



# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

To: Senate Executive Committee

From: John Bertot, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs, Office of Faculty Affairs

William Cohen, Dean, Office of Undergraduate Studies

Steve Fetter, Dean, Graduate School

Date: August 6, 2020

**Subject: Response to Memorandum regarding the Proposal on Support for Students Dealing with Difficult Life Conditions (Senate Document #18-19-21)**

At the time of the receipt of this request from the SEC the Graduate School had already embarked on the [Red Folder Project](#). The Graduate School invited feedback from UMD Counseling Center, the University Health Center, the Office of Student Affairs, the BETA Team, the Office of Undergraduate Studies and the Office of Faculty Affairs. We have all reviewed the "[Red folder](#)." The information provided on the Red Folder is comprehensive with resources as well as approaches for responding to students who show signs of distress. The information and presentation are applicable when working with graduate students and undergraduate students. The resource is hosted on the Graduate School website. To expand upon the distribution and to ensure that all faculty see this resource as useful when working with both graduate and undergraduate students, we will also distribute the folder through the Office of Faculty Affairs and the Office of Undergraduate Studies websites.

# ASSISTING STUDENTS IN DISTRESS

SEE SOMETHING. SAY SOMETHING. DO SOMETHING.



UNIVERSITY OF  
MARYLAND

## SEE SOMETHING

UMD faculty, staff, and graduate assistants are in a unique position to recognize and demonstrate compassion for UMD students in distress.

Students may feel **alone**, **isolated**, and even **hopeless** when faced with challenges in their academic and personal lives. These feelings can disrupt academic performance and lead to dysfunctional coping and other serious consequences.

You may be the first person to **SEE SOMETHING** distressing in a student if you have frequent and prolonged contact with them. As members of the UMD community, it is important that we act with compassion.

## DO SOMETHING

Sometimes students cannot, or will not, turn to family or friends. **DO SOMETHING**. Your expression of concern may be a critical factor in saving a student's academic career or even their life.

This folder can help you recognize symptoms of student distress and identify appropriate referrals to campus resources.

## SAY SOMETHING

Students exhibiting troubling behaviors in your presence are likely having difficulties in other areas of their lives, including the classroom, with roommates, with family, and even in social settings.

Trust your instincts and **SAY SOMETHING** if a student leaves you feeling worried, alarmed, or threatened.

## WHAT ABOUT PRIVACY?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) permits communication about a student of concern in connection with a health and safety emergency. **Observations of a student's conduct or statements made by a student are not protected by FERPA.**

Appropriate consideration for student privacy should be given before information is shared with people other than those suggested in this Folder, and questions about when such disclosure is appropriate can be answered by University Office of General Counsel. Faculty and graduate assistants are Responsible University Employees (see [OCRSM.UMD.EDU](http://OCRSM.UMD.EDU)).

## INDICATORS OF DISTRESS

Use the following chart to identify a student in distress. Look for groupings, frequency, duration and severity.

### ACADEMIC

- Sudden decline in quality of work and grades
- Repeated absences
- Disorganized performance
- Multiple requests for extensions
- Overly demanding of faculty or staff time and attention
- Bizarre content in writings or presentations
- You find yourself providing more personal than academic support

### PHYSICAL

- Marked changes in physical appearance (e.g., grooming hygiene, weight loss/gain)
- Excessive fatigue or sleep disturbance
- Intoxication, hangovers, or smelling of alcohol
- Disoriented or "out of it"
- Garbled, tangential, disconnected, or slurred speech
- Behavior is out of context or bizarre

### PSYCHOLOGICAL

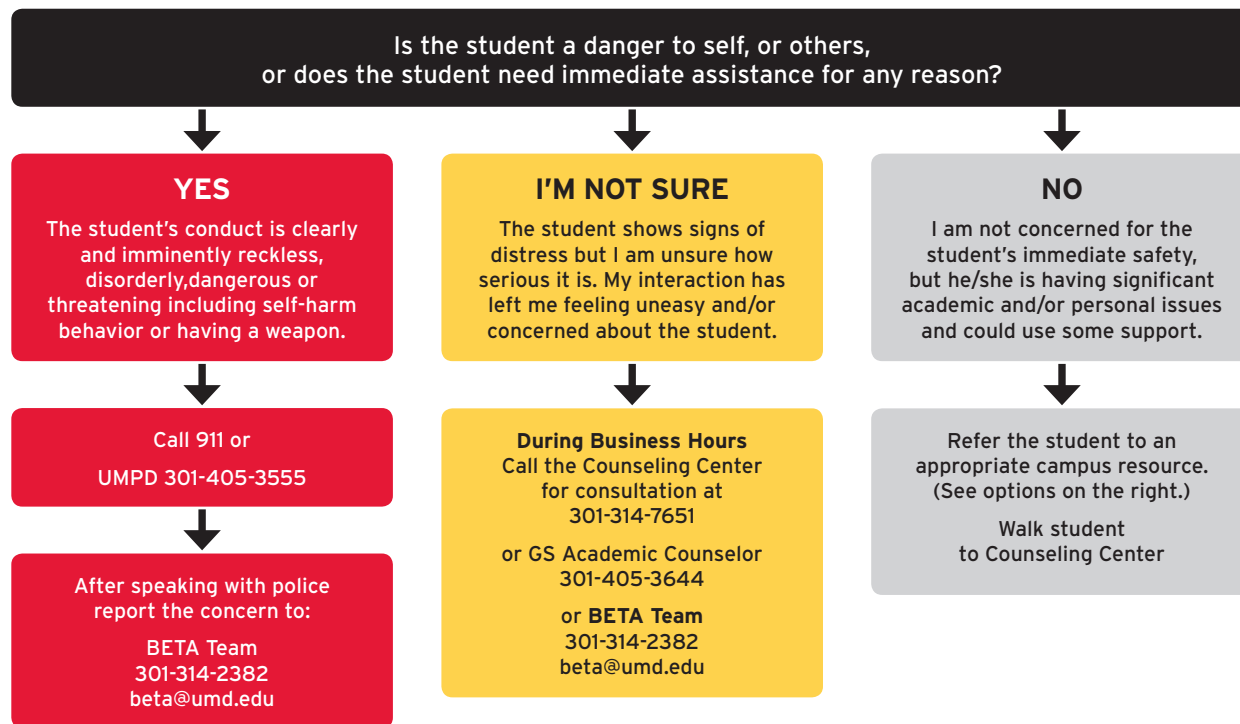
- Self-disclosure of personal distress (e.g., family or financial problems, grief, suicidal thoughts)
- Unusual or disproportionate emotional response to events
- Excessive tearfulness or panic reactions
- Irritability or unusual apathy
- Verbal abuse (e.g., taunting, badgering, intimidation)
- Concern from peers
- Delusions and paranoia

### SAFETY RISK

- Unprovoked anger or hostility
- Physical violence (e.g., shoving, grabbing, assault, display of weapons)
- Implying or making threat to harm self or others
- Academic assignments dominated by themes of hopelessness, rage, worthlessness, isolation, despair, acting out, suicidal ideations, violent behaviors
- Stalking or harassing

## RESPONSE PROTOCOL

Follow the chart to determine who to contact when faced with a distressed or distressing student.



## TIPS

### PREPARING TO REACH OUT

- Know the available campus resources and the referral process.
- Review information on privacy rules.
- If safe, meet privately and always allow sufficient time to meet.
- Ensure your safety.
- If you decide not to have direct contact with the student, refer the incident to your college dean. Best if can have conversation with student.
- Contact UMPD if a student expresses a direct threat to self or others, or acts in a bizarre, highly irrational and disruptive way.

### CONNECTING WITH THE STUDENT

- Clearly express your concerns, focusing on the behavior in nondisparaging terms.
- Allow the student to talk.
- Do not challenge or become argumentative with the student.
- Ask directly if the student wants to hurt him/herself or others.
- Respect the student's privacy without making false promises of confidentiality.
- Document all incidents and attempts to resolve the situation.

### MAKING THE REFERRAL

- Recommend services and provide direct referrals; assist student in contacting resources.
- Frame any decision to seek and accept help as an intelligent choice.
- Make sure the student understands what actions are necessary.
- Be frank with the student about your limits (e.g., time, expertise).
- Encourage and assist the student to make and keep an appointment and set a follow-up meeting with the student.

## RESOURCES

### ON CAMPUS

Vice President Student Affairs	301-314-8430
GS Academic Counselor	301-405-3644
University Health Center	301-314-8106
University Counseling Center	301-314-7651
Employee Assistance Program (EAP)	301-314-8170
Title IX/Sexual Harassment Office	301-405-1142
Office of Student Conduct	301-314-8204
Accessibility & Disability Service	301-314-7682
CARE To Stop Violence	301-314-2222
International Student & Scholars Services (ISSS)	301-314-7740
LGBT Equity Center	301-405-8720
GLAO/Undergraduate LAO	301-405-5807
Veteran Student Life	301-314-0073
University of Maryland Police Department (UMPD)	301-405-3555

### IN THE COMMUNITY

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline	800-273-8255
The Trevor Project	866-488-7386
Prince George's Community Hospital	301-618-2000

### TRAININGS/LINKS

Kognito Training	<a href="http://www.counseling.umd.edu/kognito">www.counseling.umd.edu/kognito</a>
Mental Health First Aid Training	<a href="http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org">www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org</a>
Suicide Prevention Lifeline	<a href="http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org">www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org</a>
Undergraduate Advising Reps	<a href="http://www.ugst.umd.edu/car">www.ugst.umd.edu/car</a>
Title IX/OCRSM Training	<a href="http://www.ocrsm.umd.edu">www.ocrsm.umd.edu</a>



## Proposal on Support for Students Dealing with Difficult Life Conditions

**TO** John Bertot, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs, Office of Faculty Affairs  
William Cohen, Dean, Office of Undergraduate Studies  
Steve Fetter, Dean, Graduate School

**FROM** Christopher Walsh, Chair

**DATE** April 3, 2019

The Senate Executive Committee (SEC) reviewed the attached proposal entitled, ***Proposal on Support for Students Dealing with Difficult Life Conditions (Senate Document #18-19-21)***, at its meeting on November 16, 2018. SEC members discussed the proposal at length. They raised concerns about whether there were policy implications associated with the proposal. Specifically, SEC members suggested that the concerns raised in the proposal may be indicative of a lack of resources and a lack of awareness of existing resources available to students and faculty, rather than a lack of policy protections for students. The SEC determined that developing better awareness of existing policies and resources for students is needed. In addition, the SEC agreed that providing support for faculty who are considering ways to assist and accommodate students may create better outcomes for students who face difficulties.

The SEC formally requests that representatives of the Office of Faculty Affairs, Office of Undergraduate Studies, and the Graduate School develop a comprehensive strategy to help raise awareness of available resources and existing policies for students facing a variety of difficult circumstances. In addition, the SEC requests that representatives from these units compile and/or develop best practices for faculty as a resource to help them better understand how to address a variety of situations involving students. We ask that you inform the SEC of the results of this review and any actions taken as a result. If you have any questions about this request, please contact Ms. Reka Montfort at x55805 or [reka@umd.edu](mailto:reka@umd.edu).



Proposal on Support for Students Dealing with Difficult Life Conditions

NAME/TITLE	Karima Michelle Holland		
EMAIL	Karimaholland98@aol.com	PHONE	
UNIT		CONSTITUENCY	

DESCRIPTION OF ISSUE

- Lack of mental health resources at the University of Maryland
- Current resources are often tied to rigorous criteria for applicability
- Needs of large masses not being met in timely manner due to scarcity of mental health support
- Students with certain insurances are require to pay out of pocket expenses for University Health Center services presenting a economical disadvantage to utilize support
- Individuals that identify with marginalized groups are often not able to be assisted under current system of procedures
- Lack of understanding and knowledge from University of Maryland officials about what resources and support are offered by the University of Maryland community
- Students' experiences at the University of Maryland and the assistance they are able to receive or lack thereof, are dependent on unique life conditions many have no control over
- Burdensome and demanding pathways while pursuing academic accommodations
- Title IX refusal to accommodate/assist individuals whose suspect is not affiliated with University
- Prolonged intake processes at Disability Support Services prevent and discourage students with impairments from utilizing support offered by Accessibility and Disability Support Services
- Absence of University Policy defining scope of a University professors discretion
- Absence of University Policies and Protocols regarding students dealing with difficult life conditions

DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE

Addendum added to end of faculty handbooks requiring them to work with students dealing with difficult life conditions

- Addendum would help control overflow of students being pushed towards campus resources, that without a doubt are terribly flawed
- Addendum is a very simple statement that serves as a barrier of protection for students across all backgrounds and life experiences

SUGGESTION FOR HOW YOUR PROPOSAL WOULD BE PUT INTO PRACTICE

- Process could be supervised by and added to duties of Ombuds person, who primarily handles conflict resolutions on campus
- Requires no monetary expenses
- No major changes/any changes to current University of Maryland system

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

N/A