**University of Windsor - Mental Health and Wellness Peer Advocate Volunteer Program**

**Katie Chauvin**

This year, we set out to develop an evaluation for our new student volunteer program. With our evaluation champions, we narrowed down our goal to developing an evaluation that focuses on within-program impact the first year, and broader campus impact in future years. There were many delays experienced on the UWindsor side of things due to short staffing, competing demands, and an unexpected medical leave. Although an evaluation was not developed, we had valuable conversations that allowed us to begin conceptualizing the evaluation itself and as well as advance our overall program design. Despite the challenges on our end, the most impactful aspect of our involvement this year has been the connections we have formed with James, Loa, and Sophia. They have shown us grace, understanding, perspective, and encouragement, and we are very much looking forward to the new way forward that has been discussed and bringing Sophia on board for our program development process.

Our goals for this project changed over time from ambitious, to realistic, to adaptive. Once we began to see that completing a program evaluation was likely not possible this year, we shifted to bringing Sophia on board for our program development process to ensure that she can gain experience with this project and engage in inter-campus collaborations. We are very excited to have her join us as we get started on this process in May.

This was the year of obstacles. My office was short-staffed up until two weeks ago and we ended up facing many more competing demands on our time than anticipated that put the evaluation on hold. Right as we were gearing up to bring Sophia on board for program development, I ended up requiring a two month medical leave for a brain injury which delayed our plans up until now. It has been challenging to experience these delays knowing what a wonderful evaluation champion team we had waiting for us, and I am very grateful for the understanding and grace that we have been shown.

Similar to our goals, our learning outcomes changed over time. I think the most significant learning that happened on our end went beyond the outcomes that were set and landed more in the realm of project management and workload coordination.

Although the initial goals were not met due to the delays, I do feel that this was an experience that brought strong value to our program development process and our office as a whole. What I think have been the most valuable outcomes from this process are the relationships that have been built with our evaluation champion team and the connections that we are planning to continue. Thank you for allowing us to have this experience and for your support throughout the year!