

THE JED FOUNDATION CAMPUS PROGRAM

JED Foundation Campus Program Review: Cornell Response to Recommendations **April 4, 2018**

Introduction

In 2016, Cornell University began participation in the JED Foundation's new Campus Program. The Campus Program is the current generation of JED's efforts to assist colleges and universities in their efforts to promote student mental health and prevent suicide. Cornell has participated in JED's past initiatives, including receiving the JED Seal in 2013, which was the organization's former program to recognize institutions of higher education that met the Foundation's standards.

The Campus Program is a multi-year initiative during which campuses commit to engaging in comprehensive, strategic efforts to support student mental health. The first phase of the Campus Program is an external review by JED. This review was a multi-step process that spanned two years and involved the following:

- 2016 Completion of a self-study document with feedback from JED
- 2017 Site visit including meetings with staff, faculty, and students
- 2017-2018 A series of phone meetings with JED staff to review the site visit and overall recommendations

This document represents the conclusion of the external review phase of Cornell's participation in the Campus Program. The University will continue to communicate with JED to inform them of progress and challenges, and to receive consultation. Below are recommendations made by JED in each of eight key areas. For each recommendation, a summary of Cornell's response is provided. These responses reflect a combination of clarifications Cornell has provided to JED regarding existing strategies, progress made in response to the recommendations, and remaining challenges and opportunities.

Strategic Planning

Objective: Ensure that emotional well-being is a campus wide responsibility.

JED Recommendations:

Expand the JED Campus team. Assess budgetary needs for new programs/plans related to JED Campus.
Ensure the campus community is aware of the JED Campus strategic plan and the work of the task force.

Cornell Response:

Cornell has long maintained a strategic focus on a community-based approach to campus mental health. Cornell's Strategic Plan includes the following goal in service of Educational Excellence: *"Promote the health and well-being of students (undergraduate, graduate, and professional) as a foundation for academic and life success."* Our Behavioral Health Committee provides strategic leadership and direction for the recently-established [Coalition on Mental Health](#). The Coalition has an expanded membership from its predecessor (the Council on Mental Health and Well-Being from 2004 - 2016), thus allowing a greater number of student, faculty, and staff stakeholders to participate in key initiatives related to student mental health. The Coalition will also share information related to the evolution of Cornell's [comprehensive mental health framework](#). Information regarding the work of the Coalition is shared [online](#) and available to all members of the campus community including faculty, staff, students, and families.

Develop Life Skills

Objective: Teach students the skills necessary to cope with the stresses of college life, make wise lifestyle choices, and be academically successful.

JED Recommendations:

Offer or enhance programming and/or groups on Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) skills. Implement campaigns to educate the campus community about the links between physical and emotional health and academic success.

Cornell Response:

Cornell Health is discussing ways to develop more robust clinical efforts to incorporate DBT principles into its CAPS group offerings as well as supplemental resources to individual therapy. Student and Campus Life staff continue to work with student groups like [Cornell Minds Matter](#) to address stigma and expand programs that address the links between physical and emotional health and academic success. These programs include but are not limited to [Let's CU Sleep, and Thrive@Cornell](#). This expanding campus-wide effort to promote the [Nature Rx program](#) is another example of an initiative (among faculty, staff, and students) designed to articulate the link between student health and academic success.

Promote Social Connectedness

Objective: Implement sustainable programs that offer students the opportunity to build connections with others in their community.

JED Recommendations:

Develop proactive action steps to help identify disconnected/isolated students, especially students of color, international students, students of marginalized religious identities, undocumented students, transfer students, students with disabilities, veterans, and graduate students.

Cornell Response:

The student-led "[Reflect at Cornell](#)" and "Breaking Bread" events, [Cornell Minds Matter](#), as well as the [Intergroup Dialogue Project](#) course are all examples of current, sustainable programs, available to all students, that help to cultivate a sense of belonging and community (especially among students from marginalized identities). Within the Division of Student and Campus Life numerous offices address the specific and unique needs of students who hold various marginalized identities. For example, Residential and New Student Programs offers a housing option called [Program Houses](#) dedicated to celebrating cultural diversity including Ujamaa, Holland International Living Center, the Latino Living Center, and Akwe:kon. The Office of the Dean of Students is comprised of resource centers (Women's Resource Center, LGTB Resource Center, and the Asian and Asian American Center) and other departments (Cornell United Religious Work, Student Development Diversity Initiatives, and the Student Veterans Advocate Office) that focus on identity development, student support and advocacy, and create opportunities for students to explore the intersectionality of identity development. The Skorton Center for Health Initiatives within Cornell Health does programming with students to promote the importance of social connections and the need for bystander interventions when students recognize isolated or disconnected students. The Student Disability Services office within Cornell Health works to support students with disabilities and advises the Cornell University Disability Awareness student organization.

Identify Students at Risk

Objectives:

Ensure incoming students with mental health and substance abuse histories are supported in their transition to college. Provide robust screening opportunities at diverse touchpoints in the student experience. Train campus community members to identify, reach out to, and refer students who may be struggling.

JED Recommendations:

Direct messages to new incoming students who self-identify with mental health and/or substance use history about

services and resources on campus prior to arrival. Provide and publicize screening tools for depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders on the counseling and/or health education websites. Develop, expand, or strengthen gatekeeper-training program for relevant campus faculty and staff in identifying, reaching out to, and referring students who may be struggling.

Cornell Response:

Cornell Health collects information about students' physical health and mental health concerns through a pre-matriculation Health History form. This form is regularly reviewed and updated in order to facilitate accurate and timely documentation of mental health concerns. Students who self-identify with concerns, receive letters instructing them about how they can receive care at Cornell Health if desired. Cornell Health also continues to provide mental health screenings in primary care settings and to participate in the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention screening program. Staff also continue to develop new and expand current gatekeeper training programs, such as "[Notice & Respond: Assisting Students in Distress](#)" and [Friend2Friend](#). Our recently developed "[Intervene](#)" video and workshop portrays students acting as pro-social bystanders in a variety of situations including a potential sexual assault, racial bias, hazing, emotional distress, sexual harassment, intimate partner violence, and an alcohol emergency. More information about Cornell Health bystander programs can be found here: health.cornell.edu/bystander

Increase Help-Seeking Behavior

Objective:

Promote help seeking behavior through destigmatization efforts and increased access to resource information.

JED Recommendations:

Cross reference/link counseling center, health services and health education websites. Implement campaigns/programs to encourage help-seeking by de-stigmatizing mental health and substance abuse problems on campus. Utilize online resources from other organizations to enhance wellness messaging.

Cornell Response:

[Cornell Health's website](#) reviews a broad range of collaborative efforts from Counseling and Psychological Services, the Medical Department, and the Skorton Center for Health Initiatives. These efforts take a comprehensive approach to providing care as well as addressing broader public health concerns related to mental health and issues such as substance abuse, hazing, and sexual violence. The websites for both Cornell Health and the Office of the Dean of Students provide a broad array of resources on and off-campus to help students address mental health concerns. The student-led [Beneath the Surface](#) media campaign encourages help-seeking by profiling well-known students who have received support from multiple campus resources, including but not limited to Cornell Health (e.g., academic advising/student services offices, LGBT Resource Center, Athletic coaches, Learning Strategies Center, and OADI).

Provide Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Objectives:

Ensure students have adequate and comprehensive health insurance coverage. Ensure leave policies and protocols best support students in distress. Establish systems, protocols and processes that best coordinate necessary care for students. Expedite, increase, and ensure access to all necessary clinical care services, including after-hours care. Ensure substance abuse policies and protocols best support students.

JED Recommendations:

Develop or refine resources to educate students and families in making informed decisions when choosing a health insurance plan. Develop/refine a written medical leave of absence policy that is consistent with JED Campus recommendations. Ensure that all leave policies are transparent and easily accessible to the campus community. Collect data on student utilization and incidents on campus related to mental health/substance abuse. Establish or enhance relationships with local community services and providers. Develop/refine a "medical amnesty" policy that

is consistent with JED Campus recommendations. Implement strategically timed messaging campaigns to remind students about the risks and consequences of substance use/misuse.

Cornell Response:

Cornell Health provides accessible and [affordable health plans for all students](#). This includes the development of our Student Health Plan-Medicaid ([SHP-M](#)), a program for New York State students who qualify for Medicaid. Cornell Health continues to work with all of the academic units at Cornell to make the health leave process as straight forward as possible. The university's [Voluntary Leave policy](#) was recently revised in December 2017 to address identified issues. Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) continues to provide comprehensive mental health care within a collaborative care model at Cornell Health. This includes after hours care and substance abuse education and referral. Our Good Samaritan Protocol encourages students to call for medical emergencies and served as a model for the New York State Good Samaritan Law: [GoodSam.cornell.edu](#).

Follow Crisis Management Procedures

Objective:

Ensure that protocols are established for the reporting of, and follow-up for, emergency situations.

JED Recommendation:

Develop/refine a family notification policy to be used in emergency situations.

Cornell Response:

The Office of the Dean of Students and the Cornell University Police continue to provide crisis management services and community support meetings in conjunction with the counseling staff at Cornell Health in response to emergency situations. These services work to involve families in emergency situations while balancing students' privacy rights.

Restrict Access to Potentially Lethal Means

Objective:

Proactively minimize environmental risks for suicide.

JED Recommendation:

Conduct an annual campus environmental scan involving students to identify and mitigate access to lethal means.

Cornell Response:

Cornell University has taken one of the most active stances around means restriction in the country. Laboratory chemicals and equipment are secured. Firearms are restricted on campus. Steel nets below campus-area bridges reduce the risk of suicide jumps into local gorges. The university will continue to review our environmental risks related to suicide. The Coalition on Mental Health will address how best to conduct environmental scans and review evidence-based strategies with input from students.
