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Table Discussion Final Summary - Balancing Wellness with Productivity

Portland State University

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2016 Winter Symposium
Table Discussions/ Input on Wellness

Scope of the Discussion:
With the exception of some discussion about wellness in the curriculum, the topics that emerged from this set of table notes do not fall within the purview of the Faculty Senate. For example, there are ideas related to (1) resources to support student retention and success, which intersect with initiatives in the Strategic Plan, and also (2) issues of faculty work/life balance.

Faculty Senate Action:
The Faculty Senate Steering Committee will forward these summaries and notes to (1) the Provost, to share with those who are addressing relevant initiatives of the Strategic Plan, (2) the Standing Committee on Work/Life Balance, to inform their work, and (3) the Office of the Dean of Student Life, to consider the comments on/suggestions for communicating information about resources on campus.

Intersections with the Strategic Plan:
Many of the themes and suggestions that emerged from the discussion are related to student retention, completion and success, in that student physical and financial wellness are necessary conditions for academic progress and achievement. There are numerous examples of direct intersection with Goal 1, Elevate student success, initiatives 1.4 and 3.1, but there are also indirect links to Goal 1, initiatives 1.1 and 1.2.

Themes:
First we list the themes or groupings that emerged from the discussion, with an APPROXIMATE number of comments that were submitted about that theme and a brief summary of the discussion when it was particularly long or complex. Following this summary, all comments made about each theme are listed. Note that these were table notes, and sometimes the intent of the note is obscure.

1. Wellness spaces and resources (28):
What exists on campus? How can we better inform students and faculty? What’s missing? Some themes that emerge about resources were that faculty should be better informed of programs and resources that exist so they can let students know about them. Other discussion focused on how to meet the basic needs of our student population. It wasn’t mentioned, but it might be useful to create a brochure for faculty that outlines the resources mentioned here, and others not mentioned. (Goal 1, 1.4, 3.1)
2. **Finances and wellness (10):**
Student financial insecurities came up quite a bit, along with the needs to better publicize the resources that exist and to create (and fund) additional resources. (Goal 1, 1.4)

3. **What can/should faculty and advisors do for students (15):**
An oft-repeated theme was that faculty need to be made more aware of the resources that exist to help students so that they can refer students appropriately. (Goal 1, 1.4, 3.1)

4. **Concerns about faculty involvement in student wellness (6):**
While there was much discussion about what faculty might be able to do to help students, there were also concerns raised about faculty intervention.

5. **Campus climate and wellness (22):**
There was a lot of discussion about different aspects of the campus climate and how they affect students, faculty and staff. While people noted that wellbeing is fostered by security—nutritional, emotional, employment—and impeded by conflict, they also recognized the very individualized nature of wellbeing. (Goal 1, 1.4; ALSO Standing Committee on Work/Life Balance)

6. **Faculty wellness (17):**
What can/should faculty do for themselves? What should PSU do to foster wellness among its employees? There were many comments about the importance of fostering wellness for all on campus, not just the students. There is a joint administration/AAUP committee on Work/Life balance. That group should consider the following questions and suggestions.

7. **Wellness and the Curriculum (8):**
Classes/workshops for students. These are suggestions that can relate to the curriculum, but also to workshops that could be developed as resources for students. (Goal 1, 1.2, 1.4)

8. **Societal impediments to wellness (3)**

9. **Technology and wellness (3)**

10. **Miscellaneous (9)**
LIST OF ALL COMMENTS

1. Wellness spaces and resources:

- Are there spaces for wellness on campus (or other resources - making students aware of them)
- Creating spaces of awareness for our students.
- Advertise and grow resource centers.
- Spread word of services - CARE committee, academic advising, study skills/tutoring center
- Problem: Not knowing about resources available.
- Students sleep in their cars. Create a safe space for naps during the day. Laundry services?
- Naps? Nap spaces??
- Building wellness into campus design. Expanding our definition of wellness.
- Do a better job promoting available resources on campus. Benefit, not a handout.
- We have a fund for students with emergency money needs. Faculty need to be educated about these.
- Back to hierarchy of needs!
- Educate faculty/staff on resources available to students. Recognize those in need. Refer as needed.
- How aware are faculty/staff of the CARE team?
- Interveners to catch falling students.
- Students need to be educated about resources.
- Promote more actively the services we currently offer, and support them.
- Child-friendly classrooms
- Balancing expense/resources
- Build a “transfer center” for the majority of students who are newly involved to get connected (= wellness).
- Rec Center = great resource - what percentage of students, faculty, and staff use this? Are grad students aware of this resource?
- Bringing treadmill desks, balls to library.
- Creating multiple approaches to work (group collaborative).
- Satellite wellness communities w/i programs.
- Paid senior mentors (students) for students new to a major.
- Departments taking ownership of “their” majors.
• To be an educated person is to realize your whole self (not just intellectual). Student affairs dedicated to this.
• We believe we are doing a good job addressing mental health on campus.
• What are the tools that help students manage their time?

2. Finances and wellness:

• Back to hierarchy of needs!
• Impact of how/when financial aid has positive impact.
• On-campus student jobs; we are much lower than other Oregon universities.
• Recognizing food insecurity - we can’t solve it, but we can recognize that life (in and out of class) is complicated.
• Students sleep in their cars. Create a safe space for naps during the day. Laundry services?
• Affordable housing for students.
• Small funds for those who don’t have resources to pay rent, buy food, etc. Department specific.
• How can faculty contribute to the food pantry through payroll deduction? Through foundation!
• Student support:
  ○ Funds for emergencies
  ○ Basic needs: place to nap, take a shower, laundry
• We have a fund for students with emergency money needs. Faculty need to be educated about these.

3. What can/should faculty and advisors do for students:

• Question our roles and projected identity. How can faculty open up so students can? Will they?
• Recognizing food insecurity - we can’t solve it, but we can recognize that life (in and out of class) is complicated.
• Retention and completion is dependent on wellness. This is fostered by strong personal connections with faculty/advisors and forming community.
• Wellness - create climate of caring in classrooms.
• First name
• Open to extensions in crisis.
• Promote available resources
• Faculty:
  o Understand CARE team
  o Notice student challenges
• Identification and guidance - the need for a tighter-knit community - mentors (faculty and peers).
• We have to care about our students (we are better at that than some schools).
• We have a fund for students with emergency money needs. Faculty need to be educated about these.
• Faculty aware of resources and available to students.
• Have students write about teacher who influenced them the most and incorporate into teaching/way of approaching curriculum/meetings.
• Stretch break in class (silent).

4. Concerns about faculty involvement in student wellness:
• How do I know I’m giving right information or insight?
• Concern about faculty overreaching and making student’s situation worse.
• Remember that we are not EMTs.
• How do we prepare faculty to address “feelings” and have those conversations?
• Concern about female faculty taking a disproportionate amount of informal counseling of students whether because students trust them more or more likely/willing to have open door policy.
• How do we help students maintain balance and wellness even if this negatively impacts their grade (for example, creative attendance requirements for patients, Native students attending ceremony, etc.)?

5. Campus climate and wellness:
• Does the PSU environment foster wellness/productivity among faculty/staff?
  o Prevent chronic problems and interdepartmental conflicts
  o Self-reflection
  o Happiness survey
  o Ask people how they are doing
  o Know human needs
• Collaboration among departments. Project happiness at Campus Rec.
  o Measurement
  o Implement faculty/staff happiness project!
- Improving relationships between faculty and administration = increased productivity
- Labor issues - job insecurity for NTTF and adjuncts.
- Build fitness into workday. Way to institutionalize?
- Emotions should not be excluded from academics.
- Individualizing needs
- Individuals should be more important than numbers. We need to go back to the university as an education institution, not a corporation following a business model.
- What about our campus food environment?
- Better food choices in Smith.
- Identification and guidance - the need for a tighter-knit community - mentors (faculty and peers).
- Offering students experiences they might not otherwise have.
- PSU:
  - Are we responsible for promoting wellbeing of students and faculty?
  - Tied to retention and completion.
  - Safe spaces
  - Happiness survey
- To be an educated person is to realize your whole self (not just intellectual). Student affairs dedicated to this.

6. Faculty wellness:

- Need to consider this for both students and faculty.
- There is no balance for faculty.
- Until we find balance for ourselves, we can’t help our students.
- Labor issues - job insecurity for NTTF and adjuncts.
- Build fitness into work day. Way to institutionalize?
- Give us all (students and faculty) free member to the rec center?
- If we take care of ourselves, we can model for our students.
- Healthy boundaries
- Has to be a mirror with policy.
- Do we feel our lives are balanced? Some people ignore stress, some cannot.
- We don’t get much of the reflection silence we need in an academic environment.
- “One-size-fits-all scholar” leading to wellbeing issues. Scholars need to be engaging in research/teaching/service according to their needs at a given moment in their careers.
- Wellness and care must include adjunct faculty and fixed term.
- Think about wellness for OUR students. Burning a candle at both ends.
• Self care
• “Put your own mask on before helping others.” (reminder that faculty/staff need this too).
• What if we could say yes to those activities that feed us? (this might lead to greater productivity)

7. **Wellness and the Curriculum:**

• Develop wellness curricula that would be useful across multiple disciplines.
• Life skills - elective class
  o Nutrition, cooking!
  o Financial management
  o Dealing with addiction(s)
  o Helping others
• Seed classes/workshops across disciplines and units that support wellness.
• Life skills classes
• Satellite wellness communities w/i programs.
• Paid senior mentors (students) for students new to a major.
• Departments taking ownership of “their” majors.
• Some of the highest enrolled courses focus on health and wellness. What does this tell us?

8. **Societal impediments to wellness:**

• Juggling too many things (so-called “productivity)
• We live in a culture where productivity is understood as being “busy” all the time. We create more “busy” spaces (extra-meetups, etc.).
• Title = problematic (you increase productivity through wellness)

9. **Technology and wellness:**

• Relationship between wellness and online courses?
• What about online education?! (value of facetime)
• No electronics in class.
10. Miscellaneous:

- We liked the moment of silence!
- Motion, standing, moving...in the classroom
- “This was not what my peers imagined about their college experience” - a powerful statement
- Student satisfaction - what does that look like? Links back to question of quality
- Put wellness in strategic plan
- Wellness is a comprehensive concept - physical, mental, financial, temporal (enough time), etc.
- (Self) realization of need discipline.
- Cognition is not in our heads. It is an embodied process.
- Silence...