UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF LAW

Final Report of the Dean's Advisory Committee on Mental Health and Wellness

March 26, 2019

Chairs: A. Archbold and A. Emon

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1. Introduction

This year, the Dean provided the Mental Health &Wellness Committee with the following mandate:

"Last year, the Committee developed a new online Student Mental Health Survey, which was administered at the end of the academic year. This year, I would ask that the Committee review and consider the results of the survey; evaluate the utility of the survey; and consider the survey process and whether changes should be made to future iterations."

2. Background

In 2017-18, the Mental Health & Wellness Committee developed and disseminated a new survey to assess our students' mental health (including depression, anxiety, eating disorders, self-harm and suicidality), alcohol and substance use, and help-seeking behaviours. Fifty percent of J.D. students, and 8% of graduate students, responded. Yukimi Henry, Manager, Personal and Academic Counselling and Wellness, presented a summary of the survey results to Faculty Council in January 2019.

3. Committee deliberations

The 2018-19 Committee agreed that the survey provided very useful information and should be administered every three years. In response to some students' feedback about the survey questions, the Committee also agreed that, in future iterations, the survey's preamble should include more information about the rationale for the survey design (*e.g.* explaining the use of clinical-style questions about behaviours).

The Committee reviewed the results of the survey and agreed that the data showing significant rates of high-risk alcohol use in particular warranted closer attention. The Committee spent several meetings exploring the various complex aspects of the issue, including the "drinking culture" at the law school, the troubling rates of substance abuse reported by the legal profession; and discussed the role of the law school and the SLS, and possible ways to address the issue.

The Committee ultimately agreed that the law school does have a role to play in addressing this issue, especially now that we have clear evidence that some of our students are engaging in unhealthy behaviours, and in light of the overwhelming evidence that shows that lawyers have high levels of addiction. However, the Committee was unable to reach a consensus on the exact nature of that role, and, in particular, how to balance the need to address the issue with respecting our students' autonomy to make choices.

4. The Framework

After consulting research on best practices on university campuses, the Committee agreed that the appropriate next step is to consult with students (in person and online surveys) and draft a strategy document. To assist with this process, the Committee unanimously adopted "A Framework to Address High-Risk Drinking and Alcohol Harms Reduction on Canadian Campuses" (Appendix A). Resulting from a collaborative effort of several Canadian universities, the Framework is considered a best practice in the field, and identifies five strategic areas: 1. Health promotion, prevention and education 2. Campus services, 3. Availability and marketing, 4. Pricing and alcohol, and 5. Community action.

5. Issues for Consultation

After consulting with student leadership in February 2019, the Committee identified the following issues within each strategic area of the Framework for input from students and other law school community stakeholders.

Strategic Area 1: Health Promotion, Prevention, Education

- Type of information that would be most helpful/relevant?: info on refusal skills, low risk drinking guidelines, responsible drinking strategies, drinking and networking
- Most effective format for information dissemination?: peer-based info, technical information, workshops, on-line info, posters/info screens
- Best timing for information dissemination?: orientation, event-based, on-going

Strategic Area 2: Campus Services

- What kinds of services and/or information, if any, about responsible and safe alcohol consumption at drinking events would be most helpful? E.g.s. Sober contact person, event notification emails with safe drinking information
- What supports/services re: problem drinking would be helpful to have access to or information about? eg. counselling services

Strategic Area 3: Availability and Marketing

- Suggestions for non-alcohol based or reduced alcohol focused initiatives, events, programs
- Suggestions for policy on financial "sponsorship" of events involving alcohol at the law school - firms sponsored events, law school funded events

Strategic Area 5: Community Action

- Suggestions for advocacy, signalling, leadership within the legal profession re: standards for alcohol use

6. Committee recommendations

The Committee recommends that the Dean ask the 2019-20 Committee to undertake broad student consultations and present an alcohol abuse strategy for approval in 2020.

7. Immediate next steps

In the meantime, the Manager, Personal and Academic Counselling and Wellness will continue to research best practices on university campuses, and create a draft strategy document the Committee can use for the consultations.

8. Other issues

Attached as Appendix B is a list of activities and initiatives that the law school undertook in 2018-19 to respond to the J.D. Student Mental Health Strategic Action Plan.

A Framework to Address High-Risk Drinking and Alcohol Harms Reduction on Canadian Campuses

To reduce alcohol's harm to oneself, to others and to community, recommendations and initiatives need to be implemented across five strategic areas

INDIVIDUAL APPROACHES

STRATEGIC AREA 1
Health promotion, prevention and education

1. Ensure broad access to information and effective education and awareness programs about alcohol-related issues
2. Challenge social norms supportive of hazardous and harmful drinking

STRATEGIC AREA 2
Campus services

3. Establish and maintain a system to monitor drinking behaviours, risk factors and impacts, with regular reporting mechanisms
4. Support initiatives for screening and brief interventions for hazardous and harmful drinking
5. Strengthen emergency health services to enhance on-campus safety and ability to respond to medical emergencies related to alcohol

STRATEGIC AREA 3
Availability and marketing

6. Manage and regulate access to alcoholic beverages
7. Set up regulatory framework for alcohol marketing
8. Set up effective administrative and deterrence systems for infringements on marketing restrictions

STRATEGIC AREA 4
Pricing of alcohol

9. Regulate price promotions, discount sales and flat rates for unlimited drinking or other types of volume sales
10. Establish minimum prices for the sale of alcohol beverages
11. Provide price incentives for lower-strength and non-alcoholic beverages

STRATEGIC AREA 5
Community action

12. Build capacity at the community level for effective interventions
13. Mobilize communities to prevent the selling of alcohol to intoxicated students
14. Encourage provision of alternative transportation, including public transport, until after the closing time for drinking places

SYSTEMIC APPROACHES

ENVIRONMENTAL APPROACHES

INITIATIVES INCLUDE:

1.1. Implement an Alcohol Awareness Day/Week/Month
1.2. Implement an Alcohol-related Theme Day/Week/Month
1.3. Promote LRDGs
1.4. Implement orientation programs
1.5. Develop and ensure ongoing distribution of resources for parents of students
1.6. Require mandatory training on alcohol-related issues for all major student associations and organizations

2.1. Develop social norms marketing

STRATEGIC AREA 1 — Health promotion, prevention and education

INITIATIVES INCLUDE:

3.1. Conduct regular survey of student's alcohol use, knowledge, attitudes and consequences

4.1. Provide expectancy challenge interventions
4.2. Promote protective behavioural strategies interventions
4.3. Provide brief motivational interviewing

5.1. Inform students about on-campus safety services
5.2. Ensure that emergency health services have proper training to respond to alcohol-related emergencies

STRATEGIC AREA 2 — Campus services

INITIATIVES INCLUDE:

12.1. Develop a campus and community coalition to address alcohol-related local issues
12.2. Inform students attending or hosting parties off campus about common party violations and liability
12.3. Exercise disciplinary jurisdiction over off-campus disturbances caused by students
12.4. Work with existing licensed vendors in the vicinity of the campus to ensure proper server training and responsible operations
12.5. Submit a request to provincial and federal authorities on issues of taxation that would influence students' purchase and drinking patterns (e.g., increased taxes, tax incentives for production and consumption of low-alcohol beers)

13.1. Communicate and enforce municipal and provincial drinking laws, including the minimum drinking age and the sale and service of alcohol to intoxicated patrons

14.1. Implement a designated driver program
14.2. Implement a bystander intervention program

STRATEGIC AREA 5 — Community action

INITIATIVES INCLUDE:

6.1. Regulate alcohol use in situations that are recognized to be conducive to heavy drinking
6.2. Regulate days and hours when alcohol can be sold on campus
6.3. Offer alcohol-free residence and areas
6.4. Offer alcohol-free campus events and social activities
6.5. Ensure that licensed establishments on campus adhere to proper server training and responsible operations
6.6. Inform students attending or hosting parties off campus about common party violations and liability
6.7. Exercise disciplinary jurisdiction over on-campus disturbances caused by students

7.1. Regulate sponsorship activities that promote alcoholic beverages on campus
7.2. Regulate direct or indirect marketing of alcohol on campus
7.3. Regulate alcohol promotions in connection with activities targeting students on campus
7.4. Regulate publicity on campus featuring availability of alcohol at events and locations

STRATEGIC AREA 3 — Availability and marketing

INITIATIVES INCLUDE:

9.1. Regulate "last calls"
9.2. Regulate "happy hours," "ladies nights," etc.
9.3. Regulate the number of drinks that can be purchased by patrons at one time
9.4. Regulate the size of drink containers to reflect standard drink sizes
9.5. Implement maximum serving sizes that can be served to patrons in one drink (maximum one standard drink per alcoholic beverage)

11.1. Create price incentives for lower alcohol strength products
11.2. Ensure that non-alcoholic beverages are always available and less expensive than alcoholic beverages

STRATEGIC AREA 4 — Pricing of alcohol

PEP – AH
Postsecondary Education Partnership
Alcohol Harms

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse
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Appendix B

Summary of Mental Health Initiatives (2018-2019) that are responsive to the Student Mental Health Framework

Direct counselling services to JD student body and service enhancements

- Manager, Academic/Personal Counselling & Wellness provided on-going clinical supports
- A new 0.6 FTE Health & Wellness Counsellor (MSW) was hired by the law school to provide increased capacity for clinical support appointments

Mental health and wellness information and skill development opportunities for students

- Mental Health literacy training for Peer Mentorship Program
- "Working with students experiencing distress" training for upper year tutors
- Exam preparation workshop in collaboration with Assistant Dean's Office
- Presentation during Professionalism & Ethics training for entire 1L class on mental health and professional regulation
- Workshops on "Trauma Informed Lawyering & Self-Care" for students enrolled in the Faculty of Law Externship program.

Suicide Prevention Training

- Roll out of the "Suicide Safer Faculty" initiative in which a series of four SafeTALK training workshops were provided for all members of the law school community. Sixty-nine participants registered for this training this year, including staff, faculty and students.

Peer Mental Health Support Program

- Trained Peer Mental Health Support Mentors and launched a "Peer Support Drop-In" program open to all students at the law school, which provided a weekly facilitated opportunity to connect with fellow law students and receive peer support in a safe environment.

Annual Wellness Week event for Faculty of Law

- Organized and implemented by Student Health & Wellness Committee, in partnership with other Faculty and University groups
- Series of events and activities throughout week to promote community-building and health & wellness literacy and engagement
- Activities included a Running Event with students and alumni, a yoga and fitness class, a very successful Community Kitchen event in collaboration with Health Promotion Team from the central Health & Wellness Centre, and a roundtable discussion on issues pertaining to mental health and young lawyers.

Mindfulness Program for Faculty of Law

- The Mindfulness Program at the law school continued for the first semester of year, which included a launch event and monthly follow-up sessions provided by expert facilitator and geared to topics relevant to law school student population
- Participation by students, staff and faculty members

Communication Strategy re: health & wellness related activities, events, and opportunities at the Faculty of Law

- Organized pro-active communication around issues of academic accommodations, health & wellness activities and supports provided on multiple platforms to increase awareness and participation by JD student body

Dean's Mental Health Committee

- The results of the 2017-2018 Mental Health & Substance Use survey of the student body were presented at Faculty Council
- The Dean's Committee identified the issues of high risk alcohol behaviors, as identified in the survey, as a priority area to develop recommendations and an action plan with respect to
- The "Framework to Address High Risk Drinking and Alcohol Harms Reduction on Canadian Campuses" from the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse was endorsed by the Committee as the guiding framework for program and policy development at the Faculty.
- Consultations with student leadership on the Framework

Enhanced relationship with the Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education student health & wellness programs

- Direct referral and service coordination relationship with the MoveU HappyU and S.P.A.R.K. programs allowing for facilitated access for law students to physical training and behavioral support programs.