Enhanced Support of Student Mental Health and Counseling Services

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate of the California State University (ASCSU) affirm the importance of and need for mental health and counseling services on our campuses, especially given ongoing challenges to public health and safety emerging nationwide on college campuses today; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the ASCSU commend the thoughtful work of the CSU Select Committee on Mental Health in investigating ways to address student needs and identifying necessary resources to provide counseling services; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the ASCSU support Executive Order 1053 (http://www.calstate.edu/eo/EO-1053.html) in creating a statewide Mental Health Services Advisory Committee and providing campuses with a comprehensive, systemwide policy on student mental health; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the ASCSU applaud the California Mental Health Services Authority, which stands in support of enhancing access and participation in higher education for students coping with mental health issues; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the ASCSU deplore the ongoing inadequacy of resources for mental health and counseling services systemwide despite the good efforts cited above; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the ASCSU urge the Chancellor, campus Presidents, campus Vice Presidents for Student Affairs, and relevant campus administrators and faculty to give high priority to student mental health services, and to carefully consider system and local augmentation of the appropriate baseline CSU and professional standards for quality of service, for staffing levels, and for ongoing and sustainable budgetary support beyond student fees; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the ASCSU strongly recommend that the CSU adopt the policy goal of ensuring that all CSU campuses meet or exceed relevant professional mental-health service standards for students; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the ASCSU distribute this resolution to the CSU Board of Trustees, the CSU Chancellor, campus Presidents, campus Vice Presidents for Student Affairs, campus Senate Chairs, California State Student Association, CSU Select Committee on Mental Health, and Senator Darrell Steinberg.

RATIONALE: The importance of student mental health has been heightened in the past few years by the tragic events on campuses across the country. This resolution is the first ASCSU recognition of the CSU efforts to deal with students’ mental health services. The
CSU took a proactive approach by establishing the Select Committee on Mental Health in 2009. The committee had wide representation from CSU constituents: Vice Presidents for student affairs, provosts/Vice Presidents for Academic Affairs, counseling and psychological services directors, student health center directors, services for students with disabilities center directors, counseling faculty members, ASCSU representatives, California State Student Association representatives, housing directors, and campus police.

Following the committee’s report to the Board of Trustees (BOT) in 2010, Executive Order No. 1053 was established. The newly established Student Mental Health Services Advisory Committee provides valuable advice to the CSU system, as evidenced in its recent report to the BOT on January 22-23, 2013 (http://www.calstate.edu/bot/agendas/jan13/EdPol.pdf). Recently, the Chancellor’s Office received a grant of $6.9 million from the California Mental Health Services Authority, which was made possible by the Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63, led by Senator Darrell Steinberg). The added funds will help advance the CSU in three main strategic directions: curriculum development and training, peer-to-peer support programs, and suicide prevention.

Most CSU campus Counseling Centers have inadequate funding to meet certain significant professional standards such as counselor ratios (http://www.calfac.org/counselors) as promulgated by the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS). Just 14 of the CSU campuses have counseling centers accredited by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC) or by the IACS. Only a few of the CSU internship programs are accredited by the American Psychological Association, or hold membership in the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Programs (http://www.appic.org/), or are accredited by the California Psychology Internship Council (CAPPIC). Finally, the cited grant monies do not represent continuing and sustainable support.

Approved Unanimously – May 16-17, 2013