MINUTES FOR THE THIRD GA MEETING OF 2017-2018

Wednesday, October 11, 2017
6:00-8:30 pm

Houston Hall
Ben Franklin Room

I. Food is served

II. General Assembly Meeting

Ben Franklin Room

6:00 – 7:15 pm

a. Approve Minutes from September 29
   • approved
b. Grad Fest
   • updates from VP
   • Email VP for purchasing tickets by mechanism other than credit card
c. Graduate Student Mental Health
   • In one Belgian study, rate of mental health issues was very high among grad students
   • Clarification that numbers from CAPS represent usage of clinical services specifically
   • There is no more granularity than this school breakdown
   • Wait times to see CAPS of over a month have been heard of, but there are also walk-in hours when you can’t be turned away.
   • There are intermediate options – that people don’t know about – for when there’s a crisis that isn’t necessarily an emergency
   • Is there a policy about a maximum wait time to see a clinician? [other than walk-ins, not clear]
   • Have we been asking whether there are enough counselors of color? [We’re asking that]
   • CAPS perspective of the problem:
     • belief in uniqueness of individual programs
     • …
   • Outreach has been happening at some schools directly
   • Unless a resource is designated as undergrad-only, it’s open to grad students by default
   • Note that CAPS is hoping to get feedback on how to improve service for grad students
   • Referrals to private practice – those wouldn’t get count in the
graphs we have if those appointments happened in a separate year

- Question of whether referrals happen after a certain number of appointments, or after a certain level of stability is reached
- GAPSA President will send a campus-wide mental health survey, which has never been done because CAPS can’t send such emails

**Discussion:**

- Would it be possible to have a CAPS counselor in the GSC?
- Note to make sure that grad students who start in the spring can still receive the sort of CAPS info that is disseminated at NSO
- How do we get people to respond to our survey? What did the Med school do?
  - multiple emails, and justified why this student-driven initiative was important to contribute to.
  - Also, carved out time at relevant meetings to have people fill out the survey right then and there
- President notes that some faculty can be a source of the problem of saying that their students don’t need CAPS
- We should help CAPS rephrase some of their self-explanations of the process
- The anecdotal discussions that some programs have unique problems are an opportunity to ask faculty and administrators to clarify what those are and might be.
- Note that the diversity among programs is necessarily no more than the diversity among all grad students here. Also, seconded request to advocate for more people of color as counselors at CAPS.
- Having therapists at multiple places around campus will help with visibility
- Comment/question: why is CAPS located separately from where physical health problems are addressed
- [timing of programming around high-stress times]
- During outreach, let students know all the privacy parameters – more transparency
- There need to be intermediate destress options, to make the option of not getting any help less likely.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- Mentioning that this aura effect is real and important
- Are there any ways for CAPS to support people who are getting therapy outside of their
services
• Tell CAPS to be incredulous when faculty and admin tell them that their expanded services for their program aren’t necessary
• Ask for GA to see GAPSA survey before it goes out [Okay]
• In schools where there have been big pushes to promote CAPS utilization, there’s a lot of messaging about it
• Some CAPS sessions are recorded for training purposes. How does that work when it’s mentioned before the first session?
  • We can suggest to make those options more available
• Please expand the number of in-network advisors
• Maybe there should be more specificity of what each counselor is trained to deal with or focus on
• Co-sponsor mental health events with programs that already have substantial presence there
• Set up GSC hours with CAPS
• Include survey question about whether or not grad students would care about if their CAPS session was recorded
• Outreach should focus on people earlier, before they are experiencing severely mental health issue. Mitigation
• Some students might not understand what the process of going through therapy looks like
• Regarding recording, perhaps decrease the amount of that despite this being a teaching school. Also, make sure that even happy-go-lucky students are considered as ones to whom these services should be advertised
• Expand diversity of CAPS staff
• Specify that something is a resource for not just Penn students, but “undergrads and grad students”
• Make this an editable Google Doc
d. Grad Council of the Faculties Amendment
  • withdrawn
e. Exec Updates
  • Communications has a meme contest to advertise GradFest
  • Chair for Finance asks for Ruiyuan Ma to be confirmed as deputy
III. Committee Meetings
    Various Locations (Find your Exec member)  
    7:15 – 7:30 pm

IV. Council Meetings:
    IDEAL Council: Morris Seitz Room (Room 313)
    Professional Council: Ben Franklin Room
    Research Council: Bishop White Room
    7:30 – 8:30 pm

V. Happy Hour:
    William Street Common
    8:30 – 11:00 pm