

Pace University Wellness Strategic Plan

September 2022 – June 2025

October 1, 2022

Introduction

Vision

Pace University will have a cohesive, integrated approach to physical, mental, and financial well-being for a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff.

Mission

Pace University fosters an environment that promotes inclusion, equity, mental/emotional support, and healthy lifestyle choices in order to improve the overall quality of life. Advancing wellness is a priority for our diverse community.

Definitions

Wellness is a condition obtained when a person achieves a level of health that minimizes the chances of becoming ill (Oxford Reference, 2022) or an optimal state of wellbeing.

Alternatively, wellness may be viewed as the act of practicing healthy habits daily to attain better physical and mental health outcomes (EAB, March 1, 2022). Wellness encompasses at least eight dimensions: emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social, and spiritual (adapted from M. Swarbrick, 2006). These attributes form the basis for the Pace University Wellness Strategic Plan.

- **Emotional Wellness:** Coping effectively with life and creating satisfying relationships
- **Environmental Wellness:** Good health by occupying pleasant, stimulating environments that support well-being

- **Financial Wellness:** Satisfaction with current and future financial situations
- **Intellectual Wellness:** Recognizing creative abilities and finding ways to expand knowledge and skills
- **Occupational Wellness:** Personal satisfaction and enrichment derived from one's work
- **Physical Wellness:** Recognizing the need for physical activity, diet, sleep, and nutrition
- **Social Wellness:** Developing a sense of connection, belonging, and a well-developed support system
- **Spiritual Wellness:** Expanding our sense of purpose and meaning in life

Background

There is a growing body of evidence indicating the importance of wellness in relation to both positive and negative outcomes in work, school, and daily life effectiveness. A 2021 report of the United States Surgeon General indicated “alarming increases in the prevalence of certain mental health challenges – in 2019, one in three high school students and half of female students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, an overall increase of 40% from 2009” (p.3). This persists for students into higher education. According to Eisenberg and Lipton (2019 Healthy Minds Study), there is a 14% increase in anxiety among students over a six-year period; a 10% increase in the number of students reporting depression over the past decade; and an 8% increase in students currently taking some form of psychotropic medication since 2009. The Ohio State University Strategic Plan (2019) states that “employees and students who have higher levels of wellness: (a) are more engaged, productive, and satisfied, (b) perform at higher levels, including academics, (c) miss less work and school, and (d) are at a lower risk for the development of chronic disease, which accounts for more than 75% of U.S. healthcare spending” (p.2).

In 2020, President Krislov appointed a Mental Health and Well-being Task Force “to develop a set of recommendations for addressing the mental health and well-being needs of Pace’s student body.” The Task Force spoke to students and consulted with experts within and outside of Pace. The Task Force (July 2021) made two broad recommendations: 1) create a

comprehensive wellness hub/website and 2) appoint a Chief Wellness Officer. Five additional recommendations were made: robust education/training of all staff and faculty on mental health and well-being issues, resources, policies, and support/referral mechanisms; extensive (and well-publicized) health promotion and resources to support student development of healthy lifestyles; creation of a University-wide (ongoing) campaign on mental health and well-being with robust use of social media and many other forms of targeted communication; ensuring the Counseling Centers are appropriately resourced; and addressing the Mental Health and Well-being (MHWB) needs of underrepresented and vulnerable student populations as well as COVID-19 specific student needs.

On July 1, 2021, Dr. Harriet R. Feldman, Professor and Dean Emerita, was appointed to the role of Chief Wellness Officer. Goals (and status) for the inaugural year of 2021-2022 were as follows:

1. Gain an understanding of the wellness-related issues of students, faculty, and staff, and supports already in place at Pace (completed)
2. Establish a Wellness Advisory Committee (completed)
3. Develop programs for students and faculty to engage them in discussions about mental health and resilience (February program on resilience and Mental Health Month programs)
4. Commence with writing a Wellness Strategic Plan (first draft completed July 2022)
5. Begin work on a Wellness Website (in progress)

During the time that the Task Force met, COVID-19 began to loom across the United States and with it, a sense of isolation, distress, and worry across the entire Pace population. Based on this shift and growing concerns of faculty and staff about their own circumstances and our students, the President charged the CWO with addressing the wellness needs of the entire community, with emphasis on the student population.

To create the Wellness Strategic Plan, eight workgroups (one for each wellness attribute) were appointed consisting of at least two members each from the Wellness Advisory Committee.

Outreach to the wider Pace community yielded over 100 additional responses to volunteer for one or more workgroups. These eight workgroups developed goals along with action plans, and metrics/outcomes, timelines, needed resources and person/s responsible for each goal. Their work forms the basis for the 2022-2025 Wellness Strategic Plan.

Overarching Goals

1. Build an infrastructure that values life balance and advances the spiritual, social, emotional, financial, intellectual, occupational, environmental, and physical dimensions of wellness.
2. Establish a culture of wellness by connecting students, faculty and staff to resources and opportunities that prioritize wellbeing.
3. Increase awareness, access to, and participation in programs and other initiatives that support wellness journeys across the Pace community.

References

The Ohio State University Wellness Strategic Plan 2019-2024 (2019, September 3).

*[Oxford Reference](#). Retrieved June 1, 2022

**Swarbrick, M. (2006). A Wellness Approach (Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal, 29(40, 311-314

Year 1 Strategic Priorities

1. Develop an infrastructure for Office of Wellness – staffing (full-time CWO, full-time staff support, part-time webmaster), designated space, CWO oversight, effective summer 2023.
2. Adopt a University-wide wellness charter in fall 2022.
3. Conduct the follow-up Healthy Minds Study
4. Develop a Wellness Website that will be fully functional by December 2022.

5. Offer at least 8 University-wide programs throughout the academic year, addressing all domains of wellness.
6. Offer two grants to increase wellness programming.
7. Roll out ProtoCall in fall 2022 to support student mental health.
8. Hire spiritual support personnel to cover all campuses by December 2022.
9. Assess wellness/meditation room existence and usage on each campus with an eye toward optimizing usage by spring 2023.
10. Assess current nutrition quality across campuses, e.g., cafeterias, vending machines, kiosks.
11. Negotiate with Chartwells during 2022-23 to support a full-time registered dietitian.
12. Offer a Resilience Badge to members of the Pace community by spring 2023.

Year 2 Strategic Priorities

1. Leverage existing social media channels to engage members of the Pace community, e.g., tik tok, Insta, twitter (fully functional in December 2023).
2. Offer at least 10 University-wide programs throughout the academic year, addressing all domains of wellness.
3. Offer four grants to increase wellness programming.
4. Wellness Office established with full-time CWO and staffing during summer 2023
5. Hire a registered dietitian to provide nutrition education/programming and individual counseling to the Pace community by September 2023.
6. Develop an environmental improvement plan across campuses, including holistic wellness centers, equitable offerings for fitness activities, enhanced green spaces, expanded use of the Nature Center, and facilities modifications for suicide prevention.
7. Negotiate with Chartwells to improve the nutritional quality of foods offered across campuses and improve nutritional quality of snacks and beverages across campuses.

Year 3 Strategic Priorities

1. Offer at least 12 University-wide programs throughout the academic year, addressing all domains of wellness.
2. Hold the first annual wellness day for the entire University community.
3. Offer up to eight grants to increase wellness programming.
4. Evaluate outcomes of the Wellness Strategic Plan and develop a new plan, effective fall 2025.

List of Participants

Emotional

- Co-Chair Dr. Michele Zaccario – faculty
- Co-Chair Dr. Christopher Godfrey - faculty
- Manan N. Mehta - student
- Dylan Gomez – student
- Andrea Garcia – student
- Julie Werkheiser – Staff
- Dr. Charlotte Becket – faculty
- Elizabeth Luongo – staff
- JoAnna Verlezza – staff
- Dr. Cindy Paradiso – faculty
- Amy Olsen – staff
- Ingrid Morales – student
- Sayali Sunil Tandel – student
- Haleigh Catalano – student
- Alexis Oliasami - student

Environmental

- Co-Chair Dr. Richard Shadick – staff
- Co-Chair Juliette Verrengia – staff
- Steve Mezzio – staff
- Sarit Orlofsky – staff
- Jared Keyes – staff
- Jeremy Schulman, student
- Julia Corrado, student
- Dr. Anne Toomey – faculty
- Angelo Spillo, staff
- Sheryl Scalzo – faculty
- Mirka Doj-Fette - faculty

Financial

- Chair Dr. Katherine Richardson - faculty
- Jean Gallagher- staff
- Liz Hathaway - staff
- Denise Santiago - staff
- Darrell Lee - staff
- Gary Laermer -staff

Intellectual

- Chair Amanda Ghysel - staff
- Former Chair Dr. Marcy Kelly - faculty
- Jasmine Campos - staff
- Anna Corinne Saggese - student
- Madia Bestman - staff

- Patricia Myers - staff
- Dr. Linda S. Carozza - faculty
- Kripa Ann Mathew - student
- Elizabeth Ann Berro - faculty
- Dr. Geraldine Colombraro - staff

Occupational

- Co-Chair Mariesa Cruz-Tillery - staff
- Co-Chair Mohini Gobin - staff
- Co-Chair Wendy Metzger – staff
- Eli Ratner - staff
- Nilam Kotadia-Vaidya - staff
- Dr, Daniel Strahs – faculty
- Brooke Kemnitz (student) – member

Physical

- Co-chair Dr. Sue Maxam - staff
- Co-chair Jessica Tosto - faculty
- Ron Isaac – staff
- Angelo Spillo – staff
- Kendra Free – staff
- Jonah Safris – staff

Spiritual

- Co-Chair Todd Smith-Bergollo - staff
- Co-Chair Shannon Haick - staff
- Lisa Kraft - staff
- Medaline Philbert - staff

- Novlette Gooden-Castillo - staff
- Laura Hernandez - staff

Social

- Co-Chair Dr. Sue Maxam – staff
- Co-Chair Natalie Panzera – staff
- Jennifer Tokash – faculty
- Philip Lupov – staff
- Sherylyne Toque - staff
- Meagan Mullen – staff
- Austin Parris-Powlette – student