STUDENT SENATE RESOLUTION 2017-132

TITLE: Resolution Recognizing the Need for Additional Funding for the Counseling and Wellness Center

AUTHORS: Senator Ben Lima, Senator Branden Pearson, Senate President Pro-Tempore Janae Moodie, and Preston Jones

SPONSORS: First Generation Organization, Senate President Ian Green, Judiciary Chairwoman Emily Dempsey, Senator Patrick Lee, Senator Brian Robusto, Senator Gregory Wiley, Senator Lucas Zhou

WHEREAS, on October 9, 2017, due to Governor Rick Scott's statewide fee freeze, the Local Fee Committee voted against the proposed 71.4 cent increase in the Health Fee to help provide funding for increased staffing at the Counseling and Wellness Center[1]; and,

WHEREAS, the Florida State Legislature did not approve the State University System of Florida's $14 million dollar request for increased mental health services, which would have funded 21 additional counselors for the University of Florida, in the 2017 legislative session[2]; and,

WHEREAS, over 75 percent of mental health conditions begin before the age of 24 and one in five young adults will experience a mental health condition during their time in college[3]; and,

WHEREAS, the International Association of Counseling Services recommends one clinician for every 1,000 to 1,500 students[4]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida does not meet this international standard leaving students without the necessary mental health services available that in some cases could mean the difference between life and death; and,

WHEREAS, Provost Joseph Glover committed permanent funding for the hiring of eight new counselors and non-recurring funding for four additional counselors; then,
THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes the need for additional counselors in the Counseling and Wellness Center to address lengthy wait times resulting from staffing shortages and the need to find more permanent funding.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate respectfully requests that the Florida State Legislature address this issue in the 2018 legislative session by providing adequate mental health funding to the State University System of Florida.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate respectfully requests that the University of Florida Chief Financial Officer Michael McKee reduce the overhead fee being charged to the Counseling and Wellness Center.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate respectfully requests that the Local Fee Committee consider raising the Health Fee if all other revenue sources are not deemed viable.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate stands committed to ensuring that the Counseling and Wellness Center is properly funded, and requests the Student Body Treasurer and the External Affairs Director examine other potential funding sources beyond those already considered.

Ian Green
Senate President

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to President W. Kent Fuchs, Vice President of Student Affairs Dr. David Parrott, Director of the Counseling and Wellness Center Dr. Ernesto Escoto, Interim Dean of Students Heather White, Chief Financial Officer Michael McKee, Florida Senate President Joe Negron, Florida Speaker of the House Richard Corcoran, Florida Senator Keith Perry, Florida Representative Clovis Watson, Provost Joseph Glover, External Affairs Director Haley Smith, Student Body Treasurer Revel Lubin, and Florida Representative Chuck Clemons.