Proposed Mental Health Bill of Rights
For Graduate and Professional Students of Vanderbilt University
Draft of 13 November 2017

This is a working draft proposed by the Graduate Student Council Mental Health Bill of Rights Committee. All feedback is welcome and will be considered before the bill is sent to the administration.

1. Vanderbilt University sees the mental health of its students as a priority and guarantees student access to quality, affordable, professional, and comprehensive mental health care.
2. Vanderbilt University is committed to combating stigma surrounding mental health, to providing an environment of mental health care that is inviting and inclusive for all students, and to proactively encouraging and guiding students to be good stewards of their mental health.
3. In caring for the mental health of its students, Vanderbilt University commits to consider and accommodate the unique needs of its students, including but not limited to: students of color, international students, LGBTQ students, students with disabilities, military veterans, and students who are first-generation college students.
4. Vanderbilt University commits to protecting the privacy of its graduate and professional students with regards to their mental health care and to providing maximum information and transparency for students regarding their medical privacy rights.
5. Vanderbilt University shall provide mental health services in accordance with the following guidelines:
   a. Every graduate and professional student at Vanderbilt shall be guaranteed individual therapy with a PCC provider at no more than nominal cost until a standard of care is reached, or until a mental health clinical review panel determines that such standard of care would be better facilitated by a community provider. The University shall not terminate services without first providing due notice, following the conclusion of the clinical review and any appeal, and facilitating necessary additional treatment by a community provider in accordance with 5(c).
   b. For non-urgent mental health concerns, students shall have a right to in-person assessment by a qualified mental health provider within a reasonable time after contacting the PCC. For urgent concerns during normal operating hours and during nights and weekends, students shall have access to an on-call provider for telephonic assessment; the on-call provider may refer the student to emergency services if the student's condition necessitates immediate attention, or may initiate scheduling of an in-person assessment within a reasonable time.
      i. A “reasonable time” shall be determined on an individual basis by qualified PCC staff. Such period of time shall not result in the worsening of the student's condition and shall not exceed five business days.
c. Vanderbilt University shall ensure the provision of services by University providers or by community providers. For referrals to outside providers, Vanderbilt University shall maintain ready access to a list of community providers who accept the graduate student insurance option and shall engage in a collaborative referral process with the student to secure appropriate services in the community.

d. Students shall have the right to appeal discontinuation of services at the PCC for anonymous review by a committee, outlined in 8. Student inability to pay out-of-pocket expenses associated with referral to a community provider shall be among the committee’s considerations.

6. Vanderbilt University shall guarantee a graduate student health insurance option that provides comprehensive coverage for mental health care, including, but not limited to, therapy, medication, emergency services, surgery, in-patient mental health treatment, and substance abuse treatment. Vanderbilt University shall consider the fiscal limitations of its graduate and professional students in selecting student insurance options.

7. Each graduate and professional student at Vanderbilt University shall be entitled to:
   a. Remain apprised of the structure, policies, and practices of mental health care services for graduate and professional students by Vanderbilt University, through elected representatives in the Graduate Student Council;
   b. Provide input to Vanderbilt University regarding the structure, policies, and practices of mental health services for graduate and professional students, through elected representatives in the Graduate Student Council;
   c. Consider and comment on any proposed changes to the structure, policies, and practices of mental health services for graduate and professional students, through a mechanism determined by the Graduate Student Council, for a period of at least thirty (30) days, at which time such comments shall be entered into the record and duly considered before proposed changes may be adopted;
   d. Receive detailed, transparent notice of changes following their adoption and prior to their implementation; and
   e. Access metrics and data underlying all decisions to alter, discontinue, or add mental health services.

8. Vanderbilt University shall appoint a standing committee, which shall hear all student grievances and appeals arising pursuant to this Bill of Rights, and which shall:
   a. Seat, as no fewer than two-fifths of its members, representatives of the student body, who shall be elected annually, or as vacancies arise;
   b. Meet a number of times annually to hear cases, and to advise the administration regarding matters of policy and practice surrounding mental health at Vanderbilt University; and
   c. Be authorized to arbitrate student appeals regarding care by a PCC provider, and to dictate specific actions for the relief of student appellants.