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**TO:** Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education

**RE:** STARS Innovation Credit Application for University of Alberta Mental Health Services

The Faculty of Arts has been privileged to participate in the expansion of Mental Health Services on the University of Alberta campus. We pride ourselves in fostering social justice and innovation in our students and extending this contribution to the community at large. In addition, Faculty and staff have been increasingly concerned about the mental health of our students. It has not gone unnoticed that our students self-identify, at what we consider to be an alarming rate, as experiencing an assortment of mental health ailments. For these reasons, the opportunity to partner with University Wellness Services and the Counselling and Clinical Services team to provide more robust mental health services to students was a natural fit.

As part of the service expansion a psychologist has been embedded within the Faculty office to provide enhanced support to students and to provide outreach to faculty and staff. Within this first year, the "Faculty of Arts" psychologist has played a pivotal role in increasing overall counselling services on campus: the number of clinical appointments rose by 22%; the number of group appointments rose by 39%; and the expanded team has provided over 500 hours of outreach activities to the campus community.

Apart from the obvious benefits of increasing access to mental health services for students, we have also observed a variety of other improvements. The expansion and introduction of satellite offices has:

Allowed students to access services within their comfort zones, whether that is within the Faculty office where they feel supported and safe, or in a location which will preserve their anonymity. The hours for appointments and intake have also been expanded.

Contributed to a holistic approach to mental health services, providing students with a number of different options for support. The addition of psychiatric nurses and social workers to the mental health services team has broadened the scope of the type of services students can access and accelerated the referral process. Students who may not need the services of a psychiatrist or psychologist may be assisted by these other professionals.

As part of outreach, the satellite office provided opportunities to interact with the psychologist in non-clinical settings, putting a "face" to the service and demystifying the process.

Raised awareness with staff and faculty of the issues that students experience and reinforced that assistance can be found on campus for those with a wide range of mental health needs.

Provided a resource to staff for consultations regarding students about whom they are concerned.

I should add that all of the above opportunities are particularly important in the Faculty of Arts where a significant portion of our students are International and have cultural biases against seeking treatment for mental health issues.

We sincerely support the submission to STARS requesting recognition of innovation in our mental health services, and look forward to continuing both our partnership with University Wellness Services and refining the service to best meet the needs of our community over the coming years.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lesley Cormack', is written over the typed name.

Lesley Cormack  
Dean, Faculty of Arts