Nevada System of Higher Education

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To: NSHE Presidents

Fr: Melody Rose, Chancellor

Dt: January 19, 2021

Re: Establishment of the Chancellor's COVID-19 Mental Health Task Force

Cc: Board of Regents

Emotional and mental health is often an overlooked and under-resourced issue that impacts every aspect of our lives, and the ability of students and employees to learn, work, and live within the NSHE community. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, these concerns have only increased. During the COVID-19 pandemic, an unprecedented amount of uncertainty about the present and future, combined with frequent isolation, disjointed methods of communication and learning, heavy workloads, fear of a family member or loved one becoming ill, and financial hardship has increased the level of stress, anxiety, and grief felt by students, faculty, and staff within NSHE. For many, the ongoing racial injustices witnessed in our communities is also a source of distress, and one we must address as we seek to support each member of the NSHE community.

To respond to these important emotional and mental health challenges, I am hereby forming, pursuant to Title 2, Chapter 1, Section 1.4.11(a) of the *NSHE Code*, the "Chancellor's COVID-19 Mental Health Task Force."

The Task Force will be an internal working group charged with making recommendations to me on how NSHE can better (1) address the emotional and mental health needs of NSHE students, faculty, and staff not only for the short-term emergency issues we are facing for the Spring/Summer 2021 Semesters brought on by COVID-19; but also to make recommendations on how NSHE can (2) implement long-term changes necessary to lead in these areas, so that emotional and mental health conversations become an integral part of our higher education culture and utilization of strategic resources. The Task Force shall also (3) identify the resources currently within NSHE, as well as those available through local, county, state, federal, and nonprofit entities, that are available to address these needs; (4) develop a strategic plan on how to communicate information and outreach to NSHE students and faculty on how to get assistance from these resources; and (5) make recommendations on how to improve mental health awareness, services, and resources provide to NSHE students and faculty.

I have asked each NSHE institution to nominate individuals who bring diverse expertise, training, and perspectives in this area to serve on this Task Force. Accordingly, these members are the following:

Daniel Alvarado, Ed.D.
Director of Counseling and Psychological Services/Disability Resource Center
College of Southern Nevada

Armen Asherian, Ph.D., Psychology
Director of Institutional Equity
College of Southern Nevada

James (Jamie) Davidson, Ph.D., Psychology
Assistant Vice President of Student Wellness
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Amber Donnelli, Ph.D., Nursing Education and Curriculum, and R.N.
Dean of Health Sciences and Human Services
Great Basin College

Laura Hinojosa
Case Manager for CARE Team and Student Wellness Center
Nevada State College

Cheryl-Hug English, M.D.
Director of Student Health Services
University of Nevada, Reno

Liliana (Lily) Magana
Benefits Manager for Human Resources
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Melissa Piasecki, M.D.
Executive Associate Dean
University of Nevada, Reno School of Medicine

Jacque Pistorello, Ph.D., Psychology
Director of Counseling Services
University of Nevada, Reno

Joe Reynolds, J.D., *(Task Force Chair)*
NSHE Chief General Counsel
System Administration

Jennifer Schultz
Director of Human Resources
Desert Research Institute

Joan Steinman, Ed.D.
Executive Director of Retention and Support Programs
Truckee Meadows Community College

Lauren Stevens, M.A. Counsel/Education Psychology
Coordinator of Advising and Counseling
Western Nevada College

Sarah Wilkey, Classified Staff Representative
Great Basin College

In addition to the above faculty and staff appointed to serve on the Task Force, I am also appointing the following NSHE undergraduate and graduate student representatives to serve as *ad hoc* Task Force members:

Jill Hudson
Associated Students of the College of Southern Nevada, Senator
College of Southern Nevada

Kayleigh Robichaux
Graduate Student Association, Council Member
University of Nevada, Reno

Parker Samuelson
Associated Students University of Nevada, Director of Campus Wellness
University of Nevada, Reno

As indicated above, NSHE Chief General Counsel Joe Reynolds will Chair the Task Force and serve as my direct representative and liaison. He will provide updates on the progress of the Task Force and report on Task Force recommendations as they are developed.

The first Task Force meeting will be scheduled within the coming weeks and it shall meet regularly throughout 2021. Thank you for your support with this important endeavor.