



CAMPUS

UNIVERSITY OF
NEBRASKA OMAHA

Initial Feedback Report

2024

INTRODUCTION

JED Campus would like to thank you all for your team's hard work in filling out the JED Campus self-assessment for the University of Nebraska Omaha (UNO). Additionally, a representative sample of students completed the Healthy Minds Study (HMS) during the Fall 2023 Semester with a response rate of 10.13%. We will share a comparison of your data to national averages during your Campus Visit during your campus visit in the Spring.

You will find comments regarding strength areas and areas to consider on each section of the assessment below based on the eight domain areas of our comprehensive framework. This assessment and the feedback report are the first step in an ongoing engagement and collaborative technical assistance process with your JED Campus Advisor. The considerations listed in this report will be incorporated into the overall mental health and well-being JED Campus Strategic Plan for UNO. You will also receive more formal HMS data reports in the future.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Engaging in an active and continuing strategic planning process allows schools to evaluate clinical and programming needs and to examine how they deploy both personal and financial resources to address student mental health challenges. It also gives schools a platform from which to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of programs. Setting up a task force with wide campus representation to engage in strategic planning is the first action step in participation in the JED Campus Program. Fundamentally, the establishment of a mental health strategic plan indicates to students and other stakeholders that mental health is a value for the campus.

- 01 UNO has a institutional strategic plan that is widely accessible for the campus community. This plan also explicitly includes a commitment to supporting a diverse student population which is great.
- 02 It is great that you are collecting vital student data like retention, academic achievement, mental health service utilization, health services utilization, diagnoses and student engagement. You are collecting a lot of data from other sources including NSSE, AODA surveys, climate surveys, and HMS.
- 03 You are analyzing data that you collect to inform and support students from various backgrounds and demographics such as military connected students, first gen students, and international students. This is vital in understanding and meeting student needs.

- 01 Consider how your institution will present mental health and emotional wellbeing as a campus wide priority. How can you include these topics in strategic plans, communication, and general messaging to ensure everyone on campus is engaging in this work?
- 02 Consider who is on your JED Campus team and whether there are representatives still missing that could benefit the team.
- 03 Consider all of the data you are collecting and whether you are utilizing that data to the best of your ability. Consider how you will move forward with HMS data to inform how you will engage with your JED strategic plan once created.

DEVELOP LIFE SKILLS

Supporting life skills education is a valuable strategy for helping students cope with the stress of college life, make wise lifestyle choices, foster resilience, and achieve academic success. Ensuring that students develop emotional and interpersonal awareness is a true preventive strategy aimed at enabling students to thrive. Diverse, cross-campus participation of staff members in providing this type of programming reinforces the message that emotional health is a campus-wide concern. Interpersonal and emotional awareness are strengths that help reduce risk factors for depression and suicide and reinforce emotional resilience. There are also clear links between physical and emotional health and academic success. Efforts to foster a student's emotional and physical well-being supports a student's sense of purpose and identity, and can help increase the likelihood of academic success and student retention. An increased focus on life skills development may also ease the burden on counseling centers, because it might limit or prevent some problems from emerging in ways that require clinical care.

01 Your current life skills programming covers many important areas including promoting resilience, conflict resolution, interpersonal effectiveness, study skills, time management, career readiness, mindfulness, communication, and more. There are many offices across campus facilitating these programs which is great.

02 You go even further with life skills programming by ensuring that programs are assessed on attendance, satisfaction, and achievement of learning outcomes.

03 You have programming available for students to learn about physical wellbeing and exercise. You also have a recreation/fitness facility available for student to utilize.

01 Consider if there are any gaps in your programming and similarly if there is any duplication of efforts that can be consolidated. Consider how you would conduct a life skills programming inventory to audit efforts.

02 Do UNO students, faculty, and staff understand that holistic wellness is vital for student success and positive outcomes? How can you increase this awareness?

PROMOTE SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

Research has shown that loneliness and isolation are significant risk factors for mental health problems and/or suicidal behavior. Therefore, supportive social relationships and feeling connected to the campus and local community, family, and friends are protective factors that can help lower risk. Because students often turn to their peers when they are struggling, they are more likely to be open and receptive to programming that is designed and delivered by their peers. Peer mentoring programs are very successful in this regard.

Facilitating social connectedness should go beyond simply encouraging students to get involved on campus. A comprehensive effort should be initiated to create environments that build interpersonal relationships among students, promote cultural inclusiveness on campus, and support connectedness among underrepresented or higher risk student groups. Faculty, staff, student leaders, and parents/families should proactively reach out to students who may be lonely or isolated and connect them with resources.

01 Connectedness is emphasized by offering programs that strive to promote inclusiveness on campus, and you partner with student groups to enhance inclusion. Including peer mentors, student athletes, fraternity and sorority life, and cultural orgs in the planning and implementation of these programs can be a great way to enhance this area.

02 There are processes in place to assist with identifying students who may be feeling isolated. UNO staff have access to education on isolation and how to facilitate connection.

01 You have self reported that about 65% of students are receiving peer mentoring which is great. Consider how you are utilizing peer mentors to really develop a sense of connection amongst students.

02 Consider ways in which isolated students are identified and supported. What does training and education in this area look like and can it be developed further?

IDENTIFY STUDENTS AT RISK

Students who are struggling often have not had any experience with treatment or seeking out assistance for their problems. Therefore, it is important to identify students with mental health, alcohol and other drug misuse problems, and/or those who are at risk for suicide before they are in crisis. Three core objectives can strengthen an institution's mental health safety net for students at risk: supporting the transition to college for incoming students with mental health and substance use histories, providing robust screening opportunities at diverse touchpoints in the student experience, and training campus community members to identify, reach out to, and refer students at risk. Behavioral Intervention Teams or At-Risk Teams are also important elements of this process as they require cross-campus collaboration and problem solving.

- 01 There are trainings in place to identify and refer students who may be struggling. You report that an estimated 10% of faculty, 10% of staff, and 30% of students have received this training.
- 02 You have a formalized team and protocol for when a student is identified as being in distress or needing outreach due to potential mental health and/or substance use issue.
- 03 UNO's screening efforts are great. Screening is available online and there is screening happening at health services during every visit. This is a great way to increase knowledge and awareness of services and resources.

- 01 Consider your mental health training methods and how to bolster these efforts. Are there ways you can incorporate these trainings into a formalized process that allows for reinforcement/booster training as well?
- 02 Consider what efforts you are implementing to support students in their transition to college. What data are you collecting in order to be proactive in supporting those students and how are you educating families regarding resources and support available?

INCREASING HELP SEEKING BEHAVIOR

Promoting help-seeking is an important early intervention for students experiencing mental health or substance use issues or those that are actively in crisis. Students experiencing emotional distress are often reluctant to seek help because they are skeptical about the effectiveness of treatment and/or they are influenced by prejudices associated with mental illness. Educational and informational campaigns that serve to eliminate the stigma of mental health and substance use problems can help alter negative perceptions and increase the likelihood that a student will seek out help when it is needed.

Additionally, activities and measures that increase awareness about campus and off-campus mental health services can serve to eliminate barriers to help seeking that result from a student's lack of awareness of what resources are available.

01

Your counseling center webpage is easy to navigate and understand. You clearly describe services available and you have information about crisis services easily seen. You also have information about substance misuse and education available on your website.

02

You run regular mental health campaigns that inform students about resources for mental health and emotional support, normalize and destigmatize mental health concerns, and encourage help seeking.

01

Consider ways you can increase ease of use when navigating your website. It takes 3 clicks from the homepage to get to CAPS information. What ways are students utilizing your website and how can you improve engagement with online resources?

02

Consider what campaigns you are running, how to involve students in the creating of these campaigns, and how to collect metrics on the reach of those campaigns.

03

Consider what peer support might look like on campus. Having a group of students dedicated to education around wellness resources can have a meaningful impact on a campus community.

PROVIDE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Preserving a student's mental health is critical in preventing substance misuse, risk for suicide, and strengthening their academic success. Providing adequate on campus access to ongoing mental health support and direct services is the backbone of any college mental health system. Ideally, on campus services should include both basic primary care, mental health care, and crisis support. Depending on the campus setting, the structure of these services may vary, but decisions about how these programs are organized should be based on a thoughtful assessment of needs, resources, and off-campus options for care.

- 01 You provide counseling services to your students on campus and report a FTE to student ratio of 1 FTE to 1500 students. You are also taking measures to ensure wait times are limited.
- 02 You have a medical leave policy that is accessible online and demonstrates parity between medical and mental health concerns. You also have a return from leave protocol which is essential for students to understand what their expectations are while taking leave.
- 03 You have multiple resources and pathways for individuals to seek support after hours.

01 Consider what your relationship with community resources look like and how you can bolster those relationships. Think about what your MOU's look like, what information you have online about those resources, and what communication flow with those resources look like as well.

02 Consider what your current counseling scope of practice looks like. Is it working for your institution? What do wait times look like throughout the year? How could you increase access to this service?

PROVIDE SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES

The provision of substance use and misuse education, prevention, and treatment is essential for college and university campuses. Education about the dangers of substance misuse and drug diversion, the connection between substance misuse and relationship violence, academic performance, and overall well-being, along with a variety of treatment options either on campus or in the community, is an important consideration for an institution.

- 01 You have policies in place regarding substance use including illicit/illegal use and prescription drug misuse. These policies are accessible in the student handbook and online, which is great.
- 02 You have assessment services for substance misuse as well as provide treatment services through support groups and clinicians who are specialized in substance use.
- 03 There is education happening to inform students about school policies and the dangers of misuse. There is regularly ran alcohol free events for students to attend and there is programming to educate students about the links between substance use and poor academic performance.
- 04 Having guidelines that encourage students to seek help when they or their friends are intoxicated without fear of disciplinary action can go a long way in helping students speak up when facing a serious health issue such as an overdose or alcohol intoxication. For this reason it is great that you have a medical amnesty policy in place.

- 01 Review your alcohol, drug, and medical amnesty policies to ensure they are up to date, current, and easily accessible. JED has recommendations on these policies available in the playbook.
- 02 Consider your drug and alcohol use campaigns and education to ensure they are timely, effective, and informative.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

Having clear crisis management policies and protocols in place, including a focus on crisis prevention and effective responses when crises occur, is central to the safety of students and the campus community. Though the impact of a suicide, death, or other emergency cannot be predicted and the response of a campus community can vary widely, clearly outlined emergency and postvention policies and protocols help colleges and universities respond to a crisis with coordinated, sensitive interventions at a time of potential instability. Clear protocols guide faculty and staff when a student is struggling, experiencing an overdose, or exhibiting suicidal behaviors and provide readily accessible emergency information including crisis phone numbers, chat, and text services. Well-publicized and widely promoted Behavioral Intervention or At Risk teams serve to collect and respond to reports of students of concern.

01 You have a functioning behavioral intervention team to collect and respond to students of concern. There is coordination between this team and counseling services, conduct, and campus security.

02 You have a case management system in place. Case management is a fast-growing service being incorporated on many campuses and can serve to provide follow up for students who have been hospitalized, connect students who need/want to be seen off campus to community providers, ensure that at risk students follow up with off-campus referrals, provide campus-based support for students who are receiving care off campus, and provide follow-up for students.

01 Consider comparing your postvention protocol with HEMHA's postvention guide to see if any changes need to be made. How is this policy updated regularly and how is it shared with necessary individuals?

02 Consider the student of concern reporting protocol and what challenges and strengths exist within that protocol. Also consider how informed students are regarding emergency and after hour resources.

PROMOTE MEANS SAFETY

There is excellent empirical data supporting the importance of restricting access to potentially lethal means for someone who is in crisis. The challenge of managing means restriction is that it requires coordination among several areas and offices at the institution: buildings and facilities, security, counseling, student services, among others. This area of concern should be included in inter-department strategic planning. Reviews of campus facilities should ideally occur on a fairly regular basis, especially when the institution is actively engaged in building projects. Policies and protocols related to firearms, the control and disposal of toxic substances, and drug collection are also contributing factors.

- 01 You have completed an environmental scan in the last 12 months and you have restricted access to rooftops, toxic substances, and medication storage.
- 02 Firearms are prohibited on campus.
- 03 Public safety offers late night transport to decrease risk of accidents and violence.

- 01 Consider creating a process for environmental scans to regularly happen and how to ensure relevant offices are conducting these scans annually.
- 02 Consider what a drug collection/drug return program could look like on campus. JED has some example drug collection programs available to review.

NEXT STEPS

Thank you to all staff and faculty involved in completing UNO's JED Campus Baseline Assessment. We look forward to visiting your campus, meeting with your students, and starting to develop a strategic plan for the next three years of implementation in the JED Campus Program. You will want to share this feedback report with relevant partners and have some conversations around the considerations as we will discuss these further during the site visit.