

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
DRUGS, ALCOHOL & MENTAL HEALTH TASK FORCE
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA
Ballroom, 3rd Floor, West Building
Student Union Complex
1 UNF DRIVE
JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32224
March 27, 2018

*Video or audio archives of the meetings of the Board of Governors
and its Committees are accessible at <http://www.flbog.edu>.*

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Chair Valverde convened the workshop on March 27, 2018, at 2:31 p.m. with the following Task Force members present: Valverde, Kitson, K. Patel, Tripp, Zachariah, FAMU Trustee Lawson, FAU Trustee Barbar, FGCU Trustee Gable, FIU Trustee Lowell, Florida Poly Trustee Martin, FSU Trustee Burr, NCF Trustee Schulaner, UCF Trustee Marchena, UNF Trustee Hyde, USF Trustee Garey, and UWF Trustee O'Sullivan. Additional Board of Governors members present included Cerio, Frost, Lautenbach, Levine, Link, Morton, J. Patel, and Tyson. Also in attendance were representatives from the Council for Student Affairs and the Council of Academic Vice Presidents.

Chair Valverde stated that the Task Force is charged with looking at the critical drug, alcohol and mental health issues facing students in the State University System. He also noted that the Task Force will identify best practices to inform the development of system-wide recommendations that address the most critical issues and determine what resources may be needed to implement system-wide recommendations.

2. Draft Task Force Two-Year Work Plan

Chair Valverde introduced a draft of the Task Force work plan to the attendees. He stated that it is the expectation of the Task Force that they will take the necessary time to work on the critical areas of drug and alcohol use and misuse among college students, as well as crucial mental health issues, to become informed about the nature of these issues. The critical questions identified in the work plan will provide structure for the work of the Task Force, and once the foundational components of each area are covered, the Task Force will be better able to identify best practices and system level

solutions to the most critical issues facing our students. Chair Valverde opened the floor for comments and suggestions, to which none were expressed.

3. Roles of Counselors and Academic Advisors

Chair Valverde introduced the topic of roles of mental health counselors and academic advisors, stating that it is a follow-up to the discussion of the November 2017 and January 2018 meetings of the Board's Academic and Student Affairs Committee. Chair Valverde stated that Board staff and university staff have reviewed the counseling center staffing plans submitted last fall. After accounting for changes that have taken place since the original plans were submitted, staff have confirmed with the institutions that the counseling staff-to-student ratio for all institutions will be within the recommended range by the end of the 2018-2019 academic year, and all new positions will be funded through recurring funds.

Additionally, Chair Valverde provided brief information about the roles of academic advisors, stating that the role of academic advisors is to assist students with academic planning, policies, graduation requirements, grades, and test anxiety, while mental health counselors assist students with their overall mental health well-being. Chair Valverde raised the topic of how mental health counselors and academic advisors are similar and/or different, where the roles may intersect, and where there may be points of contention that need to be addressed.

Provost Gary Perry (FAU) talked about the differences in the roles of the two professions, commenting that academic advisors focus on the academic needs of students, skill development, policies, and resources, while mental health counselors assist students with challenges such as interpersonal relationships, anxiety, drug use, health and wellness. He elaborated that academic advisors are trained to recognize areas of concern among students, such as changes in a student's physical appearance, which may indicate the need to refer a student to a mental health counselor.

Governor Kitson raised the question whether there are tracking systems to determine if students referred to mental health counseling by academic advisors go to the counseling center. Dr. Gary Perry mentioned that FAU has a system that its staff use to communicate concerns about students. Dr. Corey King confirmed that all of the institutions have systems in place that ensure students referred to counseling actually get to the counseling center, and he clarified that once students arrive at the counseling center, a separate reporting system is required. Chair Valverde reiterated the concern of whether there are any points of contention between the two roles of academic advisors and counselors, to which Provost Gary Perry (FAU) commented that none existed at FAU.

Governor Tripp expressed concern about the availability of mental health counselors when students are in crisis, and he inquired what evidence exists to document the communication between advisors and counselors. Dr. King stated that all of the universities have behavioral intervention teams, consisting of academic and students affairs members, and that they meet regularly to discuss students of concern. Additionally, Dr. King noted that the counseling centers at all of the institutions are prepared to take emergency walk-ins.

Governor K. Patel raised the question of how universities follow up with students who do not see their academic advisor. Dr. Dave Parrott (UF) commented that in addition to faculty, universities have staff in multiple areas, such as residence halls and career centers, who are trained to provide mental health referrals for students.

Governor Morton suggested that the Board provide guidance to the universities regarding mental health data collection. He also expressed concern that some students may have to wait long periods of time before being able to be seen by a counselor, and he called for the Board to establish student mental health as a priority to be supported with existing funds.

Governor Tripp expressed concerns about the possibility of gaps in the counseling center data, and also asked if students are receiving the mental health services they need. Governor Tripp also suggested that university funding measures should be tied to mental health care.

Dr. Maribeth Ehasz (UCF) commented that a comprehensive care services system is used by some of the universities, whereby university staff receive reports daily about student progress, student referrals, student behavior, including those students who do not see an academic advisor, and that information is shared with key staff across the university in an effort to help students. Dr. Gary Perry noted that FAU and other SUS institutions use a student management system (e.g., Civitas) which allows institutions to keep track of referrals to the counseling centers that academic advisors make. He also mentioned that FAU is implementing a system whereby it assigns a persistence factor to each student and when the student drops a class, for example, the system flags the student and the FAU care team is notified and then follows up with the student.

Governor J. Patel asked what the ratio of university funding is for academic advising and for mental health counseling per student, and whether there is a prescribed ratio of academic advisor and mental health counselor per student. Chancellor Criser stated that there has been a budget request for mental health and campus safety and security, which has evolved to each university developing plans for using existing funds to meet its needs. Further, Governor J. Patel asked whether universities may be reallocating resources from mental health to other areas because existing problems may not be readily apparent. Trustee Burr (FSU) stated that the universities have been focused on

these issues for several years, are very aware and highly embrace the need for mental health services. Further, Trustee Burr stated that there was a pledge among the university presidents to improve mental health services with recurring funding.

Chair Valverde commented that in healthcare, there has been a shift from a reactive system to a preventive system, and while additional mental health counselors have been added, underlying issues may remain unaddressed. Further, he stated that it is important to uncover societal changes that may be effecting increased rates of mental health problems, and that preventative measures need to be developed and implemented. Dr. Amy Hecht (FSU) stated that it is important to look at environmental factors to encourage health behaviors, and to consider ways to have conversations with students to be preventative, and to foster a “see something, say something” culture on university campuses.

Governor Kitson commented that awareness of mental health issues has increased significantly, and he made the suggestion that a good starting point for the Task Force may be to see what each university is currently doing on its campus to ameliorate student mental health, which will serve as a baseline and learning opportunity for system-wide processes.

Governor Tripp commented that two years ago universities were understaffed and underfunded for mental health and campus police services and that the legislative budget request was not approved, and he expressed affirmation of the Task Force and its efforts and an interest in learning about what is occurring at the implementation level on campuses. Dr. Kirk Dougher (FAU) commented that factors contributing to increased student demand for mental health counseling are a change in student’s resiliency, students with inadequate communication skills, and reduced stigma of receiving mental health counseling. Dr. Dougher also noted that students utilizing campus counseling services more often have a “therapeutically rich history” compared to previous generations of students.

Chair Valverde asked what the national standard in campus mental health services is that perhaps the SUS should seek to attain, to which Dr. Dougher responded that because each university campus community is so unique, seeking to attain a system wide standard may be challenging.

Governor Tyson stated that we can get more data, such as how well communication occurs between mental health counselors and academic advisors, and statistical data on how many students referred to counseling attend. He noted that the discussion so far has been on students with limited life skills and students with significant problems, and as those are two very different types of problems, he stated that it would be helpful to know what percentages of students are in the two categories. Dr. Dougher replied that

we can definitely provide the statistical data, and with regard to what extent students get counseling he stated that students average between 5 – 8 counseling sessions, with approximately 22 – 27% of students seeing a mental health counselor only once.

Governor Morton asked if university presidents can authorize funding allocations and suggested there should be an accountability measure implemented to ensure problems are addressed. Governor Link asked for clarification as to the specific problem the universities will be solving. Governor Tripp stated that as previously reported, during the past two years universities were facing a crisis. Chair Valverde asked what improvements could be made in the systems being used on campuses. Dr. Mauricio Gonzalez (UNF) stated that there may be communication gaps between faculty in the classroom and the counseling center and suggested that more training in handling problems may be needed for campus staff.

Chancellor Criser noted that every university has committed to providing the necessary mental health resources, and that next steps for the Task Force are to understand what the problems are and what needs to be done, so that Florida becomes the national leader in this area. Governor Morton added that this Task Force should determine what each of the universities are currently doing in this area and what each sees as problems.

4. Drug Use and Abuse Overview

Chair Valverde introduced Dr. Kirk Dougher, Associate Vice President for Health & Wellness at Florida Atlantic University, to give a presentation on the topic of drug use among college students in the State University System and in the United States.

Dr. Dougher explained short-term and long-term consequences of drug use among college students. Some of the consequences include: reduced capacity for learning, memory loss, falling behind academically and lower GPA, treatment needs, legal record, and sometimes death.

Dr. Dougher discussed factors and influences of drug use among college students. He noted that the likelihood of drug use is increased for students with a history of previous drug use in middle and high school. Additionally, he stated that peer pressure and students' perceived use of drugs among their peers increases the likelihood of students' drug use and misuse.

Dr. Dougher provided data for current drug use patterns among 18-25 year olds, and the sources of prescription drugs used by 12+ year olds. Additionally, he provided data for college students' perceived drug use among students, which showed that students perceive that their peers use drugs more than they actually do.

Dr. Dougher provided drug usage data for SUS and U.S. college students, which showed that overall drug use and misuse is relatively low among SUS students, with the exception of marijuana.

Chair Valverde asked why there is such a difference in students' perceptions about drug use and actual use. Dr. Dougher stated that lore about college abounds, and the entertainment industry and social media can have a negative impact in projecting an image of heightened drug use that has no basis in actual drug use.

Governor K. Patel asked about the level of confidence in the data provided by Dr. Dougher, as it is self-reported data, and stated that students may not report their drug use. Dr. Dougher commented that while it is self-reported data, it is collected from a normative sample which allows for high confidence in the data and there are no incentives for students to under-report their use.

Governor Valverde noted that escape and avoidance behaviors are the common reasons for drug misuse and asked what students are trying to escape or avoid. Dr. Dougher stated that incoming students report very high levels of stress and need of enhanced skills to deal with difficult circumstances rather than using drugs.

Chair Valverde commented on Dr. Dougher's excellent presentation and thanked him, and stated that the purpose of today was to create an environment for dialog and discussion of the many facets of drug use. He thanked Governor Lautenbach for creating the Task Force, and commented that orientation and education should be part of the conversation as the Task Force moves forward.

Governor Kitson commented that the Task Force would like to ask the universities, as well as students and faculty, to report and share their ideas on what they are currently doing related to drugs, alcohol, and mental health, which will educate all on what works and provide innovative insights to the Board in providing feedback to the Task Force. Chair Valverde concurred and suggested that the Task Force provide the universities variables for which they can respond. Additionally, Chair Valverde mentioned that a White Paper may be developed, as well metrics that can be measured and shared across the system. Dr. King stated that the Council of Student Affairs has previously provided comprehensive reports and stated that moving forward CSA can update those documents and share with the Task Force. Governor Tripp added that university campus police departments should be included in the conversation, as they deal with students in crisis mode and are a main part of what the Task Force is dealing with. Chancellor Criser stated that Governor K. Patel may be able to assist with getting student involvement. Chair Valverde thanked everyone for attending and concluded the work shop.

5. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Having no further business, Chair Valverde adjourned the meeting at 4:40 p.m.

Fernando Valverde, Chair

Cathy Oakley, Ph.D.
Assistant Director for Academic and Student Affairs