



**Undergraduate
Student Government**

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT

**February 28th, 2023
Student Senate Session
S.S.R. #9**

Sponsors: Senator Bassuk, Senator Clare, Senator Eldridge, Senator Kannan, Senator Michalski,
Senator Ocegüera, Senator Wicks
Bill Contributors: Director McKenna, Director Studer
Referred to the Academic Affairs Committee and the Health and Safety Committee
Student Senate Action **Passed** Failed/Tabled

A RESOLUTION

Recommending all colleges of the University of Iowa to include two Mental Health Days in addition to their current attendance policy.

Section 1. Short Title

This resolution may be cited as “USG support for Mental Health Days”.

Section 2. Background and Discussion

Whereas, mental health can be defined as an individual’s condition with regard to their psychological, emotional, and social well-being.

Whereas, mental health continues to be a prevalent issue facing University of Iowa Students. According to the National College Health Assessment III, 52.8% of University of Iowa students experience moderate psychological distress, and 21.7% report serious psychological distress. Additionally, 10.6% of self-reporting University of Iowa undergraduate students have committed acts of self-harm within the last 12 months of the publishing of the National College Health Assessment III.¹

¹ The National College Health Assessment III, Undergraduate Summary Report, The University of Iowa, Spring 2021

Whereas, the Undergraduate Student Government serves as the representatives and voice of the University of Iowa's student body and stands for the sustained physical and mental health of University of Iowa students.

Whereas, the University of Iowa Strategic Plan for 2022-2027 states access to mental health support is a key aspect for increasing holistic well-being and success, "The university will chart clear pathways for advancement, celebrate excellence and achievement, and ensure access to holistic well-being and mental health supports."²

Whereas, it is the mission of the University of Iowa to educate and support its students, and mental health concerns can conflict with a student's ability to succeed as evidence by the fact that stress, anxiety, and depression are three out of the top five self-reported impediments to academic success experienced by undergraduate students according to the to the National College Health Assessment III.

Whereas, one of the lasting effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic includes an increased amount of general stress among 88.6% of self-reporting University of Iowa undergraduate students according to the National College Health Assessment III.

Whereas, knowing that mental health is a persisting issue for University of Iowa students and cannot be anticipated nor scheduled around, attendance policy should reflect these realities and be implemented with proper flexibility in mind.

Whereas, understanding that complications due to mental health can affect students for prolonged periods of time and can easily consume any existing excused absences afforded to students within their syllabi at the beginning of a given semester. Therefore, additional no-questions-asked excused absences specifically designated for complications due to mental health would lessen additional stress and impediments to academic success as the result of missing class(es) for mental health complications.

Whereas, the implementation of additional designated Mental Health Days into the existing University of Iowa and its colleges' attendance policy would create more flexibility and support for students with prolonged mental health complications. Additionally, the implementation of Mental Health Days would make the University of Iowa a role model for other similar academic institutions when it comes to advocating for student mental health.

Whereas, the Undergraduate Student Government believes the inclusion of two Mental Health Days within existing University of Iowa attendance policy, available to all undergraduate students, would reduce stress, anxiety, and all forms of mental health complications. The goal of integrating Mental Health Days into University of Iowa attendance policy is to ensure that undergraduate students do not have to sacrifice their mental health for academic success. Additionally, it is the intention and understanding of the Undergraduate Student Government that Mental Health Days would not allow undergraduate students an unexcused absence from

² University of Iowa Strategic Plan 2022-2027

scheduled exams nor as an implicit extension of a graded assignment without previous communication and approval from their instructor.

Section 3. Action

Resolved, upon passage of this resolution a copy will be sent to the following individuals:

the Office of the Dean of the College of Education, the Office of the Dean of the College of Engineering, the Office of the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the Office of the Dean of the College of Nursing, the Office of the Dean of the College of Public Health, the Office of the Dean of the Tippie College of Business, the Office of the Registrar, the Office of the Provost, the Division of Student Life (Office of the Dean of Students/Office of the Vice President of Student Life), and the Office of the President.

Therefore be it resolved, the Undergraduate Student Government strongly advocates and encourages the adoption and incorporation of two designated Mental Health Days to serve as excused absences for students experiencing complications due to mental health into all University of Iowa courses. It is the belief of the Undergraduate Student Government that these Mental Health days should be included in all course syllabi and be separate from and in addition to any currently existing excused absences within current attendance policy.

Section 4. Enactment Clause

Be it enacted by the Undergraduate Student Government upon the signature of the USG President.

Alexis Carfrae, **Speaker of the Senate**
Alexis Carfrae

I hereby attest and certify that this resolution originated from the 2022-2023 Student Senate Session.

APPROVED on 2/28/23, by

Patrick Johnson, **USG President**
Patrick Johnson