Dustin Huckabe introduces “United Students in Service” - a new student organization in Norman

Tell us about yourself

My name is Dustin Huckabe and I am a transfer student from Texas Tech University. I am originally from San Antonio, TX and a die-hard Spurs fan. I am engaged to be married to my wonderful fiancé Emma and we will be married in October of this year! I have struggled with addiction since I was thirteen years old. I went to rehab for the first time in 2006 when I was eighteen years old, not because I wanted to, but because of the external pressures I had caused for myself. I was in and out of 12-Step meetings for the next five years. During this time, I struggled with depression, anxiety, and previous trauma. The only way I knew how to cope with my hopelessness was by using drugs and alcohol. At the age of 23, it was suggested that I again attend 12-Step meetings and give sobriety a real, honest try. I went, not because I thought they would work, but because I didn’t want to be consumed by hopelessness and despair anymore.
Despite myself, I sit here with seven years of sobriety trying to give back what was so freely given to me. More importantly, I am a student in long term recovery from drugs and alcohol and I want to create a safe place on campus for students who are suffering from the disease of addiction.

**Tell us about Collegiate Recovery Community at Texas Tech**

The Center for Collegiate Recovery Communities, CCRC, at Texas Tech helped shape me into the student I am today. They have a student organization, The Association of Students About Service made up of approximately 125 students, in which I served as the Fun in Recovery Chair, Public Relations Chair, and President-Elect for this incoming year. Without the CCRC, I would not be at OU today. When I applied to Texas Tech University, I was denied admission by the university, but was accepted based on a scholarship into the Center for Collegiate Recovery Communities. My acceptance into the CCRC over-rode Texas Tech University’s denial and allowed me to pursue higher education. The program provides students with a dedicated safe place on campus, staff competent in the field of recovery, and a recovering community where life-long relationships are built between peers and staff.

**What are your plans for the new student organization on OU campus?**

The United Students in Service is an organization for students in recovery and those who support recovery, which promotes and encourages fun in recovery, community outreach, and awareness through education of addiction and recovery. Our plan is to host 12-Step All-Recovery meetings, sober tailgates, as well as various Unity Events throughout the upcoming year. We are currently hosting two All-Recovery meetings on campus at The Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social of Work, on Tuesdays at Noon and Wednesday nights at 7:00 PM.
Tell us about the collegiate recovery program that is currently in development

I can’t talk about the collegiate recovery program without mentioning Jess Eddy from the Office of University Community. Jess was one of the first people I was introduced to at OU, after he had just met with the directors of The Center for Collegiate Recovery Communities at Texas Tech University. Jess has not only been instrumental in helping me feel comfortable at OU but has also provided me with the space to feel safe and included. Coming from a collegiate recovery community to a campus that does not have this type of support, the Office of University Community has greatly aided me throughout my transition. I believe that Jess and the Office of University Community are currently working to build a collegiate recovery program, that will support students in recovery or those seeking recovery from addiction. I know that these plans include a dedicated space, dedicated staff, and support for recovery programing.

How is it going to impact students’ life on campus?

I think this is the most important question to keep in mind, and it is exactly why I’m pursuing this work. I believe by developing the collegiate recovery program alongside the student organization, United Students in Service, on campus will provide a safe place for students to have fun in recovery, build unity, flourish academically, and achieve their goal of graduation. Most importantly, students will not have to suffer in silence. Universities can be a hostile environment for students who are in recovery or whom are seeking recovery, and by creating this collegiate recovery community, we can provide an alternative for those marginalized students and help end the stigma of addiction.