

**Coalition on Mental Health**

**10.23.18**

**4:45pm-6pm**

PRESENT: Abraham Araya; Aidan Fitzgerald; Akanksha Jain; Amanda Carreiro; Andrea McPherson Kiely; Anne Laurita; Anne Jones; Athena Wong; Bill Sonnenstuhl; Carumey Stevens; Catherine Thrasher-Carroll; Chelsea Kiely; Cheryl Stanley; Christine Relander; Dan McMullin; Dave Honan; Don Viands; Ekarina Wintaro; Janna S. Lamey; Jen Gudaz; Jennifer Austin; Joanna Hua; Joe Anderson; Kaitlin Lilienthal; Kara S. Miller; Kathy Edmondson; Kent Bullis; Laura Santacrose; Lisa Nelson; Lisa Ryan; Maddie Feldman; Manisha Munasinghe; Markeisha J. Miner; Marla Love; Matt Jirsa; Michael Sarkis; Michelle Horvath; Miranda Swanson; Reba McCutcheon; Rebecca Sparrow; Shakima Clency; Shawn Meyer; Shorna Broussard Allred; Stacy Groce; Tim Marchell; Vijay Pendakur; William Sonnenstuhl; Yujue Wang

MINUTES TAKEN BY: Jane Hinkle

| Agenda Items   | Discussion   | Action Items   |
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| Welcome<br><br>Vijay Pendakur,<br>Dean of Students   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dean of Students Vijay Pendakur welcomed members to the second Coalition meeting of the semester, and outlined the meeting agenda.</li> </ul>   |  |
| Comprehensive<br>Mental Health<br>Review Update<br><br>Tim Marchell,<br>Director Skorton<br>Center for Health<br>Initiatives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Last meeting, members submitted ideas about areas of focus and suggestions for the prospective campus-wide comprehensive review of mental health. Several broad categories were identified, and will help to inform the proposal for what the review should entail.</li> <li>Perspectives and feedback from students, faculty, and staff will continue to be obtained. A survey will be sent out to coalition members to gather more information, and we encourage coalition members to share this survey link with their peers and colleagues to enable us a broader base of input.</li> <li>One of the issues that was identified by this coalition at our last meeting was the Health Leaves of Absence (HLOA) policy. Robin Hamlich, Assistant Director of CAPS, was invited today to provide an overview of HLOA policies and processes before we discuss them in greater detail.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minutes from the September Coalition on Mental Health meeting can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul> |
| Health Leaves of<br>Absence<br><br>Robin Hamlich,<br>Asst. Director CAPS   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The process for taking a Health Leave of Absence was reviewed. The <a href="#">policy</a> in full, under Student and Campus Life, states that academic colleges actually grant leaves and approve returns. For health related leaves, Cornell Health should be consulted and can recommend leave and return but academic colleges have the final say.</li> <li>Health Leaves of Absence occur when the student's medical or mental health condition is found, collaboratively with the student and their health care provider(s), to significantly impair their ability to</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The HLOA PowerPoint Slides are <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>   |

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|   | <p>function successfully or safely as a student. Time away from university should be used for treatment and recovery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steps for gaining approval for a HLOA and for returning from HLOA, can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>• Criteria for returning from a HLOA include proof that the student followed treatment recommendations, amelioration of the health condition that prompted the HLOA, and the demonstrated ability to function safely at Cornell.</li> <li>• However, faculty and staff members under no circumstances should request health information or records from a student.</li> <li>• Strategic Questions for further consideration can be found on the final slide of the presentation.</li> </ul>  |  |
| <p>Coalition<br/>Discussion: Q and A<br/>with Robin<br/>Hamlisch regarding<br/>Health Leaves of<br/>Absence</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question: What alternative options to HLOA exist when the health issue is of shorter anticipated duration?<br/>Answer: Usually students work with their department in such instances, for example when a student breaks a bone or has mono.</li> <li>• Question: Can you describe the approval process that students undergo to return to campus?<br/>Answer: the priority is ensuring the student has regained a level of health necessary to succeed at Cornell when they do return. A concerted effort is made to avoid the possibility of the student having to take multiple leaves of absence, which could be extremely stressful for the student.</li> <li>• Question: How can we help a student re-integrate academically and socially upon return from HLOA?<br/>Answer: One resource is the Return from Leave of Absence group run by Cornell Minds Matter. This weekly group supports students during their transition back. Additionally, Student Disabilities Services can provide academic assistance to students when they return from HLOA.</li> <li>• Question: What happens when a student on HLOA feels ready to come back, but their treatment while on leave didn't align directly with HLOA recommendations?<br/>Answer: The goal of HLOA is to try to get students back to a level of functionality that supports their ability to do well in this academic setting. The treatment recommendations are a guideline; each case is reviewed on an individual basis and based on provider recommendation.</li> <li>• Question: Does the university take into account the potential financial hardship that undergraduate and</li> </ul> |  |

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|  | <p>graduate students might face by taking a HLOA, and how this might deter students who should take HLOA from doing so?</p> <p>Answer: for undergrads, there is a <a href="#">tuition reimbursement schedule</a> as well as <a href="#">tuition reimbursement insurance</a> that has gained popularity. This may be a consideration for the comprehensive review. Additionally, the <a href="#">Student Health Plan (SHP)</a> continues to cover undergraduate and graduate students for the remainder of the academic year, whether they are on leave or not.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question: Are students who are denied return from HLOA reached out to, so that they don't feel discouraged?<br/>Answer: Cornell Health does reach out to those students and connect them to resources in their area. However, doing more outreach and building a larger network is a good idea and something that should be discussed further.</li> <li>• Question: what support is provided to students who want to take a HLOA but don't have a stable home environment to go back to?<br/>Answer: Counselors do assist students in finding housing, food, and employment opportunities in preparation for a HLOA.</li> <li>• Question: What support structures exist for when a student (not on leave) is hospitalized for mental health concerns, and then returns back to campus?<br/>Answer: Crisis managers contact the student and work with them to contact faculty, family, and friends if requested, and support them in transitioning back, including communication around short-term academic accommodations.</li> </ul> |  |
| <p>Student Led MH Task Force Presentation</p> <p>Matt Jirsa and Joanna Hua, Co-founders of Student-Led MH Task Force</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Student Led Mental Health Task Force Co-Founders gave a presentation about their <a href="#">Call to Mental Health Action</a>. The presentation slides can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>• They outlined their recommendations, identifying four key initiatives which include: Mental Health Services, Mental Health Education and Collaboration, The Intersections of Academics and Mental Health, and Compassionate Leave of Absence Systems. Each initiative is supported with several objectives.</li> <li>• It was stressed that while these suggestions are research-backed, they are subject to change with the input of the campus community.</li> </ul>  |  |
| <p>Coalition Discussion: Q and A regarding</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A comment was made in support of the importance of having faculty and staff in academic departments on board with supporting and accommodating students who have mental or physical health issues.</li> </ul>  |  |

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| <p>presentation slides with Matt and Joanna</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Question: Are academic advisors more successful advocating for students to professors than students are in reaching out on their own?<br/>Answer: Anecdotally, students who try to reach out to their professors or seek advocacy through academic colleges sometimes feel uncomfortable disclosing their personal health history to administrators, and often are nonetheless unsuccessful in getting the support they were requesting. For students, it feels like there are not clear avenues in the system to navigate communicating with their professor or seeking advocacy effectively.</li> <li>• A comment was made in support of the key initiative of Intersections of Academics and Mental Health, saying that having due dates of assignments for different classes all at the same time has been stressful.</li> </ul> |  |
| <p>Announcements</p>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Learning Strategies Center announced their upcoming workshop on managing stress during finals. More events at the LSC can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</li> <li>• Architecture Art and Planning announced their <a href="#">return from leave of absence checklist</a>, and suggested that this could be adapted to become a broader, University-wide resource.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Cornell Minds Matter</a> announced their return from leave of absence group, which currently meets from 4:30-5:30 pm on Thursdays in WSH 211.</li> </ul>  |  |

Next Meeting:  
November 19, 2018  
4:30-6:30pm  
Cornell Health Room 127 B, C & D