



## University Relations

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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News Release

# UW System reviewing student behavioral health services

*Recommendations to be made in early 2020*

MADISON, Wis.—The University of Wisconsin System announced Thursday that it is assessing student behavioral health needs and existing services at its 13 universities with an eye toward recommending additional approaches early next year.

Three System work groups led by six senior student affairs officers will make the recommendations.

“With a wealth of expertise on campus, our institutions are already providing a range of behavioral health services to students,” said Board of Regents President Andrew S. Petersen. “We want to replicate what works and identify new strategies to fill gaps.”

Chris Navia, UW System Associate Vice President for Student Success, discussed the formation of the work groups at the UW System Board of Regents meeting Thursday. She said the groups, which include subject matter experts and representation from across the UW System, are designed to be nimble, studying the issue and making recommendations over the next few months. The UW System has already begun taking stock of services provided on campuses and collecting ideas for improvements, Navia said.

One work group will review crisis management services for students at risk of suicide or self-harm. A second will look at targeted interventions for vulnerable student populations including veterans, students of color, and LGBTQ students. A third will study ways to foster healthy learning environments.

UW System officials will seek to identify resources and explore state and national partnerships on the issue.

The work groups are being created in the wake of a presentation to the Board of Regents in April about student behavioral health concerns. Student visits to campus counseling centers have increased 55 percent since 2010, with depression and anxiety the most prevalent issues. The number of students who have considered suicide is also on the rise.

“I look forward to learning more about how our campuses are meeting students’ behavioral health needs today and how we can improve in the future,” said Regent Vice President Michael M. Grebe. “This is an important and meaningful issue for our campus communities.”

According to National College Health Assessment (NCHA) data, 23 percent of UW System students reported being diagnosed with or treated for depression in 2015, and 27 percent reported being diagnosed with or treated for anxiety.

The 2017-18 UW System Counseling Impact Assessment Program found that 22 percent of students thought about leaving school prior to counseling, and that 77 percent of those students said counseling helped them persist.

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*The University of Wisconsin System serves more than 170,000 students. Awarding nearly 37,000 degrees annually, the UW System is Wisconsin’s talent pipeline, putting graduates in position to increase their earning power, contribute to their communities, and make Wisconsin a better place to live. More than 80 percent of in-state UW System graduates stay in Wisconsin five years after earning a degree. The UW System provides a 23:1 return on*

*state investment. UW System institutions also contribute to the richness of Wisconsin's culture and economy with groundbreaking research, new companies and patents, and boundless creative intellectual energy.*

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