

Senate Mental Health Committee

Submitted by: Susan McCarty, Co-Chair
June 4, 2024

2023-2024 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

Kimberly Byrd (CAS)
Teresa Chahine (SON)
Terry Dibble (SHS)
Annie Gilson (CAS)
Melodie Kondratek (SHS)
Jennifer Matthews (SEHS)

Student, Staff, Ex-Officio

Ian Allen (Student)
Shona Collins (OUPD Representative)
Maris Ferguson (Student Congress)
Ashley Finkley (PAC Representative)
Elizabeth Forester-Coughlin (Registrar Office Coordinator)
Sarah Guadalupe (DSS Representative - Optional) Charles Guzowski (AP - Representative)
Cortney Heileman (Univ Rec & Well Being) Amena Khan (Graduate Student via GC) Shane Kolo (Graduate Student via GC)
Destiny Mahone (Graduate Student via GC)
Carrie Miller (AP- Representative) David Schwartz (GHC and/or SEHS Representative)

The committee met 14 times between September 22, 2023 and April 19, 2024.

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.**

Though these two charges are listed as separate steps, they were often incorporated together as the committee worked to discover the larger mental health picture on campus. As a new committee, we started from scratch to build this picture in order to account for all the mental-health programming on campus.

Committee members gathered information from their own departments and reported in so we could get an idea of what mental health services OU provides and where and how. Materials such as flyers, links, posters, research articles, and surveys about mental health at OU were shared and read. Members also spoke to mental health professionals at outside institutions and did benchmarking work to see how other institutions approach mental health. Many members also added to our robust Google Drive shared file with relevant research and articles that have helped steer our discussions and decisions.

As a committee, we also researched the JED Campus program through the JED Foundation and voted to recommend it to the Senate. We especially value the strategic plan it offers a committee like ours. It is our view that this kind of plan would help make the most of our committee and give us directions about how to unify our somewhat siloed campus in terms of mental health initiatives, services, and culture.

Along with this work, the co-chairs and committee members gathered information by having meetings and speaking with members of different departments of the OU Community, including Residence Life, Student Congress, OUPD, OUCC, SEHS Counseling Center, Psychology, and others to find out what they have, what they need, and what requires immediate and essential support.

Statistics and data were compiled from the Dean of Students Office, CAS, OUPD, and national sources.

- 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.**

The Committee identified many different spaces where mental health is mentioned on a variety of department landing pages. Ultimately, we agreed that rather than starting a new, separate website, it would be in the university's best interest to work with RecWell on their Healthy Campus website and house mental-health links there. We then agreed upon a number of features we might like to see on an OU mental-health website, and met with members of RecWell to discuss how to integrate these features onto the Healthy Campus website. We also discussed the possibility of how to incorporate mental-health items into the university calendar (ongoing). The website is expected to be updated soon and part of our charge next year will be to continue to work on and refine it.

- 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 5 Senate presentations this year.

-October 2023: Presented on the extraordinarily low counselor/student ratio at Oakland University and the lack of front-desk staff which may have contributed to student endangerment. Recommended OU immediately hire a full-time counselor

-November 2023: Recommended that the Mental Health Ad Hoc Committee become a standing committee.

-December 2023:

-Shared critical needs across campus where students in crisis have first points of contact, including front-desk coverage at the SEHS CC, the OUCC, and crisis intervention workers for OUPD and Residence Life.

-Shared mental-health resources from across campus.

-March 2024:

-RecWell shared news about their mental-health initiatives and programs.

-April 2024:

-Shared the OU mental health big picture.

-Recommended that OU become a JED Campus.

-In April and May, the Committee met with members of the Strategic Plan Committee and the Master Plan Committee to discuss how to improve the mental health outlook on campus. We recommended a JED Consultancy which would provide OU with a mental-health strategic plan. JED was not funded for the upcoming school year, but members of the Strategic Plan Committee (Glenn McIntosh and Steve Waterfield) are willing to revisit the idea in the 2024-2025 school year.

Plans for 2024-2025:

-Susan McCarty and Jessie Hurse will continue as co-chairs.

-Review and edit charges as necessary (now that we are a standing committee).

-Continue to work on and refine the website.

-Pursue a “mental health” designation for calendar items.

-Check in with departments about their mental-health needs during the school year.

-Report to the Senate with these needs.

-Revisit becoming a JED Campus.