

MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Senate
FROM Larissa Chen, SFU Student Senator
DATE Wednesday, May 9th, 2018
SUBJECT Mental Health at SFU

Questions surrounding mental health at SFU were submitted to SCAR by a SFU Student Senator for the May 2018 Senate meeting. The overview and context is attached for the information of Senate.

May 2018 Senate Open Session

Mental Health at SFU

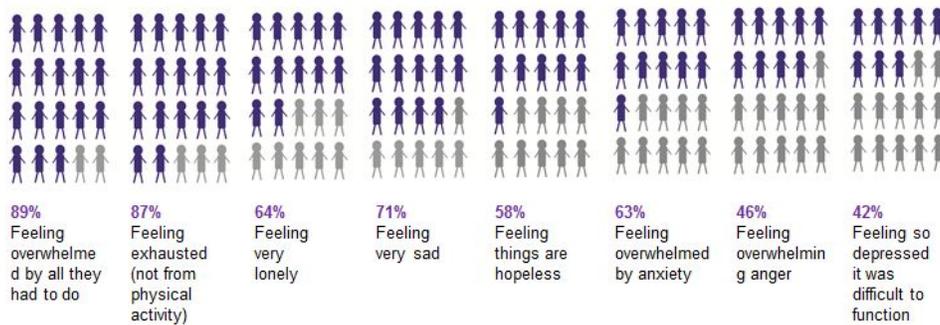
Prepared for Senate Open Session: Tues, May 22nd, 2018 5:30pm (SFU Burnaby, WMC 3210)

Resources: Larissa Chen, Alisa Stanton, Lisa Ogilvie, Martin Mroz, Marco Zenone (Contact Information on pg. 3)

General Overview

The 2016 National College Health Assessment highlights trends at SFU, and the SFU data closely resembles country-wide trends, in regards to self-identified mental health. The data shows the percentage of students who report each of these mental health conditions and/or symptoms (at any point in the last 12 months). Note that **stress (43%)** and **anxiety (31%)** are the top factors negatively impacting academics.

National College Health Assessment

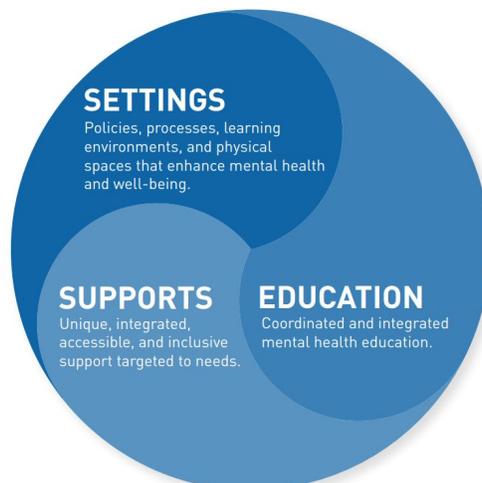


Students report that the factors most affecting academic performance include **stress (44%)** and **anxiety (31%)**

The preliminary 2017 SFU Undergraduate Student Survey reports 56% of respondents feel that they are thriving as a university student this term, *decreasing* in comparison to the 58% rate from the 2015 Survey.

In regards to the institution's role when it comes to students' mental health, there are three broad ways we can have an impact:

- (1) **Settings:** Policies, process, learning environments, cultures created, and physical spaces
- (2) **Education:** Coordinate and integrated mental health education
- (3) **Supports:** Unique, integrated, accessible, and inclusive support targeted to needs



The Mental Health Student Support Program (SSP)

- In April 2017, representatives of SFU Student Services, Simon Fraser Student Society (SFSS), Graduate Student Society (GSS), and SFU Graduate Studies collaborated to develop a proposal to help meet the increasing mental health support needs of SFU students.
- They proposed a new initiative, a Mental Health Student Support Program (SSP), that would:
 - (1) Complement existing mental health supports and initiatives,
 - (2) Increase access to support for all students,
 - (3) Provide specialized support and access for underserved or vulnerable student populations.
- After undergoing a competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process, SFU has signed an agreement with guard.me International Insurance and Morneau Shepell, to bring the **keep.meSAFE** Student Support Program to SFU students in collaboration with the SFSS.
- The **keep.meSAFE** Student Support Program will be available starting August 1st, 2018 for all SFU undergraduate and graduate students. It will complement existing mental health services supports and initiatives at SFU.
- This is a two-year pilot and there is no cost to SFU students to access the **keep.meSAFE** Student Support Program.

Benefits of the SSP include:

- Students will be able to access self-directed digital content as well as connect 24/7 with clinical support.
- 24/7 support, including crisis support, will be available via phone, chat, app and web access.
- On-going short term counselling will be offered over the phone, video or in-person.
- Students living or studying abroad as well as pre-arrival will have access.
- Specialized support is available for underserved or vulnerable populations, including access in multiple languages.
- A consultation service is available for staff, faculty and departments.
- Faculty/staff are able to make expedited, assisted referrals for students needing support 24/7.
- Ability to integrate with SFU's Health and Counselling Services.
- The keep.meSAFE Student Support Program currently provides services for Fraser International College and specializes in services for post-secondary populations.
- There will be an evaluation component to help inform continued provision of the program following completion of the two-year pilot.

What role can the faculty play?

When thinking of well-being in learning environments, professors and TAs tend to be the “first responders” for students who disclose their mental state and/or well-being. In this sense, faculty members play an essential role in supporting and/or effectively directing students to the appropriate resources and services.

In April 2018, SFU Health and Counselling Services conducted a faculty panel with Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences (FASS) that hosted over 50 registrants*. There was interest expressed in developing a coordinated place for information to be housed related to how faculty members can support. This is an example of how faculty members can explore their roles in regards to mental health for students, as well as identify specific ways to encourage well-being in learning environments, whilst protecting and maintaining their own sense of mental well-being.

Faculty will also play an important role in referring students to appropriate support services. There will be requests sent to departments to provide information to faculty about how to support and refer students to the keep.meSAFE Student Support Plan (as well as other SFU support services) and where they can go for advice when supporting a student. We ask for your help in distributing information about the SSP or booking a presentation for staff and faculty in your area. There will be emails sent to all departments.

In the Student Health Advisory Committee's 2018 report**, summarizing their multi-campus, student-focused consultation, respondents identified policies and processes in playing a role in students' and faculties' experiences of stress. We encourage all university members to connect, support, reduce mental health stigma by providing students with links to Mental Health and well-being supports through canvas and in course syllabi. Connect with SFU Health and Counselling Services for more information.

Question for Senate:

- (1) Do you think there would be interest in your faculties for discussion around how we can further support and enhance mental health through changes to supports, education and settings? How should this be brought forward? What would help facilitate this?
- (2) How can we encourage members in our respective faculties to participate and be proactive on campus-wide mental well-being?
- (3) Are there specific policies or processes that may be causing undue stress through the policy itself or through the communication of the policy? Are there any procedures that speaks to the faculty's respective responsibility in regards to promoting the student experience of academia?
- (4) How can the senate be providing leadership in terms of systemic change to promote mental health and well-being?

Contact Information

For any further questions and/or inquiries, please contact:

- Larissa Chen, SFU Student Senator <chenlrss@gmail.com>
- Marco Zenone, SFU Undergraduate Student & SHAC Chair <marcoz@sfu.ca>
- Alisa Stanton, Health Promotions Specialist <alisa_stanton@sfu.ca>
- Lisa Oglivie, HCS Special Projects Advisor <logilvie@sfu.ca>
- Martin Mroz, Director of Health & Counselling Services (HCS) <martin_mroz@sfu.ca>

Notes

* The faculty panel with FASS was recorded and is available online through SFU Vault. If interested, please email Martin Mroz.

** The SHAC 2018 Report is currently being finalized and contains summaries from multiple student, faculty and community-oriented facilitated sessions surrounding mental health in post-secondary institutions. If interested, please email Martin Mroz for an e-copy upon its completion.