

## VII. STANDING COMMITTEES

### A. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

#### Trends in College Student Mental Health

College students' lives outside the classroom are enormously important to their overall educational experience. Specifically, health and mental health factors have well-demonstrated and significant impact on students' retention, academic achievement, successful completion of developmental tasks, and on the quality of their experience. This discussion will include a review of recent national trends and issues in college student mental health, as well as a discussion of University of Washington students' health and mental health issues and how we as a campus community are responding.

#### General Health Issues Affecting College Students

There are many reasons for paying attention to student health, but we especially focus on health as a factor in promoting academic success. Because most college students are free of chronic disease, health concerns of students are more weighted to mental health and acute disease than the rest of the adult population.

The following table summarizes the top ten health-related factors affecting students' academic performance within the previous school year (American College Health Association, 2004).

	<u>UW</u>	<u>WA State</u>	<u>National</u>
1. Stress	37.0%	33.8%	32.4%
2. Sleep difficulties	27.7%	25.9%	24.6%
3. Cold/flu/sore throat	26.1%	27.5%	25.6%
4. Relationship difficulty	17.4%	15.3%	15.9%
5. Concern for a troubled friend or family member	17.4%	17.9%	18.1%
6. Internet use/computer games	16.6%	11.1%	13.4%
7. Depression/anxiety disorder/ seasonal affective disorder	16.1%	16.5%	15.3%
8. Death of a friend/family member	7.9%	8.0%	8.6%
9. Sinus infection/ear infection/bronchitis/strep throat	7.7%	9.5%	8.5%
10. Alcohol use	7.5%	7.2%	7.6%

While the above information contains the most common issues, we are often more concerned about serious health-related outcomes. For example, the following information displays mortality patterns of college-age people in the US.

- Mortality triples from age 12-17 to 18-24: 45 per 100,000 to 135 per 100,000
- Mortality of males is nearly triple that of females in age 18-24: 138 per 100,000 vs. 48 per 100,000

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- Specific causes of mortality in college-age people include:
  - Injury (45% male, 44% female)
  - Homicide (20% male, 8% female)
  - Suicide (14% male, 4% female)
  - Other – includes all illnesses (21% male, 44% female)

College freshmen are uniquely vulnerable. Despite making up only 24% of students (USA Today study, 2006), they account for more than a third of undergraduate deaths (for undergraduates, freshmen make up 40% of deaths from natural causes, 40% of suicides, half of deaths from falls, 47% of those who die on school property). Last year:

#### General Health Trends at UW/Hall Health's Role

At Hall Health, we consider ourselves specialists in the unique needs of college students, and like many universities, we are seeing more demand for services.

Hall Health's mission is to facilitate each student's academic success by:

- Providing health care that is high quality, easily accessible and affordable
- Promoting health and wellness
- All UW students may receive subsidized health care services at Hall Health (non-students may use Hall Health on a fee-for-service basis, generating additional earned revenues that reduce cost of care for students).
  - 64% of the enrolled student body received service at Hall Health
  - 66% of Hall Health's 62,806 visits were by students (5% increase from FY05)

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#### Trends in College Student Mental Health (continued p. 3)

At Hall Health, we are actively working toward a future with even more effective health services, including:

- Access innovations: true open access; electronic access
- Quality improvements by focus on results
- Increased ability to provide mental health services
- Increased wellness programming
- Supporting UW global initiatives
- Deeper understanding of health of UW students
  - *ALL* students, not just those who present for care
  - Adopt a population approach

#### Mental Health Issues Affecting College Students

##### National Trends in College Mental Health in the United States

Over the last 15 years we have seen an increase in demand for services, severity of presenting concerns, and higher numbers of clients on medication, resulting in increased public and higher education administrators' awareness of mental health issues among U.S. college students. Possible contributing factors include:

- earlier diagnosis and treatment;
- the ADA's impact on college populations;
- reduction in community mental health resources;
- increased diversity of students;
- improvement of medications;

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- more referrals from college faculty and staff;
- unknown variables increasing incidence of certain diagnoses (e.g., depression); and
- the fact that some disorders first manifest in late adolescence.

#### UW Mental Health Trends/Counseling Center's Role

Academic success is tied to mental and physical health. Retention of students and successful counseling are highly correlated. University of Washington students' mental health concerns are consistent with national trends (e.g., most factors students identify as interfering with academic success are related to mental health, substance abuse, or interpersonal problems).

#### Counseling Center and Mental Health—Treatment and Prevention

After a 30-year history of charging fees for counseling center services, the UW Counseling Center eliminated fees for the intake and first three sessions (2005-06) and then for the intake and first five sessions (2006-07) when the Center received funding from the Services and Activities Fee. For the first two quarters of the school year, the Center showed the following increases in utilization of clinical services:

- Intakes: 98% increase over two years
- Number of clients served: 51% increase over two years

The Counseling Center supports the University community in all levels of prevention to maximize the effects of resources.

- Clinical Services—treatment of existing problems; emergency services
- Developmental Services—career counseling, developmental workshops, outreach, teaching—to enhance skills in preventing problems, assist healthy emotional/social development and support academic progress

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#### Trends in College Student Mental Health (continued p. 5)

- Preventive Services—the Suicide Prevention Program (with Hall Health); training of key staff (resident advisers, career advisers, faculty) to enhance referral and student assistance skills; Counselor on Duty consultation with staff, faculty, students, families re: students of concern; collaboration with other service providers (Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence Information Service, Hall Health, Career Services, University Hospitals); Web-based mental health and developmental services

The key goals for the Counseling Center over the next few years include:

- To continue to offer, evaluate, and refine excellent services across all service areas
- To add workshops in developing areas of concern
- To enhance Web-based services and resources
- To explore alternatives for funding and support for student mental health needs
- To enhance our understanding of students' mental health and developmental needs and our understanding of how we can collaborate in enhancing the UW environment to assist students' health and development