



Undergraduate Student Government of the Kent Campus

Sponsor: Director Waligura

Co-sponsors: Senator Daniel, Director Kierstead, Senator Braunlich, Vice-Chairman Farhat, Senator Milam, Senator Desai, Director Wartman, Assistant Henneman, Chief of Staff Wolford

GA/B/F2020/05

Wednesday, February 4, 2020

A Bill to Initiate Mental Health Initiatives and to make further provisions for the USG Committee on Health which includes a formal position for mental health on behalf of Kent State students

Whereas, On the Kent Campus, poor mental health has become a significant concern for not only students, but faculty and staff as well,

Whereas, students, faculty, and staff are highly interested but are often uninformed on routes necessary to receive mental health resources,

Whereas, resources are available on campus but students, staff, and faculty alike have challenges associated with both availability and financial burden,

Whereas, according to the American Psychiatric Association, “Racial/ethnic, gender, and sexual minorities often suffer from poor mental health outcomes due to multiple factors including inaccessibility of high-quality mental health care services, cultural stigma surrounding mental health care, discrimination, and overall lack of awareness about mental health.”,

Whereas, succinct mental health resource coordination would benefit four main areas of concern on our campus:

1. Mental health awareness
2. Access to resources
3. Access and attention to the specific needs of minority populations on campus with a special attention to intersectionality
4. Reducing stigma associated with depression, anxiety, suicide and other mental health related issues,

Whereas, the Undergraduate Student Government has established a Committee on Health to oversee these concerns for students, faculty, and staff and develop solutions to improve the overall quality of mental health resources,

Whereas, the University has established a Mental Health Coalition made up of mental health student organizations, members of USG, and Kent State of Wellness,

Whereas, the Division of Student Affairs led by the Interim Vice President has established a university wide committee, KSU Mental Health Vision Committee, to develop a strategic plan for mental health support at Kent State,

Whereas, the members of the USG Committee on Health will act as advocates and relay the testimonials and personal feedback of students to all stakeholders involved in the process of developing Kent State's mental health resources,

Therefore, BE IT ENACTED by the Undergraduate Student Senate of the Kent Campus of Kent State University, acting in full session, as follows:

Section 1: The USG Committee on Health shall promote health literacy on the Kent Campus, implement and promote the Mental Health Week, and establish further events in addition to the Mental Health Week.

Section 1A: USG and the Committee on Health will coordinate a Mental Health Week in the spring semester of 2020 to promote mental health resources and allow departments to put forth a concerted effort to raise awareness, increase access to resources, attentively meet specific needs, and reduce stigma associated with mental health related issues.

Section 1B: USG and the Committee on Health will prioritize mental health in their Students First initiatives by organizing various "de-stress" events.

Section 2: The USG Committee on Health shall be receptive to the feedback received from Ohio state legislators and the Lieutenant Governor of Ohio.

Section 2A: The Committee recognizes the importance of student presence in mental health discussions on behalf of their peers in advancement of Kent State's "Culture of Care." The USG Committee on Health sent out a survey called "On My Mind" to reach out to students to collect their voices and stories in the form of creative media: art, poems, song lyrics, etc. The goal is to amplify the words of a student's mental health experience at Kent State that cannot be justified only quantitatively.

Section 3: The USG Committee on Health will work in close cooperation with the KSU Mental Health Vision Committee and the Mental Health Coalition to ensure that students' mental health needs are fully addressed.

Section 3A: The USG Committee on Health was asked to present a formal position on behalf of students at Kent State. In addition to the students' voices, the USG Committee on Health has put together recommendations that they believe relate to crucial resources that students would benefit from.

1. A university-wide Mental Health Committee would establish an ongoing relationship between faculty, administrators, and students to continue the discussion and seek insight on mental health from a student's perspective.
2. To maintain optimal usage of the plentiful mental health resources offered on campus, an Office for Mental Health (OMH) would advocate for the four areas of concern listed above as well as mental health literacy. The Committee strongly advocates for the importance of student presence involved within this office, to again cultivate a "culture of care" and truly incorporate "Flashes taking care of Flashes"
3. If the university does wish to establish a mental health fee to provide funding for the office, the committee recommends establishing an opt-in or opt-out option, similar to the legal services fee.

Please refer to these links for further information:

Basic Information

- <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/cultural-competency/education/mental-health-facts>
 - American Psychiatric Association provides several informative infographics on poor mental health among Racial/ Ethnic, LGBTQ, and female communities.
- <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/preventing-suicide/facts-about-suicide/>
 - The Trevor Project is an organization focused on suicide prevention efforts in the LGBTQ community. This link provides statistics for why this is crucial within this community.
- <https://www.activeminds.org/about-mental-health/statistics/>
 - Active Minds raises mental health awareness among college kids. This link provides statistics of poor mental health among college students.

Work Cited

American Psychiatric Association. (n.d.). Mental Health Disparities: Diverse Populations. Retrieved from: <https://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/cultural-competency/education/mental-health-facts>.