

**To:** The University Senate

**From:** Purdue Student Government Mental Health Action Week Committee

**Disposition:** University Senate for Discussion and Adoption

**Subject:** Required Department QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Liaisons for Mental Health Action

**Rationale:** The youth in the United States, particularly at undergraduate- and graduate-level age, are some of the people most vulnerable to struggles with Mental Health. According to a report done by Mental Health America, in 2020, 9.7% of youth, ages 15-24, in the United States have severe major depression.<sup>1</sup> According to the Mental Health Foundation, 75% of lifetime mental illnesses start by age 24.<sup>2</sup> According to the National Institute of Mental Health, suicide is the second leading cause of death in the United States among individuals ages 10-34.<sup>3</sup> These statistics are national statistics; however, Purdue University has some statistics regarding Mental Health as well. According to Purdue University Police Department reports, in 2020, 2 Purdue students died by suicide and 3 additional students attempted suicide.<sup>4</sup> Purdue University Spokesperson Tim Doty stated that since 1998, Purdue University has averaged an annual 2 students dying by suicide. Many students at Purdue University feel there is a lack of empathy on campus and Purdue should do more to improve the emotional wellbeing of students, according to a tabling event conducted by Purdue Student Government in 2019. One solution that students at Purdue who participated in the “Occupy Hovde” protests last November think needs to be implemented is higher accountability for the professors when it comes to Mental Health

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<sup>1</sup> “The State of Mental Health in America” *Mental Health America*. (2020). <https://www.mhanational.org/issues/state-mental-health-america>

<sup>2</sup> “Mental Health Statistics: Children and Young People” *Mental Health Foundation*. (2020). <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/statistics/mental-health-statistics-children-and-young-people>

<sup>3</sup> “Suicide is a leading cause of death in the United States” *National Institute of Mental Health*. (2018). <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/suicide.shtml>

<sup>4</sup> Taylor, J., Smith J., & Weliever A. “Following a suicide, Purdue quiets social-media backlash after PUPD falsely reports 3” *Purdue Exponent*. (Nov. 18, 2020). [https://www.purdueexponent.org/campus/article\\_d0d0d5b2-29f1-11eb-a243-a7b5f5a651ca.html](https://www.purdueexponent.org/campus/article_d0d0d5b2-29f1-11eb-a243-a7b5f5a651ca.html)

concerns.<sup>5</sup> If departments are more informed on Mental Health, it will increase sensitivity to the topic, as well as help students, faculty, and staff who could be struggling. A case study done in 2018 on Mental Health training for educators showed that training programs were effective in improving knowledge and attitudes towards the Mental Health of students.<sup>6</sup> If students, faculty, and staff are aware that departments are getting the training they need in regard to Mental Health, it is likely to create more trust and compassion regarding Mental Health in the Purdue Community, as well as potentially save lives.

**Proposal:** Purdue University requires each department to acquire a QPR (Question Persuade Refer) liaison. This liaison will complete mandatory QPR Training. The Mental Health Action Week Committee recommends using the QPR Institute's QPR Gatekeeper Training Program for Mental Health Certifications. The QPR Institute's mission is "To save lives and reduce suicidal behaviors by providing innovative, practical and proven suicide prevention training."<sup>7</sup> The QPR Suicide Prevention Training is a 90-minute training session that is free through Purdue University to faculty when conducted in person, and \$5 when conducted asynchronously online.<sup>8</sup> The QPR Suicide Prevention Training Certification remains active for 2 years.<sup>9</sup> During the training, liaisons will learn to recognize the warning signs of suicide, learn how to offer hope, and learn how to get help to save a life. Liaisons will serve as a resource for students, faculty, and staff within the department and will promote opportunities for QPR certifications throughout the academic school year. Purdue University will make known to the public that each department has delegated liaisons that the Purdue Community can use as resources through emails to the students, faculty, and staff, as well as information regarding the liaison on each department web page.

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<sup>5</sup> Shekar, N. "Students gather at Hovde Hall for sit-in following peer's death" *Purdue Exponent*. (Nov. 20, 2020). [https://www.purdueexponent.org/campus/article\\_c6e67348-2aa7-11eb-92bf-bfbbc1ae4d1b.html](https://www.purdueexponent.org/campus/article_c6e67348-2aa7-11eb-92bf-bfbbc1ae4d1b.html)

<sup>6</sup> Anderson, M., Werner-Seidler, A., King, C. *et al.* "Mental Health Training Programs for Secondary School Teachers: A Systematic Review." *School Mental Health* 11, 489–508 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-018-9291-2>

<sup>7</sup> "What is QPR?" *QPR Institute*. (2021). <https://qprinstitute.com/about-qpr>

<sup>8</sup> "QPR Suicide Prevention Training" *Purdue University, Office of the Dean of Students*. (2021). <https://www.purdue.edu/advocacy/students/other/presentations.html>

<sup>9</sup> "QPR Gatekeep Training" *QPR Institute*. (2021). <https://qprinstitute.com/individual-training>