

**Date:** 08/23/2022

**To:** Students' Union Council

**Re:** Vice President Student Life 2022/23 Report #8

### **MENTAL HEALTH - let's talk about it**

*Counseling Workshops* - The counseling workshops at DoS will remain virtual. From an accessibility standpoint, this is what seems to work better for students. Pre pandemic, DoS was getting 7-8 to students. Since the switch to virtual sessions numbers have gone up by x10 (60-80 students) per workshop. As we return to fall DoS will keep track of the usage of these workshops, to ensure it's accessible for students and meet their needs.

*Understaffing issues* - Going into the school year, we are down to 2 psychologists. Finding a new psychologist has been challenging, although DoS is still working to fill these two positions.

*What's next???* - This understaffing issue does bring up concerns for both administration and students. With the current context of Service Excellence Transformation (SET) these are important conversations we need to have especially in regards to mental health post what was an isolated pandemic era for various students where students faced a lot. I hope that this will set up dialogue around restructuring ourselves for success. Especially with the University wanting to increase the number of students joining our community. There is a case for dialogue to have with the DoS and other university stakeholders about the restructuring as well as the MNIF and what needs to be considered to set the student service up for success over the next 3 years since we see an increase in students. The goal would be to ensure that we have enough services to meet student needs.

I will also continue to work alongside VP Fotang, to ensure that we are on the same page in regards to mental health asks to the GoA. The current budget is not enough to provide for our entire campus community which is set to grow exponentially over the coming years. I also continue to seek guidance from my SRA counterparts to shape my advocacy and ensure we are working together to get students the adequate services they are entitled to.

*Peer Support Network* - Kevin Friese (DoS) is working with CHMA Edmonton to pull together various Peer Support volunteers. Our past PSC Program lead has attended in the past. The goal is to look towards various options in how we support our peer supporters, especially knowing a lot of them were affected during the pandemic. The other goal was also to give the platform for peer supporters to network and talk about the quality of training. They're looking at working together to come up with common training across institutions.

The Peer Support Centre does a lot of work around supporting students, however, the bulk of its services are volunteer-run and not meant to be a replacement for professional counseling. I am meeting with Karen, to figure out what are the best ways in which I can support them alongside other volunteers.

*Interview with CBC* - I had an interview with CBC last week to talk about the context of our Mental Health Services. I'll share the interview with the council once it's published.

### **PERIOD EQUITY**

I was able to work with DoS and managed to secure 5000\$ for the period equity initiative!!! This is very exciting for us as we can use this money to buy new dispensers and replace our current ones. This will be the first step in implementing our new strategy for the period equity initiative, specifically the emergency use

dispensers.

### **SV ADVOCACY - Update & What's next?**

*Residence* - I am so happy to let students know that many of our SV recommendations will be implemented this fall. Here is a TLDR of areas that will get changed :

- Student Staff Training: online e-class module, In-person session during Fall Training. I recently got an update that all RAs will be able to participate in 1on1 scenarios and get more hands-on practical training.
- Orientation - Basecamp
- Joint Executive Training - this is the first time that Residence Association executives will receive

*Overall advocacy* - I have talked to Deb(SVRC) about setting up a student leader forum to talk about the next steps in SV work, initiatives, and advocacy. This is a crucial conversation to have not only because of the importance of the matter but 1) with the new policy approval approaching, we need to talk about what comes next 2) the SVRC although they work under the Provost, students helped make their hiring possible through partial funding provided by the MNIF. Student voices must be heard. I am working with my counterpart from the GSA to set this up and will provide more information in the near future.

**Surprise!** Today's fun fact is a **PopQuiz** open book ;) - I would love to take one of you out for lunch to Cafe Bicyclette. To be that lucky individual you must be the first to bring back an answer. In my last report, I asked you all to learn more about the SSJ campaign. You may have found information that will help you out.

**Question** - *How much did CSJ recently receive in terms of funding and from who?*

\*this is external funding from the Un



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