

Fostering a Healthy Campus

Projects and ideas towards realizing the goal of a healthy campus

In June, the Campus Well-being Steering Group organized the *Be Well Summit on Campus Well-being* to provide an update about the *Be Well* initiative consultations that the group had completed between 2022-23, ongoing well-being initiatives at various academic and administrative units, and to share ideas for future initiatives compiled from various campus consultations, the workplace well-being strategy, the Third Century Promise, and the National Standards for Well-being¹.

During the Summit, attendees from various employee and student groups were asked to help prioritize ideas and potential projects towards implementation within academic and administrative units and, in general, across Dalhousie. This document is a compilation of the top 10 ideas that were prioritized by the attendees, which are categorized into the following high-level themes/categories (the idea number is written within parentheses):

1. Working well: The employee experience (#1, #2, #3)
2. Promoting well-being (#4, #5, #6)
3. Being well in our spaces (#7)
4. Being well as we teach and learn (#8)
5. Being well financially (#9)
6. Accountability for well-being (#10)

Each of these ideas are described in the sections that follow.

¹ The two standards that are being referred to here are: (1) National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace (2014), and (2) National Standard for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students (2019).

Working well: The employee experience

1. Assess employee roles and identify those that can have a traumatizing effect on employees and offer appropriate supports.

Assess which roles can impact those doing the work, including those working on EDIA, mental health, trauma response, and sensitive subject matter, and institute support mechanisms.

2. Audit employee roles and mitigate employee burnout.

Consult internally on measuring and addressing the impact, and potential for burnout, of taking on the responsibilities of other roles when job vacancies occur.

3. Review attributes contributing to overall employee experience with a well-being lens.

Ensure a review of employee engagement and satisfaction feedback across all areas of the university.

Promoting Well-being

4. Develop and promote educational opportunities on mental health and well-being.

Develop a mental health and well-being literacy program for faculty, staff and students using the expertise of the Dalhousie community and external resources to equip members of our community with skills needed to live well, to improve health, and to create a caring environment.

The program will go beyond the provision of services, will be inclusive of a shared responsibility for community well-being, will include a health promotion frame, and could involve a credit-based curriculum.

5. Develop a collection of actionable well-being projects that academic and administrative units can draw from.

Promote a list of suggested activities that areas on campus can easily adopt to promote their own health and well-being.

6. Create a central repository of resources, information about activities, and collaboration opportunities.

Develop an inclusive digital and communication strategy for all members of the Dalhousie community, including a central online space for information and links to resources, including opportunities to volunteer and collaborate, both on and off campus. This site can help onboard new community members and promote help-seeking behaviour.

Being well in our spaces

7. Promote development and renewal of spaces with a well-being perspective.

Develop a plan to review the design and development of physical and social campus spaces as they relate to health and well-being with particular attention to EDIA to ensure that all members of the Dalhousie community can benefit from a healthy, supportive and equitable campus environment. The plan would be inclusive of new design/builds as well as refurbishment and could include WELL Certification.

Being well as we teach and learn

8. Promote healthy curriculum development, teaching, and learning practices.

Incorporate universal design principles into teaching to promote inclusion as the expectation and ensure principles are implemented across Dalhousie. The plan could include curriculum/teaching committees in each faculty to support local implementation efforts and to consider the relationship between student experience (optimal and adverse) and course curriculum and design.

Financial Well-being

9. Facilitate the financial well-being of the Dal community.

Identify and implement financial support tactics for students and employees related to wage rates for student jobs, food security and other well-being bursary supports.

Accountability for well-being

10. Develop ways for the Campus Well-being initiatives to be accountable to the community.

Establish a structure for accountability for Campus Health and Well-being that will be embedded within appropriate governance and planning structures at Dalhousie.

Appendix A: Specific Details for each Idea Theme

Note: *These were some ideas and strategies that were identified through campus consultations, and which were prioritized by members of the Dalhousie community during the Be Well Summit in June. These ideas and strategies are shared here as ways to begin or continue the work towards fostering a healthy campus and are not an exhaustive list of ideas. As we work toward implementing actions and ideas identified in this section, initiative leads across campus will work through appropriate governance and approval processes that apply to each priority, based on their area of jurisdiction. All initiatives are subject to the usual university consultation and approval processes.*

Working well: The employee experience	
<i>Idea</i>	<i>Details</i>
1. Assess employee roles and identify those that can have a traumatizing effect on employees and offer appropriate supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Promote EDIA efforts by reviewing policies, supporting resources for trauma, and identifying how specific work duties can adversely impact those doing the work. b. Institute debriefing sessions and supports for individuals working on EDI, mental health, sensitive subject matter; ensure specific training related to mental health is in place for faculty members supervising graduate students.
2. Audit employee roles and mitigate employee burnout.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Consistent auditing of staff and faculty positions that are vacant, where those responsibilities have been re-directed to address issues of staff/faculty burn out.
3. Review attributes contributing to overall employee experience with a well-being lens.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review HR policies and practices with a well-being lens. b. Identify pathways to action results and feedback from mechanisms such as the Your Voice Survey to mitigate any harmful impacts on employee well-being.

Promoting Well-being

<i>Idea</i>	<i>Details</i>
<p>4. Develop and promote educational opportunities on mental health and well-being.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop a mental health literacy strategy; connect with strong partnerships within and external to the university community emphasizing that the approach to enhancing mental health is about more than providing services, it is about equipping our community with the skills they need to live well and improve their health by creating environments that support them. b. Create a mandatory first year course embedded in the curriculum focused on well-being and inclusion; start with first year students but also consider and support needs of other cohorts of students. c. Offer more mental health first aid training or other similar programming (e.g., MH 101, Mental Health in the Workplace) to faculty and staff; develop individual programs/workshops on HWB related topics; certification re: resilience and participation in health promotion activity. d. Ensure that staff know they have a duty to respond when staff identify mental health concerns and train with options.
<p>5. Develop a collection of actionable well-being projects that academic and administrative units can draw from.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Promote a list of suggested activities that areas on campus can easily adopt to promote their own health and well-being.
<p>6. Create a central repository of resources, information about activities, and collaboration opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop an inclusive digital and communication strategy that offers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Consideration for students, faculty, staff, and research staff audiences. This includes a central repository with clear and concise information on how to access health and wellbeing resources. ii. A coordinated approach to navigate “systems” including: faculty, student, student, student affairs, and support staff (including: administration and infrastructure support i.e. plumbing, electrical, etc.); iii. Consideration for multi-lingual and multi-cultural populations iv. Promotion of key resources and supports during critical times of the year (e.g., midterms, finals) b. Establish a Health and Well-being onboarding system, to improve awareness of individual supports and services and opportunities to develop formal/informal networks and support systems for connection; this should be ongoing, layered learning, encouraging help-seeking behaviours and connection.

- c. Better promote what resources are available
- d. Encourage help-seeking behaviours in community members; develop campaigns targeted to promote help seeking in our diverse campus population, especially populations that may not seek help due to historic marginalization; Further development of EFAP service outcomes.
- e. Engage with community partners.
- f. Develop creative, collaborative on and off-campus volunteer opportunities to contribute, get to know each other, build community.
- g. Peer-mentorship program for student with mental health and accessibility issues. (e.g., pairing a senior student with a junior student.)
- h. Be careful when encouraging people to participate in some wellness activities as strategies may not work for everyone (i.e., marginalized groups)
- i. Develop and promote clear protocols for responding to those needing support both during business hours and 'after hours'/emergency situations; Create a postvention protocol to deal with the aftermath of student death, suicide, or other campus disaster; crisis response protocol.
- j. Focus on how the university positions well-being in alignment with teaching and learning priorities of the university in the strategic plan and how we measure success. This may include, for example, inclusion of information and resources in syllabi and common methods of linking to online information about health and well-being resources from faculty/departmental websites; inclusion of health and well-being information in viewbooks and recruitment materials.
- k. Advisors assigned to each student (e.g., as in UNB) so that delays are avoided, especially when a student is in an academic crisis.

<i>Being well in our spaces</i>	
<i>Idea</i>	<i>Details</i>
7. Promote development and renewal of spaces with a well-being perspective.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop a plan to review the design and development of physical and social campus spaces as they relate to health and well-being. Pay particular attention to EDI to ensure that all campus constituents can benefit from a healthy, supportive and equitable campus environment. b. Consider health and well-being in all aspects of building design and/or refurbishment. Explore the implementation of WELL Certification in appropriate campus buildings (49).

Being well as we teach and learn

<i>Idea</i>	<i>Details</i>
<p>8. Promote healthy curriculum development, teaching, and learning practices.</p>	<p>a. Incorporate universal design principles into teaching spaces and encourage/ensure principles are implemented across campus. In particular, Universal Instructional Design should be an expectation within all areas of teaching and learning to foster inclusion. Curriculum and teaching committees should be established in each faculty to initiate discussions about the relationship between student stress and course curriculum and design.</p>

Financial Well-being

<i>Idea</i>	<i>Details</i>
<p>9. Facilitate the financial well-being of the Dal community.</p>	<p>a. Ensure that higher than minimum wage is provided for all on-campus jobs. Provide support for food banks and food programs (projectDal, Monday Night Meals, Loaded Ladle, DSU Market); have food vouchers available at Student Health and Wellness and/or other strategic areas where students seek support. Bursary Support; well-being bursary programs for faculty and staff in need of access to Dalplex facilities.</p> <p>b. Ensure that collective bargaining and negotiations are pursued with employee well-being in mind, being mindful of both how negotiations and final decisions impact employees' overall well-being.</p>

Accountability for well-being

<i>Idea</i>	<i>Details</i>
<p>10. Develop ways for the Campus Well-being initiatives to be accountable to the community that will be embedded within appropriate governance and planning structures at Dalhousie.</p>	<p>a. Establish a central organization (CO) team to establish the mechanisms to change the culture of health and well-being on campus; identify 'who' is leading us to address health issues on campus to support student and employee success; the CO functions to guide vision and strategy related to health and well-being, support aligned activities, established shared measurement practices, cultivate community organization and engagement, advance policies and mobilize resources (28) (e.g. an office of Campus Health and Well-Being and adequate resources). This may include the creation of a Well-Being Advisory Board with champions identified to implement plans and report on metrics by faculties and departments.</p>