

Resolution No. 2016-24

Sponsored by: Students' Rights and Welfare Committee

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**RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE
MENTAL HEALTH ACT**

*A resolution calling for the implementation of the comprehensive mental health act in De
La Salle University*

Whereas, the Legislative Assembly is the highest policy--making body of the University Student Government (University Student Government Constitution, Article XIV, Section 1);

Whereas, the USG shall have the power of which emanates from the student body. It shall be the sole, unified, autonomous and democratic representative body of the students (University Student Government Constitution, Article III, Section 1);

Whereas, The USG shall be at the forefront of the students' struggle for their rights and welfare, as embodied in Article IV of this Constitution, the University's Student Charter and the laws of the land (University Student Government Constitution, Article III, Section 4);

Whereas, the USG shall help foster the physical, intellectual, moral, cultural, civic, spiritual and political interests of the students, as long as these are not contrary to the University's vision and mission (University Student Government Constitution, Article III Section 5);

Whereas, the University Student Government (USG), being the supreme and autonomous representative body of the students, shall have the right to participate in the formation of school policies directly affecting the students (Student Handbook, Student's Charter, Appendix I, Chapter I, Section 3.4);

Whereas, students have the right to adequate facilities and services provided by the University. These shall aid the overall development of the members of the Lasallian community through well-equipped venues and well-maintained equipment (Student Handbook, Student's Charter, Appendix I, Chapter IX, Section 37);

Whereas, in the Philippines, suicide attempts and mortality were generally higher in adolescents and young adults (Redaniel, Dalida, and Gunnell, 2011);

Whereas, social support is a protective factor of mental health. (World Health Organization, 2004);

Whereas, stigma and discrimination against patients and families prevent people from seeking mental health care. (World Health Organization, 2014);

Whereas, mental illnesses, social stressors, suicide in the family, among friends or peers, and low access to psychological help are some of the evidence-based risk factors for suicide. (World Health Organization, 2004);

Whereas, the Comprehensive Mental Health Act is an act that is at the forefront of protecting the rights of students with mental illnesses;

Whereas, the Comprehensive Mental Health Act is an act that is at the forefront of addressing the needs of students with mental illnesses;

Whereas, this Comprehensive Mental Health Act went through various consultations with OCCS, the Psychology Department, and a Senior Medical Intern (Appendix B);

Wherefore, be it resolved that this Comprehensive Mental Health Act (Appendix A) be approved and implemented university-wide through the coordination of different sectors within and outside the university;

Wherefore, be it further resolved that the University endeavors to address the Mental Health Needs of students;

Wherefore, be it further resolved that the University Student Government direct its efforts and resources to ensure inclusivity and equal opportunity to those with disabilities;

Wherefore, be it further resolved that the university shall continuously formulate, develop and implement mental health programs and policies;

Wherefore, the Office of the Vice-President for Internal Affairs (OVPIA) upon effectivity of this resolution, shall spearhead in the implementation of the necessary measures involved in this resolution;

Wherefore, the Office of the Vice-President for External Affairs (OVPEA) upon effectivity of this resolution, shall support the OVPIA in the implementation of the necessary measures involved in this resolution;

Wherefore, all involved offices needed in the successful implementation of the resolution shall give its support to the OVPIA and OVPEA;

Wherefore, be it finally resolved that this resolution be approved by the Legislative Assembly.

Adopted, November 11, 2016

Appendix A.

COMPREHENSIVE MENTAL HEALTH ACT

Section 1. Definition. Substantive definition of terms used in the resolution:

- a. **Confidentiality** refers to the right of an individual to have personal and medical information related to his/her psychiatric, neurologic, and psychosocial health needs kept private. It is meant to ensure that such information should only be available to the physician of record and relevant health care workers with authorized access.
- b. **Discrimination** refers to an action that makes any distinction, exclusion or restriction with the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedom.
- c. **Mental health** refers to a state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, has the ability to cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.
- d. **Mental Health First Aid** refers to a course that gives people the skills to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. The evidence behind the program demonstrates that it does build mental health literacy, helping identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness.
- e. **Mental Health Professional** refers to to psychiatrist, clinical psychologist, medical doctor or any other appropriately-trained and qualified person with specific skills relevant to the provision of mental health services.
- f. **Mental illness** refers to a neurologic or psychiatric disorder characterized by the existence of a recognizable, clinically-significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotional regulation, or behavior that reflects a genetic or acquired dysfunction in the neurobiological, psychosocial, or developmental processes underlying mental functioning.
- g. **Psychiatrist** refers to a medical doctor who specializes in mental health specifically the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of mental illness.

Psychiatrists are qualified to assess both the mental and physical aspects of psychological problems and prescribe medicine.

Section 2. *Rights of students with Mental Illness.* A student with Mental Illness shall have the right to:

- a. Freedom from adverse treatment and any form of discrimination and stigmatization from every member of the University including faculty, staff, visitors, and students. Forms of discrimination include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Denying admission in the university on the basis of a student's neurologic or psychiatric disorder;
 - ii. Denying access to university program and services on the basis of a student's neurologic or psychiatric disorder; or
 - iii. Instigating or allowing an environment that is unwelcoming or hostile based a student's neurologic or psychiatric disorder.
- b. Practice all inherent social, religious, educational, civil, and cultural rights while free from discrimination on the basis of a student's age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, race, color, religion, disability.
- c. Access to necessary and quality mental health services in the university for the benefit of student's full recovery from mental illness and achieve the highest attainable standard of mental health.
- d. Receive comprehensive and evidence-based information adequate to understand and decide on the treatment options and alternatives that could be taken.
- e. Give informed consent before receiving care or treatment, including the right to withdraw such consent and right to refuse treatment.
- f. Receive reasonable forms of accommodations from the university to give students with disabilities the same access to opportunities and an equal chance in performing as nondisabled students.
- g. Confidentiality of all information, in whatever form or medium stored, regarding (1) the student; (2) any aspect of the student's mental health; (3) or any treatment or care received by the student. Such information, shall be kept private and safe from access or disclosure to unauthorized third

parties without the written consent of the student or the student's legal representative.

Section 3. Recommendations to address Mental Health Needs. The University is called on to address the Mental Health Needs of students and consequently pursue initiatives and programs that seek to enable an equitable and inclusionary environment free of stigma against mental illness. The University is asked direct its efforts and resources to ensure inclusivity and equal opportunity to those with disabilities. Further, the University is asked ensure the establishment of the following programs and policies:

- a. **Disclosure of condition.** The University is asked to give its students the option to disclose their existing mental condition, and the discretion to whom such information can be disclosed to, for the purpose of receiving necessary accommodations. Thus:
 - i. The University should implement measures by which a student may comfortably disclose such information;
 - ii. The Office of Counseling and Career Services should actively work towards an environment free from stigmatization and discrimination that would encourage students to seek help;
 - iii. The University should ensure that all members of its faculty and administration effectively understand and respond to the mental health needs of students.
- b. **Accommodations.** The University is requested employ strategies to promote equal access to classes, programs, and coursework and remove barriers to full participation and learning by providing effective accommodations to students with disabilities upon the recommendation of mental health professionals.

Therefore, the University, in coordination with the Vice Chancellor for Administration, Office of Counseling and Career Services, and the Psychology Department, should work on the formulation of policies and procedures to be followed for the arrangement of the necessary accommodations.

- c. **Medical Withdrawal and Incomplete Grade.** The University should not hold the circumstance of a student against him/her if: (1) The student's condition is beyond their control; or (2) The student's condition impedes their ability to perform in the usual manner. Therefore, upon the careful

evaluation of the University where the student is deemed psychologically unfit to continue enrolled courses, the University should:

- i. Allow students to receive a grade of *Incomplete* under specified guidelines to be set by the University if the personal emergency prevents a student from completing a major course work by the end of the trimester; or
 - ii. Allow the withdrawal of a student from course load under specified guidelines to be set by the University if an Incomplete is grade is not practicable.
- d. **Clearance after Leave.** A returning student who was granted leave on the basis of psychological condition must obtain Medical Clearance from a mental health professional that should be validated by the University.
- e. **Support Groups.** The University is called to develop support groups that target a range of issues through the collaboration of different student groups, counselors, and other relevant university sectors for the benefit of mutual support. The nature of support groups should be rooted in being a form of therapeutic treatment, which should:
 - i. Provide a safe and supportive space for students to discuss their own challenges and experiences;
 - ii. To provide an avenue for learning from interaction with others who have similar concerns; and
 - iii. Address a range of interpersonal issues or specific problems such as stress, anxiety, eating disorders, and depression.
- f. **Online Mental Health Platform.** The University is called to create an online platform, in collaboration with mental health professionals, to provide mental health information and resources related to De La Salle University, for students, faculty, and staff. The following are recommendations to include in the platform:
 - i. Contact information for urgent consultations for those experiencing mental health crisis.
 - ii. Online therapy which includes programs for users to manage symptoms of mental illness with feedback from trained mental health staff. This could also serve as an alternative space to those uncomfortable with in-person consultations.

- iii. Information on all mental health services available in the university.
- iv. General information of different mental illnesses and appropriate care options in the university according to the mental health services available.
- g. **Training.** The University, in coordination with the Office of Counseling, Career Services, Educational Leadership and Management Department, and the Psychology Department, is requested to introduce training programs for its faculty and staff. The program should train them to:
 - i. Identify warning signs of psychological problems in students;
 - ii. Handle basic needs of students in mental distress; and
 - iii. Link students with effective services and support available in the university.
- h. **Periodic Student Psychological and Risk Assessment.** The university, in coordination with the Health Services Office and Office of Counseling and Career Services, is called to include in its mandatory undergraduate health examination a psychological and risk assessment which shall evaluate whether a student is generally psychologically fit or has a predisposition to mental illness.

Section 4. Duties and Responsibilities of the University Student Government (USG). To achieve the policy and objectives of this Act, the USG shall:

- a. **Accessible Psychiatric Services.** The University Student Government shall lobby to make psychiatric services accessible to students by measures such as partnering up with public and private hospitals.
- b. **Mental Health First Aid.** The University Student Government shall mandate all its elected officers to go through Mental Health First Aid training, in coordination with the Office of Counseling and Career Services, to adopt the necessary skills to help someone who is developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.

Note: This, however, will mean that trained USG Elected Officers shall only perform first aid up to the extent of their training and shall recommend affected students to go to their respective counselors. This shall not qualify them to give Mental Health advice because this shall be done by a mental health professional.

- c. **Implementation.** The University Student Government shall direct its efforts and resources to implement this Comprehensive Mental Health Act. They shall continuously formulate, develop and implement mental health programs and policies towards a progressive environment that is inclusive and equitable.

Section 5. *Separability Clause.* If any portion of this Act is declared void or unconstitutional, the remaining portions or provisions hereof shall not be affected by such declarations.

Section 6. *Amendments.* Amendments to this Act can be proposed by any Legislative Assembly Representative through a resolution and shall be approved through a two-third majority vote of the Legislative Assembly.

Appendix B.



