

## SU Mental Health SUMmit

- 1 Purpose of paper
  - 1.1 To inform stakeholders on the feedback gathered and outcomes of the SU Mental Health SUMmit.
- 2 Background
  - 2.1 In November 2019 The SU and Student Services collaboratively gathered feedback on student mental health from the student community through the Be Well Survey.
  - 2.2 The SU worked with Student Minds and Nightline and a group of students interested in this area to identify key priorities for students arising from the data (Be Well Survey results) and organised an opportunity for students to come together to discuss further.
  - 2.3 SUMmit is a new mechanism used by the SU to provide an opportunity for students to come together to begin to tackle some of the biggest challenges faced by communities of students at the University of Bath.
  - 2.4 38 students registered prior to the SUMmit. 29 students, together with SU Officers, came together on 18<sup>th</sup> February 2020 to discuss the topic of mental health. Students attending were from a variety of subject disciplines, levels of study, fees status and year of study.
- 3 Executive Summary
  - 3.1 The majority of attendees at SUMmit believed that mental health is not a priority for the University of Bath and it is not perceived to be a topic which is widely and openly talked about.
  - 3.2 Attendees felt that students who are delayed in arriving at the beginning of the academic year, or start their degree at a different point in the year (Doctoral and Erasmus exchange students in particular), miss out on key induction information about mental health. Inductions needed to have more focus on adjusting to the new stage in a student's academic journey rather than operational matters.
  - 3.3 Attendees commented on the perception of overlap between services which lead to students finding it difficult to differentiate between them and knowing which service to approach.
  - 3.4 Clarity of what students should expect from services e.g. how many sessions they will be offered, and having a clear plan of next steps, how to access further support and what to do if the situation escalates was highlighted as important for students accessing support services. An action plan could also prompt discussion with the student regarding disclosure to friends and support available to them.
  - 3.5 Practical steps to making support service spaces more accessible included making spaces less visible to others so that students accessing these spaces feel comfortable and less anxious about others seeing them.
  - 3.6 Clarity in the role of Departmental staff, in particular the roles of Personal Tutor and Director of Studies was highlighted, it is hoped that the review of the Personal Tutoring system addresses this.
  - 3.7 An overview of feedback gathered can be seen in appendix 1.

- 4 Recommendations
- 4.1 Review the online communication that is offered relating to the broad range of support (both mental health or otherwise) from the University to ensure there is a clarity of information, management of expectations and clear navigation for students who are seeking support available from the University.
- 4.2 Have a student wellbeing section in all papers relating to student experience presented to University Learning, Teaching & Quality Committee, Student Experience Board and Council, Senate, Students' Union Committee to ensure that student wellbeing is considered when decisions are being made.
- 4.3 A consideration for the induction strategy group what induction offering is available for students who don't start at the traditional points during the year (doctoral and ERASMUS).
- 4.4 To have an explicit focus in mental health working group of what transition looks like at different points in the student life cycle and what measures are being put in place at each point to support students better.
- 4.5 Involve students' peers/friends in students' action plan if they are in need of long-term support, with their consent.
- 4.6 Install frosted glass on the front of the Roper Centre (Student Services building).

*The following recommendations are part of wider work and discussions that have been had with Student Services and other members of the University. They are specifically related to impact measurement and governance which we hope will inform future work. We hope that a combination of these recommendations will improve the overall delivery of the support offering for students.*

- 4.7 Create impact assessments and targets for all services on offer within Student Services.
- 4.8 Ensure appropriate accountability is undertaken by Student Services and that there is an annual report presented to Equality and Diversity Committee, CSSU, and University Council.
- 4.9 No cuts made to the Student Services budget, and that any significant increase in the number of students in 2020/21 (for example where placement students have to progress directly into final year) is met with adequate resource allocation per student.

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