





UTAH STUDENT ASSOCIATION

The mission and purpose of the Utah Student Association (USA) is to:

- Represent the interests and preserve the rights of the students of higher education in the State of Utah
- Work with various government entities to initiate positive changes and be a voice for the students
- Foster the educational goals and promote citizenship and civic responsibility among students
- Advocate for the students!

USA 2016-17 Initiative: Student Mental Health

USA 2016-2017 Initiative: Student Mental Health

- In 2013, the suicide rate for the U.S. was 14.9 per 100,000 population while Utah's was 23.9 during the same time period. (National Center for Health Statistics 2014).
- Mental illness corresponds with higher dropout rates, lower GPA, and an increase in mortality rates (NAMI 2012).
- On average, a college student in Utah has to wait four to eight weeks to get an appointment at a counseling center. At some schools, the wait time is as long as 11 weeks (Utah Student Association, 2015).
- At UVU, the average wait time to see a therapist last year was 6 weeks with a therapist to student ratio of 7 therapists to 33, 211 students (UVU Student Health Services 2016).



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Mental Health Action Plan

The student body presidents sent a letter to their university presidents expressing their concern for the mental health of students in Utah which highlighted the following action plan:

1. *Increase access to therapists:* It is critical that we increase the number of therapists and resources for students in crisis on each of our campuses. Hiring additional therapists and using crises lines, text-support lines, phone applications like SafeUT, and ensuring that students are trained in Question, Persuade, Refer techniques is crucial in providing direct access to students in crisis (Buchanan, 2012; Gould et al., 2013; Tompkins & Witt, 2009).
2. *Create a support network:* Social support helps prevent mental health problems from worsening, and increases students' academic achievement (Whitlock et al., 2010). Drawing from the examples of other university successes like Michigan State's Wolverine Support Network and collaborating with community resources like Utah NAMI support groups, we can find ways to provide lasting social support for our students.
3. *Emphasize preventative care:* We must continue to decrease the stigma surrounding mental health issues through marketing campaigns. In addition, we need to continue to emphasize preventative care through access to mental health programs on campus.



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