THREE MAIN ISSUES Confronting SJSU Mental Health Services:

1. **Number of students coming to Counseling Services has increased:**
   - Numbers have doubled over the last two years alone (at the end of the last two semesters our waiting list for personal counseling had over 90 students and for a psychiatric appointment over 30 students.)

2. **Degree of severity has increased steadily for the last 15 years (nationally as well as locally).**
   - over 20 students hospitalized in 07-08 – the highest number of hospitalizations for previous years was 6 students.
   - 8.5% report active suicidal ideation.
   - increase in reported sexual assaults, stalking incidents over the last several years.
   - an accompanying significant increase in consultation about students of concern from faculty, residence hall staff and others on campus.

3. **Provider-to-student ratio has declined** to 1 counselor to 3000 students – only half the number of counselors needed to meet national accreditation standards. Our psychiatry provider-to-student ratio is one psychiatrist for 30,000 students. We need one psychiatrist for every 10,000 students.

IMPLICATIONS:

1. **Fewer counseling resources** available for students with mild to moderate concerns because the severe concerns take a great deal of time and attention.

2. **Waiting lists** and reduction in the number of counseling visits available to students.

3. **Greater risk of falling behind** and SJSU students cannot afford any significant period of even mild dysfunction without risking falling behind.
   - currently if a student misses a semester, they might not be able to reenter immediately.
   - if a student has to postpone graduation because of dropped classes, probation, disqualification, etc., each additional semester needed currently costs $2577.

4. **Counseling helps students to be successful in school**, i.e. have higher retention and graduation rates. Fewer mental health resources and higher stress levels endanger our ability to help students academically.
   - Almost 2/3 of students using Counseling Services, regardless of their presenting concerns, reported that counseling helped with their academic performance.

5. **Campus community is negatively impacted** -- from classrooms to parking lots -- as faculty, staff, and students spend inordinate amounts of time dealing with untreated students experiencing stress and distress.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEMS:

1. Revised our assessment/triage system so that all students can be seen on the same day and usually within 30 to 60 minutes of when they come in to Counseling Services.

2. Assessed the high demand times for students and shifted counselors schedules to provide more coverage during high demand times.
3. Developed a follow-up system where all students who are on the waiting list are contacted to assess their status and to keep them informed of the wait.

4. If students on the wait list will most likely not be seen before the end of the semester, we let them know and find out if they would like to be seen during winter or summer break.

5. Developed a weekly “Coping 101” workshop (presenting tips on self-care around stress, anxiety, and depression) to everyone on the wait list and anyone who comes in for assessment.

6. Made many self-help resources available on our web site as a resource for students. We added a faculty/staff resource page to help employees of the University in their work with students.

7. Created a stronger group program to increase the number of groups we offer.

8. Transferred much of our educational counseling offerings to our educational counselors. This is work that used to be done by counselor faculty. Our educational counselors deliver programs and workshops as well as work individually with students on skills such as test taking, time management, study habits, etc.

9. Limited our presentations to various campus groups in order to have more time for the clinical services.

CURRENT SITUATION:

Despite these efforts at efficiency, the demand for our service continues to increase which we’re happy about because our work helps students be successful in school and in life. We believe that our best approach to this problem is to increase our staffing. We need to hire more counselors and psychiatrists which would allow us to provide the various mental health services students need.

QUESTIONS FOR YOU:

From what you know about SJSU students, what are the mental health needs and how can we respond in order to have a positive impact?

An increase to the Health Fee to enhance staffing would significantly improve our ability to provide mental health services to students. We are considering a semesterly fee increase of $14 over two or more years. In other words, students would pay an additional $14 a semester for the first year; $28 a semester the second year; $42 the third and $56 the fourth. The $56 would support the full complement of staffing necessary to come close to the accreditation standards and provide the level of services necessary for our student population. Each level of fee less than the four year increase would allow for a proportionately smaller increase in services and programs.

Would you be supportive of such a fee increase and to what degree?