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Winter 2017, UNH Symposium Addresses the Emotional Wellness Needs of International Students

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Recommended Citation

UNH Global Education Center, "Winter 2017, UNH Symposium Addresses the Emotional Wellness Needs of International Students" (2017). *International Educator: the Newsletter of the UNH Global Engagement*. 251.

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UNH Global

UNH Symposium Addresses the Emotional Wellness Needs of International Students

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

College is an important transition to young adulthood. It is a period of emotional and personal growth, which comes with challenges. For international students, psychosocial and emotional challenges are experienced far from family support and can be further complicated by cultural dimensions. To ensure UNH is responsive to the health needs of all students, including the international students, the Center for International Education and Global Engagement (CIEGE) and Student Life invited Dr. Chen, an expert on cross-cultural psychiatry, stigma, and mental health disparities, to UNH. In September, he and his team provided an open symposium on international student emotional health to invited faculty, first responders, and staff from Psychological and Counseling Services and Health & Wellness. This symposium was the second in a series on student health and wellness; the first, Mindfulness Practices for College Students, was held in the spring.

Dr. Justin A. Chen, MD, MPH, the Executive Director of the Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Cross-Cultural Student Emotional Wellness

(<https://www.mghstudentwellness.org/>) in Boston, heads a consortium of clinicians, educators, and researchers who are passionate about understanding and promoting the mental health of students from diverse backgrounds. The goal of the morning session



Dr. Chen (seated at head of table) leading group discussion on emotional wellness

was for attendees to learn about the unique health and wellness challenges and needs of the international student population. He and his team discussed how we can support the health of international students on campus.

UNH is the first university to invite the Center to share their expertise and help create a more supportive environment. Dr. Vroman, Associate Vice Provost for CIEGE, commented that “it is essential to have diverse approaches and therapeutic strategies to address the psycho-emotional health of all students at UNH. This symposium assists us to offer culturally sensitive services to international students while promoting a campus climate of well-being.” In the afternoon, Dr. Chen's team worked with staff from Psychological and Counseling Services, Health & Wellness, and advisors from OISS on specific areas associated with culturally competent healthcare.

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