



Strategic Leadership for Student Success

*Aligning Auxiliary Services to Foster
Well-being and Drive Institutional Outcomes*

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This afternoon's discussion

- Why everyone across the university should be focusing on **student success**, and why caring about **student well-being** matters
- Butler University's approach to advancing student success through attention to **holistic well-being**, and key considerations for this at your institution/ organization
- How auxiliary services leaders can play a role in improving student outcomes by **assessing the climate for well-being** – with an easy solution for how to do this. **Data to tell YOUR story!**

An aerial photograph of a university campus, likely Butler University, with a blue color overlay. The image shows various buildings, a large circular area in the center, and a dense forest in the background. The text is overlaid on the image.

**What are the biggest
challenges to student
success?**

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OVERVIEW

Established in 2017, NACAS Research strives to demonstrate the value of the auxiliary services industry within the greater higher education landscape. Our annual student success study attempts to define the term success from the perspectives of students directly and explore the impact of auxiliaries on their experiences. This 2022 report captures data from the past three years during the greatest disruption to face higher education. Colleges and universities everywhere have experienced major shifts in operations as they've responded to the aftermath of a global pandemic, which has caused almost every student to have a nontraditional campus experience.

As seen in our data, students are more likely to define their success by academic achievements when learning remotely without the opportunity to fully experience the services that auxiliaries have to offer. When they are on campus, however, students are more likely to define their success through happiness and fulfillment. To address the current enrollment and retention crisis in higher education, we believe auxiliary service professionals need to stay committed to enriching the campus experience and help students succeed in the ways they define it for themselves.

SUCCESS DEFINITION
How do students define success?

In 2021, "Happiness & Fulfillment" became most important to students, reflecting an evolution in priorities. In 2020, students were more likely to feel that grades defined their success.

+13%	-7%	+3%
Happiness & Fulfillment	Academic Achievement & GPA	Balance & Stability

Percentage of change between 2021 and 2020

NON-ACADEMIC IMPORTANCE
How important is the non-academic portion of your college university experience to achieving success?

In 2021, 55% of students felt that the non-academic portion of their college experience is very important or extremely important to achieving success. This is compared to 58% of students in 2020.

66%	58%	55%
2019	2020	2021



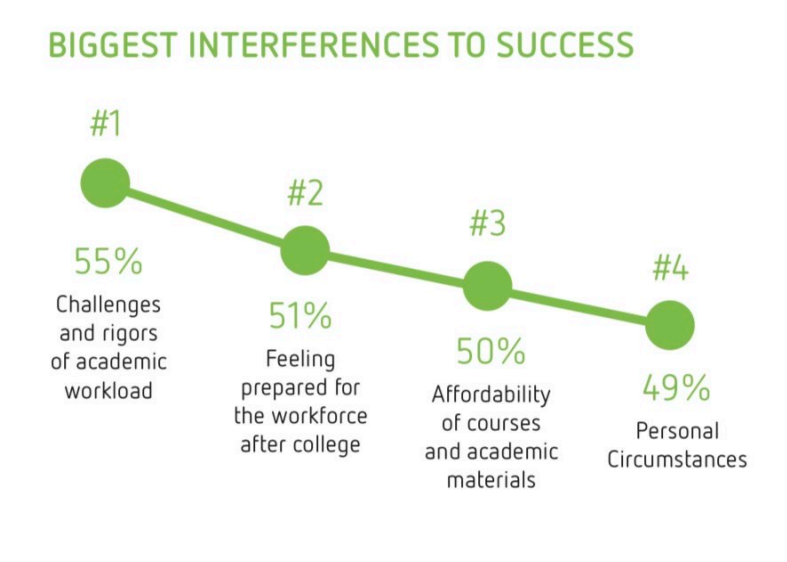
CRITICAL TO ACHIEVING SUCCESS

Over the years, non-academic personnel was consistently ranked by students as the fourth most critical factor in achieving success. The pandemic disruptions have accelerated wellness services as more critical in 2021.

AUX. SERVICES DROPPED 4 PLACES TO #8

#1 Owl icon	Academic Personnel	#2 People icon	Peer to Peer Mentoring
#3 People icon	Student Community	#4 Brain icon	Physical/Mental Health Services

REPORT RELEASED IN 2022

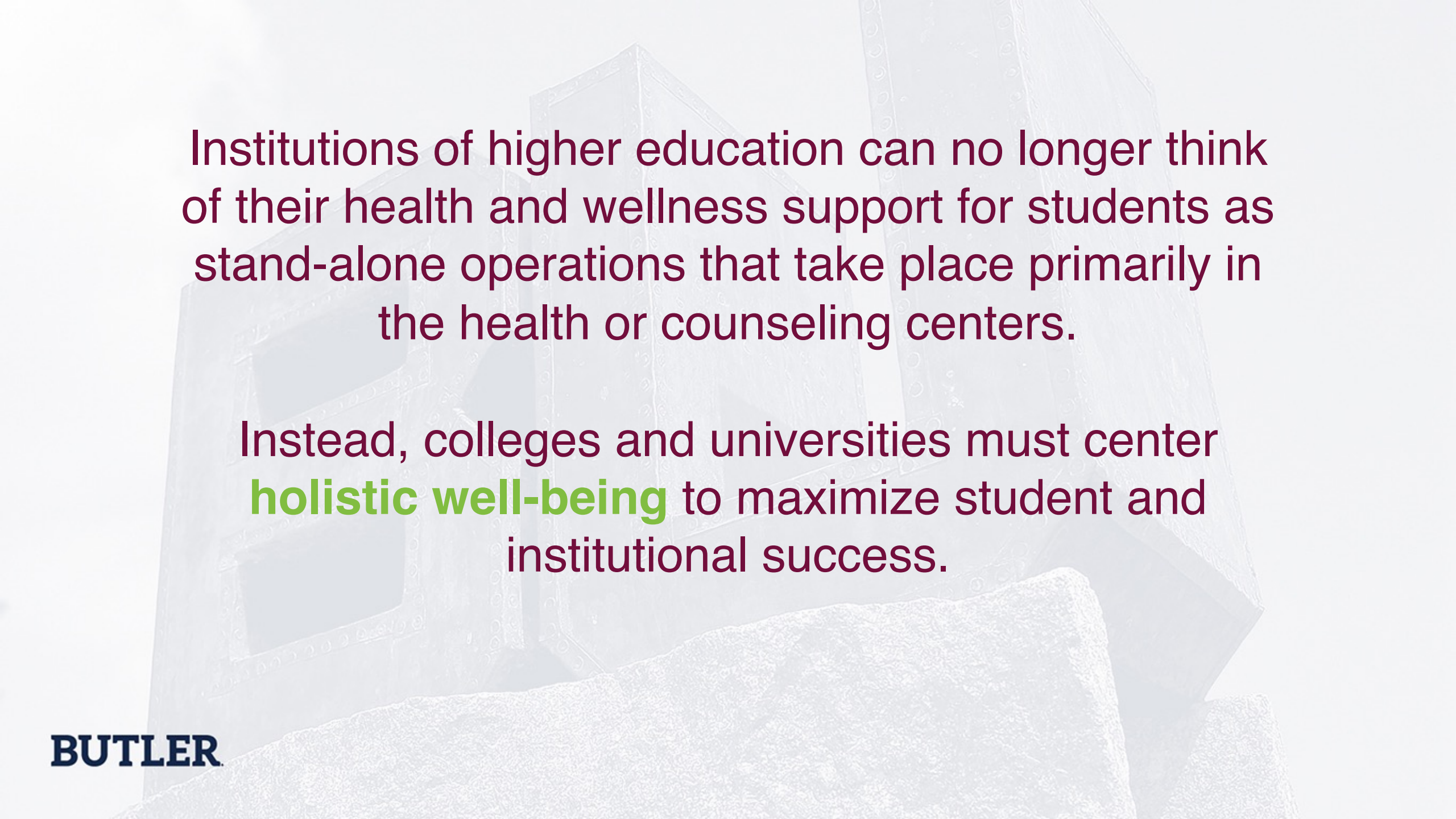


“To address the current enrollment and retention crisis in higher education, we believe auxiliary service professionals need to stay committed to enriching the campus experience and help students succeed in the ways they define it for themselves.” - NACAS, 2022

The Case for Centering Student Well-being to Improve Student Success



*WHY institutional leaders should care about taking a multifaceted, holistic approach to student well-being to improve **student success** outcomes*



Institutions of higher education can no longer think of their health and wellness support for students as stand-alone operations that take place primarily in the health or counseling centers.

Instead, colleges and universities must center **holistic well-being** to maximize student and institutional success.

Well-being and Student Success Outcomes

- Students who **sleep** more (Kelly, Kelley, & Clanton, 2001) and who **eat more nutritiously** (Burrows, Whatnall, Patterson, & Hutchesson, 2017) are more likely to have higher GPAs
- Strong **social well-being** can help college students effectively manage their stress (Altaher & Runnerstrom, 2018)
- **Interacting with difference** helps to promote student learning and development (Fosnacht, Gonyea, & Graham, 2020)
- Sense of **belonging** is a critical factor in determining retention and is directly influenced by a university's ability to create a welcoming, caring, and supportive environment (O'Keeffe, 2013)
- Undergraduates who learn how to use **mindfulness-based strengths** practices are retained at higher rates; and report higher levels of well-being, engagement, sense of meaning, and health (Wingert, Jones, Swoap, & Wingert, 2020)

Well-being and Student Success Outcomes

- First-year students who participated in a psychosocial **wellness seminar** reported better adjustment to college and less overall psychological distress (Conley, Travers, & Bryant, 2013)
- The **first year** of college represents an especially critical time for the development of positive practices that bolster well-being (Wyatt, Oswald, & Ochoa, 2017)
- Active, collaborative, and enriching educational experiences lead to better student **motivation and engagement**, which lead to increased retention and better mental health outcomes (Zepke & Leach, 2010)
- Developing **positive financial behaviors** in college increases students' chances of a better quality of life post-college (Worthy et al., 2010)

The Case for Centering Student Well-being

Well-being is at the center of student and institutional success!



- Sleep
- Nutritious food
- Mindfulness
- Social well-being
- Interaction with difference
- Sense of belonging



- GPAs
- Retention
- Engagement
- Stress management
- Health
- Sense of meaning
- Emotional well-being
- Satisfaction

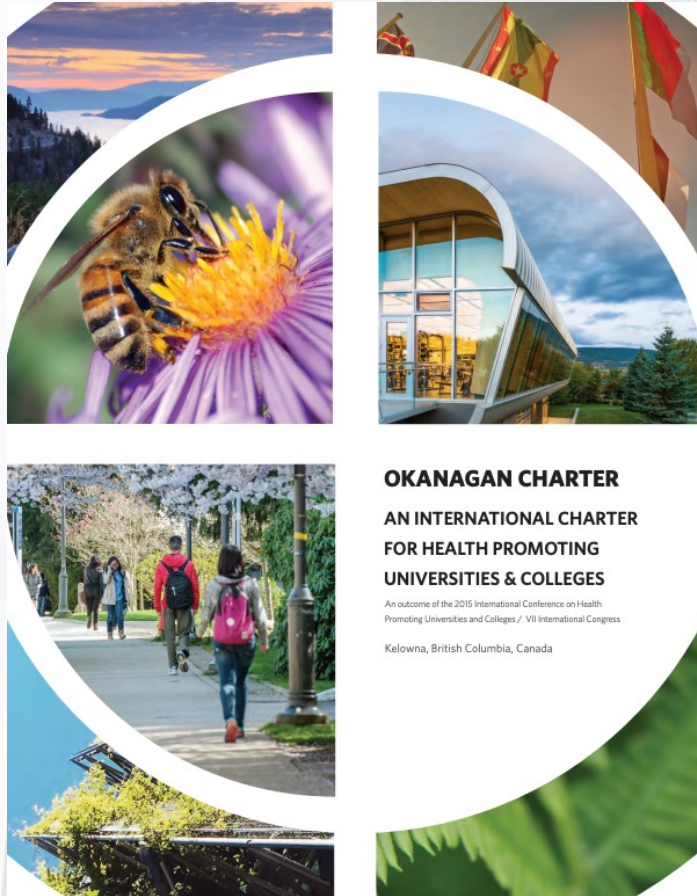
Changing the Narrative: Student Well-being as an Institutional Priority



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Okanagan Charter

An International Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges



- Called on higher education to embed health into all aspects of campus culture and to lead health promotion action and collaboration locally and globally.
- Provided institutions with a common language, principles, and framework to become health and wellbeing promoting campuses.

Engaging Leading Higher Ed Associations



- NASPA, NIRSA, ACHA, campus leaders
- **“This was the very first inter-association dialogue about emerging issues and opportunities to improve the wellbeing of students across the country, North America and around the world.”**
- Dialogue and sharing of best/ promising practices in well-being.
- Documented preliminary strategies and principles.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Commitment to Student Success

MARCH 2018



“We commit to innovating, supporting, and fostering a **holistic, integrated, and strategic** approach to well-being from the association level to the institutional level.”


(Health and Well-being in Higher Education: A Commitment to Student Success (NASPA & NIRSA, March 2018))

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“We define **well-being** as an optimal and dynamic state that allows people to achieve their full potential.”



Inter-association Definition of Well-being

November 2020

Sponsored by NIRSA, NASPA, and ACHA, with support from *Health and Well-being in Higher Education: A Commitment to Student Success* signatory organizations

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NIRSA - Leaders in Collegiate Recreation, NASPA - Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education & ACHA - American College Health Association (November 2020). *Inter-association definition of well-being*. Retrieved from www.nirsa.org/hands-in

Inter-association Definition of Well-being

Well-being is an optimal and dynamic state that allows people to achieve their full potential.

Our focus is on two interdependent types of well-being: 1) individual and 2) community.

Individual well-being is defined within three broad and interrelated categories: (a) the perceived assessment of one's own life as being generally happy and satisfying, (b) having one's human rights and needs met, and (c) one's contribution to the community.

Community well-being is defined by relationships and connectedness, perceived quality of life for *all people* in the community, and how well the community meets the needs of *all members*. By focusing on the whole — the whole person, the whole educational experience, the whole institution, the whole community — well-being becomes a multifaceted goal and a shared responsibility for the entire institution.

Student Well-being at Butler University



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BEST COLLEGES

& WORLD REPORT
U.S. News

REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES
MIDWEST
2024

🏆 #1 in Regional Universities Midwest

🏆 #1 in Most Innovative Schools



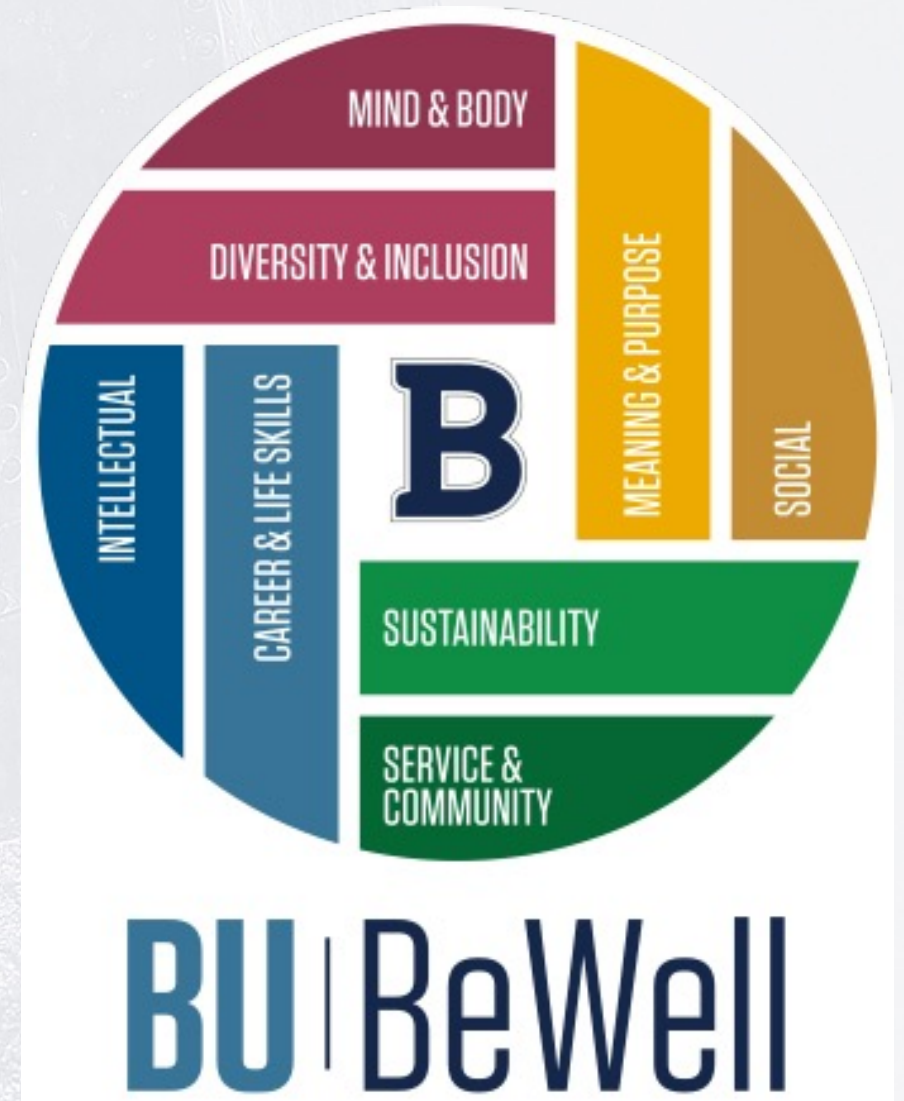


Butler's Framework for Well-being

Through **BUBeWell**, we foster a positive environment that helps students grow, learn, and be the best version of themselves.



Learn more



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Assessing Student Well-being

- Extremely positive reaction to BU|BeWell, but how to best measure **impact**?
- Data on multiple facets of student well-being are needed to support informed decision-making across the institution—programs, additional services, resource allocation, etc.
- Approaching student well-being as an holistic, campus-wide effort is crucial, as is a method of measuring how well students think their institution is doing that work.

Assessing Student Well-being

All happening at a time when students were struggling with **mental health challenges, financial insecurity, social issues, political stress, homelessness and hunger** – all of which impact students' well-being and opportunity to succeed.



Despite the clear benefits of having a student body with high levels of well-being, there was currently **no survey tool available** that measured how well students think their institution is supporting their well-being.

Our Solution...



Through the *Student Well-being Institutional Support Survey* (**SWISS**), we can assess how well an institution **supports** its students' holistic well-being and identify **opportunities** to improve support.

30
institutions

30,000+
student responses



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- Butler University
- Oakland University
- Viterbo University
- University of South Carolina Beaufort
- University of South Carolina Aiken
- Binghamton University
- George Washington University
- Goucher College
- University of Minnesota Duluth
- University of Minnesota Twin Cities
- University of Minnesota Crookston
- Carl Sandburg College
- SUNY Cortland
- Creighton University

- University of Minnesota Rochester
- University of Minnesota Morris
- Louisiana State University
- University of South Alabama
- Sacramento State University
- University of Central Florida
- University of Illinois Chicago
- University of West Georgia
- UNC Charlotte
- DePauw University
- St. Mary of the Woods College
- Rose Hulman Institute of Technology
- Thomas More University
- Woodbury University
- York College of PA

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SWISS Measures

Residential
support

Engaging
in
campus

Campus
resources

Meaning
&
purpose

Diversity,
equity &
inclusion

Academic
support

Navigating
campus

Demos

SWISS Results – National Landscape

Areas of Strength

Well-being in housing

(safety, sleep, studying, pursuing non-academic interests, relax)

Physical environments

(places to exercise, connect, relax, feel welcome, be outdoors)

Institutional emphasis on DEI

Instructors (challenge thinking; explore new ideas)

Academic support outside courses

(advising, prereqs, leaning outside the classroom, study skills)

Engagement on campus

(meet other students, activities, artistic performances/exhibitions)

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SWISS Results - National Landscape

Areas of Opportunity

Basic needs: 25 – 30% sometimes/never

Social connection in housing

Financial literacy

Opportunities to learn about self

(empathy, mindfulness, identities, resilience, self-compassion)

Affordable housing

Faculty interaction (goals & individual needs)



National Landscape

Areas of Opportunity

69% report academic concerns as a stressor in their lives, **51%** report mental health as a stressor, and **46%** report financial concerns as a stressor

Students are **least likely** to say they know where to go on campus for help if they're feeling **isolated socially** or if they are interested in **better nutrition**



National Landscape

Lack of information on resources

Counseling services **19%**

Opportunities for religious or spiritual engagement **22%**

Tutoring availability **12%**

Financial literacy **18%**

Given these areas of opportunity identified by students, what **specific actions** can auxiliary services leaders take to make a **positive impact** on student well-being?



Data to Action from SWISS Partner Institutions



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Small liberal arts college in the Midwest

- SWISS 2020 administration results showed low social connection in place of residence (69% felt supported)
- Took action, including:
 - Engaged Residence Life staff
 - Established new programming model in residence halls
 - Increased outreach to sophomore students
 - Overhauled RA training and expectations
 - Refocused Faculty-in-Residence program
- **Result: 69% ('20) to 83% ('22)**

Small liberal arts college in the Midwest

	2020	2022
Nutritious food	49% strongly agree/agree	54% strongly agree/agree
Meet your dietary needs (gluten-free, kosher, vegan, etc.)	61% strongly agree/agree	69% strongly agree/agree

Small liberal arts college in the Midwest

“SWISS was an incredibly useful tool for our campus. It provided us real data from our students on how we were doing, and where we needed to improve.

SWISS also helped us discover that we had a significant number of students suffering from **food insecurity**. We used these data to develop a campus food pantry, which has been incredibly beneficial to our students and their success.”

Small liberal arts college in the Midwest

- University established food pantry.
- Campus dining provider partners with food pantry to host cooking classes for students.
- Partners with campus farm to provide produce.
- Meal swipe donation program established.

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NEW APPROACHES TO OLD PROBLEMS: INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES TO FIGHT CAMPUS FOOD INSECURITY

by [Elise Kulers](#) | March 14, 2024

X Post

Like



Large, urban public research university in the South

- Had no well-being initiative or plans/priorities when SWISS administered.
- Recent turnover in Student Affairs division leadership.
- SWISS results are helping them to create a **well-being strategic plan**, determine outreach/programming priorities, and allocate resources to areas of opportunity as highlighted by SWISS - particularly **financial well-being** education.

Large, urban public research university in the South

“SWISS was very comprehensive and it helped us find themes that overlap. For example, how financial well-being impacted other answers. Moreover, SWISS allowed us to look at what well-being priorities our Division has put in place and match them with needs the students provided in their responses.”

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Large comprehensive university system in the Midwest

- Administered SWISS at all 5 campuses to compare experiences site to site
- Analyzed data using Tableau and added SWISS visualizations to **system-wide data dashboard** for all faculty and staff to access and use
- **Areas of action: affordable housing, affordable dining, nutritious dining - broken out by student characteristics to better address needs of specific populations**
- Areas of action: student stressors, particularly academic concerns and mental health concerns--broken out by student characteristics as well.

Large comprehensive university system in the Midwest

*“The wider array of questions that have implications and impact across many areas of campuses was among the most beneficial aspects of the Student Well-being Institutional Support Survey. The questions and responses will be of interest to many areas of campus – both in finding positive institutional support and areas where the campus could develop strategies for improving institutional support. **In particular, the race/ethnicity report was very useful** as our campuses have a high level of interest in comparing experiences between students with different backgrounds.”*

Comprehensive public research university in the South

- SWISS showed a much higher than expected percentage of students who were experiencing food insecurity.
- Campus partners gathered to formulate interventions.
- The university is opening a food pantry for students to help address the need, and will continue to study the problem.

Comprehensive public research university in the South

“Specifically, SWISS was eye opening to learn that a significant number of our students have food insecurities. We are working with other departments to shine a light on this problem and seek solutions. SWISS survey highlighted areas that we are currently impacting our students in a positive way. Learning where we are succeeding is often just as important as where we need to improve.”

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A close-up, blue-tinted image of a stone face sculpture, likely a classical or religious figure, with the text "What is new with SWISS?" overlaid in a bright green, bold, sans-serif font. The sculpture's features, including the eyes, nose, and mouth, are clearly visible against the blue background.

What is new with SWISS?

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What is new with SWISS?

Partnership with NSSE

- Mental health and well-being topical module

Facility-specific question set

- Climate in CR facilities
- Reasons students don't go to CR facilities
- Impact of CR on sense of belonging

What is new with SWISS?

Population-specific analysis

- First-generation students
- Affiliated students

Well-being and **belonging** question set

- How does institutional support for various dimensions of well-being influence student sense of belonging?



In Conclusion

- Focus on holistic well-being is good for **students**; good for the **institution**.
- Involve key stakeholders campus-wide—often from siloed areas. **Auxiliary services professionals are CRITICAL to the conversation.**
- Helps you identify where students feel supported, and areas of opportunity.
- Results help you find out what's going on with **different student populations** on your campus.
- Use your data to take action, support your ideas, **tell your story.**
- Remember the important role auxiliary services play in this work – especially in helping students **build community.**



Students continue to rank “**student community**” within the top 3 factors that area most critical to their success.

We know from the research that **social well-being** is key for student success.

As you plan for the next year, what can YOUR area do to provide opportunities for **community building and connection with students?**

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Questions



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