



**RESOLUTION ON CAPS (COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES)  
TRANSPARENCY AND SERVICE STANDARDS AT  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, LOS ANGELES**

*Respectfully submitted to the Board of Directors of California State University, Los Angeles,  
Associated Students, Incorporated*

*Submission Date: 04/6/2020      Approval Date: TBD*

Authored by: Diana Chavez (*ASI Vice President for Academic Governance*), Jocelyn Vargas (*ASI RongXiang Xu College of Health & Human Services Representative*), Nicholas Cohen (*President of the Social Justice Caucus*), and Daniel Navasartian (*Officer of the Social Justice Caucus*)

**WHEREAS**, The Associated Students, Incorporated (A.S.I.) is recognized as the official voice of the 27,827 students, tasked with expressing and protecting the rights and interests of all the students in the institution. A.S.I. is committed to overseeing administration at California State University, Los Angeles and tasked with ensuring the practice of shared governance and determining if the efforts and initiatives of campus administrators align with the needs and the interests of the student body.

**WHEREAS**, The Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) Department within the Student Health Center at California State University, Los Angeles has the stated purpose to, in part, “provide(s) confidential and non-judgmental help with your personal growth and psychological wellness. CAPS specializes in mental health services that can help you express thoughts and feelings, gain perspective,<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>About CAPS. (2019, July 23). Retrieved February 1, 2020, from <http://www.calstatela.edu/studenthealthcenter/caps/about-caps>



alleviate emotional symptoms, improve coping skills, and make healthy changes in your life.”<sup>2</sup>

**WHEREAS,** As of February 20, 2020, CAPS employs 9 full-time and 2 part-time counseling staff (2 licensed psychologists, 7 LCSWs, 2 MFTs) that are tasked with providing mental health therapy to over 27,827 Cal State LA students.<sup>2</sup> The funding for CAPS services is paid for by the student health services fees, in addition to a portion of the student success fee.<sup>4</sup>

**WHEREAS,** This ratio of therapists to students places Cal State LA among the CSU with the highest ratio of students to counselors as compared to all CSU campuses (as of 2017).<sup>5</sup> Even with the stated plan to hire two additional CAPS therapists (using funding from the student success fee)<sup>4</sup>, this would still not meet the recommendation by the International Association of Counseling Services (IACS).<sup>6</sup>

**WHEREAS,** Due to a stated lack of therapists, CAPS has implemented a policy to triage the mental health treatment needs of students based on a confidential rubric.<sup>4</sup> Students seeking one on one therapy are asked to share personal, confidential, and often traumatic experiences when requesting therapy. Students who do not meet the CAPS criteria for urgency are routinely referred to two mandatory group workshops before CAPS allows them to schedule therapy.<sup>4</sup> This workshops policy is not shared with students and not published on official marketing or information material presented to students or staff, defying transparency.<sup>4, 7</sup> The specific

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<sup>2</sup> Meet Staff. (2019, July 23). Retrieved February 1, 2020, from <http://www.calstatela.edu/studenthealthcenter/caps/meet-staff> ;

<http://www.calstatela.edu/studenthealthcenter/caps/about-caps>

<sup>4</sup> (J. Fries, personal communication, February 20, 2020). <https://www.instagram.com/tv/B80aSUCgN2-/?igshid=lcwtcamzx9zej>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.calfac.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/csu\\_mental\\_health\\_counselors\\_numbers\\_by\\_campus.pdf](https://www.calfac.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/csu_mental_health_counselors_numbers_by_campus.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> IACS is the major accrediting board for collegiate counseling centers, and they set a standard of one counselor for every 1000-1500 students.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.calstatela.edu/studenthealthcenter/caps/scheduling-caps-appointment#what-you-can-expect-during-your-initial-visit>



criteria by which students receive therapy without mandatory workshops is not published due to a stated concern by CAPS leadership that students will “say things that wouldn’t be accurate” to receive timely therapy.<sup>4</sup>

**WHEREAS,** CAPS advertising can be perceived as deceiving when students are encouraged to attend one-on-one therapy only to be referred to CAPS workshops in the majority of cases. Those seeking therapy at CAPS, will most likely disclose personal trauma during the initial assessment, and against their expectations, will be referred to public workshops as a prerequisite for obtaining a therapy appointment. Such an experience can dissuade students from seeking therapy in the future.

**WHEREAS,** CAPS has shared that the policies of the Cal State LA Police Department supersede the policies of CAPS in cases where a student is found to be a danger to self or others.<sup>3</sup> CAPS does not currently have any LPS (Lanterman-Petris-Short)<sup>8</sup> certified clinical staff. Therefore, the Cal State LA Police Department is called upon by CAPS to make the final determination on whether a student is a danger to self or others.

**WHEREAS,** The Cal State LA Police Department officers are currently not required to receive trauma-informed training to serve students in mental health crisis. While CAPS has shared that the “handcuffing” policy has recently changed<sup>3</sup>, the actual policy has not been shared publicly. Treatment and detainment by police officers that are not trauma-informed may be perceived as criminalization of mental health which stands against the university’s mission to reduce mental health stigma.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Meet Staff. (2019, July 23). Retrieved February 1, 2020, from <http://www.calstatela.edu/studenthealthcenter/caps/meet-staff> ; <http://www.calstatela.edu/studenthealthcenter/caps/about-caps>

<sup>3</sup>(J. Fries, personal communication, February 20, 2020). <https://www.instagram.com/tv/B80Yy3KAcoN/?igshid=zfvzm250kb0s>

<sup>4</sup>(J. Fries, personal communication, February 20, 2020). <https://www.instagram.com/tv/B80aSUCgN2-/?igshid=1cwtcamzx9zej>

<sup>5</sup><http://www.calstatela.edu/studenthealthcenter/caps/scheduling-caps-appointment>

<sup>6</sup> IACS is the major accrediting board for collegiate counseling centers, and they set a standard of one counselor for every 1000-1500 students.



**WHEREAS,** Currently, the campus police are the only Cal State LA staff with an LPS privilege designation. There are no CAPS counselors who are LPS certified. An LPS certified mental health clinician has the authority to place students (or others) on involuntary holds due to being assessed as being a danger to themselves or others (e.g., a 5150 hold).

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** That the ASI Board of Directors recommends that in an effort to increase the ability for students at Cal State LA to access mental health therapy, Cal State LA shall employ the requisite number of mental health counselors at CAPS to meet the ratio of counselors to students to 1:1,500, per the IACS guideline<sup>6</sup>, *and*

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** It is the stance of ASI that any CAPS policy that requires attendance of workshops before receiving therapy should be documented wherever CAPS therapy services are advertised.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** ASI recommends that Cal State LA publish (publicly) the “handcuffing”<sup>3</sup> policy that the Cal State LA Police Department uses for students found to meet the legal criteria for danger to self or others, *and*

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** ASI recommends that Cal State LA maintain one Lanterman-Petris-Short (LPS) certified counselor at CAPS to be on call during CAPS hours of service<sup>5</sup>, *and*

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** ASI recommends that each year Cal State LA shall conduct a full-day training with CAPS counselors and all employed Cal State LA campus police officers on trauma-informed treatment of students in psychological crisis, *and*

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<sup>7</sup> The CSU needs to respond to the growing crisis in delivering student mental health needs. (n.d.). Retrieved February 22, 2020, from <https://www.calpac.org/magazine-article/csu-needs-respond-growing-crisis-delivering-student-mental-health-needs>

<sup>8</sup> [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=WIC&sectionNum=5150](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=WIC&sectionNum=5150)



**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** ASI recommends that Cal State LA be transparent about CAPS therapy services. Specifically, the exact process by which students can receive CAPS therapy should be readily communicated online, *and*

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** ASI recommends that CAPS eliminate the requirement for students to attend any required workshops or other non-requested services in order to make an appointment for one on one therapy, *and*

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** ASI requests that CAPS post online an annual budget breakdown which includes the source of all CAPS funding, and the specific usage of such funding, *and*

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** ASI recommends that Cal State LA create a student led Mental Services Taskforce comprised of students, faculty, CAPS counselors, and ASI student board members, who make recommendations on the budget and delivery of treatment services for CAPS, including facilitating an annual mental health townhall as needed, *and*

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** ASI recommends that Cal State LA shall implement such changes outlined herein by February 1, 2021. It is further resolved that the Cal State LA Dean of Students shall create and publicly present a draft plan to implement these changes by September 1, 2020.

**RESOLVED,** That copies of this resolution and supporting documentation be distributed widely, including, but not limited to, the Cal State LA Campus President William A. Covino, Provost Dr. José Luis Alvarado, Vice President for Student Life Nancy Wada-McKee, Associate Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students Jennifer Miller, Director of CAPS Jonna Fries, Vice President for Administration and Finance Lisa Chavez, Dean Pamela Scott- Johnson, Dean Ron Vogel, Dean Linda Essig, Dean Emily Allen, Dean Tye Jackson, Dean Cheryl Ney, Academic Senate Chair Veena Prahbu, the Academic Senate Chairs, and Chancellor Timothy White.



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Jacquelyn Acosta  
ASI President

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ASI Vice President for Academic Governance

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Jocelyn Vargas  
ASI RongXiang Xu College of Health & Human Services Representative  
MSW'21 Candidate

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Social Justice Caucus President  
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