

Office of the Dean of Students  
Student Care and Assistance Annual Report  
2020-2021

Student Care and Assistance provides assistance to University of Iowa students experiencing crisis and emergency situations. These situations may include: hospitalization; medical emergencies or long-term illness; mental health concerns; chronic conditions; death of a family member; natural disasters - fire, tornado, and displacement; off campus living concerns; or unexpected events or challenges.

We know that students may experience a variety of challenges during their college career. Student Care and Assistance is a central location that provides coordinated efforts along with campus partners to assist students with overcoming challenges to be successful and continue towards graduation.

Student Care and Assistance (SCA) works closely with the Early Intervention Team (EIT) and the UI Threat Assessment Team (TAT). The Director co-directs the Early Intervention Team with the Director of Retention.

### **SUMMARY**

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Between June 1, 2020 and May 31, 2021, the Office of Student Care and Assistance (SCA) provided support and assistance to:

- 2001 students including undergraduate, graduate, professional, and non-degree/non-enrolled (not including Title IX cases)
- 19 of those total cases were joint student conduct and student care cases (necessary to involve both offices to address the concerns of the student)

### **SCA Case Numbers**

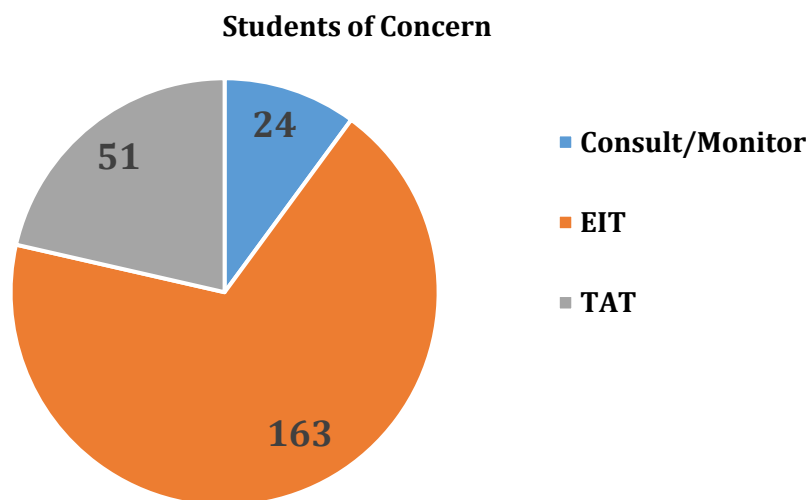
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Student Care and Assistance: 2001

Joint Care and Conduct: 19

**Total Cases: 2020**

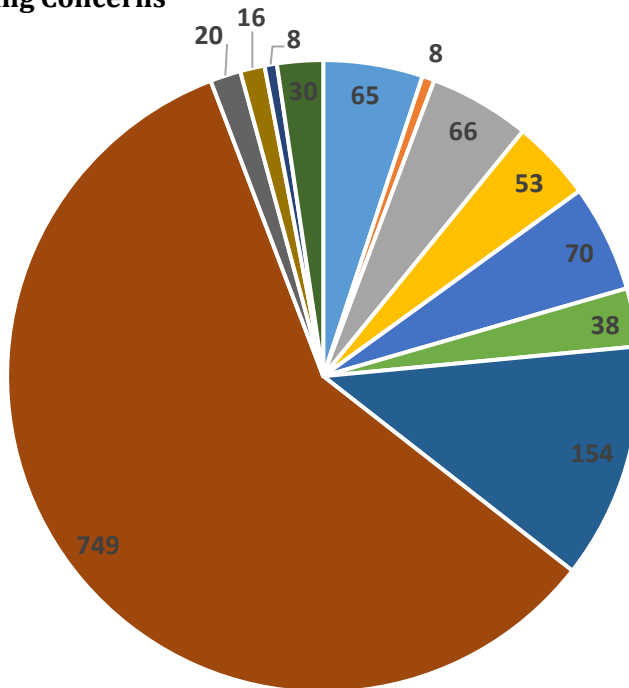
Students of concern engage with SCA in different ways including meetings, various communications, consultations with faculty/staff, discussion on EIT or TAT, or a combination of methods. The numbers below regarding consultations and EIT or TAT primary cases may overlap due to the type and level of engagement with a student of concern.



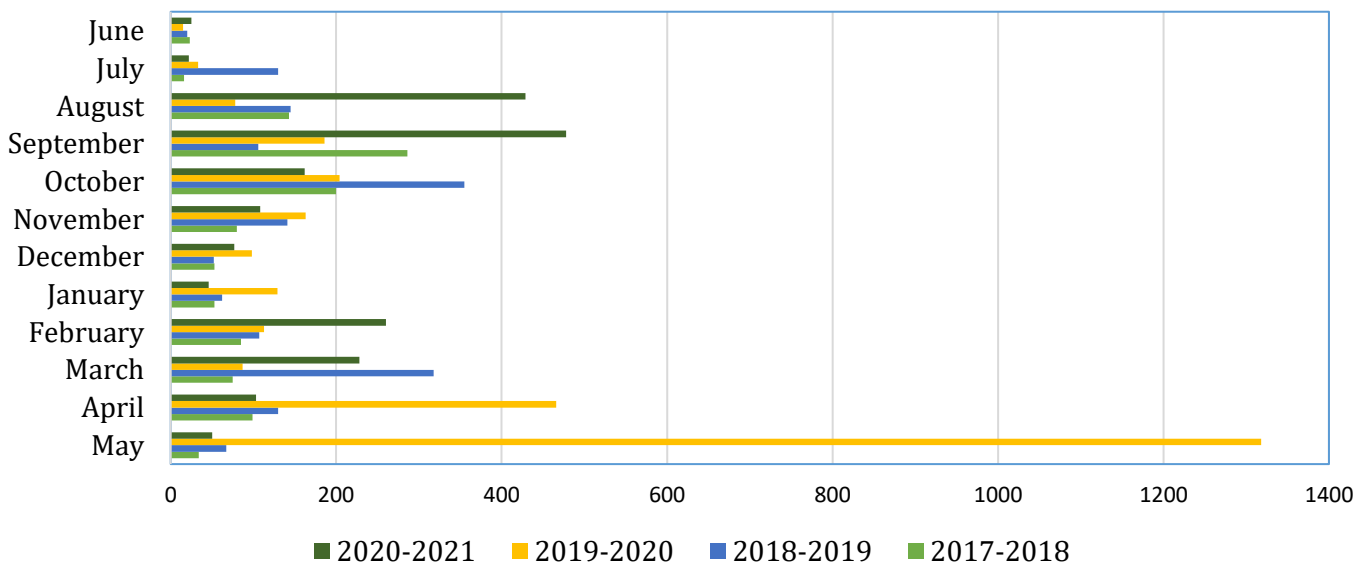
The types of concerns presented by students range from absence notices, emergency transports, and death of family members to hospitalizations, mental health concerns, natural disasters, and medical concerns. Below are the presenting concerns during 2020-2021. One student may present multiple concerns.

### Presenting Concerns

- Absence Notice (65)
- Accident/Injury (8)
- Condolence Card (66)
- Family Concerns (53)
- Hospitalization (70)
- Medical/Illness (38)
- Mental Health (154)
- Natural Disaster (749)
- Roommate/Other Student (20)
- Suicidal Ideation (16)
- Suicide attempt (8)
- Direct Referral from Mental Health Agency (30)



### Seasonal Nature of Concerns



### Academic Status of Students of Concern:

	<u>2020-2021</u>	<u>2019-2020</u>	<u>2018-2019</u>	<u>2017-2018</u>	<u>2016-2017</u>
First Year	17%	11%	19%	27%	34%
Second Year	20%	18%	22%	21%	21%
Third Year	24%	25%	23%	20%	16%
Fourth Year+	23%	34%	21%	19%	15%
Unclassified	3%	3%	3%	10%	10%
Graduate/Professional	13%	9%	12%	3%	4%

## **New SCA Initiatives**

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### *Coronavirus Self-Report Form and Other Support*

In preparation for the 2020-2021 academic year, Student Care and Assistance partnered with a variety of campus partners to create a system for students and employees to notify the University when they needed to isolate or quarantine. Upon submitting the form, students received a follow-up email with pertinent reminder information about next steps. Faculty received a daily summary email of students in their courses who had submitted a form to assist with absence notification in lieu of the standard university process. On days 2 and 7 of their isolation/quarantine students received additional automated follow-up to offer support and provide resources for them to consider. As a part of the self-report form, students could indicate they needed additional support as well as any questions they had. Student Care coordinated response to 1,136 students who submitted this form requesting additional follow-up and support. The partnership with Residence Education and volunteers from Leadership and Engagement and Student Wellness were essential in assisting with response.

To help meet the growing need and demand for support for students impacted by the Coronavirus and the shift to mostly (if not all) virtual classes, Student Care and Assistance hired a temporary Student Care Coordinator and was able to partner with Student Wellness to utilize an additional staff member to help meet student needs for the academic year.

### *Individual Student Meeting Space Program*

Knowing most classes and campus services were remaining virtual for the 2020-2021 academic year, there became a great need to create a system which allowed students to receive rooms on-campus for individual use. A primary reason for this was to ensure they had a private space where they could participate in confidential meetings, such as a virtual doctor's appointment or counseling session. It was also recognized that some students needed to be able to have a space on-campus in order to participate in a virtual class due to the lack of travel time between in person classes/commitments. Representatives from IMU Event Services, University Counseling Service, Student Life Information Technology, and Student Care and Assistance worked together to create partnerships with a variety of campus offices, including Facilities Management and the Main Library, in order to identify spaces across campus. A website system was created to allow students to reserve rooms and appropriate marketing and signage was established based on COVID19 protocols to guide use and expectations of the space.

### *Support for Direct Referrals from Mental Health Agencies*

Due to a hospital staff member retiring who provided case management support for hospitalized students, Student Care and Assistance established a larger presence with the Crisis Stabilization Unit at UI Hospitals & Clinics. In partnership with the Threat Assessment Program, social workers learned about the role of Student Care and Assistance and how it could assist students, both while they were hospitalized as well as after they had been released. A similar partnership was established with the GuideLink Center, a new agency offering urgent mental health and substance use care. GuideLink Center had a "soft opening" in March 2021 and fully opened it's doors for all services in June 2021. In the past year, 30 students were referred to Student Care and Assistance through these partnerships (28 specifically from UI Hospitals & Clinics.).

## **Ongoing SCA Initiatives**

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### *Emergency Fund*

The student emergency fund supports University of Iowa students who encounter an unforeseen financial emergency or catastrophic event which would otherwise prevent them from continuing their education at the University of Iowa. The fund is supported by the Undergraduate Student Government (USG) and the Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG).

These funds are not intended to be used for routine expenses or as a supplement to a student's education funding sources. Instead, these funds are for those students who experience an event or unforeseen circumstance that negatively and severely impacts their academic success. The Office of Student Financial Aid provides assistance in determining if the granting of the emergency fund request would have a negative impact on current and future aid received. Priority will be given to students whose tenure at the University of Iowa may be at risk because of unexpected expenses. Funds may only be awarded once during a student's academic career at the University of Iowa.

540 completed requests were submitted to the Student Life Emergency Fund due to financial hardship related to impacts of COVID, personal emergencies, and other life circumstances. Student Care and Assistance outreached to all students requesting funds to ensure their application was processed and they received access to additional campus and community resources. The Student Life Emergency Fund was able to award 421 student requests for a total of \$51,205. 119 requests were denied. The majority of the denied requests (81) received funding through coordination with the Office of Student Financial Aid grant programs (such as the Retention Grant, Hawkeye Completion Grant, or funds from Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund) which often surpassed the amount they would have received from the emergency fund. Those students who were otherwise not eligible still received outreach by SCA, including community resources for support and offer to meet to help with additional options.

#### *Laptop Loan Program*

In March 2020, as classes were moved to a completely virtual format due to the pandemic, students identified a need for access to a computer, as they depended upon the campus computer labs as their primary source for technology. With many students returning to their family home and the labs being closed, Student Care and Assistance Partnered with Information Technology Services (ITS) to create the Laptop Loan Program. ITS identified laptops currently in use on-campus in different departments as well as devices that were set to be retired to establish a pool for use. Students contacted Student Care and Assistance in order to identify they were in need of a laptop. SCA coordinated with ITS to ensure physically safe distribution, which included mailing devices to those out. As it became evident the 2020-2021 academic year would continue to rely upon virtual learning, this Laptop Loan Program continued to operate. 194 students requested and borrowed a laptop for the 2020-2021 academic year. The main reasons students identified as needing to borrow a laptop were: Personal computer/laptop was being repaired (63), their personal technology broke/crashed (44), specific software for class not supported on personal technology (40), unable to use exam software on personal computer (21), no access to working/reliable computer, does not own computer (17-does not include those who indicated computer broke/crashed). To continue to support students in future years needing to borrow a laptop for longer periods of time (more than 3 days), the university was granted a GEER grant from the Iowa Department of Education to assist in purchasing additional laptops dedicated to longer-term use.

#### *Basic Needs Student Support*

At the end of summer 2018, the Office of the Dean of Students convened a group of campus and community partners to begin discussing the issue of homelessness among college students. Since then, the committee has grown its purpose to help address all basic need concerns. Partners serving on the committee include representatives from Office of Admissions, Office of Financial Aid, Academic Support and Retention, New Student Services, Leadership and Engagement, University Housing & Dining, Iowa City High School, United Action for Youth, and students impacted by or interested in the issue.

During the 2020-2021 year, the Basic Needs Committee was structured to create sub-committees to allow specified interest and work towards awareness, marketing, and assessment. Due to the transition in staff, partnerships were re-established with Swipe Out Hunger, Campus Compact, Iowa Food Bank Association, CommUnity, and the Food Pantry. In addition to this, an on-going relationship was established with the

University's Governmental Liaison in Washington D.C. to continue to bring awareness to the need of food insecurity and other basic need insecurity among college students.

### *Hawkeye Meal Share*

Hawkeye Meal Share is an initiative that gives students the opportunity to donate their unused guest meal swipes online to any undergraduate, graduate, or professional student in need at the University of Iowa. Students experiencing food insecurity are able to receive meals by contacting Student Care & Assistance in the Office of the Dean of Students. All of this is possible thanks to the collaboration of the Office of the Vice President for Student Life, Office of the Dean of Students, University Housing & Dining, University of Iowa Student Government (UISG)/Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG), Food Pantry at Iowa, Associated Residence Halls, and the charitable students of the University of Iowa.

During the 2020-2021 academic year, 856 students donated a total of 5,202 meals to the program. 140 students requested meals and a total of 1,785 meals were distributed. On average, each student received 13 meals. Since the start of the program, over 10,000 meals have been donated to students.

### *Safe Room Program*

The Office of the Dean of Students, in collaboration with the Iowa Memorial Union and the Iowa House Hotel, provides a safe room program for those who need an emergency place to stay because of safety or violence concerns. The rooms are available as a temporary accommodation and a signed agreement from the participating party is required. Those eligible will be referred to the program directly from the following resources: the Office of the Sexual Misconduct Response Coordinator, University of Iowa Police Department, Rape Victim Advocacy Program, Student Care and Assistance, or other advocacy programs.

The Safe Rooms were used by 11 students for a total of 61 nights during the academic year for an average length of stay of 5 days.

### *Trans\* Support Fund*

The trans support fund assists and supports University of Iowa trans students who desire to pursue legal name and document changes, but have limited financial means to complete the process. Issues related to identity and the ability to legally change documents and names can sometimes limit a student's ability to fully participate academically and socially on campus, thus preventing them from continuing their education at the University of Iowa.

Student Care & Assistance, in collaboration with the UI Trans Alliance organization, University of Iowa Student Government (UISG), and Graduate and Professional Student Government (GPSG), developed a financial support fund that allows students with demonstrated financial need the opportunity to work with campus resources to obtain the necessary funds to complete their legal name and document change. The fund is supported by UISG and GPSG. Students applying for funds will work with Student Legal Services to complete the legal process for changing their name and documents.

2 students utilized the fund through Student Legal Services this past academic year.

### *Quick Guide for Helping Students:*

In fall 2013 we created a "Quick Guide for Helping Students." The folder is available online or in a printable PDF version on the Office of the Dean of Students website: <http://dos.uiowa.edu/assistance/quick-guide-for-helping-students/>

The *Quick Guide* was not mailed so distribution to campus was provided through a mass email in fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters.