



MEMORANDUM

To: Ashish Vaidya, President
Cc: Sue Ott Rowlands, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dan Nadler, Vice President for Student Affairs
From: Matthew Zacate, Faculty Senate President
Re: Resolution on mental health services
Date: October 9, 2019

The Faculty Senate passed a resolution related to mental health services for students at its August 26, 2019 meeting. It, along with background that the senate considered, is appended below.

I am sending this only now, after the September meeting of the Faculty Senate, because I wanted to wait until after the minutes of the August meeting, including amendments to this resolution, were approved. I don't think that this resolution is particularly time sensitive, but it is important to bring to your attention.

I hope that you will give your support to the newly formed Mental Health Advisory Group so that it can more effectively address concerns that the student and faculty have about cost and access to counseling services for students, especially for the increasingly diverse student body at NKU. I understand that data related to usage and need of counseling services already are being collected. I hope that you will ensure that data collection continues, that data is analyzed, and that findings are reported to the Faculty Senate at the appropriate time.

(Begin resolution.)

BACKGROUND: NKU faculty frequently come into contact with students in need of counseling and other support services and lack the professional training and expertise to provide these services, which are critical to student retention and success. In addition, it is not always clear that online referrals are effective in connecting students with available services on NKU's campus.

The Student Government Association of Northern Kentucky University adopted a resolution March 18, 2019 expressing concerns over the cost and access to counseling services for a diverse student body.

Beyond the concerns raised by SGA, there is an abundance of recent data indicating a mental health crisis among teenagers and young adults. The rate of teen suicides in Kentucky doubled from 2014 to 2017 (Cincinnati Enquirer March 31, 2019). Nationally, the incidence and prevalence of mental health disorders is rising in the college-aged population with under-represented and socially disadvantaged



students at highest risk. Most alarming, it is clear that the students at highest risk because of ethnic and cultural differences are least likely to take advantage of available mental health services and most likely to suffer health and academic consequences.

References:

Liu CH, et al. 2018. The prevalence and predictors of mental health diagnoses and suicide among U.S. college students: Implications for addressing disparities in service use. *Depress Anxiety*. [doi:10.1002/da.22830](https://doi.org/10.1002/da.22830).

Martinez et al. 2018. No food for thought: Food insecurity is related to poor mental health and lower academic performance among students in California's public university system. *Journal of Health Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1359105318783028>

Tran, A. G. T. T., Mintert, J. S., Llamas, J. D., & Lam, C. K. 2018. At what costs? Student loan debt, debt stress, and racially/ethnically diverse college students' perceived health. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 24(4), 459-469. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000207>

WHEREAS data from multiple peer-reviewed sources document a serious mental health crisis on college campuses nationwide and

WHEREAS NKU faculty strongly support student success and retention and the NKU values of embracing Diversity, Inclusion and Equity and

WHEREAS the NKU Student Government Association has adopted a resolution expressing concern regarding mental health services for a diverse student body,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT THE NKU FACULTY SENATE requests that the Administration puts a high priority on addressing the mental health needs of all NKU students by:

1. Providing access to mental health services that are affordable for all NKU students
2. Supporting the newly formed Mental Health Advisory Group's efforts to address the concerns raised by faculty and students, especially the cost and access to counseling services for a diverse student body.
3. Tracking data on service usage and need on an annual basis to determine if further adjustments to student mental health services are warranted and to verify that changes have been effective in meeting the afore-stated needs.