**Academic Support and Services Committee**

**NJCU University Senate**

**December 2020**

**Additional Student Mental Health Supports/Services at NJCU**

NJCU Student Counseling Center has been providing amazing good quality counseling services for our students prior to and during this COVID-19 pandemic, and at the same time, the center also has limited clinical staff to provide enough services to all the NJCU students who are in need and thus has developed a long waitlist of student clients. Thus, the Counselor Education Department and the Student Counseling Center have been cooperating with several offices on campus in order to provide additional mental health supports/services to NJCU students. Currently, four internship students in the Counselor Education Department are providing these services in four different projects on campus. Overall, Jodi Bailey and the director of the Student Counseling Center oversee all these additional services, the administrative staff in different offices are providing administrative supervision, and the faculty members, Drs. Ogawa and Tuazon, are providing clinical supervision for the four student interns.

**The Four Projects**:

1. Lunch Bunch Project: Starting in the Fall 2020, two students are providing group counseling services in support group format for undergraduate students. The groups will start at the end of Oct, 2020, and will meet once or twice a week. Currently, about 5-10 students have signed up for this service (Administrative supervisor: Jodi Baily; Clinical supervisor: Victor Tuazon).
2. Res Life Project: One student provides counseling services to campus residence students (it used to be mandated students, but during pandemic, this project is open to self-referred/volunteer students, too). Currently, this project has been serving 5-6 students in average (Administrative staff: Chantell Rivera; Clinical supervisor: Yumi Ogawa).

Reaching out to students/advertising this service is typically a challenge

1. Rebound Project: Two students work with academic support team to provide mental health services (including mental health workshops and counseling) for students who report mental health needs while receiving academic supports for academic probation. This project mainly serves rebound students, but is also open to other students now during the pandemic (Administrative supervisor: John Blicharz; Clinical supervisor: Victor Tuazon).
2. LGBTQIA+ Support Project: One student intern received a GA position and is providing group counseling in support group format for LGBTQIA+ students. This project was initiated by the Women Center; Pride Center with cooperation with the Student Counseling Center (Administrative supervisor: Venida Rodman from “Women Center”; Clinical supervisor: Victor Tuazon)

Note. The student interns are not providing urgent response or emergency services. All the urgent/emergency situations are referred to the Student Counseling Center and the on-call clinician(s) will respond to the situations.

**Challenges and Supports Needed**:

The NJCU, particularly the aforementioned departments and offices are providing these precious additional supports and services; the student interns reported some challenges they have experienced so far:

* **Marketing/Advertisement**: Although these services are available on campus, delivering the information about these services to NJCU students has always been a challenge. Advertising these services often falls back onto the student interns, which is not appropriately use their skill set and also has very limited effect. This challenge is even more severe during this pandemic since students are not coming to the aforementioned offices, such as Women Center, Pride Center, Student Counseling Center, and old marketing method like bulletin board doesn’t work anymore. *The university may want to consider additional marketing/advertisement strategies in order to help students know these available services*. Perhaps, actively and constantly advertising these services through NJCU mobile App might be a good idea!
* **Technology Support**: The client file management and storage was not a concern prior to COVID-19 pandemic because all the student client files were physically stored in corresponding offices and the security and confidentiality were highly protected following HIPAA regulations. However, during this pandemic, student interns are unable to store student client files in these offices because the services has been transitioned to telecounseling format. Currently, student interns even purchased their own locked cabinets to store student client files in order to meet HIPAA regulation. *The university may want to consider some HIPAA compliant software for telecounseling services so the student interns can continue provide these services and securely keep all the student client records and files in electronic files*. Perhaps, the university can consider “Supervision Assist (<https://supervisionassist.com/>).
* **Staff Support**: There is no additional staff to support the client scheduling. Currently, the administrative supervisors and staff in these projects all have their original heavy workload already and are unable to provide support for client scheduling, and the scheduling falls onto student interns. These projects have been working fine so far because the student interns are putting extra effort contacting students and scheduling services. *The university may want to consider providing staff support for the client scheduling, especially if these projects grow even more in the future*. (with the software such as Supervision Assist, it would be much easier for client scheduling)