Introduction to Student Wellness.

University of Guelph Graduate Student Orientation, Fall 2020

Transcript:

Hello everyone, my name is Alison Burnette. I'm the Director of Student Wellness here at the University of Guelph and I am here today to give you a brief overview of the various programs and services that are available at the University of Guelph to help students live well and achieve well while they're students.

This obviously is a new way of presenting this information to you and I hope sometime in the near future I'll be able to meet you in person. Until then, I'm going to give you a high level overview of some of the services and programs. If you'd like more information, our website is noted here at the bottom of the slide, which goes into much more details, that you can refer back to if you need to as we move through this next year.

So, this is the J. T. Powell Building and this is going to be the newly named Vaccarino Center for Student Wellness. The services that are included within Student Wellness are Accessibility Services, Counseling Services, Wellness Education and Promotion, Health and Performance Center, Health Services, Sexual Violence Supports and Student Support Network.

Here's a brief overview of what our services provide, and the phone numbers associated with each of our services. I believe that Teri has uploaded to the site this postcard of our services that you can have for future reference. I'm going to speak a little bit more detail about each of these services, just to give you a brief overview and to highlight some of the important components or things that would be of benefit for you to know at the outset.

Accessibility Services helps students who experience disabilities with full and equitable participation in academic life. We strive to work with our faculty partners in creating a barrier-free environment where students can achieve their potential. Our services include advising, support, screening for individuals who think they may have a disability, whether it's a permanent or temporary disability. Temporary disabilities can be things such as broken arms, legs, concussions. It doesn't include things like colds and temporary flus. You know various illnesses, those are not considered disabilities.

Advisors meet with individual students to discuss the accommodations and supports that they need that would help them to achieve and maintain their academic success. As we go through this fall term, these services will be done in a virtual way through video conferencing, etc, and meeting with students online. We also provide transitional and orientation programs for new students.

Many of you are probably going to be grad teaching assistants in the upcoming year and with regards to Accessibility Services, it's important for you to know that if you have a student in your class who approaches you with a request for an accommodation, that you don't try and
make decisions in isolation. It's often helpful to ask if you can check in with their SAS advisor and that helps with consistency and ensuring that we're all doing the right things to support the student. If they're not registered, you could encourage them to contact SAS, and you're not obligated to grant an accommodation just because a student has requested it. We have a process within SAS to confirm that students in fact have disabilities, and that the appropriate accommodations are available given the context within the disability. You can leave to SAS all the sort of nitty gritty of asking for documentation, reviewing accommodations, reviewing the documentation, etc.

If you see someone who's struggling and you suspect that they might have a disability, it is actually very appropriate for you to ask if they need help, and you can also refer them and ask them if they know about Student Accessibility Services. These services are confidential, obviously, within the context of the law, and students can access by calling the front desk of Student Wellness Services to book appointments, etc.

I'd just like to talk briefly about our Student Wellness Navigators. These were new positions that we instituted last year where students who are looking to access mental health services for the first time meet with the Student Wellness Navigator who conducts an introductory assessment and then helps develop a plan with the student and assist them in accessing the most appropriate services to address their needs. Often, you know students aren't aware of all the variety of services that are available to help them. They feel they may need counseling, but perhaps that's not what they need.

Also we try to have students meet with our navigators within 24 to 72 hours of approaching our service, so the long wait times for an appointment with a counselor only to be told that they might not be able to help them with their particular issue is diminished and helps decrease the level of crisis. So they meet with the person, they walk away with a plan and they're on their way to addressing the concerns that they have. It's been very highly successful.

Counseling Services are available to all graduate students and you're able to work with all of our counselors who are registered psychotherapists. And, individuals seek counsellors for a variety of reasons. We often encourage people to reach out for help before it becomes a crisis. Not always possible, obviously, but hoping that most people will reach out before it becomes dire.

We offer individual and group therapy on a variety of issues, from self esteem, stress management, dealing with complex emotions and building skills in the area of resiliency. We have drop-in services available every afternoon and all of our services are private and confidential. We don't share again within the confines of the law. All of these services this upcoming year will continue. They will be done in a virtual environment for the most part, of considerations for emergencies, etc. But our approach will be providing services in a virtual way.
Health Services provides multidisciplinary medical care right here on campus. We have a team of family physicians, nurses, dietitians and psychiatrists etc. We have drop-in services again available every day September through April. The difference this year is that students will be encouraged to call prior to coming to campus or coming to the center to do an assessment about whether or not they actually need to come in person, or if the drop-in could be provided in a virtual way. So, individuals are encouraged to contact via the phone prior to coming to the building.

All services are private and confidential, and as I said, where services are able to be provided in a secure virtual environment, they will be. We do have for this upcoming term, physicians on site, although it is minimal as we continue to face the situation with regards to the pandemic. So again, when in doubt, don’t hesitate to contact us and we certainly have services available to assist and will make appropriate decisions, you know upon having conversations with individual students.

Our Wellness Education and Promotion Center offers, obviously wellness education on a variety of different topics related to student health and well being. We offer interactive events, workshops, media campaigns and again our programs and services will primarily be done online this term with lots of exciting new programs aiming to help students maintain and improve their health and well being. So I would encourage you to check out our website for more details on that, and in the end, you know, encouraging you to connect with our social media, where promotion of these events will be happening as well.

Our Student Support Network will also be up and running this fall in a modified way to help facilitate social distancing, etc. We will continue to offer drop-in peer to peer support and graduate student support circles, but these will be done in a virtual environment and that’s just to keep everybody healthy and well as possible.

The Health and Performance Center is a unique service as not all universities have this service. They provide a wide range of diagnostic, rehabilitation and health promotion services. They specialize in the diagnosis, treatment and rehab of acute and chronic orthopedic, musculoskeletal, and support and activity-related injuries. This is accessible to all students on campus, not just varsity athletes, etc.

The health and performance multidisciplinary team includes sports medicine physicians, physiotherapists, massage therapists, osteopaths, dietitians, chiropractors etc. And many of our services are covered under the health and dental plan.

Now for this upcoming term, when in the space of COVID-19, this is one service that we are providing in a face to face format given the nature of the work that they do. We have followed public health strict guidelines in enhancing our cleaning practices, ensuring social distancing where possible, ensuring staff are outfitted with personal protective equipment when needed, and asking our clients to have face coverings when they come for their appointments. So, we are taking all precautions necessary to keep everyone safe and healthy within this environment, as well as screening individuals when they come into the building. So, this is
something that is available to students, and as I said, covered under the health and dental plan.

Our Sexual Violence Supports in education, we have an individual, her name is Meaghan, who is our Sexual Violence Support and Education Coordinator, and this really provides a gateway for support for those who have experienced sexual violence. They can be reached through a variety of ways to self referral, referral from others on campus, through our front desk, through our Student Wellness Navigators, that is often a gateway as well, and in addition to the individual support that she provides to students, she works with a team of peers to provide campus training and education related to consent and sexual violence, and you may have come across our new sexual violence education training module that’s being launched this fall as well.

And finally, if you are in need of urgent help, I just want to highlight for you on the Student Wellness website that there is a button here on the web page and this is on all of the Student Wellness website pages for urgent help, that you can click on that and it will give you after-hours resources including, here 24/7, good to talk, our crisis texting service that you could access after hours. So, we have you covered for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in terms of support. So, I would encourage you to access those as well when needed.

So again, that gives you an overview of our Student Wellness Services. Here again is our website and I would encourage you to get connected with us on our social media channels. I want to wish you all a very good year and if you do need our services please don’t hesitate to reach out. Stay well and we hope to see you soon. Bye bye.

[End of Transcript]