WHEREAS, the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire (UWEC) Office for Counseling Services is tasked with providing a wide variety of mental health resources to the student body; and

WHEREAS, Counseling Services hires licensed clinicians to facilitate and provide mental health resources to the student body; and

WHEREAS, Counseling Services conducts an Academic Impact Survey of their clients; and

WHEREAS, Counseling Services annually surveys their clients to get feedback on their performance; and

WHEREAS, the survey results show that 48.9% of the 290 students surveyed agreed that counseling aided their focus on academics; and

WHEREAS, 43.8% of the 290 students surveyed agreed that counseling impacted their academic motivation and/or course attendance; and

WHEREAS, the majority of responses from this survey indicate frustration with long wait for appointments, lack of availability, and being unable to be seen more frequently; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, the average wait time for an intake appointment at Counseling Services was 18.94 days compared to 8.62 days in 2020; and

WHEREAS, despite decreasing enrollment, Counseling Services continues to see an increasing number of clients; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, Counseling Services has completed 231 crisis sessions compared to 67 in 2020; and

WHEREAS, Counseling Services is currently seeing 610 non-crisis session clients compared to 496 at this time last year; and

WHEREAS, the addition of two fixed-term clinicians will enable Counseling Services to decrease wait times for appointments and see approximately 220 more clients each year; and

WHEREAS, Counseling Services approached the Student Senate Finance Commission with a proposal for funds to hire two additional clinicians at 0.82 FTE for a fixed two-year term; and

WHEREAS, Counseling Services does not have the financial means to hire these critical staff members; and
WHEREAS, seven of the ten current fulltime clinicians are reimbursed via non-allocable Segregated University Fees; and

WHEREAS, the total cost of this request is $280,000; and

WHEREAS, fixed-term staff salaries and fringe benefits are a permitted use of Segregated University Fee funds under UW-System Policy 820; and

WHEREAS, following a presentation from Counseling Services, the Finance Commission approved the full $280,000 allocation request; and

WHEREAS, the voting margin for this proposal was 8-0-1; and

WHEREAS, it is the duty of the Student Senate to support the resources that directly impact the academic and personal well-being of the student body; and

WHEREAS, the Student Senate has the financial capability to support the addition of two 0.82 FTE clinicians within Counseling Services;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that upon passage, the Student Senate will allocate $280,000 for the addition of two fixed-term 0.82 FTE clinicians within Counseling Services; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that upon passage, President Mikoulinskii will transmit a copy of this bill to Dr. James Schmidt, Chancellor; LaRue Pierce, Dean of Students; Dr. Patricia Kleine, Provost and Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs; Olga Diaz, Vice Chancellor, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Student Affairs; Grace Crickette, Vice Chancellor, Finance and Administration; Billy Felz, Interim Vice Chancellor, Enrollment Management; Tracy Drier, Director, Budget and Resource Planning; Jacqueline Kriesel, Controller, Administration & Finance; Riley McGrath, Director, Counseling Services; Evan Weiher, Chair, University Senate; Grace Arrigoni, Student Body President, UW Eau Claire-Barron County; Gary Wheeler, Interim Campus Director, UW Eau Claire-Barron County.