A. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Wellness and Life Skills Development at the University of Washington

For information only.

BACKGROUND

Nationally, colleges and universities are going beyond simply providing treatment services for students with identified mental health concerns, expanding efforts to prevent mental health problems from arising and promote the mental health of all students. In other words, they are adopting a public health approach to address the social and environmental risk factors that influence student mental health (Davidson & Locke, 2010; SPRC, 2004). CampusMHAP (Mental Health Action Planning) recommends that prevention strategies include a continuum of programs that address multiple levels of the social ecological model (Jed Foundation & Education Development Center, 2011).

The Jed Foundation and the Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) have formulated a comprehensive approach to college mental health promotion and suicide prevention based on the current literature about decreasing risk factors and increasing protective factors about college students (Jed Foundation & SPRC, 2009).

- Promote Social Networks
- Develop Life Skills
- Identify Students at Risk
- Increase Help Seeking Behavior
- Provide Mental Health Services
- Follow Crisis Management Procedures
- Restrict Access to Potentially Lethal Means

There is a broad range of programs and activities on each of the three campuses particularly designed to promote social networks and life skill development.

UW BOTHELL

The HEROs (Health Educators Reaching Out), a program designed to deliver health and wellness programming to students on campus and in residence halls, plan events, facilitate workshops, create various resources, campaigns and outreach opportunities for students to improve their health and well-being.

2014/15 initiatives include:
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De-stress with Art and Music Workshop held during Welcome Week to help new students ease into the college lifestyle with stress reduction techniques in their back pocket
Social Media and Sleep- Poster campaign to raise awareness of the usage of social media and how it affects sleep
Body Acceptance Art Gala to build mindfulness about healthy eating, to empower students to love and respect their bodies, and to learn about the stress that many students experience around body image perceptions
Drag Brunch to address LGBT mental and sexual health concerns and to build visible support for LGBT-identified students
Affirmation cookies to hand out positive messages and resources to students so that they have the tools to handle stress before it starts
Find a New Hobby Event gives students an opportunity to find a new hobby in order to find new ways of relaxing, de-stressing, and coping with exhaustive schedules.
Domestic Violence Awareness Month to raise awareness about partner violence and provide information about campus resources that are available to support students experiencing interpersonal violence
Finals Stretch Week provides study survival packs, massage therapy, painting… activities that the HEROs host during finals week to help students get through the stress of exams and papers.
Sleep Info Graphic - poster campaign with healthy sleep tips

UW TACOMA

Health, Wellness, Education & Promotion (HWEP) is housed in the Office of Student Success (OSS), and operates out of the Division of Student & Enrollment Services (SAES). HWEP supports the overall health, safety, and well-being of the campus community with specific emphasis on outreach education and prevention programming, and provides tools to assist students in the development of lifelong healthy behaviors.

HWEP has sponsored or co-sponsored wellness programming on campus on a variety of topics including but not limited to smoking cessation, breast cancer awareness, depression screening, sexual assault prevention, etc. HWEP also participates in events coordinated by other departments/units aimed at promoting health and wellness on our campus.

HWEP Highlights
• Peer Counseling for Resident Assistants;
• Culture Shock and Adjustment for International Students;
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- UWT Student Involvement Fairs;
- SAB Domestic Violence Awareness;
- Health Fairs;
- Breast Cancer Awareness;
- UWT Resource Fair;
- Great American Smoke-Out;
- World AIDS Day;
- Stress Management for Student Success Mentors;
- Kick Butts Day;
- Screening of Addictions Inc.;
- Co-sponsored speaker Dr. Barry Kerzin (physician to Dalai Lama);
- ‘Beating’ Stress Drum Circle;
- Weekly Yoga Class;
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Class;
- Created YouTube channel to post video content.

UW SEATTLE

Peer Health Educators (PHEs) in Health & Wellness is a group of undergraduate and graduate students who facilitate presentations about health issues to groups all over campus, as well as host health related events and advocate for student health in the community.

Huskies for Suicide Prevention and Awareness, an undergraduate Registered Student Organization, sponsors a variety of events throughout the academic year to promote awareness of suicide and mental health concerns among students and to provide support for survivors of suicide.

The Mindfulness Project is a new student-led initiative that is gaining some traction on the Seattle Campus. The UW Mindfulness Project's (UWMP) goal is to create a space on campus where the UW community can actively maintain their mental and emotional wellbeing by engaging in self-reflection and mindfulness-based practices. Mindfulness simply refers to the act of "paying attention, in the present moment, without judgment." Last year UWMP gathered 176 signatures from presidents and leaders of other RSOs across campus who supported this initiative. They have also networked extensively with staff and faculty on campus who are supportive of their goals. Currently UWMP is offering free yoga and meditation classes as well as mindfulness topic seminars on campus Sunday through Thursday evenings at 6-9pm. Their hope is to establish a more permanent space on campus to provide services to a larger percentage of UW students. They are also interested in transitioning from being a student-run organization to an
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entity of UW Student Life so as to ensure sustainability of the program. They have created a website that explains more about the project, including their vision: www.uwmindfulnessproject.com.

The Daily also wrote two articles about UWMP which can be found here:

UW Mindfulness Project encourages students to 'connect and reflect'
Mindfulness Mission

Attachment
Student presenter’s biographical information
Alysha Greig is a native of the Seattle area. She is a sixth year undergraduate philosophy major and Mary Gates Leadership Scholar at the University of Washington.

Alysha founded the UW Mindfulness Project (UWMP) in Fall of 2013 and currently serves as the director of this student-run organization. Before working on UWMP, Alysha also founded and served as president of the yoga club on campus (Yogis at UW, YUW) from 2011-14 which provided free yoga to over 300 members of the club. She also was the co-founder and vice-president of Huskies for Suicide Prevention and Awareness (HSPA) from 2011-13 which raised $20,000 for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and Awareness.

Through Alysha's work with these student organizations on campus, she noticed the high demand for self-care and self-reflective practices on campus, this lead to her work with UWMP which strives to create a space on campus for mindfulness-based practices. Alysha took time off from school as a sophomore after experiencing severe depression and feeling lost on such a big college campus. During this time she also got certified to teach yoga and has been doing so for three and a half years. She believes that studying oneself in college is just as important as studying anything else.