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Bowling Green State University

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Tuning in: Faculty/staff can help prevent student suicide

Among college students, accidents are the leading cause of death. Suicide is number two.

The University is not immune from the problem: this past fall semester, two students committed suicide. Out of 350 students who sought help at the counseling center last year, 56 were currently exhibiting suicide issues, 115 had reported past suicide issues and 15 had already been hospitalized in the past due to suicide issues. Such issues might include, for example, thinking about hurting oneself, making gestures toward that end or actually attempting suicide.

"So, it's no miniscule thing," Roman Carek, director of the counseling center, said. "One suicide is one too many."

According to Carek, "Statistically, you might expect to have one or two suicides a year, but it really fluctuates. We've gone a number of years here where there were none, but during two out of the last three years, we've had suicides during exam week. One fall semester, I was called to the hospital 13 times with student suicide attempts and all of those were serious attempts.

"People tend to give off signals that perhaps you need to be attuned to," Carek said. "Statements such as, 'I can't take it anymore,' 'You people would be happier if I were gone,' or 'I'm going to disappear some day' may be a beginning plea for help."

What can a person say to someone who has made such statements? "You should ask them what they meant by that and if they really feel like no one cares about them," Carek said. "People shouldn't be afraid to ask someone if they are thinking about suicide."

It's a myth that if you ask someone about it, you're putting the thought of suicide into that person's head. The thought is already there and it might just be a relief to the person that someone has finally noticed.

Other signs include: sudden changes in behavior," Carek said. "That's really important: a sudden withdrawal, crying a lot, depression, hiding weapons. But the reverse is also something to look out for, such as people who become suddenly outgoing and garrulous. If someone has been down and they are suddenly happy, it may be that they made a decision and believe they have found a way out of their misery. Also, people sometimes begin to give away their possessions. Getting someone in order is a signal—people who suddenly begin getting their insurance policy in place, for instance."

In a university setting, Carek said, "you can see some of the signals in class. For example, if a student who normally participated a lot withdraws, looks troubled or just stops coming to class with no explanation.

I'm not sure how often faculty really track that, but it does warrant some sort of follow-up. Especially with the University's emphasis on retention, there should be some way that tracking that could be folded into the system."

"Bowling Green has a strong history of looking out for students," Carek said. "Every year, we get phone calls from faculty and the residence advisors about students.

In many instances, a faculty member will call the counseling center for advice, he said. "For example, if they read something disturbing in a student's journal that the student is writing for class, or a student says something in class that is kind of alarming. There is a lot of concern shown by faculty and staff here."

What should faculty and staff do if they detect disturbing signals? "People need to go out of their way to help someone in trouble. It's not always easy to do, I know. You feel like you're intruding, but if we are truly a community, we need to reach out to others," Carek said.

If faculty begin to notice that a student seems troubled, Carek said, "they should just ask to see the student after class and say, 'I'm worried about you. Is something happening? How are you?'"

"The person may tell you it's none of your business, but at least you tried."

And faculty do that here—we've had several calls from faculty who are calling from their office to refer a student to us while they're still talking to the student in their office."

When people do commit suicide, those around them "always look back and think of all the things that they could have done," Carek said. "When we have the opportunity to help other people, we should take it."

Faculty and staff should be especially mindful of students "who are at a higher risk for harrassment—gay, lesbians, people who look different or who are outcasts for other reasons, people who other people find it easy to harass or discriminate against.

I realize that is a dilemma in many cases—trying to figure out how much to probe into a student's life. As long as the student is not showing any signs of distress, you don't want to violate their privacy, that's true, but if you see a student is being isolated, I think you can make the effort," Carek said.

"Maybe people need to take more risks, need to bother people sometimes, especially when they have a concern."

Students are referred to the center from a variety of sources, Carek said: self-referrals, friends, faculty, residence advisers and parents."

Each summer, parents of new students are invited to attend Education 101, an informal 90-minute information session offered during Orientation and Registration. The session is facilitated by counseling center staff and parents are informed where their children can go in cases of rape, discrimination, etc., he said.

"People don't think of college as a place for problems," Carek said. "But every time students bring their problems with them."

A wide range of problems are exhibited by students who come to the counseling center, Carek said, with depression heading the list, followed by relationship problems, family concerns, anxiety, school problems, general stress and eating disorders.

Students who exhibit psychiatric symptoms, such as those evident in bipolar disorders or various types of psychosis, are referred to psychiatrists, while those with drinking/drug problems and eating disorders receive help at the Counseling Center in conjunction with the Center for Wellness and Prevention and Student Health Services.

Carek said the Counseling Center has seen a definite increase in its caseload this school year. "We have a waiting list of between 30-50 students. With limited staff, what do we do when we're suddenly inundated with students, especially when three out of five students have serious concerns and we need to get to them quickly?

A number of us in student affairs have recommended that the University look into having a fall break, or at least a long weekend during October, because tensions do build up during that semester just like in the spring," Carek said. "We saw a definite increase in the waiting list around the first of November...I know of another university which had student counselors interview the same students every week to gauge how they're doing during the fall and there was a build-up of stress evident. They proposed a fall break and the university went along with the idea and it really has helped."

The Counseling Center is open every weekday year-round, closing only on major holidays.

For emergencies, The Link, a 24-hour hotline, is available. The service is affiliated with Behavioral Connections, the umbrella mental health organization for Wood County, and is staffed by community and student volunteers who receive extensive training, Carek said.

"That service has helped prevent a number of suicides," Carek said. "We try to cover all the bases so that students don't fall through the cracks."

Summer hours policy set

Over the past few months, a great amount of dialogue has occurred regarding the question of summer hours of operation. Based upon input from across the University, University hours of operation from Monday through Friday for the summer of 1998 will fit within one of the following patterns:

• Session times may vary between 7:30 a.m. and 8 a.m.
• Closing times may vary between 4:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Flexible working schedules will be allowed as long as individual employees do not exceed their normal hours of work per week. Small work units with limited staff may have only telephone coverage on Friday afternoons. Each work unit is encouraged to work with its supervisor, director, dean or divisional vice president to insure that appropriate levels of service coverage are maintained.

A complete list of hours of operations for individual offices will be available on the BGSU Web site by mid-June.
Ohio's universities impact economy

The $342.7 million spent in 1995-96 by BGSU and its employees, students and visitors was a major contributor to the state's economic health, according to a study released Jan. 28 by the Inter-University Council. The study, Ohio Education Portfolio 1995: An Economic Impact Statement, comprises data from Ohio's 15 public universities.

"The state's public universities are truly engines of economic development and job creation."

—Ohio Education Portfolio 1995: An Economic Impact Statement

The study found that enrollment, research and student spending at Ohio's universities generated an estimated $26 million in local and state taxes in fiscal year 1996 from employees, students and visitors. Employees paid $10.3 million at BGSU, $4.8 million at MCO and $10.9 million at UT.

Another factor that aids local economies is research funding awarded through federal, state and private grants. In 1995-96, BGSU received $14.8 million, MCO $21.1 million and UT $26.4 million.

Construction projects also add to the economic health of the area. The three universities pumped $230.1 million at UT, $75.8 million at MCO and $131.9 million at UT.

The three universities also spent $84.1 million in the local economy. Employees put $230.1 million into the local economy through a variety of payments, purchases and investments.

For only the second time, private giving to BGSU has topped the million-dollar mark for a one-month period.

During December, the university received $1,095,910 in cash and marketable securities. "It is an achievement worth celebrating," Doug Smith, associate vice president for University relations and director of development, said.

"This reflects the hard work of our development staff, but more importantly, it reflects the growing commitment and support among alumni, faculty, staff and friends of BGSU."

The $1.1 million is 32 percent more than the amount raised in December 1995 and brings total giving for the 1997-98 fiscal year to nearly $3 million.

In both number of donors and amount raised, the largest category was alumni giving. Corporate giving topped $75,000, followed by $67,500 from individuals.

Many of those, Smith said, came from employees and former employees. One of the largest gifts, $80,000, came from the estate of Dr. John C. Clifton, of the veterinary college. The late Dr. Helen McMaster, of Swaisgood Library, also gave a gift of $14,800.

"When I came to Bowling Green, I said that our University family was going to have to step forward and support our efforts. We are seeing that happening," he added.

Other totals include $46,600 from businesses/corporations, more than $39,000 in matching gifts and $79,000 from foundations.

In November 1995, giving topped $1 million, but nearly all of that came from one gift. As part of the University's 75th anniversary campaign, Dr. Harald and Helen McMaster of Perysburg donated $1 million.

Summer Research Fellowships available

The provost is pleased to announce the availability of summer fellowships to help faculty members who are midway through the probationary period. The fellowships are expected to result in findings and publications which enhance the reputations of the recipients, their departments and the University.

Awards of up to $10,000 may be used for summer compensation (including benefits) and other research-related expenses. Recipients are expected to devote all of their time and effort to the project. They may neither engage in summer teaching nor receive summer salary support from other sources. External support to supplement these awards is encouraged and University policy and procedures regarding remuneration are in effect.

Those eligible for the outreach and professorship seminars include full-time, probationary faculty who are currently in the third or fourth year of their probationary period, not being considered for promotion or tenure. Applications (including supporting letters and vitae) should be submitted to Piano 106 (106 University Hall) by 5 p.m., March 2. Decisions will be announced by April 20. Awards will be given beginning May 20 and Aug. 9.

Focus groups to offer feedback

A series of focus groups that will help gather prospective students' perceptions about BGSU and provide information for marketing strategies will be conducted in four Ohio cities in the next two weeks.

High school students and their parents will take part in the sessions in Cincinnati, Columbus, Cleveland and Toledo. The Mallett Research Group of Cleveland will conduct the focus groups. Members of the University's marketing committee and representatives of the admissions office will be observing each of the sessions. Also, focus groups will be held on campus to determine faculty and staff reaction to possible marketing strategies.

Ribeau to host presidential roundtable

Four northwest Ohio presidents will share their views on "Diversity as a Value in Higher Education" during a television program airing tonight from 10-11 p.m. on WBGU-TV (Chann. 24).

Led by President Sidney Ribeau, this presidential roundtable discussion also features President Frank Shankwitz of Medical College of Ohio, President Daniel Brown of Owens Community College and President Frank Horton of the University of Toledo. Marlene Harris-Taylor, WBGU-TV, will serve as moderator.

The event is part of a series of discussions on race relations held on the campuses of BGSU, UT, MCO and OCC this academic year. The series was developed as an avenue for Northwest Ohio's higher education community to participate in the national dialogue on race initiated by President Bill Clinton last fall.

Last semester, discussions took place at UT and OCC. On Feb. 5, a campus forum will be held at MCO to discuss "Race and the Canon: What Should Be Taught and Who Should Teach It?"

The four-campus dialogue concludes April 16 with a forum at BGSU on the topic of "Race, Higher Education, and the New Millennium." This forum is expected to feature a member of President Clinton's national Advisory Board on Race Relations.

For more information, contact Marshall Rose, affirmative action, at 2-8495.

Tax forms, information available

Federal and state tax forms, instruction booklets and publications for 1997 are now available in the lobby of Jerome Library. Forms and instructions are free. Internal Revenue Service publications may be photocopied.
Secrets to success: College finds the right mix for recruitment, retention

What does it take to successfully recruit and keep students? At the College of Musical Arts, it involves a comprehensive approach that blends communication, personal attention, relationship-building and collaboration with other University programs.

The college has long been a leader in the BG SU community in student recruitment and retention. This did not come about by accident, college sources say, but through careful planning and learning from experience. Though some of what the college does is specific to music students, many of its practices could be emulated by other areas.

Richard Kennell, associate dean of the college, explained that the college's approach to recruitment involves five problem/solution areas. Outlined below, these five strategies for success are shared during Kennell's summer workshop during the National Workshop for Musicians at DePaul University's School of Music.

- What is recruitment? First, all college personnel share an understanding and a definition of what exactly 'recruitment' means: "getting the right message to the right person at the right time and in the right way." This definition guides many of the efforts, Kennell said. Each faculty member participates as appropriate, according to individual opportunity and responsibility.

"Studio teachers...make phone calls, give concerts, make school visits. The emphasis is on building honest, exciting, professional relationships with students." — Richard Kennell

Teaching is the top priority. If you have excellence in that area, recruitment falls into place.

- Diverse students, varied messages. The second main point: having a "theory of the student." It is important to understand both how new students are diverse and in what ways they are similar, Kennell said. Messages must be fairly sophisticated and varied in order to communicate effectively with diverse students. For example, experience has shown that music students tend to want very specific information, so the right message usually means detail.

- Often it is necessary to send multiple messages in order to communicate all the needed information. "We've found that trying to have one slogan to explain what you're about misses many people," Kennell said.

- Communicate and follow-up. Managing the college's messages is the third prong of the approach. The college has developed a sequential system of communication with students through printed materials, follow-up letters and personal calls that gradually provides the prospective student with a broad picture of what the whole operation "One mailing doesn't equal recruiting," Kennell said. Studio teachers may be in communication with prospective students for up to two years before the students actually come to Bowling Green. They make phone calls, give concerts, make school visits. The emphasis is on building honest, exciting.

From one-on-one lessons to large ensemble classes, music students enjoy plenty of opportunities for interaction with faculty. Here, Nancy Lutes instructs Christopher Brooks, a sophomore music education major from Middletown, Ohio, on bassoon, and Todd Davidson conducts a Jazz Lab Band II class.

professional relationships with students. Admissions, alums and events. The college also enjoys an excellent relationship with the admissions office. Kennell said, "Together, we're stronger," he said.

In addition, many college alumni and music students in northwest Ohio can serve as ambassadors for the program as well. "We've received tremendous support from them and are always looking for ways to get more involved with them," said Gene Trantham, who teaches music theory. He recently visited the school of an alum in Oak Harbor to deliver a teacher-in-service seminar. Trantham has recently started a list serv students can use to ask further questions and keep in touch.

Retention in action: one-by-one. "The administration's role is to provide opportunities for faculty to interact with students, and the faculty makes the personal contact with those students. We sincerely believe an individual can make a difference," Kennell said.

Trantham is a good example of a faculty member whose personal efforts have made a difference. Since public school music curricula generally no longer focus on music theory, students coming into college are not as well prepared in the basics as they once were. In response, Trantham has developed a set of materials for high school students that they can use to learn the basics of music theory such as key signatures, notation, scales and rhythm. By learning some of this before entering college, they have an opportunity to take higher on placement tests and avoid remedial classes. If we want to help students prepare and be more successful when they come here, we've got to take an active role," Trantham said.

Nativg, who also sits on the advisory board for the University Honors Program, takes a special interest in students who might qualify for the program. "Honors students need just as much TLC as other students," she said, adding that a high percentage of music students are eligible for the program, either as freshmen or sophomores. "Music students really value the honors classes. I think it's important to help meet their needs outside of music," she said.

To enhance the sense of community, many music students are now choosing to live in Kettering Hall. In its second year, the residence program has grown from 80 to 150 participants. "Wedding cake" curriculum. The music curriculum is analogous to a tiered wedding cake, Kennell said. At the top is the individual music teacher, with whom students take private lessons each week. This offers a natural opportunity to discuss problems or ask for advice—valuable tools for retention.

Next comes the chamber music teacher, who deals with a larger group of students, then the large ensemble teachers. At the broadest level, students take academic music courses and general education courses as part of their overall learning experience. "Students' needs are evaluated in each tier," Kennell said. "It's about focusing on the gap between where the student is at present and where he or she wants to be, and helping the student through the maturation process."

However, it is not uncommon for a student who sincerely loves music to nevertheless decide that the serious study of it is not for him or her. In that case, the faculty teams with those in other areas to help that student find the right fit somewhere else within the University.

"We always remember that we're training some people, but we're educating everybody. We're part of an institution," Trantham said.

Grant applications due soon

Faculty members are reminded that February 13 is the deadline for application for Instructional Improvement Grants which provide allocations of up to $1,000 for innovative projects that lead to a demonstrable improvement in pedagogical skills and have a positive effect on student learning. Application materials are available in the department/school offices or from the Provost/VPA office (2-9215).

State of the University
9 a.m. Refreshments 9:30 a.m. Address by President
Sidney Ribeau
Thursday Feb. 19 101 Olscamp Hall

University Event Calendar

March 2: Quadrennial Telecommunications Project Kickoff Meeting
March 3: Annual Research Symposium
March 5: University Senate Meeting
March 7: Annual Faculty Senate Meeting
March 9: University Faculty Meeting
March 11: University Staff Meeting
March 13: University Student Meeting
March 15: University Executive Committee Meeting
March 17: University Board of Trustees Meeting
March 19: University Executive Council Meeting
March 21: University Academic Senate Meeting
March 23: University Faculty Senate Meeting
March 25: University Staff Senate Meeting
March 27: University Student Senate Meeting
March 29: University Executive Board Meeting
March 31: University Board of Governors Meeting
Monday, February 2
International Film Series, Moscovy Parade (Prova), 8:15 p.m., Gish Film Theater. Free.
Television program, “Diversity as a Value in Higher Education,” northwestern Ohio roundtable discussion led by President Sidney Ribeau, 10-11 p.m., WRGU-TV Channel 27.

Tuesday, February 3
Forum, “Bringing History to Life,” with Christy Matthews, Director of African American Interpretations and Programs at Colonial Williamsburg, noon luncheon, $5, 12:30 presentation is free, Tower Inn, McDonald West. Reservations: Mary, 2-2340. Sponsor: arts and sciences, in conjunction with popular culture. Faculty Senate 2-30 p.m., Assembly Room, McFall Center.
Affective Action Issues Forum, “Ethnic Nuisances,” a video discussion roundtable reviewing the critical role of the media in creating and sustaining racial stereotypes, 3-4:30 p.m., Faculty Lounge, Student Union.
“Music from Bowling Green at the Manor House,” Bowling Green Opera Theater under the direction of Dr. Eugene Dybdahl, 7:30 p.m., Wildwood MetroPark Manor House, 5100 West Central Ave., Toledo. Free.

Wednesday, February 4
Master class with Grammy Award-winning pianist Emanuel Ax, 11:30 a.m., Bryan Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center. Free.
Black History Month, Poet Nikki Giovanni, 7 p.m., Lebanon District Ballroom, Student Union. Free.
Festival Series Forum, hosted by Paul Hunt, musical arts, 7:30 p.m., Bryan Recital Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center. Free.
Festival Series, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra with pianist Emanuel Ax. 8 p.m., Kobacker Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center. Tickets: $20, $30 and $37. Reservations: 2-8717.

Thursday, February 5
Administrative Staff Council, 1:30 p.m., Alumni Room, Student Union.
Workshop, “Preventing Sexual Harassment,” 1-3 p.m., Taft Room, Student Union. Sponsored: affirmative action.
Conversations About Race: Higher Education and The American Dilemma, a series of discussions on race relations held on four northwestern Ohio campuses, continues with "Race and the Canon: What Should Be Taught" and "Who Should Teach It?", 6:30-8 p.m., The Dana Conference Center, Medical College of Ohio, Toledo.
Men’s basketball hosts Northern Illinois, 7 p.m., Anderson Arena.

Friday, February 6
Black History Month, Brown-bag Lunch Book Discussion on the works of African American authors, 11:30 a.m., Faculty Lounge, Student Union. Free.
Lecture, “Ethics and Race,” with Charles Mills, University of Illinois, Chicago, 4-6 p.m., 105 Olescamp Hall. Free. Sponsor: ethnic studies and philosophy.

Saturday, February 7
Women’s swimming and diving hosts Ball State, 1 p.m., Cooper Pool, Student Recreation Center.
Men’s tennis hosts Indiana State, 2 p.m., Central Fitness Club, Toledo.
Men’s swimming and diving hosts Ball State, 4 p.m., Cooper Pool, Student Recreation Center.
Men’s basketball hosts Ball State, 7 p.m., Anderson Arena.

Sunday, February 8
Men’s tennis hosts DePaul, 9 a.m., Laurel Hill, Toledo.
Men’s tennis hosts Dayton, 2 p.m., Shadow Valley, Toledo.
Choral/orchestra concert, featuring A Cappella, Collegiate Chorale and Philharmonia, 3 p.m., Kobacker Hall, Moore Musical Arts Center. Admission charged. Call 2-8717.

Monday, February 9
Valentine’s Day candygram sale for Mortarboard, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., foyer, Student Union. (Candy delivered Feb. 13.)

Program, “Understanding Your Grief—Part 1,” the first of four sessions geared to students dealing with the aftermath of a death and their support persons, with psychologists Craig Vickio and Claudia Clark, Counseling Center, 6-7:30 p.m., 320 Sadtlerlinke Student Services Building.
International Film Series, Gonza the Spermman, a 1986 Japanese film, 8:15 p.m., Gish Film Theater. Free.

Continuing Events
January 13–February 6
Exhibit, "By Example," internationally acclaimed designer and BGSU alumnus Rick Silo. Exhibit uses interactive and process-oriented methods to examine client-designer collaboration through video and print, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesdays-Saturdays, 2-5 p.m. Sundays, closed holidays, Dorothy Uber Bryan Gallery, Fine Arts Center. Free.

January 14–February 7
Art exhibit, "The Body of a House," a series of eight oil canvases by Robert Beckmann, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays and 2-5 p.m. Sundays, Wankel Gallery, Fine Arts Center. Free.

January 30–March 6 & March 17–April 24
Planetary show, "Alpha Universe," the best of space from A to Z, 8 p.m. Tuesdays and Fridays, 7:30 p.m. Sundays, 2 p.m. Saturdays, Feb. 21 and March 21, 112 Physical Sciences Building. $1 donation suggested.

Ongoing
Public skating, 8-10 p.m. Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, 3:30-5:30 p.m. and 7-9 p.m. Sundays. Cost: $2 with student I.D. $1 skate rental; not offered during varsity hockey team home games. Information/confirmation: 2-2264.

Continuing Education Classes
Feb. 5-March 12: Foreign Travel - An Independent Approach. Learn how to get the most from foreign travel. Contact: abroad travel columnist Roger Holliday and Claudia Fischer, and Roger Anderson, political science, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Thursdays. Fee: $45 or $85 couple.
Feb. 6: Developing Effective Meetings - Professional Training & Development Series.Learn how to successfully organize and conduct a meeting, 8-10 a.m. Friday. Fee: $40.
Feb. 7: Rubber Stamping - Advanced. Learn more elaborate designs and decorative cards and other useful items, 10 a.m.-noon, Saturday. Fee: $20.
Feb. 10-March 10: Calligraphy Design 1 & 2 - Enhance your calligraphy designs, 7-9 p.m., Tuesdays. Fee: $60.
Feb. 13-March 3: Keys to Successful Investing. Learn how to choose investments that will enable you to reach your financial goals, 7:30-9:30 p.m. Tuesdays. Fee: $25.
Feb. 21: Scrapbooking - Organize, store and beautifully preserve your photos, 10 a.m.-noon, Saturday. Fee: $30.
Feb. 26-March 26: Creative Experience I - Translate everyday experiences into creative writing, 7-9 p.m., Thursdays. Fee: $45.
Feb. 28: Aromatherapy. Learn how to relax with essential oils, 9 a.m.-noon, Saturday. Fee: $25.
For more information, including locations, or to register, call continuing education, 2-8181.

"Strengthening Cultural Diversity In Education"
Friday, Feb. 27 - 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. * 101 Olescamp Hall
“Preparing Today’s Youth for a Different Tomorrow”
Ako Rambon, president, Visionary Leaders Institute
Free to participants. * Registration (required) by Feb. 18.
For further information, contact 2-9346.
Sponsor: Project FEED (Future Educators Enhancing Diversity), supported by a grant from the Ohio Department of Education, administered by the special education department, College of Education and Human Development.