

**UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
STUDENT RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Friday, February 14, 2020

11:15 AM-12:45 PM

Trotter Multicultural Center

Present: Gina Cervetti, Simone Himbeault Taylor, Jeannie Moody-Novak, Judith Beck, Olga Virakhovskaya, David Potter, Charlie Koopmann, Mariah Fiumara, Harish Ganesh

Absent: Amy Chavasse, Evelyn Winter, Katie Van Zanen, Nida Syed, Chitra Subramanian, Yaacov Ritov, Jairam Menon, Kyriaki Marti, Helen Look, Cindy Leung, Jill Esau

Guest(s):

- *Dr. Rob Ernst, AVP for Student Life and Executive Director of UHS*

1. Lunch/Call to Order/Review/Approval of Minutes

Chair Gina Cervetti called the meeting to order. The minutes for January were reviewed. No adjustments were made. Approved as written.

**2. Presentation by Dr. Rob Ernst
Priorities around SSD Services**

Chair Cervetti introduced Dr. Rob Ernst, AVP for Student Life and Executive Director of University Health Services and thanked him for his time to speak with the committee.

Dr. Ernst updated the committee regarding the director search for the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD). The SSD director position has been open since January 2019 and he explained that there has been an intentional pause placed on filling the position due to preparation and gathering of information about SSD by the IDEA Board. Using a population Health Specialist the Idea Board recently submitted their report to the Provost Office. This report included, among other findings, the needs of the student population that use SSD and the current and predicted case load of the coordinators.
2/26/2020 UPDATE: Director Services for Students with Disabilities posting #184919 through 3/18/2020

Currently there are about 3300 students registered with SSD with 5 coordinators. Some of the coordinators as well as the director have as many as 900+ students assigned to them. Based on average caseload in other schools it is reported that there are 300-375 students assigned per coordinator and no other schools have students assigned to the directors. There has been new coordinators hired and as students register or reconnect with SSD, there has been an effort to reassign with the goal of reaching the 300-375 student max.

Information about Task Force-IDEA Board

The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ODEI) led by Dr. Robert Sellers coordinates the IDEA Board task force. It is set up into 8 subgroups split to do focused work. Immediate needs identified is creating a one-stop SSD website and procuring an electronic management system, using feedback from students. Dr. Ernst informed us that they are meeting with 3 vendors with the anticipation for the system to be launched in January 2021.

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The current SSD model is based on a pedagogy subgroup and staffing needs are based on registered SSD students' diagnoses. Multiple coordinators are required if a student had multiple diagnosis. This has been changed to single coordinator model. It is expected that the new system will allow for the organization to go paperless which benefits by increased security, timely communication directly with faculty regarding students in their classes that require accommodations, auditing and providing provisions to allow the students to change coordinators.

Other plans within SSD are to expand staffing and launch an adaptive sports program. One requirement for reaching the goal is the need for more space. Initial plans are to keep the coordinators in Haven and open an SSD lounge for students from that community to connect with their peers. There are also plans to look at Ruthven for additional testing space when the building reopens following construction.

Dr. Ernst spoke about partnering with Dr. Oluwaferanmi Okanlami, MD, MS regarding adaptive sports and explained that adaptive sports are inclusive for all. For example, some can play basketball by running around the court, all can play basketball in a wheelchair. This initiative will support students that want higher level competition including the Paralympic games and allow for the university to recruit from this population.

Open Dialogue

It was brought up that many faculty experience frustration regarding accommodations required by students that are registered with SSD. Often accommodation letters are presented to faculty less than 24 hours prior to a test, making reservations for the testing facilities difficult. It was also brought up that it is frustrating for faculty to have responsibility for finding note takers adding that note takers are expensive, sometimes not utilized and need to be registered in same class section. Faculty felt they are left scrambling each semester. Dr. Ernst responded that is predicted that the new system will interface with students' schedules and allow for faculty to make accommodations for both testing and note taking. They are also discussing flexible space for "busy" time during midterms and finals.

Concerns were raised about accurate diagnosis ADHD with the opinion that ADHD is being over-diagnosed questioning that accommodating students can be viewed as providing a competitive advantage. Dr. Ernst responded that a professional review including a personal interview and documentation is required when students register with SSD. If not provided, new testing and documentation is required.

Chair Cervetti thanked Dr. Ernst for collaboration with the testing center. Faculty can be uncomfortable assisting students due to lack of education by the faculty member. She asked if training would be available stating that responsibility should be on the individual school leaders to work with faculty in their school by making staff and faculty aware that students that need services to level the playing field and are not asking for a competitive advantage. It was commented that it is the responsibility of the University leadership to send the message that students that require SSD services aligns with DEI initiatives. Commitment to DEI values and accommodations should be normalized.

Other comments to the committee included that North Campus has specific needs as to travel time to testing centers and that maker spaces and shops are not accessible. Accessibility all over campus is a concern, for example, no bussing service over the holidays left students stuck in dorms.

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Comments regarding UM's adaptive sports vs. Michigan State that has an extensive adaptive sports program. Michigan State is reaching into the high school level to recruit students. We are behind our peers. We are at an institutional tipping point to offer even more opportunities and become a place that students with disabilities want to come to. The vision for campus is to be a well-being campus.

Priorities for new SSD Director

They are ready to launch national search. Pre-work from the IDEA Board has been helpful to update the job description. Posting should be up in the next week or 2.

Chair Cervetti thanked Dr. Ernst for his insight and assured him that he will be invited back.

3. Remarks from Interim VP Simone Himbeault Taylor

Interim VP Taylor remarked that mental health is on the top of the list of many discussions with student groups. It is the opinion that the University and other professionals that support students need to evaluate drivers of mental health issues and enact policies that should be more proactive rather than reactive to mental health issues and including the reduction of anxiety. Some have offered suggestions to her such as hiding freshmen grades or eliminating them all together. More work needs to be done and no suggestion should be dismissed.

4. Wrap-up and Adjournment

A motion was made by Charlie Koopmann and seconded by Jeannie Moody-Novak to adjourn the meeting. All in favor.