

Senate Mental Health Committee

Submitted by: Susan McCarty, Co-Chair
June 30, 2025

2024-2025 Senate Mental Health Committee members:

Co-chairs

Jessie Hurse - CO-CHAIR (Assoc Dean of Students & Deputy Title IX Coordinator)
Susan McCarty (CAS) - CO-CHAIR

Faculty

Terry Dibble (SHS)
Annie Gilson (CAS)
Nikki Scott (CAS-Social Work) - Mental Health Designation
Rebecca Vannest (SEHS Counseling Dept) - Mental Health Designation
Teresa Chahine (SON) - Mental Health Designation
Melodie Kondratek (SHS) - Mental Health Designation

Student, Staff, Ex-Officio

Rose Smith (Student Congress)
Jasper Bakker (RA Hillcrest Hall)
May Kennedy (RA Apartments)
DJ Williams (Student)
Mackenzie Smith (Student)
Destiny Mahone (Graduate Student via GC)
Shane Kolo (Graduate Student via GC)
Amena Khan (Graduate Student via GC)
Tionna Davenport (Graduent Student via GC)

Ashley Finkley (PAC Representative)
Cortney Heileman (Univ Rec & Well Being)
David Schwartz (GHC) – Mental Health Designation
Melissa Guertin (GHC) – Mental Health Designation
VACANT (CT Representative)
Charles Guzowski (AP - Representative)
Carrie Miller (AP- Representative)
Shona Collins (OUPD Representative)

The committee met 10 times between September 19, 2024 and April 14, 2025.*

Charges

- 1. To gather information on all mental health services currently available (how they operate, their availability, cost, capacity)**
- 2. To assess mental health issues and needs on campus.**

The committee continued to gather information on all mental health services currently available and to assess mental health issues and needs on campus by talking with each other (many committee members work at OU in mental-health capacities) and by talking to other stakeholders, such as Residence Life and Healthy Campus. SEHS was able to secure a SAMHSA grant this year and make a hire to assess and make recommendations regarding mental health resources on campus. Since our committee had already been doing this work, we were able to assist Sara Beckett/the REACH Program with information we had gathered and to triangulate with her and Student Congress to make a recommendation that OU hire caseworker to help manage student mental health resources and to facilitate communication between the two counseling centers on campus.

We met with many stakeholders all over campus throughout the year to get the full picture of OU mental health on the ground and to ask them about their needs so that we could bring those needs to the Senate.

- 3. To gather information on the various OU web pages that have information on mental health support services, and to organize that information to be more easily accessible and visible by supervising the creation of one main web page that can be accessed from the main OU home page.**

This year, the committee also focused on how to better collect and disseminate information about mental health resources on campus, as this was a main issue that has come up throughout the life of this committee—people in our community get information about MH resources piecemeal and from many different sources. How could we help make that information more accessible and visible?

To these ends, we met with Becky Lewis and Todd Nucci to give website input.

Our main work on this charge this year was to begin to send out a Mental Health Newsletter with Dave Groves in UCM. The newsletter comes out semi-monthly and includes information about mental health resources on campus that are especially relevant or timely.

We were also able to get a “mental health” box added to the OU calendar, so that when listing their events, OU departments and individuals may designate their particular event as having a mental health designation.

We also collected input from students about what might help them better navigate mental health resources online. The committee will continue to gather input and plans to meet with Todd Nucci again next year to revisit the question of a mental health button or quicklink on our homepage.

As the RecWell and Healthy Campus webpages continue to be developed, we hope to continue to be part of the conversation about what those pages can look like.

4. To promote and advocate for the mental health needs of the OU community (faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students) by making recommendations to the University Senate.

The Committee made 3 Senate presentations this year.

-October 2024: Presented on Graham Counseling Center: weekly support groups, new Grizz Recovery program, videos added to the counseling center website; and also on the SEHS Counseling Center incl no waitlist link and flyer of events; also included Mental Health First Aid training days

-February 2025: Introduced Sara Beckett and the REACH (Resilience, Education, Access, Connection, and Hope) Program to the Senate.

-April 2025: Gave an update to last December’s “Critical Needs” presentation and the OU mental health big picture as it stands—many needs we had last year are still not being met. Ended the presentation with the recommendation to hire a caseworker.

Concerns for 2024-2025:

-The committee continues to recommend the hiring of a campus caseworker, along with other stakeholders on campus, such as the REACH Program, and Student Congress.

-The committee will continue to send out newsletters to keep the campus informed of mental health resources as they are available and relevant.

-The committee will continue to check-in with departments about their mental-health needs during the school year and report to the Senate about those needs.

-The committee will continue to assess and make recommendations for a more organized mental-health web presence.

-Terry Dibble and Jessie Hurse will continue as co-chairs.

-Committee will review and edit charges as necessary.