

TOWSON UNIVERSITY STUDENT CONCERNS COMMITTEE

(revised 8-19-11)

MISSION

The mission of the Towson University Student Concerns Committee is to coordinate the support resources of Towson University to assist students in being successful academically and in promoting their health and well-being.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Student Concerns Committee is to serve as a central network focused on prevention and early intervention in community situations involving students experiencing extreme distress or engaging in harmful or disruptive behaviors. The Committee will develop strategies and provide consultations to the university community when concerns arise about students' well-being or when there is behavior that is potentially harmful to self and/or others or is disruptive/ threatening. This committee will regularly assess these situations in the university community and will recommend actions in accord with existing university policies.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Coordinate the university response to potentially harmful/disruptive student situations
- Develop specific strategies to manage potentially harmful or disruptive behavior by students with regard to safety and rights of others and minimize the disruption to the university community.
- Make recommendations to university officials on appropriate action regarding the disposition of students' cases consistent with university policies and procedures.
- Receive, gather and catalogue information about difficult situations involving students. The person maintaining reports for the committee is the Associate Vice President for Students Affairs.

MEMBERS:

Jana Varwig, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Chair

Jerry Dieringer, Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Housing and Residence Life

Pat Frawley, Director, Student Conduct and Civility Education

Ryan Kane, Associate Director, Student Conduct and Civility Education

Bernie Gerst, Chief of TU Police Department and Director of Public Safety

Teri Hall, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Campus Life

Jane Halpern, Director, Dowell Health Center

Toyia Younger, Assistant Provost, Academic Affairs
Dan Leonard, Assistant to the President for Special Projects
Jim Spivack, Special Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs, and Director,
Counseling Center
Susan Willemin, Director, Disability Support Services

AS NEEDED MEMBERS

Other university officials representing the following offices/organizations may be asked to serve on the committee in specific situations as needed. They include but are not limited to:

- Office of Media Relations representative
- International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO)
- Representative from Campus Ministries
- University Counsel
- Athletics

The Student Concerns Committee will meet weekly during the fall and spring semesters.

PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES FOR CASE MANAGEMENT

Chair Functions

The Student Concerns Committee will be chaired through the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs by the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs. Chair functions will include but not be limited to the following:

- Setting the agenda for meetings
- Facilitating meeting discussions and managing meeting time
- Record-keeping
- Post-meeting follow-up

Member Responsibility

- Receiving and sharing relevant information about potentially harmful behavioral situations in the community
- Responding to/implementing dispositions/action steps from the Committee meetings

Committee Procedures

- The Committee will discuss cases for an appropriate length of time to come to an acceptable resolution as determined by the Chair.

- The Committee will work on setting appropriate behavioral boundaries within existing university policies, and examine specific departmental procedures or course of action.
- The Committee will consider specific issues including the assessment of potential violence, evidence of mental illness as the possible cause of the harmful behavior, containment of disruption, examination of environmental causes, and appropriate referral resources.

Criteria for discussion at the Student Concerns Committee:

Student issues involving threatening behavior such as but not limited to:

A student who implies or makes a direct threat to harm others

A student who displays a firearm or weapon

A student who physically confronts/attacks another person

A student who stalks or harasses another person

A student who sends threatening emails, letters, and other correspondence to another person

Additionally:

A student who attempts suicide or who makes serious or repeated threats of harm to self

A student who experiences an alcohol/drug overdose, accidental or intentional

Record-keeping:

The Associate Vice President for Student Affairs will keep a record of all student behavior discussed at the Student Concerns Committee including name of student, the student's behavior causing concern, and the recommended disposition of the situation. In accordance with FERPA requirements, students discussed at the meeting may request and gain access to their individual record.

REPORTING CONCERNS TO THE STUDENT CONCERNS COMMITTEE:

Faculty and staff are encouraged to contact university services such as the Towson University Police, the Counseling Center, the Provost's Office, the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, and the Office of Student Conduct and Civility Education for consultation about student behavior which concerns them. When appropriate these

departments will bring information about student behavior to the committee for discussion and possible action. The committee may contact faculty and staff for further information as needed. Faculty and staff should also inform their chair or supervisor when they are concerned about student behavior. Please see the Counseling Center brochure, "Helping Students in Distress" for more specific information about dealing with student behavioral concerns.

POTENTIAL DISPOSITIONS/OUTCOMES

The following are potential recommendations for Dispositions/Outcomes:

- No immediate action taken; monitor for future occurrences
- Assist faculty or staff in developing a plan of action
- Referral to existing campus support resources
- Referral to appropriate off-campus community resources
- Recommendation of parental notification
- Recommendation of a voluntary medical leave of absence
- Recommendation of an involuntary leave of absence
- Associate Vice President may discuss situations with faculty

CASE INFORMATION AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All student records are protected by FERPA. As such, information about specific student cases will remain confidential with exceptions made only as permitted by FERPA and/or in accordance with federal or state law. Specifically, information will be shared only in the following instances:

To individuals who have a legitimate educational interest

In situations where information needs to be shared in order to protect the health and safety of the student involved

In situations where information needs to be shared in order to protect potential victims from threats of harm

If the student involved in harmful, threatening, or disruptive activities is already receiving care at the Towson University Counseling Center information may only be obtained by the committee without written authorization of the student in question, in accord with federal and state law.

Information from psychiatric/psychological assessments required of the student as a pre-condition of being allowed to stay in campus housing or school may be shared with the committee for the purpose of making decisions regarding the safety and welfare of that student and the campus community.

Official meeting records containing identifying data will be maintained in a confidential file in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.