



CCDI PROVINCIAL MEETING

November 15, 2019

GEORGE BROWN COLLEGE (WATERFRONT CAMPUS) – ROOM 611
51 DOCKSIDE DRIVE, TORONTO, ON M5A 1B6

Minutes

1. Approval of Agenda

- Jeff Szymr approved; seconded by Tim Comerford.

2. Approval of Minutes of May 13, 2019

- Approved by Naille O'Connor; seconded by Andrea Finkelstein.

3. Updates and Reports

- a) *BSWD/CSG-PDSE: Open Discussion* - Anik Powell, Erin O'Neill, and Zaineb Ali, Student Financial Assistance Branch, MCU

- Anik advised they are working with federal, provincial and territorial (FPT) colleagues to consider exploring how the social model of disability and other human rights considerations in light of policy and program improvements, including disability documentation.
- Anik advised from their perspective there are no major concerns supporting student assessments for accommodations regarding learning disabilities, ADHD, or mental health. Federal support is different as they would only support student assessments that confirm a learning disability. Erin advised they are involved in an FPT committee for students with disabilities and continue to raise this issue, advocating for potential changes to the reimbursement model for psycho-educational assessments.
- *ASD Assessments* – Erin advised they have not received feedback on this issue. Members are looking for clarity and consistency on this issue as to whether or not students are being accommodated. They will take this feedback into consideration.
- *Financial Aid* - Anik confirmed the province will provide up to \$2,000 for a psychoeducational assessment (PA) for students eligible for BSWD (e.g., to verify a disability, for accommodations), regardless of the results. The federal government will only cover up to 75% of the costs associated with PAs (up to a maximum of \$1,700 per loan year) that result in a diagnosis of a learning disability. The ministry intended to provide greater clarity on this matter by addressing financial aid officers directly at the fall Ontario Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (OASFAA), but OASFAA did not hold this conference. One of the unintended consequences from implementing the disability verification form (DVF) is that it has blurred the lines of responsibility (FAOs vs DSOs). The policy intention was that financial aid officers would continue to be responsible for making sure students are OSAP eligible and handling things like overpayments and timely administration of funding, and that disability counsellors would continue to be the authority on accommodations, services and equipment. — Generally speaking, if the DSO recommendation is in accordance with the BSWD/CSG-PDSE policy manual guidelines and aligns with the student's functional limitations, then the recommendations should not be denied. The ministry will consider how to provide further clarification of roles and responsibilities in an audit environment.
- *Group Psychotherapy* – Erin advised they have heard some feedback asking for policy changes to the counseling category to increase access. Currently, the policy states counselling can only be one on one. Access to counselling and therapy have been raised as a concern. This request is noted and will be considered.

- *Q - Northern Community Counselling Services* – Northern campuses have no counsellors on campus and PAs are outsourced. Most of the time the PA uses up a student's BSWD funding, which leaves the student struggling (i.e., unable to afford counseling services). Is there any discussion about increasing the \$2,000 BSWD cap?
- Anik advised that the ministry does not have access to information about situations where funding is insufficient for the disability-related expenses. He indicated that if CCDI (as a group) could forward this information to them, this data would help inform future policy consideration. The CCDI Chair advised CCDI could look at forming a subcommittee looking at gaps and bring this forward to our ministry colleagues. (Carla)
- *Q - BYOD* – Members asked for clarification on colleges whose programs indicate *Bring Your Own Device*. For example, if a student wants to purchase an iPad for their program but requires Kurzweil/Jaws, can they request funding through BSWD?
- Anik clarified his understanding that BYOD programs are those where students must select from a list of hardware and software packages that represent the minimum required to participate in the academic program—it might be an iPad, laptop, etc. He advised that if a student's program requires specific hardware, but that this hardware does not meet the student's disability-related needs, or is incompatible with needed disability-related assistive software, that the ministry could potentially fund extra costs above the cost of the normal hardware/software package in BYOD programs. However, Anik acknowledged that this is not reflected in the manual and that the cap for tablets is lower than cap for laptops. They will take this feedback into consideration. Erin advised that the federal program determines the frequency and funding caps, and that any changes impacting CSG-PDSE would need to be made at that level; they will bring the issue forward to the FPT working group. Exceptional situations should be forwarded through the appropriate channels for review.
- *Q - Funding Difference* – Members asked for clarification with regards to funding the difference between the required hardware costs of \$1000.00 and upgraded equipment of \$2000.00.
- They would expect to fund the student for the difference between the base required package and the cost of hardware required to support the student's disability-related needs.
- *Q - OSAP Changes* – With the increase in students with various kinds of mental health issues, counselling needs for students are increasing but the number of counselors is not. With recent OSAP changes, more students that were receiving counseling before now are no longer eligible for provincial funding. With the increase of the federal component would that fund therapy? Did students protesting OSAP changes affect MCU?
- Anik advised they do not know if there is a possibility of the federal program covering counselling and therapy. They will bring the issue forward for discussion at the FPT working group. Anik was not able to comment on any perceived dissatisfaction with OSAP changes and the Ministry.
- *Mental Health* – Zaineb advised there is interest from the federal side to bring mental health initiatives to the forefront. They are not sure what this will mean from a policy lens.
- *Q – Reimbursement/Attendant Care* - Has there been any discussion on the reimbursement for costs associated with completion of the disability verification form? Members also wanted clarification on funding for attendant care in between classes.
- Anik advised the federal program explicitly states they will not cover reimbursement associated with disability documentation. This has been raised and is being looked at on the provincial side. Erin spoke to the attendant care issue and advised they have looked at it and it is limited again by the federal program. The policy currently restricts funding educational attendants for in-class services, but if a student is at school completing program related work (labs, assignments, research, etc.), they can see some value in these services. They will take this feedback into consideration.
- *Functional Limitation Assessment Form* – One member stated that in the OHRC guidelines for accessible education it says that students should be reimbursed if we are requesting

- documentation for proof of disability. Sometimes colleges do not always require that form to be filled out because the student will provide us with previous documentation (i.e., psycho-education assessment). For OSAP purposes, however, documentation has to meet the federal requirements for recency for psycho-educational assessments. A CCDI member stated that it should be MCU's responsibility to cover the costs.
- Anik advised the OHRC states it is the responsibility of the institution to cover costs associated with documentation, and reiterated the federal requirement. He agreed there was a disconnect between OHRC expectations and federal policy in this regard.
 - *Funding Denied* – It was noted that when the Ministry denies student funding for BSWD/CSG-PDSE, students do not receive a good explanation as to why the student was denied. This is a challenge and would like to receive more rationale.
 - Anik advised that most denials occur at the Financial Aid Office at the college. Ministry staff are only consulted when the Financial Aid Office forwards (typically exceptional) cases for clarification.
 - *First Year Semester Psychoeducational Assessments* – Usually students are waiting four to six weeks for funding for an assessment in that first semester. In the meantime, the student fails out of the program, then are approved for funding for the assessment in December but cannot move on as they failed their courses. Is there any ministry talk of getting access to funding earlier for students who do not have documentation related to a disability?
 - Anik advised that the ministry has introduced an interim process to allow students with disabilities to receive their base OSAP funding before their disability documentation has been updated. This process has been made available on request, with the understanding that the ministry is working on a systematic process to allow funding to process for these students in 2020-2021.
 - There was a discussion around how most counsellors will accommodate a student based on old documentation but there is the issue of a student failing because the counsellors do not know enough about the disability to give the student the appropriate accommodations. The student then fails and has to reapply. They cannot use the funding in January and then they have to reapply next year and pay back their loans. Can there be some sort of “forgiveness program”?
 - Anik said he will look into this.
 - Post-meeting note: Ministry staff would like more information on exactly how this scenario plays out in order to ensure we understand the sequence of events, to see if we can avoid this situation in future.
 - *Students in Arrears –Technology Funding* – A member stated at their college students are often in arrears over the technology funding. For example, they buy a computer and get talked into a warranty, which ends up different than the quote. It was suggested to have a simple one-time only basic technology grant we give students with chasing the students for receipts. It was suggested to also just give them a medical grant.
 - Anik agreed students should have the right to shop around and make equipment purchases themselves. The overpayment rules around BSWD and CSG-PDSE are restricted by regulations that currently prohibit things like grant to loan conversion, which works well for the rest of the OSAP program. He acknowledged that overpayments may present barriers to students with disabilities. He mentioned that at one college an Adaptive Technologist assists the student to buy the computer online, ensuring that the student purchases a product that will meet their needs, and satisfying receipting requirements at the point of purchase.
 - *Disability Verification Form* –Member asked if the reduced course load statement could be put back on the form.
 - Anik advised they have received this same feedback and it is noted.
 - *Behavioral Interventions* – It was asked how the behavioral interventionist category came to be added as a service in the BSWD/CSG-PDSE manual.

- Erin advised the recommendation came through the FPT committee for students with disabilities. Since the federal government included it in the table of equipment and services funding caps chart, they have been doing research to provide policy clarification.
- This service is intended to support students who have an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis with behavior intervention services while at school.
- Given the behavioural interventionist category is an emerging field with variations in how individuals are accredited across jurisdictions, policy guidelines for this service are evolving. There are currently no provincial/federal regulatory bodies overseeing behavioural clinicians. Through the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, the province has committed to improving oversight and regulation of these services/service providers (hoping by 2021).
- In the meanwhile, Autism Ontario hosts helpful information on their website, such as a provider list of clinical supervisors of behavioural services and information about qualification requirements to join the provider list
 - Post-meeting information shared: Please see [here](#) for a link to the Autism Ontario provider list of clinical supervisors of behavioural services.
 - Currently, behavioural interventionist service providers should have one of the following professional designations:
 - Board Certified Behavior/Behaviour Analyst® (BCBA®)
 - Board Certified Behavior/Behaviour Analyst – Doctoral™ (BCBA-D™)
 - Clinical Psychologist or Psychological Associate registered with the College of Psychologists of Ontario (CPO) with documented expertise in Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)
 - It is recommended that behavioural interventionist services be provided by individuals on the provider list mentioned above.
 - However, other service providers may be funded (at least until early 2021) if there are access issues (e.g., student can't find a provider in their geographical area who is on the list) or if the student has previously received behavioural interventionist services from a provider who is not on the provider list but working towards the qualification requirements.
- *Q - Disability Verification Form (DVF)* – Members have found that some physicians are struggling with the “patient’s disability status” section. Some physicians are unsure whether they should mark certain disabilities as permanent or temporary (e.g., depression). Will there be any changes to the DVF as to how a permanent disability is defined – throughout postsecondary experience or throughout a lifetime?
- Anik advised this is an ongoing discussion. The provincial government will support temporary disability, but the federal government will not. OHRC says a student has a disability whether it be temporary or permanent, so while there is an institutional duty to accommodate, student financial assistance funding decisions must follow the federal definition. There has been FPT discussions around changing the definition of disability and it is something for which ministry staff continue to advocate.
- *Assessments* – Is there any flexibility around the forty-day deadline for supporting documentation?
- Anik advised probably not because it is difficult to argue that a student benefited from an assessment they received in the last month of the semester. The underlying assumption is that this funding is to assist students with participation in post-secondary studies. If the student will be continuing studies in the next school year, the recommendation was to submit the assessment funding request then. CCDI members indicated they struggle with this, especially in the northern colleges. Ministry staff said they will take this feedback into consideration.
- *Q – Funding* - It was noted students can have assessments done six months prior. Once they have accepted, paid the deposit, registered for courses in July, applied for OSAP, could we not consider giving them funding early?

- This is a good idea, but isn't currently possible given the way the program is designed (e.g., OSAP does not consider a student "actually there" until the start of term when their confirmation of enrollment occurs). The ministry will take this into consideration.

- b) *Spring Fling 2019 Update* - Sherri Parkins, M.A. Learning Strategist, Seneca College (*See Attached*)

- c) *Heads of Student Services (HOSA) Report* – Neil Buddel, PhD, Dean of Students, Centennial College, HOSA Representative – (*No Update at this time*)

- d) *Treasurer's Report* – Shanna Lecuyer, Treasurer, CCDI
 - We are in good standing. There are two colleges with payment still outstanding.

- e) *College Updates* – CCDI Reps – To be deferred (TBD)

- f) *Center for Innovation in Campus Mental Health Initiatives and CCDI* - Marija Padjen, MSW, Director at Centre for Innovation in Campus Mental Health (*See Attached*)

- g) *Employer's Barriers and ASD* - Julia Martensson, Relationship Manager, Recruitment, Specialisterne Canada (*See Attached*)

- h) *Other* - New Name/PD Update/February PD 2020 - TBD