

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-XXXX

TITLE: Resolution Advocating for the Implementation of Campus-Wide Semesterly “UF Mental Health and Well-Being Days”

AUTHOR(S): Senator Simone Liang

SPONSORS: Senator Aaron Rubaii, Senator Laurie Wang, Senator Vivian Phung, Senator Elizabeth Insuasti, Senator Gabriela Prieto, Senator LJ Bryan, Senator Aleah Henley, Senator Jonathan Bedine, Senator Aaron Amster, Minority Party Leader Nathaniel Pelton, Senator Raj Mia, Senator Hunter Monson, Senator Arturo Zárrate

WHEREAS, in 2021, over 60% of college students met the conditions for at least one mental health problem [1]; and,

WHEREAS, more than three quarters of students reported moderate or severe psychological distress in a national survey conducted by the American College Health Association [2]; and,

WHEREAS, around 5,000 students have sought counseling services at the Counseling and Wellness Center of the University of Florida in 2023 alone [3]; and,

WHEREAS, more than half of the 5,000 cases were related to academic distress, depression, and difficulty concentrating [3]; and,

WHEREAS, according to the American Psychological Association, students who are struggling with academic coursework and demands may benefit from workshops or instruction on time and stress management, goal-setting, and effective mental and physical health routines [4]; and,

WHEREAS, several universities including Northeastern University, Grinnell College have implemented some form of mental health or wellness days during which students receive time off from courses and assignments [5]; and,

WHEREAS, twelve states have passed laws and eight states have introduced laws allowing mental or behavioral health reasons to constitute an excused absence for students in K-12 public schools [6]; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the importance of mental health and well-being for UF students in current and future academic, professional, and personal pursuits.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate advocates the implementation of a campus-wide UF Mental Health and Well-Being Day once per semester that would encourage large-scale tabling for CWC and Gatorwell Services, as well as stress relief activities.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate encourages faculty to hold online classes on these semesterly UF Mental Health and Well-Being Days or classes focused on sharing information regarding the counseling and mental health resources offered on campus.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the importance of long-term solutions to the growing mental health crisis on college campuses.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to University President Dr. Ben Sasse, Vice President for Student Life Dr. Heather White, UF Student Health Care Interim Director Jocelyn Gravlee, Dr. Angela Lindner, Counseling and Wellness Center Executive Director Ernesto Escoto, and Gatorwell Health Promotion Services Director Dr. Monica Webb.

[1] <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0165032722002774>

[2] https://www.acha.org/documents/ncha/NCHA-III_FALL_2021_REFERENCE_GROUP_EXECUTIVE_SUMMARY.pdf

[3] <https://counseling.ufl.edu/annual-report/>

[4] <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2022/10/mental-health-campus-care>

[5] <https://www.npr.org/2022/11/06/1134608188/colleges-are-offering-wellness-days-to-students-not-everyone-is-on-board>

[6] <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/23/12-states-that-allow-mental-health-days-for-kids-in-schools.html>