

THE POWER TO TRANSFORM: BECOMING A HEALTH — PROMOTING INSTITUTION

CAMPUS HEALTH AND WELLBEING
FRAMEWORK PROJECT
SUMMARY OF THE CONSULTANT REPORT



COLLEGE OF
THE ROCKIES

MARCH 2021

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This summary is based on the full consultant report:

Dyck, Lesley (2021). *Technical Report: Campus Health and Wellbeing Framework Project*. Department of Student Affairs, College of the Rockies, January 2021.



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Territory Acknowledgement

College of the Rockies serves the communities of the East Kootenays. All of the College's campuses are located in the traditional territory of the Ktunaxa people which is also home to the Kinbasket people. Five First Nations bands are located in the regional boundary of the College: Four of which are Ktunaxa and one is Shuswap. Additionally, the College partners with the Kootenay Regional Office of the Métis Nation, BC.

We are thankful for all our Indigenous partners and are constantly seeking new ways to support the development of our community.

Message from the Director of Student Affairs

The development of the Campus Health and Wellbeing Framework would not have been possible without the endorsement and encouragement of College of the Rockies leadership team, the members of the Advisory Committee, the insights from community stakeholders and the thoughtful contributions of students and employees throughout our campus communities. I am grateful for your time and perspectives. You have all played an important role in this worthwhile project!

I would also like to extend my thanks to the Institutional Research Team for their support in developing research instruments, facilitating the distribution of surveys, and for supporting data collection of the *Environmental Scan, the Employee Health and Wellbeing Survey and the Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey (2020)*.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Lesley Dyck (Lesley Dyck Leadership and Consulting), whose guidance and knowledge were invaluable throughout this project. Her experience facilitating collaborative health promotion projects and her qualitative research background were instrumental in creating a unifying framework that integrates leading research, a settings-based approach, and the unique context of the College. When COVID-19 protocols prevented us from in-person consultation, her willingness to adapt the project plan and timelines allowed us to be sensitive to the needs of our college community as we adjusted to new protocols and a different reality.

Finally, I gratefully acknowledge the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training for supporting the development of the *College of the Rockies Health and Wellbeing Framework* and providing the grant funding to make this important work possible.

Doris Silva
Director of Student Affairs
College of the Rockies
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INTRODUCTION

The *Campus Health and Wellbeing Framework* has been developed as a simple and accessible conceptual tool to guide learning, planning and action for improving institution-wide health and wellbeing.

The *Framework* is intended to:

- **Guide learning** by helping to ask the right questions, explore different perspectives, and understand the context.
- **Support planning** by helping to prioritize opportunities, identify gaps, and develop strategies based on evidence, and effectively allocate and align resources.
- **Drive action** by helping to describe where we are going, evaluate our success, and make improvements over time.

The *Campus Health and Wellbeing Framework* supports the work of building a strategic plan with goals, objectives and timelines that can be operationalized over the next 3-5 years, as the College translates the theory of a health-promoting post-secondary institution into action. The framework brings together information on evidence-based practice, available resources, and community priorities to guide strategic decision making and support collaborative action.



What is a health-promoting college?

The *Campus Health and Wellbeing Framework* builds on the *Okanagan Charter*, an international charter for health promoting universities and colleges developed in 2015 and endorsed by many Canadian and international post-secondary institutions over the past 5 years. The *Okanagan Charter* provides the foundation for colleges and universities to systematically incorporate health and wellbeing into everything they do. It calls upon higher education institutions to incorporate health promotion values and principles into their mission, vision and strategic plans, and model and test approaches for the wider community and society.

“HEALTH PROMOTING UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES TRANSFORM THE HEALTH AND SUSTAINABILITY OF OUR CURRENT AND FUTURE SOCIETIES, STRENGTHEN COMMUNITIES AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE WELL-BEING OF PEOPLE, PLACES AND THE PLANET.” – Okanagan Charter, 2015, pg. 2

The *Okanagan Charter* has launched a movement with various networks bringing together like-minded institutions to provide mutual support and learning. For example:

- Canadian Health Promoting Campuses: healthpromotingcampuses.squarespace.com
- International Health Promoting Colleges and Universities: www.healthpromotingcampuses.org
- UK Healthy Universities Network: healthyuniversities.ac.uk



What is a settings-based approach?

The *Campus Health and Wellbeing Framework* provides a **settings-based approach** as a foundation for strategic action and the development of a comprehensive health and wellbeing strategy. It describes the **vision, values, settings and practices** necessary for moving from a health education approach to a whole-systems approach within post-secondary institutions (Ardiles et al., 2017; Barton, 2014; Okanagan Charter, 2015).

A settings-based approach includes the following key features:

- Ecological, holistic and whole systems approach.
- Strong leadership and direction to manage and change culture.
- Importance of partnerships both within and outside the setting.
- Working with individual skills and capabilities.
- Taking an empowering approach from the bottom up to ensure participation and sustainability. (Barton, 2014, pg. 6)



What are the benefits?

Enhancing both mental and physical health contributes to the success of students, employees and the organization as a whole. The benefits include increasing positive factors associated with resilience, connection and engagement, and decreasing negative aspects like stress, anxiety, depression and absenteeism (SFU, 2015). (See **Figure 1**).

For ...	Increases	Decreases
Students	Thriving Learning and persistence Resilience Sense of community Social, physical and mental health Connection	Stress Isolation Anxiety Depression
Faculty	Work life balance Job satisfaction Morale Camaraderie Social, physical and mental health	Burnout Stress Isolation Anxiety Depression
Institution	Retention Productivity Engagement Reputation Supportive organizational culture Bottom line	Absenteeism Presenteeism Attrition Associated costs

*Figure 1: Individual and institutional benefits of enhanced wellbeing
(Adapted from SFU, 2015, pg. 7)*



Mental Health

From a mental health perspective, wellbeing includes:

“[THE] CAPACITIES OF EACH AND ALL OF US TO FEEL, THINK, AND ACT IN WAYS THAT ENHANCE OUR ABILITY TO ENJOY LIFE AND DEAL WITH THE CHALLENGES WE FACE. IT IS A POSITIVE SENSE OF EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING THAT RESPECTS THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURE, EQUITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE, INTERCONNECTIONS, AND PERSONAL DIGNITY” (CACUSS & CMHA, 2013, pg. 6).

Mental health and wellbeing have been increasing priorities for post-secondary institutions in Canada over the past 10 years. The *Campus Health and Wellbeing Framework* is designed to align with and leverage several key initiatives in this area, including:

1. **National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students** – was developed through a collaborative initiative led by the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) and launched in 2020 (Canadian Standards Association, 2020). The work of aligning with the National Standard is being supported by the MHCC through the

Starter Kit and promotion of the ‘Five Stage Continuous Improvement Framework’.

Institutions can also join the CORE Community ([Centre for Outreach, Resources and Engagement](#)) to access resources and get support on the CSA website. (*Note: Registration is required*).

Implementation of the National Standard is being supported in 2021 with Kickoff Grants of \$25,000 from the [Bell Let’s Talk](#) initiative.

2. **Campus Health and Wellbeing Survey** – is a survey that was developed through a national partnership to overcome the lack of a Canadian surveillance mechanism and ensure ‘Canadian data for Canadian campuses’ (Faulkner et al., 2019).
3. **Healthy Minds Healthy Campuses** – is a province wide community of practice supported through a partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association and the Canadian Institute for Substance Use Research (CISUR) at the University of Victoria. *Healthy Minds Healthy Campuses* has endorsed the *Okanagan Charter* as an essential approach to mental health promotion in British Columbia.

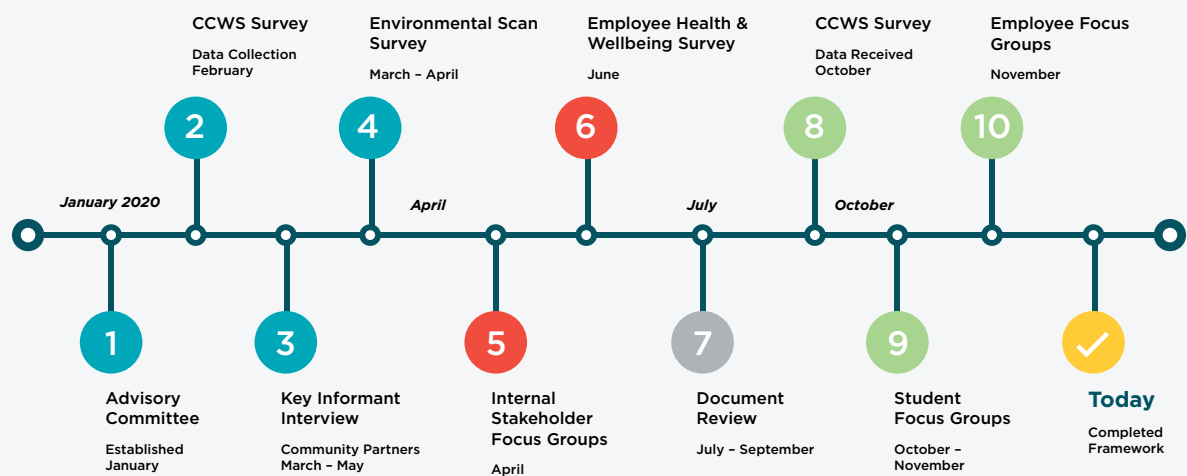


Figure 2: Campus Health and Wellbeing Framework Project Timeline 2020

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Project activities included the establishment of the Advisory Committee, data collection associated with an environmental scan, and engagement activities with students (focus groups), with employees (focus groups, surveys), and with internal/external stakeholders (focus groups, interviews).

See [Appendix A](#) for a summary of campus engagement. See **Figure 2** for a summary of the project timeline.

Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey

The project benefited from the new *Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey* (CCWS) implemented for the first time across BC (January-March 2020) with the support of the BC Ministry for Advanced Education.

The CCWS provides information on students' impressions of the campus climate related to mental health, their feelings about how well they fit in and how supportive the campus is toward their learning process and academic success. The survey is designed to take 20-minutes to complete and incorporates:

- an existing mental wellbeing scale
- assessment of sense of difficulties, negative affect and access to health services
- questions about sleep patterns, physical exertion, wakeful sedentary activity, sexual behaviour, substance use, and food (in) security

- demographic information (i.e., age, ethnicity, connections to Canada, residential situation, mode of commuting, grades bracket, placement situation, job involvement, degree of financial stress, gender identification, relational status, disabilities/conditions, parental/guardian level of education)

For participating institutions, the CCWS is a tool to help strengthen health and wellbeing programs and services, but it is also a resource for supporting the implementation of the Okanagan Charter (2015). It provides the robust data required to take a 'whole campus' approach to wellbeing. However, it does not include measures to monitor institutional health and wellbeing, and assess progress in implementing the Okanagan Charter's calls to action. The *BC Healthy Minds Healthy Campuses* initiative recommends that post-secondary institutions start with the survey data and then go deeper using 'qualitative inquiry and collective dialogue' to better understand how to create a health promoting campus environment.

"TOOLS FOR THESE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS ARE LESS EASY TO COME BY AND OPERATIONALIZE, BUT ARGUABLY MORE CRITICAL FOR ENHANCEMENT OF THE CAMPUS SETTING AS IT, IN TURN, INFLUENCES INDIVIDUAL ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS" (Dyck, 2020).



THE FRAMEWORK

The *Campus Health and Wellbeing Framework* has been developed as a simple and accessible conceptual tool to guide learning, planning and action for improving institution-wide health and wellbeing. It is intended to help translate the theory of a health-promoting post-secondary institution into action by supporting the College to take the next step of creating a **strategic plan** with goals, objectives and timelines that can be operationalized over the next 3-5 years.

VISION AND VALUES

As a health-promoting college, we envision a **campus environment** that promotes health and wellbeing, and a **campus community** that contributes to the well-being of people, places and the planet.

The framework is built on the **values** that guide the College (2015):

- Student success drives our success.
- Appreciate people, land, and culture.
- Listen and accelerate understanding.
- Be curious and creative.

It is also built on the shared values of **equity** and **sustainability**, two critical core values that underpin the work of supporting healthy built and social environments.

Equity in health exists when

“ALL PEOPLE CAN REACH THEIR FULL HEALTH POTENTIAL AND ARE NOT DISADVANTAGED FROM ATTAINING IT BECAUSE OF THEIR RACE, ETHNICITY, RELIGION, GENDER, AGE, SOCIAL CLASS, SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS, SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR OTHER SOCIALLY DETERMINED CIRCUMSTANCE” (BCCDC, 2018, pg. 73).

This includes concepts of Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, cultural safety and humility, diversity, inclusivity, and the availability, affordability, acceptability and accessibility of services.

Sustainability exists when organizations are situated in communities that are economically, environmentally, ecologically and socially healthy and resilient. It includes concepts of a 'One Planet Living' approach, prioritization of preventing/reversing climate change, meaningful, inclusive and respectful engagement, using a multi-solving approach, trust and flexibility (BCCDC, 2020).

SETTINGS-BASED APPROACH

The core of the framework is based on the intersection of four **environments** that make up the campus setting (adapted from: BCCDC, 2018 and 2020; SFU, 2020; WHO, 2012), and six **promising practice** themes that have emerged from the promotion of mental health and wellbeing in post-secondary institutions (adapted from: Mount Royal University, 2020; WHO, 2012).

The environments and promising practices intersect to generate outcomes that will ultimately improve the health and wellbeing for students, employees and the wider community (see **Figure 3**).

1. SETTINGS/ENVIRONMENTS

The **settings** are overlapping **environments** that support interventions to be person-centred and consider the specific context:

1. The physical environment, including:

- 1.1. **Built environments** that are complete, compact and connected, applying universal design principles.
- 1.2. **Transportation** that is networked, prioritizes active transportation, safety, and accessibility.
- 1.3. **Natural environments** that are preserved and maximize opportunities for everyone to access.
- 1.4. **Food systems** that increase equitable access to and affordability of healthy and culturally appropriate food options.
- 1.5. **Housing** that ensures access to adequate housing quality for everyone.

2. The social environment, including:

- 2.1. **Service environments** that foster partnerships to ensure a range of human and social services based on the needs of the campus community (e.g., co-located services).
- 2.2. **Recreation** opportunities that are safe, equitable and adaptable, and include community events.
- 2.3. **Arts and culture** programming that celebrates diversity and promotes equity.
- 2.4. **Information and communication** across multiple channels/platforms, based on principles of equity and participatory engagement (e.g., community dialogues).

3. The learning environment:

- 3.1. **Social engagement** based on social connection, inclusivity and positive classroom culture.
- 3.2. **Engaged learning** grounded in real-life learning, setting optimal challenges, and providing civic engagement opportunities.



- 3.3. **Instructor approach** that is flexible, empowering and supportive.

- 3.4. **Personal supports** for individual growth and promotion of wellbeing, resilience and readiness to learn.

4. The work environment:

- 4.1. **Physical environments** that are safe, adaptable and flexible to meet individual needs.
- 4.2. **Psychosocial environments** that are positive and supported by well-organized work, respectful organizational culture, consultative management style, consistent application and protection of worker rights, protection from violence or harassment, and support for work-life balance.
- 4.3. **Personal health resources** that support active living, healthy eating, prevention of substance use or abuse, stress management, and access to appropriate health care services.
- 4.4. **Organizational community involvement** in support of healthy physical and social environments at the local and global levels.



2. PROMISING PRACTICES

The **promising practices** are intervention approaches that have demonstrated impact and help us to see how values can be operationalized to achieve specific health and wellbeing outcomes:

1. **Institutional leadership** - There is 'buy-in' and alignment with institutional values from multiple levels of leadership. Initiatives lend themselves to informing and contributing to meaningful health policy development and/or change within the institution, for students and employees.

Core equity and sustainability values include collaborative decision making and shared accountability.

2. **Equity, diversity, and inclusion** - Initiatives are developed in consideration of various cultural, social, and socioeconomic groups. They promote equitable opportunities to be involved, for both students and employees; initiatives are used as a means to help reduce stigma and prejudice on campus, especially among those who may be experiencing additional challenges that negatively affect their mental health and wellbeing.

Core equity and sustainability values include support for Truth & Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, cultural safety and humility, addressing systemic racism, recognizing principles of intersectionality and using them to inform actions.

3. **Mobilizing local community** - There is an effort to engage students, employees, and all stakeholders at various developmental stages across initiatives.

Core equity and sustainability values include respectful community engagement, multi-solving approach and attention to generating co-benefits.

4. **Shared responsibility and collaboration**

- Health and wellbeing initiatives foster sustained responsibility and connections between stakeholders; initiatives are integrated within organizational plans and objectives.

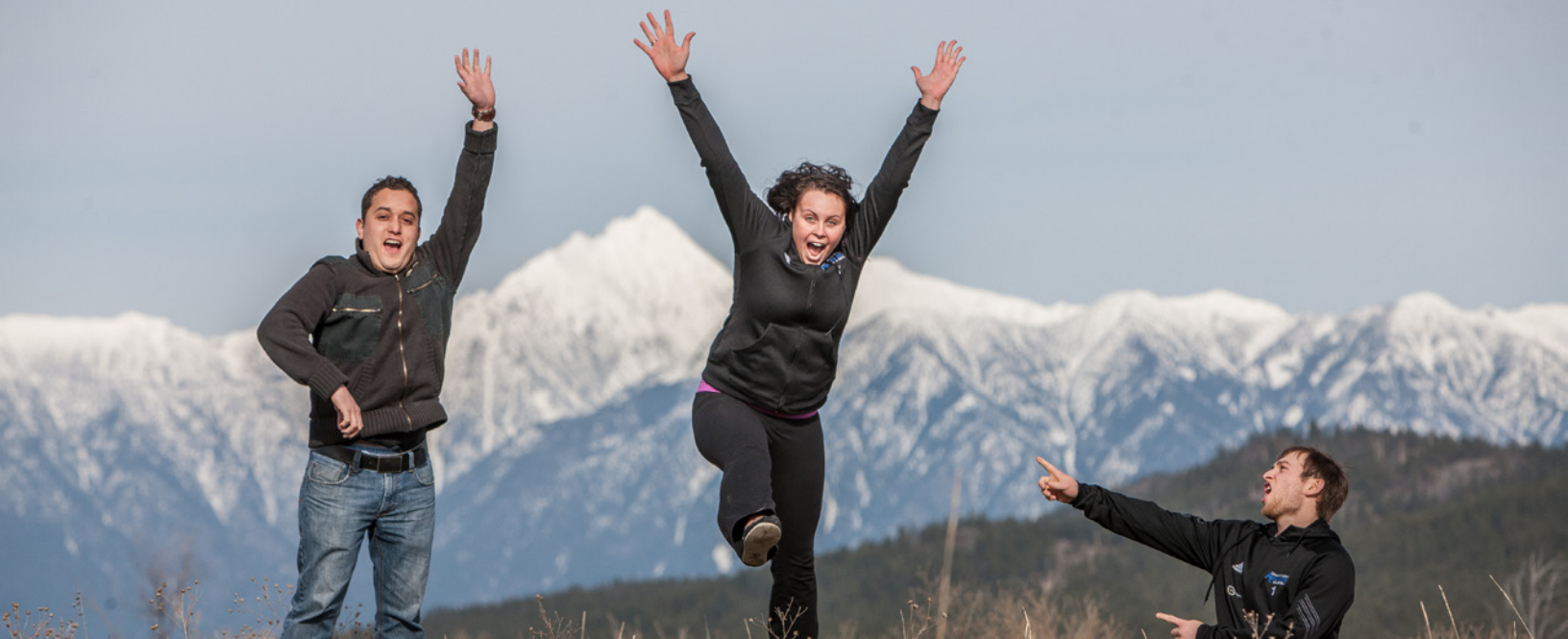
Core equity and sustainability values include trust and flexibility.

5. **Access** - Initiatives accommodate the needs of diverse groups. This may include interventions that are customizable at varying levels, following principles of confidentiality, privacy and protection from harm.

Core equity and sustainability values include availability, affordability and acceptability.

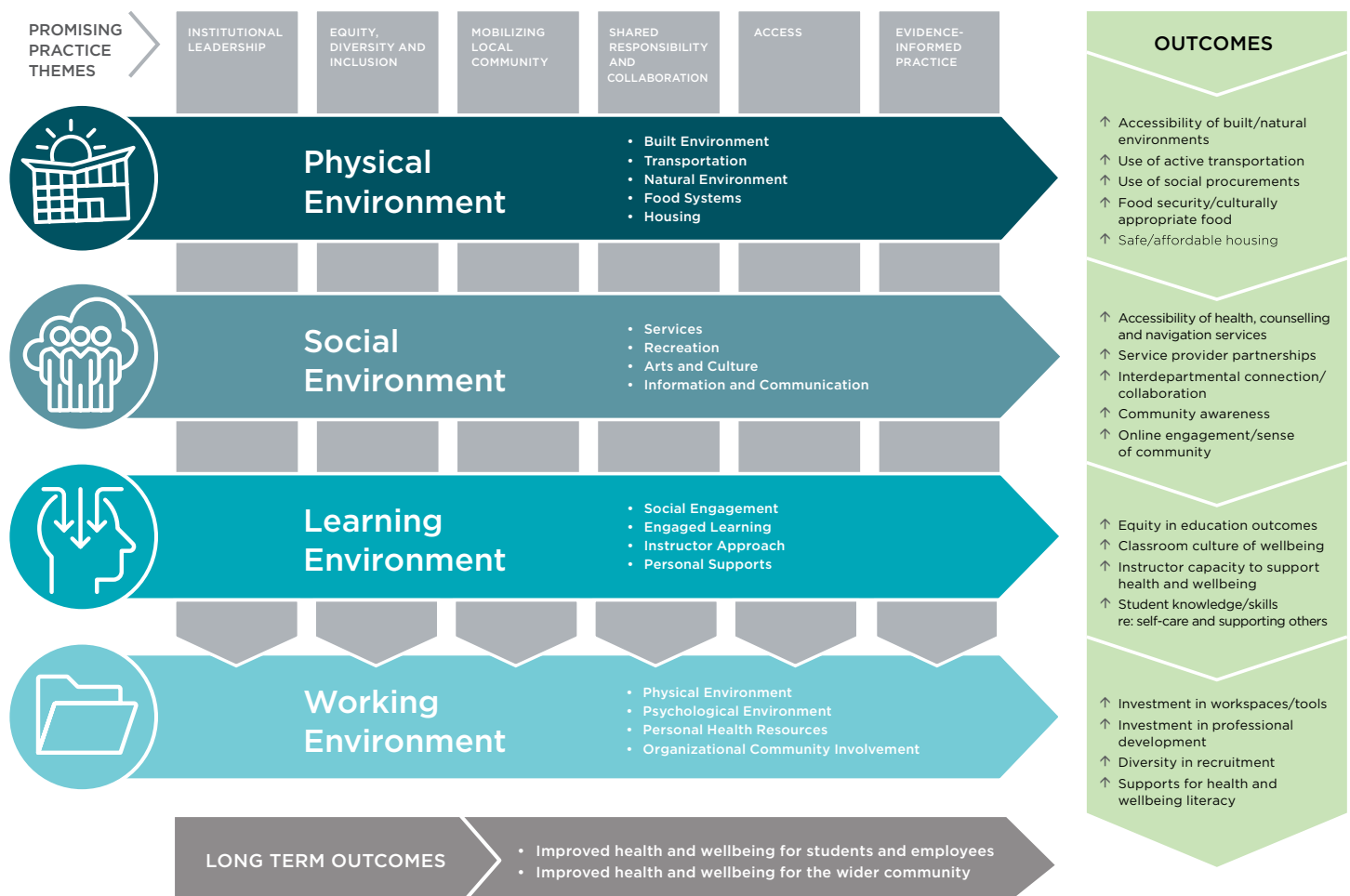
6. **Evidence-informed practice** - Health and wellbeing initiatives are created in consideration of evidence such as needs assessments, research, and student and employee feedback. Implementation includes consideration of continuous quality improvement and ongoing evaluation.

Core equity and sustainability values include recognition of diverse 'ways of knowing' and attention to transformative processes for equitable social change.



VISION: As a health-promoting college, we envision a campus environment that promotes health and wellbeing, and a campus community that contributes to the well-being of people, places and the planet.

Figure 3: Campus Health and Wellbeing Framework



STRATEGIES AND OUTCOMES

The following **settings-based strategies** and **anticipated outcomes** are based on health-promoting actions prioritized by students, employees and community stakeholders. They are aligned with the promising practices in the *Framework* and are intended as examples of potential actions that could be implemented in the short- and medium-term by leadership teams and health and wellbeing ‘champions’ throughout the College.

These are followed by a set of **foundational strategies** recommended as next steps to build organizational capacity and create the necessary institutional commitments and structures to guide the work for the long-term.

1. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTS

The **physical environment** includes the built environment, transportation, natural environments, food systems and housing.

Not surprisingly, students identified the physical environment as an essential support for their wellbeing. They identified the new campus housing, the Gathering Place and the gym as important physical spaces for supporting work-life-study balance, social support, health and safety. Students talked about keeping active, eating well and staying connected with friends and how the campus

“FOOD IS IMPORTANT ...
IT CREATES A SENSE OF
COMMUNITY.”

– Student Focus Group

and wider physical environment helped with this.

Student focus group participants called for more organized study groups, more supportive spaces for relaxing and sleeping, improved food on campus, longer hours for the Gathering Place, and stress reduction supports like dogs on campus during exams.

Employee focus group participants talked about the importance of the design of physical space to support students to ‘drop-in’ and enable private conversations as necessary. The environmental scan data emphasized the importance of accessibility through extended hours (e.g., the Gathering Place, gym), and improved healthy food options at more locations, including social and study space that allows food.

Taking an integrated approach to addressing the interconnected elements of a healthy built environment also supports the College to meet its environmental sustainability objectives and address the wider equity issues of poverty and housing that require a community wide approach.



“BEING NEAR THE COMMUNITY
FOREST IS A HUGE ADVANTAGE ...
WE SHOULD USE IT MORE!”

– Student Focus Group

Proposed strategies:

1. **Universal Design** assessment of campus spaces, to support identification of priority areas for improvement. Include consideration of the use of design to support inclusion, social engagement and privacy for students and employees.
2. **Bike to Campus** recognition program and supports for increasing access to active transportation for students and employees.
3. **Trail Map** of existing walking and recreation paths, and areas for development of future paths; explore partnership with municipal/regional government to prioritize trails for improved accessibility and development.
4. **Campus Food Policy** initiative to assess opportunities to strengthen procurement policies around local food and healthy vending/meeting policies, including consideration of the availability of culturally appropriate food.
5. **Food Preparation** infrastructure assessment for both students and employees, including consideration of waste management and sustainability issues.
6. Undertake a **Housing Assessment**, in collaboration with community stakeholders, for young adults in the community and promote campus-community partnership to strengthen research and advocacy. Link to the homestay-parent program and community inclusion/diversity campaign (see Social Environment).



ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES:

- Increased accessibility of physical spaces and natural environments.
- Increased use of active transportation.
- Increased use of social procurement strategies (e.g., local food, compostable containers, purchased services from social-benefit businesses).
- Improved food security, including availability of culturally appropriate food.
- Improved availability of safe and affordable housing.



“THE COUNSELLOR IS GREAT ... I HEAR FROM SOME PEOPLE THAT THEY WOULD ALSO LIKE TO BE ABLE TO SEE A WOMAN FOR SUPPORT.”

- Student Focus Group

“IN SOME CULTURES, IT’S NOT OKAY TO ASK FOR HELP. WE NEED TO LEARN THAT IT IS GOOD TO SAY, ‘I’M NOT WELL TODAY’.”

- Student Focus Group

2. SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS

The **social environment** includes provision of services, recreation opportunities, arts and culture programming, and information/communication.

Overall, students confirmed the *Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey* (CCWS) findings about the positive and supportive nature of the campus and community context. Students commented on the availability of services like counselling and education advising, and programs like JumpStart and Student Services supports in general, as being valuable for supporting student health and wellbeing.

Students, employees and community stakeholder organizations did have suggestions for improvements, including an additional counsellor, decreased wait times, more flexibility around short appointments, and an on-campus primary care provider and/or service hub.

Improving services could also include strengthening online supports, based on the

“STUDENTS ARE BENEFITING FROM ONLINE COUNSELLING AND EDUCATION ADVISING ... THEY ARE NOT MISSING AS MANY APPOINTMENTS.”

- Employee Focus Group

positive impact of online services during the pandemic.

Employees and community stakeholder organizations also noted that care for students needs to be flexible and offered as stepped care, not all or nothing. And all programs, not just health care services, need to be trauma-informed and culturally safe.

Student focus group participants recognized that the solution to improving care services may simply be ensuring students are aware of what is available, especially for the international students. This includes having the diversity of staff available to connect with the students.

Employee focus group participants noted that this means addressing the fact that some students experience explicit racism when working or shopping in the community. It also means recognizing that cultural norms related to health and wellbeing may be different. For example, students may never have been asked directly about how they are feeling and may need more support to have this conversation.

Participants in one student focus group acknowledged the importance of the wider community in this context.

“WE NEED A DOCTOR OR NURSE PRACTITIONER ON CAMPUS ... THEY COULD SERVE THE WIDER COMMUNITY AS WELL, BUT THE COLLEGE FIRST. IT WOULD ALSO PROVIDE A PRACTICUM PLACEMENT FOR HEALTH STUDENTS.”

- Student Focus Group

Opportunities to be together was emphasized as important for supporting student health and wellbeing.

Student focus group participants called for more organized study groups, more interdepartmental activities on campus, and stress reduction supports like dogs on campus during exams.

This was supported by participants in employee focus groups, who emphasized the importance of activities on campus for ensuring students feel connected to the College and the wider community. It was pointed out that attendance at events goes up and down and that better promotion, more variety, and more information about events is necessary. A number of participants also emphasized the importance of the campus culture and noted that engagement is also supported by creating a welcoming environment and ensuring that students are greeted with 'good morning!' every day.

We heard from employee focus group participants that regional campuses can sometimes feel disconnected from the main campus in Cranbrook. Participants told us that part of this is distance, but part of it is also the lack of housing, residence supports, and education advisors in the regions. At the same time, staff on regional campuses noted that they are often able to have the one-to-one relationships with students that allow them to provide effective supports.

“HAVING ACCESS TO CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE SUPPORT IN THE COMMUNITY HAS BEEN IMPORTANT ... IT DOESN'T ALL HAVE TO BE THROUGH THE COLLEGE.” – Student Focus Group



“YOU CAN'T BE ISOLATED FOR TOO LONG ... KIND OF LIKE A THERMOMETER, YOU NEED TO KNOW WHEN YOU NEED TO CONNECT WITH OTHER PEOPLE AND DON'T WAIT TOO LONG.” – Student Focus Group

Part of improving connection is strengthening communication. Employees note that there is a need to improve communication with students and build more opportunities for socializing and creativity. This was also emphasized by the community stakeholder organizations who emphasized that students need information in bite-size pieces, to see themselves in the information, and be able to access appropriate supports. The messaging and outreach need to use multiple channels, including print, online and through peer education.

The importance of using a variety of media/ social media platforms was emphasized by students as well. It is important that the College is visible across social media platforms as that is where many students get their information and feel engaged.

“INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS DON'T UNDERSTAND THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM, SO NEED AN ORIENTATION AND HELP FINDING A FAMILY DOCTOR WHEN THEY ARRIVE. TIPS ABOUT HOW TO NAVIGATE THE SYSTEM WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL.” – Student Focus Group

“IT WOULD BE GOOD TO HAVE A MUSIC GROUP TO BE ABLE TO GO AND SEE, OR EVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE MUSIC.” – Student Focus Group

Proposed strategies:

1. Enhance **Counselling Services** with the addition of online options, increased diversity of service providers (e.g., women and men, racialized, Indigenous, LGBTQ2S), increased promotion of services, and improved data collection to better assess patterns of service use on- and off-campus.
2. Partner with external stakeholders (e.g., CMHA, Interior Health, Ktunaxa Nation, the planned Cranbrook *Foundry* youth mental health project) to explore the option of building and staffing a **Primary Care Clinic** on the Cranbrook campus as part of a ‘stepped care’ approach. Consider establishing an inter-agency **Health and Wellbeing Committee** to coordinate provision of health education activities, health care services and referrals.
3. Program **Pop Up Recreation** opportunities to enhance existing recreation spaces and encourage social engagement and play (e.g. staff/student giant chess match, dog-petting during exams, lunch-time community forest walks).
4. Provide a **Campus Event Fund** for campus groups and ‘neighborhoods’ to host events to engage across regions and programs (e.g., music/open mic nights, comedy-club noon-hours, international festivals).
5. Develop a **Community Campaign** to showcase students and employees in the community, with a focus on diverse abilities, international diversity, and equity.
6. Create an **Online Connectivity** plan to link multiple social media platforms, College sites/spaces, and enhance student engagement.



ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES:

- Increased accessibility of health/counselling and navigation services
- Improved service provider partnership along the care continuum
- Increased inter-departmental connection
- Increased community awareness and knowledge about the College
- Improved online engagement and sense of a College community

“ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES THAT BRING STAFF AND STUDENTS TOGETHER GOES A LONG WAY TO DEVELOPING PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS. MAYBE A FUND THAT WE COULD APPLY TO CREATE EVENTS WOULD HELP.”
– Employee Focus Group

3 LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The **learning environment** includes supports for social engagement, engaged learning, effective instruction, and integration of personal supports for students.

The online environment was an important topic during the student focus groups, likely as a result of being in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic and having to attend classes and study almost entirely online. Students noted benefits like not needing to travel and increased flexibility in their schedules. They also commented on how instructors, education advisors and IT staff have been flexible and supportive through the challenge of moving courses online.

However, most online learning environment comments were about the challenges, like poor connectivity/technology, lack of engagement with other students, and the struggle of learning in the online environment where everything is slower.

“THERE HAS BEEN SO MUCH SUPPORT FROM INSTRUCTORS ... THEY HAVE BEEN SUPER QUICK TO RESPOND.” – Student Focus Group

“ONLINE COURSE HAS BEEN GOOD, BUT MORE USE OF ‘BREAKOUT ROOMS’ COULD HELP ME FEEL MORE CONNECTED WITH OTHER STUDENTS.”
– Student Focus Group

Employees suggested that student technology literacy be supported through targeted skill development in order to enhance student success.

The challenges of online learning included the lack of online spaces to support sharing and discussion. Students identified approaches such as online discussion forums that are anonymous, and a liaison function to support students in part-time programs and bridge the in-person and online environments.

Anticipating and supporting students before there is a need was identified as a priority by participants in the employee focus groups. Recommendations included interviewing students on entry to the program, assigning an advisor to each student to ensure no one falls through the cracks, and creating structured check-ins with students throughout the term.

Employees also recommended peer training/support as a valuable tool to support students. Participants in the employee focus groups identified how some programs (e.g., trades, nursing) create a sense of community as students go through the program with their cohort. This provides a type of informal peer support, but a formal program would



“PEOPLE ARE THE EXPERTS OF THEIR EXPERIENCE ... THE COLLEGE CANNOT KNOW WHAT EACH PERSON IS BRINGING WITH THEM TO THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.”

– Key informant interview



benefit a wider variety of students. It is especially valuable since, as the CCWS findings confirmed, the first reaction when students are struggling is to talk to a friend.

Employees are important supports for students, and participants in the employee focus groups called for improved training to be better able to support student health and wellbeing. Examples of recommended training programs for employees include *Mental Health First Aid*, crisis line training, and accessible instruction/universal design training.

The campus manager group described how they are seeing an increase in mental health issues and a higher percentage of students with disabilities. Employee focus group participants in general noted that the increased need for support and accommodation by students is not being matched by available resources.

Community stakeholder organizations talked about the benefits they have seen in partnering with the Human Service Worker program and the Nursing program to support

practicum students and get them engaged in the community. They recommended that students be supported to participate in community workshops, volunteer with initiatives such as harm reduction services at festivals and events, and to take advantage of online and in-person training resources that many community organizations provide (e.g., ASIST – Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, and safeTALK – Suicide Alertness for Everyone, both available from the Canadian Mental Health Association).

The College experience is often part of an important transition period from high school to the work place. This can be a vulnerable time for young adults, and they need early intervention supports (e.g., tools for stress management) through to harm reduction (e.g., access to condoms and clean needles). Community organizations emphasized how young adults need navigation supports they can leverage to get them through this period, and how the entire education environment would benefit from using a trauma-informed approach.

“IT’S HARD TO BE PART-TIME ON A REMOTE CAMPUS ... I DON’T REALLY FEEL CONNECTED THE WAY I DID BEFORE [DOING AN UNDERGRAD DEGREE AT ANOTHER INSTITUTION]. IT’S A CHALLENGE TO GET HELP AND WORK AROUND MY WORK SCHEDULE, ESPECIALLY NOW WITH COVID AND THE ELIMINATION OF SERVICES HERE. MAYBE IF THERE WAS A SPECIFIC LIAISON PERSON FOR PART-TIME STUDENT PROGRAMS?” – Student Focus Group



“THE EDUCATION ADVISOR WAS CRITICAL FOR HELPING ME DROP COURSES AND CREATE A PART-TIME PROGRAM. THE POOR ONLINE ACCESS WHERE I LIVE MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE TO CARRY A FULL COURSE LOAD.”
– Student Focus Group

Proposed strategies:

1. Pursue initiatives that advance the College’s commitment to the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada - Calls to Action**.
2. Develop a **Teaching Online Social Engagement Toolkit**, based on tools and tips from current instructors and links to resources (e.g., use of breakout rooms).
3. Train staff and support use of **Accessible Instruction/Universal Design** principles.
4. Collaborate with community stakeholders to expand **Service-Learning** opportunities across programs to support student civic engagement.
5. Develop guidelines for the provision of **Online Office Hours** to supplement in-person office hours.
6. Build-in first-semester session to every class to connect students to **Education Advisors/Navigators**. Consider developing a program for assigning advisors/navigators to students as part of orientation and developing a plan to support structured check-ins over the term.
7. Develop electronic **Engagement Sessions/ Feedback Tools** that allow anonymous participation.
8. Develop and support a **Peer Health Education Team** program.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES:

- Improved equity in education outcomes
- Strengthened classroom culture of wellbeing
- Increased instructor capacity to support health and wellbeing
- Improved integration of learning and health outcomes
- Increase student knowledge and skills around self-care and support for others



4. WORKING ENVIRONMENTS

The **work environment** includes the physical environment, the psychosocial environment, personal health resources, and organizational involvement in the community.

Employees talked about a culture of caring at the College in both the employee survey and focus groups. Specific **strengths** at the College for supporting employee mental health and wellbeing included:

- Recognition of the importance of being flexible and inclusive of individual needs.
- Strong team feeling among colleagues, and skilled support teams such as the Indigenous education team.
- Response to crises and requests for help, including access to an employee assistance program.
- Caring and supportive colleagues, supervisors and managers.
- Support for healthy workplace standards, including respectful communication.
- Collaborative approach to resolving work-related challenges.

Employees noted that the COVID-19 pandemic magnified some of the already existing challenges associated with the physical work environment as many transitioned to working from home. This included the need for improved technology supports and communication strategies.

“COVID HAS BROUGHT CAMPUSES TOGETHER ... WE COULD STILL DO WEEKLY TEAM MEETINGS EVEN WHEN THE EMERGENCY IS OVER.”

- Employee Focus Group

“POOR COMMUNICATION CREATES MASSIVE STRESS ... THERE NEEDS TO BE MORE COMMUNICATION TRAINING AND MENTORING.”

- Employee Focus Group

“THERE [NEEDS TO BE] INVESTMENT IN STAFF AND FACULTY ... WE NEED A DEDICATED SPACE FOR STAFF TO TAKE BREAKS, HAVE DISCUSSIONS [WITH COLLEAGUES] ... PREPARE FOOD ... NOT A TAG-ALONG TO CAMPUS LIFE.” - Employee Focus Group

Employees also reflected on what it will be like when they return to working on campus and described the need for improved employee-only spaces on campus.

Employees identified the need for a better balance between online and in-person communication to support a positive psychosocial environment. They recognized the opportunity to learn from the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, the strong integration of MS Teams as the virtual online engagement platform. Employees suggested that it could be used right away to implement health and wellbeing challenges and support online ‘coffee break’ engagement opportunities.

There was appreciation for the ability to work remotely, and how the online space has increased engagement across campuses. However, the transition to predominantly online work has had mixed results.

Workload was reported by employees as an ongoing issue, impacted by the pandemic, but also by the need for improved performance appraisal, professional development and career planning supports.

Employees suggested that supports such as dedicated space for workouts that are separate from students, more standing desks and walking meetings, more areas for food preparation and better food options on campus would contribute to overall employee health and wellbeing. Workshop/presentation topics related to mental health and interpersonal relationships, including work/life balance and stress management, were rated highly.



“I’VE NEVER BEEN IN BETTER SHAPE WITH ALL THE WALKING I’M DOING ... BUT I HATE THE ISOLATION AND LACK OF UNPLANNED CONTACT. IT’S HARD TO BUMP INTO PEOPLE IN CYBERSPACE.” – Employee Focus Group

“IT IS A STRUGGLE TO TRY AND KEEP UP TO PROVINCIAL STANDARDS AND CHANGE AT THAT LEVEL. A LOT OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS HAPPENING ONLY ON PERSONAL TIME AND IN THE SUMMER.”

– Employee Focus Group

Proposed strategies:

1. Prioritize the development of a **Staff Lounge** for breaks/meals/meetings/recreation as part of the long-term capital and building plan.
2. Develop an **Assessment Plan** related to work space, home office and computer/technical tools to guide capital planning investment priorities.
3. Support the continued use of **MS Teams** post COVID-19 as part of online coffee break activities, and regular online inter-campus meetings.
4. Enhance the **Hiring Strategy** with the addition of increased diversity objectives.
5. Support team and leadership development by providing training and mentoring to supervisors and managers on communication, performance appraisal, and

new staff onboarding, as part of a broader **Professional Development** strategy.

6. Build employee health and wellbeing literacy by supporting **Training** for helping students with mental health concerns (e.g., *Mental Health First Aid* or *At-Risk Gatekeeper Training*), trauma informed and culturally sensitive practice, and personal health practices (e.g., mindfulness, stress management).

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES:

- Increased investment in workspaces/tools
- Increased investment in professional development
- Improved diversity in recruitment
- Increased supports for health and wellbeing literacy

ESTABLISHING THE FOUNDATION

The students who participated in the focus groups reported feeling well supported by the College. Students have a holistic sense of health and wellbeing and recognize the importance of self-care. They were aware of many of the supports and services available to them, and they had thoughtful suggestions for how the learning environment could be improved both online and on-campus.

Ultimately, the student focus group participants supported the development of a *Campus Health and Wellbeing Framework* for the College and want to see students engaged in providing feedback on things the College wants to try.

The need for a *Campus Health and Wellbeing Framework* was supported by employees as well, who called for the Framework to link to the goals of the College, be based on evidence of the need and effective interventions, and be sufficiently resourced. Employees and external stakeholder organizations also emphasized that the development of a strategic plan needs to be informed by students, employees and community stakeholders, in partnership.

Employees also talked about the need for

“COLLEGE CONVERSATION CAFÉ IS GREAT ... VERY INTERESTING TOPICS AND COULD BE USED IN PLACE OF A SURVEY TO GET ENGAGEMENT AND FEEDBACK!” – Student Focus Group

digging deeper and ensuring health and wellbeing conversations include reflection on how employees and the College can ‘live our values’. These reflections included comments about the importance of talking about health and wellbeing from a decolonized and holistic perspective.

There is an urgency to undertaking the work of creating an institutional health and wellbeing strategic plan. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to continue even after most students and staff are permitted to return to campus. And although the CCWS 2020 survey reports that most students are doing well, there are around 30% who are struggling with at least one of: substance use issues, sexual health risks, food insecurity, and prolonged sedentary behaviour. As well, 24% report severe mental distress, and 9% report contemplating suicide in the past year. There is a need for long-term planning that considers the need for targeted interventions for higher risk populations alongside the need for high quality, accessible universal supports.

“A TASK FORCE OR COMMITTEE WOULD GO A LONG WAY TO ADVANCING HEALTH AND WELLBEING AT THE COLLEGE ... BUT IT NEEDS NOT JUST SENIOR MANAGEMENT, BUT ALSO FRONT LINE.” – Employee Focus Group





Proposed next steps:

The following **foundational strategies** are recommended as next steps to build organizational capacity and create the necessary institutional commitments and structures to guide the work of implementing the *Campus Health and Wellbeing Framework* for the long-term.

1. Formally adopt the **Okanagan Charter** -

International Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges (2015), in support of the two central calls to action:

- i. To embed health into all aspects of campus culture, across the administration, operations and academic mandates.
- ii. To lead health promotion action and collaboration locally and globally.

2. Formally adopt the **Canadian National Standards** (voluntary) for:

- i. Mental health and well-being for post-secondary students (2020)
- ii. Psychological health and safety in the workplace — Prevention, promotion, and guidance to staged implementation (2013)

3. Form a **Task Force** to develop a 'health promoting college' **Strategic Plan**, based on the *Campus Health and Wellbeing Framework*. Engage stakeholders at all levels within the College, including students and external stakeholders. Use the resulting strategic plan to ground the development of the overall institutional strategic plan.

4. Create an annual 'participatory action' **Health Promoting Campus** initiative where interdisciplinary students develop health promotion projects for credit. Activities should include a qualitative inquiry/ dialogue approach and build on the Conversation Café initiative.

5. Develop a **Data and Evaluation Strategy** to leverage information provided by the *Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey*. This should include a focus on health equity issues and the segmentation of student population data in support of targeted strategies within a universal approach. It should also identify relevant outcome indicators and tools for collecting the necessary data.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Advisory Committee members included:

- Doris Silva, Director of Student Affairs (Project Sponsor)
- Heather Hepworth, Dean of Health and Human Services
- Laurie Calverley, ED, Human Resources and Payroll
- Nicola Kaufman, HR Consultant



Environmental Scan Survey and Summary

Report - an environmental scan survey was sent to internal stakeholders (employees) to identify documents, programs/services, resources, policies and key community stakeholders relevant to student health and wellbeing:

- 98 complete surveys
- Representing all categories of employees:
 - Faculty 50%
 - Support Staff 35%
 - Management 10%
 - Other 5%

Key Informant Interviews – with key community stakeholders (external):

1. ANKORS (Aids Network, Cranbrook)
2. CMHA Kootenays (Canadian Mental Health Association)
3. RCMP (Mental Health Liaison)
4. Community Connections Cranbrook (CCSSE BC)
5. Summit Community Services (Cranbrook)

Internal Stakeholder Focus Groups – with employees from key programs and departments:

1. Campus Managers (6 participants)
2. Student Life (4 participants)
3. International Team (5 participants)
4. Education Advisors (8 participants)
5. Disability Services and Counselling (3 participants)

Employee Survey and Summary Report

– to collect data on the inclusivity of the College in support of employee mental health and wellbeing:

- 87 complete surveys (response rate of 30%)
- Representing all categories of employees:
 - Faculty 47%
 - Support Staff 36%
 - Management 14%

Student Focus Groups – with representation across programs and campuses:

- 6 groups, for a total of 19 students (14 female, 5 male; ages 20-50; 1st to 4th year; part-time and full-time; variety of programs)

Employee Focus Groups – with representation across employee groups, including staff, faculty and management:

- 5 groups, for a total of 25 employees (20 female, 5 male; employment 2 to 32 years; variety of programs)



Think. Do. **Become.**