Mental Health Task Force Executive Summary

Colleges in the United States are currently experiencing an explosion of mental health issues among students. TTU Administered the National College Health Assessment survey to 1,578 students during the Spring 2004 semester. In comparing TTU data to national averages, the following “Academic Impacts” were observed.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>TTU</th>
<th>National Average</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>28.7 %</td>
<td>32.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep Difficulties</td>
<td>22.7 %</td>
<td>25.0 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Relationship Difficulty</td>
<td>13.6 %</td>
<td>16.0 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Concern for Friend/Family</td>
<td>15.8 %</td>
<td>18.0 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alcohol Use</td>
<td>14.0 %</td>
<td>8.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marijuana Use</td>
<td>9.0 %</td>
<td>11.0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression in Last 12 Months</td>
<td>42.9 %</td>
<td>39.1 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Meds for Depression</td>
<td>37.5 %</td>
<td>40.4 %</td>
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</table>

The above percentages applied to a population of 28,000 students represents over 10,000 students seeking mental health care on the TTU campus. This influx combined with declining community resources and increased litigation against colleges and universities has created a need for a comprehensive plan for resources and protocols to handle mental health issues on the TTU campus.

On August 25, 2004, Student Health Services sponsored a Mental Health Summit to open dialogue within the TTU campus and with the Lubbock community. Dr. Richard Kadison, Chief of Mental Health Services at Harvard University Health Services and author of the book “College of the Overwhelmed”, lead discussion. Subsequently, a Mental Health Task Force with representation from the Division of Student Affairs, TTUHSC Family and Community Medicine and the Lubbock Community met regularly through the fall semester and has submitted the following recommendations.

- Distribution of a pocket size card to be widely distributed on campus outlining symptoms of depression and appropriate steps in dealing with suicidal students.
  
  **Task Force Response:**
  
  *Distribution of pocket size cards to begin in Spring 2006, with wide distribution to continue each subject.* (McPherson)

  *Brochure has been finalized and is expected to be distributed in Spring 2006.* (Nathan)

- Enforcement of health insurance coverage requirement for International students.
  
  **Task Force Response:**
  
  *Enforcement of mandatory health insurance for international students effective in January 2006. Premiums will be billed with tuition and fees by Student Business Services. Student Health Services will waive premiums for students who provide evidence of comparable health insurance coverage.* (McPherson)
SHS has been involved in establishing this policy. (Nathan)

- Continuation of SHS Scope of Care Policy. Students identified by psychiatrist as inappropriate to be followed in SHS to be reviewed by Medical Director and a panel of medical professionals to determine appropriate medical referral.
  Task Force Response:
  As of this date, only three students have been identified as inappropriate to be followed in Student Health Services. All three students were notified that no further mental health appointments would be scheduled at Student Health Services. These students can continue to seek medical care for other health conditions at Student Health Services. (McPherson)

The Student Counseling Center has revised its Informed Consent paperwork to include specific statements explaining the scope of services students can expect. (Nathan)

- Continued use of the Assessment and Response Team Committee, housing contracts and Code of Conduct in monitoring “at risk” students.
  Task Force Response:
  The Interim Dean of Students has continued to conduct very productive Assessment and Response Team meetings throughout the Fall Semester. Representatives from Housing & Student Judicial Services attend these regular meetings. (McPherson)

ART continues to meet on a bi-monthly basis. (Nathan)

- Development of a web-based mental health triage system of campus and community resources for student and/or parent reference regarding depression, stress, anxiety, etc.
  Task Force Response:
  Dr. Jennifer Hammat, Student Judicial Services, and D’aun Green, Housing and Residence Life, will continue to work on a web-based mental health triage system of campus and community resources for students. (McPherson)

The Student Counseling Center (SCC) is in the final stage of adding web-based self-screenings from the “Screenings for Mental Health Inc.” organization. These self-screenings cover the following topics: depression, generalized anxiety, eating disorder, bipolar disorder, and post traumatic stress disorder. The SCC currently has a web link to the Jed Foundation’s Ulifeline site which is available to students for psycho educational reference regarding mental health issues. (Nathan)

- Implementation of a general awareness campaign for the academic community, with specific focus on International Affairs.
  Task Force Response:
  Dr. Richard Kadison returned to TTU on October 5, 2005, for a discussion of the explosion of student mental health issues TTU faculty and staff face today. Approximately 80 faculty and staff attended. We have received very positive
feedback on Dr. Kadison’s presentation and four of the attendees have requested to be included in future meetings of our Task Force. The Student Counseling Center has developed a CD with information on campus resources available to students, faculty and staff. The CD was initially distributed to new faculty members in the Fall 2005. Distribution will be expanded in the Spring 2006. Student Affairs has worked collaboratively with International Affairs on implementation of mandatory health insurance for international students effective in January 2006. (McPherson)

The SCC is collaborating with SHS to prepare an informational DVD on mental health services for TTU students on campus and in the community to be distributed to all faculty and staff. The SCC has a liaison to the International Cultural Center to provide stress management and general adjustment presentations. (Nathan)

- Development of comprehensive plan to manage increased number of patients seeking mental health services. Emphasize “getting help” as a strength and not a weakness!

**Task Force Response:**
*Articles in The Daily Toreador have been utilized to emphasize campus resources for students experiencing anxiety, stress, etc. Campus awareness events (Depression Screenings, Anxiety Week, Drug and Alcohol Screenings) continue to be utilized to increase student awareness and to direct students to appropriate resources. Access to mental health services in Student Health Services has been carefully monitored. Emergency Detentions, with the assistance of TTU Police Department, have effectively utilized with two students during the Fall semester.* (McPherson)

**SCC and SHS Depts. Are collaborating on ways to streamline case management.** (Nathan)

- Encourage student involvement in development of comprehensive plan.

**Task Force Response:**
Student representatives on the Medical Services Fee Advisory Committee have expressed interest in participation in development of comprehensive plan. (McPherson)

SCC is in the process of conducting a campus-wide student needs assessment. (Nathan)

Reported by:
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Task Force Responses by:
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