ASSU Presentation to University Budget Group

Justice Tention, President of the ASSU
September 25, 2017
Mission of the ASSU

“The ASSU provides funding to over 700 volunteer student organizations (VSO). These organizations in turn provide the majority of cultural, political, recreational and religious programming for the entire campus... The ASSU also works to represent the interests, needs and perspectives of Stanford students at every level of decision making within the university.”
ASSU Executive

- President, Justice Tention ‘18, and Vice President, Vicki Niu ‘18
- Elected representatives of all 16,000 Undergraduate and Graduate students
- Oversee all ASSU bodies including:
  - Undergraduate Senate
  - Graduate Student Council
  - Stanford Student Enterprises (ASSU financial branch)
- Manage Cabinet of student leaders focusing on various issue areas:
  - Mental Health & Wellbeing
  - Sexual Violence
  - Academics
  - Sustainability, Environmental Justice
  - Disability
  - Community Centers
Preview

- Mental Health and Well-Being
- Stanford as a just community for all
Mental Health and Well-Being
Stanford students are facing an increasing amount of stress, anxiety, and depression

- As we see from University survey data, students are facing an experiencing an increasing amount of stress on campus
  - The narrative of stressful pre-collegiate experience to be admitted to Stanford, then reduce stress when we arrive is not the case
  - In fact, the opposite is true. Students are more stressed after they arrive at Stanford
- Common student life stressors that students seek-help for are:
  - Stress/anxiety
  - Relationships
  - Academics
  - Depression
  - Family Issues
  - Identity
  - Suicidal ideation
Counseling and Psychological Services

- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)** is the university’s counseling center within Vaden Health Center dedicated to student mental health and well-being.

- Dedicated CAPS counselors and staff provide
  - Short-term as well as on-going counseling for students in need
  - Crisis response for any urgent mental health issue
  - Refer students to outside psychological and medical assistance that exceeds scope of CAPS ability to help

- CAPS services offered at no additional cost to students, included with Campus Health Service Fee
  - Makes counseling services accessible to students regardless of insurance coverage
CAPS has seen a net increase in demand in recent years

**Increase in number of students visiting CAPS**
- More students are visiting CAPS than ever before
- Difficult to tell exactly why this is but several potential factors:
  - More high-needs students
  - Students who previously sought other resources now going/referred to CAPS
  - Other external changes in social norms

**Increase in outreach requests**
- Counselors are increasingly asked to attend events, discussions, talks (FACES, Community Center talks, etc.)
- More outreach to communities who historically did not see CAPS as accessible or approachable.
- Leaves fewer appointment slots within CAPS

**Increase in number of students on campus**
- Growing Undergraduate population by 100 per year through 2035 (per General Use Permit)
- Escondido Village will bring 2,431 Grad Students just down road of Vaden who might have previously used other clinical services
- This is not limited to CAPS, but also will strain on Vaden, Rec centers, food, and other on-campus facilities
CAPS struggles to retain counselors

- Unlike other Student Affairs positions, CAPS counselors have lots of alternatives in terms of employment.
  - Counselors frequently leave to start their own private practice or join other more lucrative positions
- Bay Area cost of living makes it difficult to recruit from other parts of the nation
- Consequences:
  - High counselor turnover reduces quality of care for students
  - Not always fully staffed
Catering to a diverse student body

- CAPS serves a diverse student population with wide variety of identities
  - Age groups (serving both Undergraduate and Graduate students)
  - Cultural and ethnic backgrounds
  - Nationalities
  - Socioeconomic statuses
  - Sexualities
  - Gender identities
  - Disabilities

- Students will often request counselors who are affirming in one or multiple of these identities

- For quality of care, it is critical to have a diverse staff of counselors to meet the needs of all Stanford students
Inadequate funding

- Fortunately, 100% of Health Fee goes to student health services, no taxes unlike other universities
- Health Fee only rises at same rate as tuition (2-4% each year)
  › Health care inflation national average is 4-8% each year
- CAPS has seen no significant increase in funding in recent years, despite the significant increase in demand
Well-Being is not the sole responsibility of Vaden

- Many departments, organizations, and student groups on campus work to address issue of student well-being
  - ResEd (RAs, CAs, Resident Fellows)
  - The Bridge Peer Counseling Center (24-hour, 7-day peer call center)
  - The Mental Health Coalition (14 student groups supporting student health and well-being)
  - Community Centers
  - Graduate Life Office
  - Bechtel International Center
  - Office of Accessible Education

- Efforts promoting well-being can change campus culture and prevent escalation to point where students need clinical support
Still, CAPS does not have resources to adequately meet demand

- Although, many groups on campus are working to address the state of mental health and well-being on campus, CAPS is the only resource on campus for clinical support
- CAPS does not have the adequate number of counselors and resources to address the problem of mental health and well-being on campus
Stanford as a just community for all
Stanford as a just community for all

- The Stanford student body is a vibrant, passionate community that want to have meaningful impact on the world
- Ultimately, student activists and advocates desires for Stanford to be a just community for all its diverse student, faculty, and staff
Support from new university leadership

- New University leadership has made quick and strong responses to issues that rise at a national level
  - Provost Drell’s statement on Stanford’s commitment to battling sexual assault
  - President Tessier-Lavigne’s statement on “shameful decision” to rescind DACA

- President’s remarks at Convocation encompass this shared commitment to make Stanford a just community for all

- Expressed values of University leadership should be reflected in student facing resources
“[Respect] your body and respecting the bodies of others; holding yourself and one another accountable for preventing sexual violence.”
Sexual Violence & Title IX

- Nationally, the Federal Government is retreating from Obama-era protections on Title IX on college campuses
- At Stanford, the Title IX Pilot Program is in its final year, concluding in August 2018
  - Advisory Panel continue to work with students to collect feedback on Stanford’s Title IX process
  - The Title IX process should be accessible and fair to all students regardless of background, socioeconomic status, gender, sexuality or other identity
  - Students demand transparency in adjudication process, while upholding privacy
“Whether you come from a family of lesser or greater financial means...you belong here.”
Supporting First-Generation, Low-Income students

- Students from low-income backgrounds face unique challenges at Stanford and do not have the “social capital” that most students with parents of advance degrees have.
- Majority of First-Generation, Low-Income students are also underrepresented minority students.
- Community Centers are instrumental for supporting low-income students.
  - Community Centers cannot meet full needs of students with their University provided funding.
  - Count on ASSU-funded groups to make up for shortcomings in University support.
    - E.g. University traditions organized by Community Centers such as Black/Nuestra/Native Graduation but funded by ASSU funded student organizations.
From President Tessier-Lavigne’s Convocation remarks

“Whether you and your family were born in the United States, or in another special place somewhere around the world…you belong here.”
Immigration

- Protect and support those most vulnerable to deportation, surveillance, and employment discrimination, specifically Muslim and undocumented individuals.
  - “Dreamers” as affected by DACA
  - Student, faculty, and support staff
- Undergraduates and Graduate students in constant worry of visa status upon graduation
- Continue to push for legislative solutions at a national level
“Draw on our diversity.”
Promote and support a diverse student body, staff, and faculty

- Students
  - Adequate Community Center with proper funding and staffing
  - Celebrate and promote all forms of diversity, including national, socioeconomic, etc.

- Staff
  - Support staff ought be diverse to adequately meet the needs of the diverse student body which they serve
  - CAPS Counselors, Student Affairs staff, etc.

- Faculty
  - Continued support of the Faculty Development Initiative (FDI) to increase representation amongst the faculty population
  - Visiting scholars from diverse backgrounds
    - We see this band of low hanging fruit but we caution against using that as the metric of success
    - Metric of success should be next step-up, tenured faculty members
  - Look at potential faculty who are either
    - Current Stanford PhD candidates
    - PhD’s who have left
    - Other candidates who at some point were at Stanford and have a love for the farm