policy Meeting



**GSA Negotiating Committee  
Report to Council**

To: GSA Council  
From: Monty Bal  
Date: November 15, 2013

Dear Council Colleagues,

The GSA NC met jointly with the GSA LRC on **30 October 2013** to discuss the **collective bargaining 2013-2014 process for the 2014-2015 AEGSA Collective Agreement**. Subsequent to this meeting, **the GSA submitted its Opening Position to the University's bargaining team** to begin the collective bargaining process.

I will report further orally.

Respectfully,  
Monty Bal, GSA VP Labour and GSA NC Chair

**GSA Labour Relations Committee  
Report to Council**

To: GSA Council  
From: Monty Bal  
Date: November 15, 2013

Dear Council Colleagues,

The GSA LRC met on **25 October 2013** to discuss the **collective bargaining 2013-2014 process for the 2014-2015 AEGSA Collective Agreement and to provide advice to the GSA Negotiating Committee** concerning negotiations with the University. The GSA LRC **then met jointly with the GSA Negotiating Committee on 30 October 2013** to further discuss the collective bargaining process.

I will report further orally.

Respectfully,  
Monty Bal, GSA VP Labour and GSA LRC Chair

**GSA Executive Director  
Report to Council**

To: GSA Council  
From: Ellen Schoeck, GSA Executive Director  
Date: November 15, 2013

Dear Council Colleagues,

For my report this month, I wanted to provide you with a bird's-eye-view of the strategic issues that were researched/supported by GSA management and staff at the GSA Office during the week of November 12-15, 2013. You will hear about many of these issues from the Directly-Elected Officers in their written and oral reports. However, I wanted to let you know about the support that the Officers receive from GSA management and staff on these issues in the course of their duties.

This list of issues and items will be turned into a training document to be used in our Early Call for Talent and Training. Potential GSA Directly-Elected Officer candidates will be trained on each item in the list to provide examples of the issues they would work on as Directly-Elected Officers. To date, we have had five people respond to the Early Call for Talent and Training.

**Strategic Items for Week of November 12-15, 2013**

**University Budget:** ongoing research around the 2013-2014 budget; effects of budget cuts and VSP on graduate students; how the reinvested \$14.4M will be used; research into indirect costs of research

**Tuition:** ongoing research on tuition; input on proposed tuition increase position paper; research on the proposed professional masters programs

**Early Call for Talent and Training & Elections:** along with Nominating Committee Vice-Chair Lacey Fleming, meeting with graduate students interested in running for GSA Directly-Elected Officer positions, introducing interested students to the GSA and providing some background training, planning the General-Election timeline

**Background research on student services initiatives including:** dedicated prayer space, possibly hiring an immigration lawyer at UAI, researching a graduate student stream for the Provincial Nominee Program

**Graduate Student Support:** assisting with several individual graduate student problems, including labour, student pay, and tuition assessment issues

**Physical Activity and Wellness Centre:** worked to finalize the outfitting of student lounges in PAW; continuing to work with the SU on determining the PAW fees and length of fee term

**Athletics and Recreation Fee Research:** research on similar fees at other institutions to better understand the University of Alberta's proposed increase

**Student Groups:** meeting with Students' Union and Dean of Students on changes to the Code of Student Behaviour; working on developing a Graduate Student Group Constitution, an initiative that came out of the Departmental Liaison Initiative

**Academic Bullying:** white paper drafted and forwarded to Ombudservice, Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights, Dean of Students, FGSR for feedback

**Winter & Departmental Orientations:** planning January orientations as first point of contact with GSA for new graduate students

**Ensuring that graduate students are and continue to be represented on University committees**

**including:** Digital Learning Committee, Loughheed Steering Committee

**Academic Governance Committee:** research and support for graduate student serving on President's Task Force on Academic Governance

**North Power Plant:** meeting with Students' Union to determine plans for future use of space

**Referenda Research:** research and planning for possible upcoming APIRG and Athletics and Recreation Fee referenda

**Council Support, including:** establishing next year's Council dates, working towards all departments having Councillors, ensuring Councillors have access to a departmental email list of fellow graduate students

**GSA Archives:** sorting, archiving and destroying materials from the Cave