December 1, 2016
Faculty Senate Presentation

Mental Health & Wellness at Stanford

Jackson Beard, ASSU Executive President
Amanda Edelman, ASSU Executive Vice President
About ASSU Executive

- Every student is a member of the Associated Students of Stanford University (ASSU)
- Our mandate: ensure the ASSU’s long-term political and financial viability
- ASSU Executive builds a Cabinet and expends funds
- We engage with ASSU entities, University bodies, and external media outlets
#UNITE

● Our platform included key and perennial student issues
  ○ Mental Health & Wellness
  ○ Academics
  ○ Sexual Assault & Title IX
  ○ Community Development
  ○ Environmental Justice & Sustainability

● Mental Health & Well-being is a core issue area; it is of universal importance to students of all types
Climbing the Stanford hill
Student investment

● Student life is all-encompassing - and often difficult to balance
  ○ Courses
  ○ Residential community
  ○ Service, career, academic, hobby and other extracurricular groups
  ○ Social events
  ○ Planning for future pursuits
  ○ Off-campus obligations and interests

● “Duck Syndrome” oversimplifies the student experience

● Mental health and wellness is relevant to students throughout and beyond their time at Stanford
Student Groups Committed to Improving Mental Health on Campus

Infographic by Lily Zheng, Mental Health + Wellness Coalition
ASSU Executive Cabinet Initiatives

1) Revamp wellness.stanford.edu to increase visibility and accessibility

2) Identify and centralize scattered, less visible mental health resources (i.e. AA, grief counseling, etc.)

3) Address student concerns about CAPS wait times

4) Increase transparency of and facilitate improvements on Stanford’s crises protocol

5) Administer a survey to gauge campus climate on mental health (perceptions of campus resources, stigma, etc.)
Areas of Improvement

- Student perceptions regarding “lacking” mental health resources--
  Many of the resources and initiatives are there; people just do not know about them
- Disparate, decentralized student-run initiatives
- Lack of funding to sufficiently provide for students
- Dearth of resources for intermediate-level care
- Lack of communication between students and faculty/admin
Faculty Engagement
What Can Faculty Do?

- Offer support to students struggling with coursework or students exhibiting concerning symptoms
  - Please do not take punitive measures against them
- Normalize check-ins with students to assess their well-being
- Discuss the option of taking Incompletes
- Remain mindful of sensitive topics and articulate trigger warnings as needed
- Solicit mid-quarter feedback that speaks directly to ways teaching staff can better support student needs
Summary

- Mental health & wellness has been an issue at Stanford for decades
- There has been robust student engagement to support our communities and improve our experience on campus and beyond
- Student leaders, including previous ASSU Executives, have driven improvements in this area
- Administrators have historically been key allies
- Faculty can support students’ mental health and champion wellness by:
  - Allowing students to prioritize well-being with compassion and/or by taking Incompletes
  - Being aware of sensitive topics and proceeding accordingly
  - Asking for feedback on teaching team-student interaction
Thank you for your time