

November 16, 2023

Dr. Susan Edwards  
250 University Hall  
Wright State University  
3640 Colonel Glenn Highway  
Dayton, Ohio 45435

Dear President Edwards:

The leadership of the American Association of University Professors, Wright State University chapter (AAUP-WSU) and the Student Government Association (SGA) are writing to express a number of concerns—and to request full transparency—regarding the University’s handling of an incident that occurred on Friday, September 15, 2023.

In the aftermath of this incident, several very troubling facts have come to light about campus safety and the quality of Wright State’s Counseling and Wellness Services. It appears that there were several distinct failures within and external to the University. These include:

1. The individual responsible for the 9/15 incident entered The Hangar in Allyn Hall carrying a training rifle that was property of the WSU ROTC. This raises serious concerns about the security measures in place at the ROTC facilities.
2. While the WSU police department responded promptly to reports of a person with a weapon in Allyn Hall, news of the incident had already begun to spread across the campus and social media. At no point was an “all clear” message sent through the WSU Emergency Alert system; consequently, numerous faculty and students were left sheltering in place, uncertain whether it was safe for them to move about the campus.
3. Testimony offered by a current WSU student during the 9/19/23 Special Meeting of the SGA indicated that when the individual responsible for the 9/15/23 incident was released from the Greene County Jail, he was not released into the custody of a family member, physician, or mental health professional. Rather, he was released into the custody of several members of his former fraternity, who were—quite understandably—very uncomfortable with the situation and uncertain of how to deal with it. Their circumstances were made even more uncomfortable because the WSU police department made no effort to contact them before dropping off the individual at their off-campus residence. It was only through these students’ actions that the individual was transported to a mental health treatment facility. When the facility refused to admit him, one of the students put the individual up in a hotel for the night with his own money.
4. During the same meeting, numerous students documented the inability of WSU’s Counseling and Wellness Services to meet their needs. They noted, for example, that several friends of the individual responsible for the events of 9/15/23 had reached out with concerns about the student’s mental state and had been largely rebuffed. Other students expressed their own frustrations about their interactions with the university’s mental wellness services, including the lack of available on-campus counseling services and the outsourced care hotline’s tendency to hang up on emergency calls.

We understand that the incident and its aftermath are the subject of an ongoing investigation on the part of WSU's administration. However, the safety of our campus, and the services available to its faculty, staff, and students are a matter of concern for the *entire* campus community, not just for the administration. We are therefore requesting that this investigative process be not only thorough but above all, transparent. Specifically, we are requesting, in the strongest possible terms, that WSU's administration:

- make an accurate and thorough account of the incident publicly available to the entire campus community following the completion of the university's investigation—including a timeline that details any relevant information about what was known before the incident, attempts (if any) to prevent the incident, and actions that were taken in the immediate wake of the incident and in the weeks afterwards
- identify specific recommendations and action items that will be implemented to prevent similar incidents from happening in the future as well as to improve overall campus safety going forward
- provide a clear budget with an action plan for improving the mental wellness and counseling services offered by Wright State and all contracted external service providers; as part of that action plan, we strongly urge that you take note of the following recommendations:
  - services for students have decreased recently (to as few as 4-5 sessions); it would be best if Counseling and Wellness Services interns have full client loads, so that students are not being denied services or forced to end counseling so long as there are available slots in the interns' schedules;
  - funding for Counseling and Wellness Services should be increased to ensure that all employees are properly paid, given the expertise required for these positions; the pay would ideally be equivalent to what similar positions pay in the Dayton area; this would encourage a more competitive pool of potential employees, which in turn would speed up the hiring process, ensure quality candidates, promote healthier outcomes for the campus, and reduce lapses in services.

We also encourage the administration to remain in contact with those WSU students who courageously expressed their dissatisfaction with the state of student health and wellness services—and to meet their requests for support. As we are sure you will agree, the provision of a campus environment that is safe, secure, and promotes both the physical and mental health of every member of the community is a matter of paramount importance.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to your response.

*Bobby Rubin*

Bobby Rubin  
President, AAUP-WSU

*Stephanie Buettner*

Stephanie Buettner  
President, Student Government Association