

# WELLNESS STRATEGY

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH FOR STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF



UNIVERSITY OF  
SASKATCHEWAN







Wellness Strategy Goal

**To create an environment that promotes and supports the health and well-being of all who study and work at our campuses**

JOINT PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN PEOPLE AND RESOURCES  
AND TEACHING, LEARNING AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE



**Focusing on everyone—  
students, faculty and staff—  
is essential for creating an  
inclusive wellness environment**

# Introduction

Over a century ago, our first President Walter Murray noted that, “In laying our foundation, we must remember we are building for centuries.” In the intervening years, the roots of our university community have grown around the foundation of human and environmental sustainability.

In recent times, we have come to recognize the struggles that increasing numbers of people in our broader U of S communities face as they relate to health and well-being. Despite our differing backgrounds, these challenges are common to all who study and work at the university. In better understanding these inherent challenges, we recognize the importance of getting ahead of these issues in order to think and act preventively. In order to be healthy, we must all be part of a supportive, inclusive and enabling community.

In supporting this work, the university community renews its commitment to thinking deeply and intentionally about wellness – our accountability for caring for ourselves and one another individually as well as collectively. Only in committing to a continuing dialogue and action about how our community takes care of each and every one of us can we begin to identify the endless opportunities for positive change.

In doing so, we seek to learn from one another, value our differences, demonstrate our commitment to one another by showing—in our actions—the values of collegiality, fairness and equitable treatment, inclusiveness, integrity, honesty, ethical behaviour, respect and kindness. In supporting these values, we make a commitment to remove stigma and barriers to people accessing the supports they need and create the conditions for our community to thrive.

We are taking this opportunity to look through a wellness lens to examine the ways in which we teach, work, study, make decisions, support change and interact with one another to shape the culture of the University of Saskatchewan in order to better sustain a safe and healthy environment. It is up to each and every one of us to ensure that a renewed approach lives in every place and space in which the life and work of our university community unfolds.

The focus and approach outlined in this strategy is the product of countless hours of research, consultation, reflection and discussion. It outlines, both individually and as a community, the ways in which we can sustain ourselves and support one another in achieving our common goals of optimal health, well-being and personal success.

This strategy is both a recognition of where we currently stand as well as an aspiration as to where we seek to be. It represents a starting point as well as a work-in-progress designed to build and sustain a strong, healthy community not only for those who are already on campus but also for future students, staff and faculty who will join us in the years to come.

**Together, we will create a  
culture that promotes wellness  
and strives to prevent illness.**

# Six Strategic Areas of Support

The U of S will support our diverse students, faculty and staff in achieving and maintaining an optimal health and well-being by focusing on six areas of support along every stage of wellness.



## PROMOTION

**Ensuring a Supportive Foundation**  
**Fostering a Healthy Culture and Environment**  
**Raising Awareness and Maintaining Healthy Behaviors**

Wellness is a personal and ever-changing state of being. One's state of wellness not only evolves over time, it is also uniquely and individually defined by one's distinctive culture, experiences and world view.

The objective of the strategy is:

- to lay a supportive foundation
- create a culture of wellness
- provide the right support at the right time.

As an institution, we commit to supporting students, staff and faculty in being well and to examine our policies, processes, practices and environments; and to make changes where possible and necessary to support wellness.



## PREVENTION

**Identifying Risk and Responding Early**  
**Developing Resilience and Self-Management Competencies**

We believe that, by addressing wellness from a holistic perspective and by structuring support in a comprehensive way, we will create an inclusive wellness environment and be well-positioned to support the health and well-being of all who study and work at our campuses.

The Wellness Strategy focuses on supporting the campus community by providing focus and resources in:

- promotion
- prevention
- intervention



## INTERVENTION

**Providing Services, Training and Critical Support**

While critical care will always be necessary, the U of S will shift our core focus away from intervention and professional care towards preventative social and self care as the first line of support.

In doing so, we will support our community, wherever possible, being able to take ownership of health and well-being.

## PROMOTION

# Ensuring a Supportive Foundation

We will ensure foundational supports are in place to guide the development and practice of certain values, beliefs and behaviors that support various dimensions of wellness, and discourage those that do not.

We will look through a wellness lens to focus on institutionalizing support, engaging leaders and defining responsibilities; ensuring planning, procedures, practices and policies are supportive of wellness.

## SPECIFICALLY, THE U OF S WILL

- Further formalize and embed support for wellness into governing U of S strategic planning, documentation and related processes to ensure a commitment to wellness becomes part of the institutional fabric.
- Define and formalize wellness roles and responsibilities for senior leaders, people leaders, and those with the ability to influence others at the U of S through their job function or organizational position.
- Critically examine our policies, processes, practices and environments and make changes where possible and necessary to eliminate prejudice and inequities within the framework of institutional wellness.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Identify areas of university life, practice and policy which may be putting the health and well-being of individuals or communities at risk.
- Let us know what's working well and what's not with new and existing supports and resources.
- Take action. Think about how you can embed wellness into your work or learning environment.

## PROMOTION

# Fostering a Healthy Culture and Environment

We will foster a culture of health and support, and create an environment that positively influences the well-being of all who work and study at the U of S. Wherever possible, we will consider institutional, professional and study relationships, program design, delivery and assessment, culture and environments to determine where changes can be made.

We will focus on developing health promoting messages and networks, enhancing healthy spaces, and ensuring the U of S has a respectful, inclusive culture that reflects the values of the institution and the wellness needs of our community members.

## SPECIFICALLY, THE U OF S WILL

- Maintain and develop healthy spaces throughout the U of S campuses.
- Foster healthy relationships and collaborative efforts to provide a cohesive experience across the continuum of wellness support for both those providing and receiving support.
- Form a wellness support network that values, represents and speaks for diversity of the U of S community, and promotes inclusion in practicing and supporting wellness while at work or while learning.
- Define wellness expectations and responsibilities for staff, faculty and students who may not have a formalized influence over others but rather an informal influence as a caring and committed member of the same U of S community.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Work collaboratively with your peers to build community.
- Get involved in activities that actively support wellness.
- Lead from where you stand and become a wellness champion.
- Live wellness.
- Share your wellness story - tell us what "be well" means to you?

## PROMOTION

# Raising Awareness and Maintaining Healthy Behaviors

We will raise awareness of health and well-being so that students, faculty and staff understand what optimal wellness means, the signs and impact of poor health and how to enact change for ourselves and others.

We will focus on engaging people in raising awareness, developing targeted communication plans and messages, improving access to health information and supporting change in behaviour.

## SPECIFICALLY, THE U OF S WILL

- Highlight supports and resources which are already available on campus.
- Create learning opportunities on a number of platforms to increase student, staff and faculty knowledge and understanding about health and wellness and how to access the appropriate resources in a timely manner.
- Align university health and wellness messages and promote in a coherent manner.
- Increase student, staff and faculty knowledge and skills to enact healthy behaviors and create environments to foster these.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Be open to thinking about your own wellness in a multi-dimensional way.
- Engage with the wellness messages that are being shared at the U of S.
- Seek out the health and wellness resources available to you, learn as much as you can and turn that knowledge and skills into action to enhance your well-being.
- Tell others about what you've learned about the resources available.
- Take part in wellness programs and events. Bring a colleague or classmate.

## PREVENTION

# Identifying Risk and Responding Early

We will strive to educate all members of the broader U of S community to recognize early warning signs showing that a person may be struggling and require support, including indicators of more serious health risks. By teaching our students, faculty and staff about issues faced, we will reduce stigma and create opportunities and skills for having conversations about well-being needs just as we might about work and academic needs. In doing so, we create the conditions for those experiencing difficulty to seek and gain support before harm occurs.

We will educate ourselves to identify risk in order to help ourselves and those around us, and take advantage of the supportive programs and resources available. Together we can make a difference.

## SPECIFICALLY, THE U OF S WILL

- Equip students, staff and faculty with the information and tools to support the well-being of one another.
- Provide tools and methods for students, staff and faculty to assess their own well-being and related risk factors.
- Proactively provide support and highlight available resources for identified at-risk communities within the U of S.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Know your own wellness risk factors and take action to reduce them.
- Learn how to identify when someone is struggling, and how to have an honest, supportive conversation with them and direct them to self-care resources or professional assistance.

## PREVENTION

# Developing Resilience and Self-Management Competencies

While we recognize that members of our community have various backgrounds, life experiences and are at different points in their personal, study and work lives, one common feature is that everyone is faced with changing situations and evolving challenges. These challenges impact the level of risk people have in relation to different dimensions of wellness. Self-management competencies and coping skills strengthen resilience and ability to manage and/or overcome life's demands, which decreases the risk of overall health issues.

We will focus on empowering people to take control of their wellness by developing or enhancing resiliency and self-management skills and competencies. We will highlight awareness of available resources to help those in crisis or those who require accommodation.

## SPECIFICALLY, THE U OF S WILL

- Offer programs and services that develop the ability of students, staff and faculty to manage health and wellness both independently and with support from others.
- Offer programs, services and supports that help develop a culture of resilience in students, staff and faculty.
- Develop new orientation programming to provide newcomers with the greatest chance of success in our campus environment and beyond.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Have a growth mindset, be determined to persevere. Encourage others to do the same.
- Be empowered to learn more and make changes that help you navigate through challenging times.
- Participate in programs and services that are offered to improve how you manage your own well-being.

## INTERVENTION

# Provide Services, Training and Critical Support

We recognize the importance of providing outreach and professional care services and training to help stabilize those in crisis and support them in achieving their own optimal level of wellness. This will be done within a supportive, accessible and easy-to-navigate system and environment.

We will offer services to support students, faculty and staff in all aspects of their well-being. Additionally, support and training will be available for those people who are leading and/or supporting other people at the U of S, like those in advisory, faculty, managerial or other roles that have influence on others.

## SPECIFICALLY, THE U OF S WILL

- Provide students, staff and faculty access to general and critical support services in a timely, accessible and confidential manner.
- Provide training to identify those in crisis and how to respond in a timely and appropriate manner.
- Create and invest in train-the-trainer programming to create a sustainable institutional knowledge base and wellness culture.

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Download the USafe mobile safety app - learn what resources are available on campus and in the community.
- Be open to getting or giving support. Be prepared to share your concerns with specialist supports if necessary.
- When you're not sure how to improve your well-being, reach out for help. You will be in a better position to help someone else when they need it.

# Three elements of wellness

The University of Saskatchewan's wellness strategy takes a holistic approach to being well in supporting three elements of wellness:



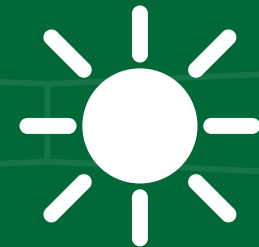
## healthy mind

Provides the emotional energy and clarity to approach and manage life with optimism and resilience. A Healthy Mind contributes to the prevention or better management of mental illness.



## healthy body

Provides the physical energy and endurance to fulfill life's daily requirements and reach personal goals. A Healthy Body contributes to the prevention or better management of physical illness.



## healthy life

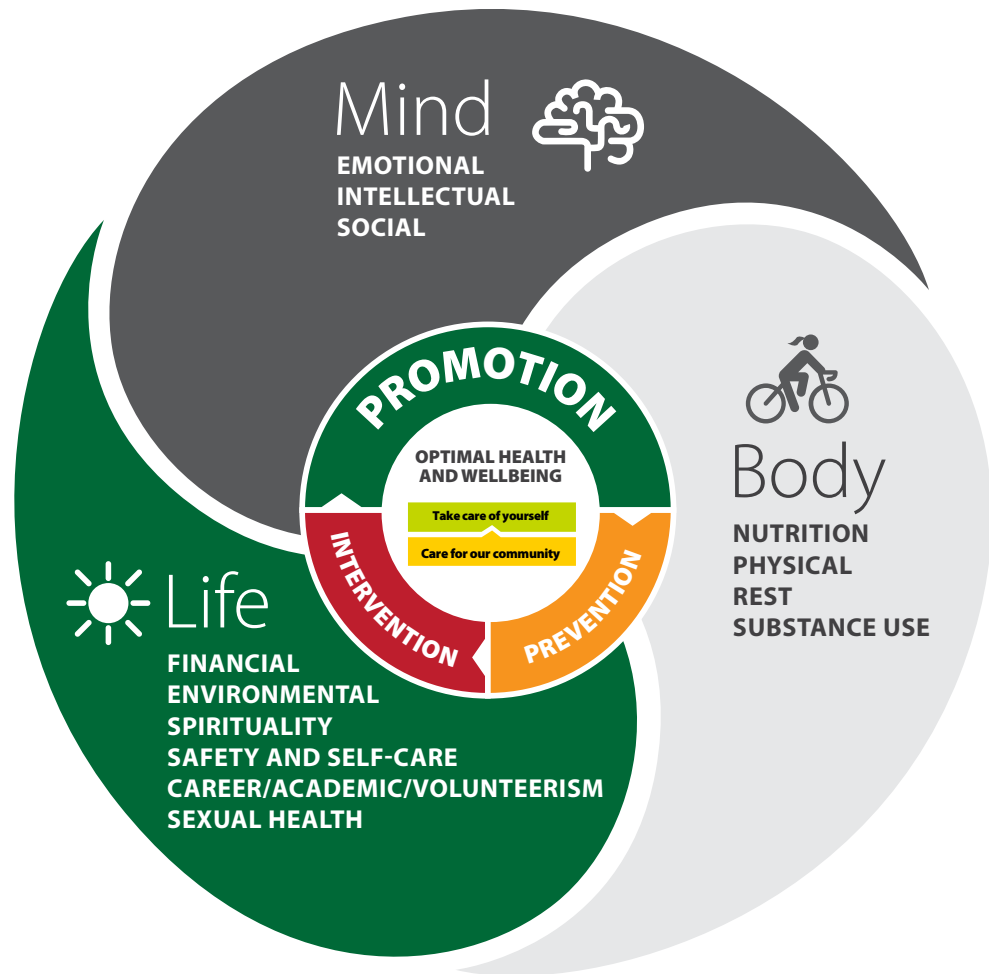
Provides the knowledge, ability and opportunity to interact with the world with increased confidence, security and stewardship. A Healthy Life contributes to a Healthy Mind and Body.

# Wellness Framework

The U of S wellness framework reflects our holistic approach to being well in creating an environment that promotes and supports optimal health and well-being for all who work and study at our campuses.

## The wellness framework is designed to:

- Highlight the university's commitment to prioritizing our resources in wellness promotion, prevention and intervention.
- Illustrate the holistic approach to wellness and recognize the wholeness of a person is comprised of interdependent elements: mind, body and life.
- Identify the various dimensions such as emotional, physical and financial within mind, body, and life that affect overall health and well-being and remind us of the need to consider not only the interdependent parts but also their effect upon the whole.
- Highlight the role we all play in supporting and affecting our own wellness and that of those around us.



The background of the slide is a solid green color with a repeating pattern of small, stylized green handprints. Each handprint is oriented with the fingers pointing upwards and slightly outwards, creating a dense, textured effect across the entire background.

**How can we create a  
Healthy Mind, Healthy Body  
and Healthy Life for all?**

## Healthy Mind



### SOCIAL

Establish positive, nurturing and healthy relationships and have a sense of community and belonging.



### EMOTIONAL

Be self-aware; accept and manage your feelings, thoughts, and attitudes; have self-esteem and be resilient.



### INTELLECTUAL

Be open-minded to new ideas and experiences that allow you to have a growth mindset and continue learning.

## Healthy Body



### NUTRITION

Eat nutritiously with a focus on natural, unprocessed foods and a balanced intake of nutrients; follow the recommended guidelines for health benefits.



### REST

Get sufficient amounts of rest, both during the day as well as sleep at night, to support the highest achievable quality of work and life.



### SUBSTANCE USE

Limit, eliminate or be better informed about the use of substances - such as tobacco, alcohol, drugs, and others - on health and well-being.



### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Recognize the benefits and enjoyment of physical exercise/movement, and invest time in individual and group activities that build endurance, flexibility, and strength; follow the recommended guidelines for physical activity.

## Healthy Life



### CAREER/ACADEMIC/VOLUNTEERISM

Seek personal fulfillment and meaningful work that nurtures your gifts, skills and talents while still maintaining a balance between work, study and personal leisure time.



### ENVIRONMENTAL

Relate to and care for the planet and nature.



### FINANCIAL

Understand and manage money in ways that provide security, confidence and options to support work, study and personal commitments and interests now and in the future.



### SAFETY AND CARE

Safeguard yourself from physical or mental harm and practice methods of self-care that optimize well-being and prevent or better manage illness.



### SEXUAL HEALTH

Choose a positive, respectful and safe approach to sexuality and sexual relationships; free of coercion, discrimination and violence. Empowerment and courage to speak out and seek help if needed.



### SPIRITUAL

Find peace, meaning and purpose in life, individually or through involvement with spiritual communities; appreciating connectedness between your inner world and larger expressions of reality.

**THE U OF S IS COMMITTED TO CREATING AN INCLUSIVE WELLNESS ENVIRONMENT THAT SUPPORTS OUR DIVERSE STUDENTS, FACULTY AND STAFF. WE WILL EMBED WELLNESS IN OUR INSTITUTIONAL FABRIC, CREATE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE, ENSURE ACCESS TO RESOURCES, SUPPORTS AND TRAINING AND EVALUATE OUR PROGRESS OVER TIME.**

# We all have a role to play



# It will take the entire university community to bring the strategy to life and make it sustainable for centuries to come...

We challenge each and every student, faculty member and staff member to commit to creating a culture of wellness and actively engage as a champion of wellness. There are many ways you can help create an environment that promotes and supports the health and well-being of our campus community. There are many wellness opportunities already available to support your health and well-being at the U of S.



**Together, we will create a  
culture of wellness as we care for  
ourselves and our community  
and build for centuries to come.**

Peter Stoicheff  
University of Saskatchewan  
President and Vice-Chancellor

# We all have a unique world view that helps shape and refine how we support wellness

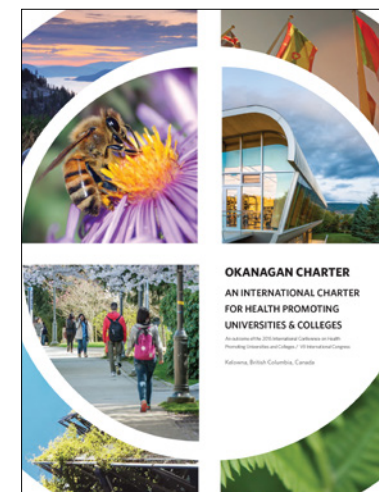
All of our students, faculty and staff have various backgrounds and life experiences and are at different points in their personal lives. We drew on these unique perspectives to inform the development and direction of the Wellness Strategy. Additional data was gathered from multiple sources.

The work is just starting but significant strides have already been made. The U of S has made a formal commitment to healthy minds, bodies and lives in the adoption of the Okanagan Charter, a global health initiative that calls on post-secondary institutions to make a commitment to embed health in all aspects of campus culture and take the lead in actions that promote well-being both locally and globally. The University of Saskatchewan has joined other institutions across Canada by adopting this charter. We have made the following commitments which align with our institutional strategy:

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## WITH THE ADOPTION OF THE CHARTER, THE U OF S HAS PLEDGED TO A NUMBER OF COMMITMENTS:

1. Commit to create an environment at the University of Saskatchewan that promotes and supports the health and well-being for all who study or work at our campuses.
2. Commit to planning and actions that are aligned with and live out the university's principles and values.
3. Commit to a robust wellness partnership that calls us to work collaboratively across our staff and student portfolios.
4. Commit to create and implement an organizational wellness strategy that integrates leading edge wellness initiatives (i.e., CACUSS Framework for Postsecondary Student Mental Health).
5. Commit to increase investment and focus on promotional and prevention resources in the following priority areas:
  - a. Healthy Mind
  - b. Healthy Body
  - c. Healthy Life
6. Commit to bring existing wellness programs and services into alignment to support the wellness strategy.
7. Commit to include Indigenous world views in our approach to health and well-being.
8. Commit to develop and implement a metric reporting system so that we can evaluate and report on outcomes of our wellness initiatives.
9. Commit to collaborate and/or share our best practices wellness strategies, initiatives and learnings across Canadian and international campuses.



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There will be many opportunities for you to get involved in this work. Participation by stakeholders will take varying forms within these areas, including leadership commitment and sponsorship, focus groups and interviews, committee and champion network participation, interest/feedback surveys, risk assessments, and specific roles that help gather insights, design plans, develop implementation practices, roll out programs, evaluate overall strategy success and determine continuous improvement activities.

The Wellness Partnership is a collaboration between People and Resources (formerly Human Resources) and the Office of the Vice Provost, Teaching, Learning and Student Experience with the goal of creating an environment that promotes and supports the health and well-being for all who study or work at all of our campuses.

The Wellness Partnership is the evolution of the Healthy Campus Committee, which brought students, faculty and staff from around campus together to discuss and implement wellness initiatives. We wish to recognize their many years of work in providing the foundation for the work done in the Wellness Partnership.

# Acknowledgments

The University of Saskatchewan's six strategic areas of focus are adapted from the Canadian Association of College & University Student Services and Canadian Mental Health Association. (2013). Post-Secondary Student Mental Health: Guide to a Systemic Approach. Vancouver, BC.

Insight used to inform the development and direction of the Wellness Strategy was gathered from various sources, including U of S employee and student stakeholders, U15 schools, U15 websites, relevant student and employee surveys and data analyses, federal government, provincial governments, health regions and expert bodies/organizations focused on supporting a healthy mind, healthy body, and healthy life.

## The University of Saskatchewan Wellness Strategy is the result of the significant contributions of:

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This strategy was designed by the Wellness Strategy, Wellness Leadership Advisory, Healthy Mind, Healthy Body, and Healthy Life teams and Aon Hewitt, and approved by the Executive Sponsors (ES) and Wellness Leadership Advisory Team (WLAT).

It is owned and maintained by People and Resources (formerly Human Resources Division) and the Office of the Vice-Provost, Teaching, Learning and Student Experience.



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