Student Services Fee Update

Name: Harry McDermott, M.D., M.P.H. Position: Exec. Director, Health & Wellness

Overview:
The Counseling and Psychological Services unit operating within the Campus Health Service has been able to hire an experienced Psychologist/Assistant Director for the last three-quarters of this year and a new front office support position as a result of the $100,000 in funding received from the new Student Services Fee in 2008-2009. The Ph.D., Clinical Psychologist sees mental health patients 70% of the time and offers much needed professional management oversight as Assistant Director for a unit that is expanding to meet unprecedented student demand for mental health services on the U of A campus.

Updates:
The Campus Health Service has committed the vast majority of the Student Services Fee money in the form of salary and benefits for the aforementioned positions. However, since Glenn Matchett-Morris, Ph.D., Psychologist and Assistant Director, was not hired to begin practicing until October 6, 2008, the Campus Health Service has returned $1,796 to the Student Services Fee Committee for year one of the funding support.

It is also clear Dr. Matchett-Morris is well on his way to providing much needed services as his clinical schedule has quickly filled with students/patients who are seeking professional mental health services. In addition, the student patient’s ability to communicate with a “live person” for the purpose of making an appointment or otherwise accessing the services of the Counseling and Psychological Services unit has markedly improved as a result of the addition of a third front office staff member, effective July 1, 2008.

Demand:
The U of A Counseling and Psychological Services unit is experiencing dramatically rising demand for mental health services consistent with reports from college settings all over the United States. When a comparison in the number of patient visits is performed between the 2002-2003 and 2007-2008 school years, the resulting figures underscore this assertion. The Counseling and Psychological Services unit total visit volume for 2002-2003 was 6,681 compared with 10,134 for 2007-2008, a 51.68% increase in raw visit volume. Even when the figures are “neutralized” for increased enrollment over the 5-year period, the visits figures increase from .186-visits/enrolled UA student to .267-visits/enrolled UA student, a 45.55% increase. Therefore, not only is the Counseling and Psychological Services unit total visit volume rising, so is the relative intensity of utilization by the U of A student population.

As for the true impact on accessibility to mental health services resulting from the addition of Dr. Matchett-Morris is concerned, it is too soon to provide exact figures, but it
is expected that an average of 750-800 student/patient visits’ per year will be accommodated. The Campus Health Service will be very pleased to provide more definitive information to the Student Services Fee Committee as this and subsequent years unfold.

**Outreach:**
The posting of a six-inch decal that states, “Your UA Student Affairs Fee At Work”, on the glass partition of the Counseling and Psychological Services waiting room helps to highlight the funding support source. Given the fact that Student Services Fee funding is providing for Counseling and Psychological Services professional and support staffing, it is somewhat challenging to offer more on-site promotional support. The Campus Health Service will, however, be adding a tag line to all of our Wildcat Newspaper advertising for Counseling and Psychological Services that properly acknowledges the generous fee support, beginning November 19, 2008.

In addition, Dr. Matchett-Morris will be participating on a number of U of A committees and will perform some specific outreach activities that will help to emphasize the support.

**Student Services Fee Breakdown:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Services Fee - Funding Allotment</td>
<td>Total</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$100,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full-time Equivalent</td>
<td>Expense (Sal/ERE)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ph.D. Psychologist/Asst. Director</td>
<td>1.0-FTE (3/4’s of Year)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support Service (Receptionist)</td>
<td>1.0-FTE (Full Year)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal Staffing Expense for 2008-2009</td>
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1st year funding returned to SS Fee Com. (unused for first year –only)..............$ 1,796

**Other Funding Sources:**
The first year Student Services Fee funding allotment of $100,000 for the Counseling and Psychological Services unit is augmented by approximately $1,000,000 in University Retained Fees, and $500,000 in Fee-For-Service funding in order for the unit to remain at its’ present size and capacity.

It is clear, as the demand for mental health services continues to rise, the Counseling and Psychological Services unit will need to consider hiring additional professional staff members to meet the need and begin to close the gap in professional staffing to enrolled student ratios enjoyed by other university counseling centers. When this need for staffing is set against a reduction in Retained Fees funding due to University budget cuts, an added financial burden will have to be borne by either increasing the Fees-For-Service paid by students or through other means such as the Student Services Fee funding support. The downside of increasing Fees-For-Service tends to result in discouraging utilization by some students which has a negative affect on student success/retention.