

LEHMAN COLLEGE
ACADEMIC FREEDOM COMMITTEE
Minutes of the committee meeting
11 MAR 2021

Present: Analia Firpo, Elgloria Harrison, David Manier (chair), Kayme Marcelino, Mohan Vinjamuri

1. A quorum having been established, and minutes of the preceding meeting having been approved via email, the meeting was called to order by Prof. Manier at 3:30 p.m.
2. Following up on a previous meeting, we continued reviewing issues related to mental health at Lehman, particularly with regard to additional stresses being caused by the current Covid-19 pandemic. Based on a previous meeting, we had drafted a set of guidelines (along with resources such as addresses and phone numbers of hospitals) to be presented the Lehman Senate to be approved. We discussed this draft and considered possible changes and additions.
3. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned, but members subsequently followed up on our discussions by sharing email messages with one another. By email, we considered further changes/additions to the guidelines we had discussed at the meeting. We reached a consensus, and voted by majority (with some abstentions but none voting against) to pass the attached guidelines (see below), which were presented at the next Senate meeting (April 7th). At that meeting, the guidelines were approved (again with some abstentions but none voting against), with the friendly amendment being added that the Provost's Office would review the information in the guidelines and referral resources and make any necessary changes before distributing them.

Respectfully submitted,
David Manier, Assoc. Professor
Chair and Secretary Pro Tempore

Cc: Sophia Diamantis-Fry

Guidelines on mental health issues related to student disclosures
Lehman College - CUNY
Approved by Academic Freedom Committee
to be approved by Lehman Senate
and distributed by the Provost's Office

Particularly during crisis periods (such as the Covid-19 pandemic), Lehman College must maintain a strong mental health safety net. A part of this is educating students, faculty, staff, and families about the signs and symptoms of mental health issues and emotional problems and what actions might (or might not) be appropriate to take about them. Reaching out to a student of concern is an important element in creating a caring community, but well-intentioned informal counseling efforts may delay the student's receipt of needed professional services. Therefore, the college should not ask or encourage faculty, students, or other non-healthcare personnel to serve in the capacity of health/mental health professionals. In particular, the college should avoid asking untrained individuals to assume responsibility for a student who is experiencing a serious mental illness or poses a risk of suicide or violence. For example, it is neither legally advisable nor good practice to ask a student to "watch" another student who may be at risk. Similarly, faculty and staff should avoid taking on a professional role for which they are not trained. Non-mental health professionals need to understand the limits of what they can provide to students and focus on making appropriate referrals.

Below are some general guidelines, along with contact information for resources.

- The college should utilize means of addressing the safety of distressed, distressing, or suicidal students, using institutionalized processes around issues such as emergency contact notification and medical leave/re-entry, as well as notifying the counseling center or the campus public safety office, when appropriate.
- The college should encourage relationship-building among students as well as a sense of community on campus, which will help promote mental health and well-being.
- Professors serve the role of helping students to develop skills that may assist them as students face various challenges in school and in life. This may sometimes include skills in dealing with emotional and/or psychological issues, but the role of a professor is not that of a therapist.
- Professors and staff should encourage students to seek appropriate treatment for emotional issues, and reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness.
- If a student is having a relatively common or neutral problem, such as feeling overwhelmed with coursework, the student should talk with the appropriate professors and/or advisors about this problem right away.
- If a student is having a more serious emotional or psychological problem, the student should be encouraged to consider speaking to someone in the counseling center first, before talking about it with a professor or advisor.

- Whether teaching face-to-face or online, it is important that professors give students clear guidelines on how students need to give careful consideration before making personal disclosures. Student self-disclosures can be appropriate, and help reduce isolation and stigmatization, but students also need to reflect on maintaining appropriate boundaries with their professors and classmates.
- Some courses, such as those within the psychology or social work department, may have content that can become very personal. Personal experiences and opinions sometimes become part of the class discussion. Disclosing such information, where appropriate, can add to the course content, but any personal disclosures should be carefully considered before students decide to make them public, as the classroom is not a therapy session and cannot guarantee confidentiality.
- Students remain better focused on content when professors make it clear from the start that: (a) students are ultimately responsible for the personal information they choose to disclose; and (b) the role of a professor is not to attend to their students' emotional needs other than acknowledging them and referring students (when appropriate) to available resources or staff for support and counseling.
- Professors have duties, not only to their students and the administration, but also to the fields of knowledge that they represent. Where appropriate, professors may decide to be flexible with deadlines and accommodations during crisis periods (such as the Covid-19 pandemic). But at the same time, students must understand that compromising professional standards within a given field of knowledge is not acceptable, even during times of crisis.

List of resources and contact numbers:

- In any serious emergency or crisis situation, please call 911 immediately.
- In case of serious situations, crises, and emergencies that occur on campus, in addition to 911, please also consider calling the Campus Department of Public Safety at 718-960-7777.
- Campus Counseling Center
Old Gym Building, Room 114
Tel: 718-960-8761
E-mail: counseling.center@lehman.cuny.edu
- Student Health Center: 718-960-8900

More resources (hospitals and clinics)

In New York City:

New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation (HHC), is a public benefit corporation whose mission is to provide comprehensive and high quality healthcare to all, regardless of their ability to pay, in an atmosphere of dignity and respect. Each HHC hospital and health center evaluates a patient's eligibility for public health insurance and assists patients in completing applications for public health insurance. Uninsured patients who do not qualify for coverage are assessed for financial assistance using an established sliding fee scale based on Federal Poverty Guidelines to ensure that access to care is not withheld based on the ability to pay. Fees are reduced to an affordable amount, based on family size and income, and are available without regard to immigration status. The following HHC hospitals and clinics are in the Bronx, except for Bellevue, the HHC flagship hospital.

NYC Health + Hospitals/Jacobi Hospital
1400 Pelham Parkway South
Bronx, New York 10461
718-918-5000

NYC Health + Hospitals/Lincoln Hospital
234 East 149th Street
Bronx, New York 10451
718-579-5000

NYC Health + Hospitals/North Central Bronx
Hospital
3424 Kossuth Avenue
Bronx, New York 10467
Appointments: 844-692-4692
718-918-5700

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health,
Morrisania
1225 Gerard Avenue
Bronx, New York 10452
844-NYC-4NYC

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health, Belvis
545 East 142nd Street
Bronx, New York 10454
844-NYC-4NYC

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health,
Gun Hill
1012 East Gun Hill Road
Bronx, NY 10469
844-NYC-4NYC

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health,
East Tremont
1826 Arthur Avenue
Bronx, NY 10457
844-NYC-4NYC

NYC Health + Hospitals/Gotham Health,
Tremont
1920 Webster Ave
Bronx, NY 10457
844-NYC-4NYC

NYC Health + Hospitals/Bellevue
Walk-In Psychiatric Clinic
462 First Avenue (between 27th and 28th Street)
Building C, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10016
(212) 562-4141 (main number)
(212) 562-5710 (Walk-in clinic)
Hours: 8am-4pm, Monday through Friday

Other Bronx hospitals/clinics (fees vary):

BronxCare Hospital Center -
Grand Concourse Campus
1650 Grand Concourse, Bronx, NY 10457
Main number:
(718) 590-1800

Bronx-Lebanon Hospital Center
1276 Fulton Ave Bronx, NY 10456
Main number:
(718) 590-1800
Psychiatric Emergency:
(718) 901-8222

Bronx Psychiatric Center
1500 Waters Place
Bronx, NY 10461
Main number:
(718) 931-0600

Bronx Children's Psychiatric Center
1000 Waters Place
Bronx, NY 10461
Main number:
(718) 239-3708
Alternate number:
(718) 239-3600

Montefiore Medical Center
111 East 210th Street
Bronx, NY 10467
Main number:
(718) 920-4321
Psych Dept:
(718) 920-6215

Montefiore Wakefield Campus
600 East 233rd Street
Bronx, NY 10466
Main number:
(718) 920-9000

Montefiore Westchester Square Campus
2475 St Raymond Ave.
Bronx, NY 10461
Main number:
(718) 430-7300

In Westchester:

Northern Westchester Hospital-Northwell Health
400 East Main Street
Mount Kisco, New York 10549
Main number:
(914) 666-1200
Inpatient psychiatric services:
(914) 666-1590
Outpatient psychotherapy:
(877) 4-NWH-DOC

Phelps Hospital-Northwell Health
701 North Broadway
Sleepy Hollow NY 10591
Main number:
(914) 366-3000
Mental health:
(914) 355-3619

Northwell Health hospitals/clinics provide discounted services—based on financial need—to those who are uninsured, underinsured, ineligible for government programs or other third-party coverage, or otherwise unable to pay for emergency or other medically necessary care. For more information, call (800) 995-5727.

