



Date: November 12, 2021
Meeting: November 2021 Board of Regents Meeting
Organization: University System of Maryland Student Council
Representation: **Yvonne Harper**, University of Baltimore
Master of Public Administration Candidate
University System of Maryland Student Council President

Good morning, Board of Regents

As students have settled into their classes, there are other issues that students struggle with daily. Following the October 2021 Chancellor's meeting and the request of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, President Freeman A. Hrabowski III, "How are the student's mental health; we want to know." If I may add, hearing this from a President and leader of our system, especially during a global pandemic, was appreciated. Thank you, President Hrabowski, for thinking of the students because the student's mental health is a significant concern. Chancellor Perman joined us at our October 2021 meeting for a fulfilling discussion on Mental Health and how the system may address some of the problem students mentioned during the session. I would like to continue future conversations throughout this year regarding mental health relating to our student population.

The Vice President of Undergraduate Affairs, Arsalan Siddiqui, and I have devoted time each week to meet with students and University representatives via zoom meetings, phone calls, and in-person to check on their mental health. We will implement this check-in system throughout the year with students as we find ways to navigate our system's new hybrid learning model.

The overall response from the students when referring to mental health has been a request to provide "fast and reliable" mental health services for students. Students have reported waiting multiple months to see a provider when they are not well, while others have taken alternative routes. Students request that universities provide "Stress-management" resources; we are all living through a global pandemic. Before Co-Vid19, mental health may not have been everyone's priority, but at this moment, while we are in the middle of covid and still trying to adjust to the new normal, mental health must be a priority. Lastly, students would like faculty to become more aware and recognize the students struggling with anxiety or depression and take preventative measures to help students succeed in and outside the classroom. After doing some research, I understand that

the Office of Student Support on most campuses houses mental health resources; If there is not already training provided, this office could provide faculty with proper training to identify when a student is in a mental crisis. I have a detailed plan on how this would work and would love to develop this together with the system.

Furthermore, students are requesting more academic resources (extended library hours, tutoring centers). I asked the question regarding In-person learning, online or hybrid education; the overwhelming response was, "it does not matter where I learn, but will I have the resource to learn." There is a discussion around faculty members who have not changed their teaching methods, given that we have been online learning for almost two years and every student's learning style is different. We can not produce successful students and future leaders on old and outdated material. We are an innovative system, and we need a progressive education.

In addition, the Board of Directors has been confirmed by the USMSC council. We have an entire Board, and they began meeting and are very active. The USMSC Board of Directors areas is Communications, Diversity and Inclusion, Government Relations, and Student Affairs. In other news, the Vice President of *Graduate Affairs* position is now vacant; graduate students report to me directly. I am holding a system-Wide Search for a new Vice President of Graduate Affairs.

Sincerely,
Yvonne Harper