

Task Force on Mental Health and Well-being Terms of Reference

Purpose

The University of Manitoba has engaged in many diverse mental health and wellness initiatives over the years, and developed its initial Campus Mental Health Strategy, *Success Through Wellness*, in 2014. Following approval by the President's Executive Team, a 'Champions for Mental Health' group was formed under the joint leadership of Student Affairs and Human Resources to implement the strategy. Comprising more than 20 key stakeholders, this group's mandate was to address the 67 recommendations outlined in the strategy, in keeping with UM's stated commitment to develop a caring, healthy, responsive, supportive, committed, and resourceful campus community. As noted in the '[Success Through Wellness 2015-2019 Implementation Report](#)', progress had been made on all recommendations. Beginning in 2019, a comprehensive consultation process was initiated to inform development of a revised strategy. However, progress on this was interrupted by the onset of the pandemic in 2020 and further delayed by the emergence of other priorities, including the need to provide support for the community during the prolonged remote work and learning period and subsequent return to campus.

More recently, the University of Manitoba's Strategic Plan, [Momentum: Leading the Change Together](#), has identified *well-being* as a core value. Specifically, the plan states: "Grounded in an ethos of respect and compassion for each other and our community, we cultivate a supportive environment that embraces the values of *mino-pimatisiwin* (good life) and *mino-ayawin* (good health)." (p. 4)

Recognizing the importance of safety, respect, and social connection as key to mental health and well-being for the UM community and its individual members, the Strategic Plan's core value of *belonging* underscores our imperative to "create the conditions for all to be their authentic selves" (p. 4) by centering equity, accessibility, diversity, inclusion, and belonging when establishing the Task Force's recommendations.

Definitions

To ensure a shared understanding of mental health and well-being, the following definitions will guide us in our work:

- **Mental health:** The capacity of each and all of us to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections, and personal dignity¹.

¹ Public Health Agency of Canada. "[The Human Face of Mental Health and Mental Illness in Canada](#)," Government of Canada, 2006, p. 2.

- **Well-being:** A state of positive feelings and meeting full potential in the world. It can be measured subjectively, using a salutogenic approach².
- **Wellness:** The active pursuit of activities, choices, and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health³.
- **Health:** A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. ([WHO](#))
- **Mino-pimatisiwin:** Indigenous peoples belonging to the Algonquian language family use the term mino-pimatisiwin, which could be loosely translated as “living the good life,” to describe a state of harmony, well-being, and comprehensive health based on relationships, cultural identity, and connection to the land⁴.

Mandate

Reporting to the Provost and Vice-President (Academic) and the Vice-President (Administration), the Task Force will investigate the following:

- Across the institution, what data do we collect pertaining to mental health and well-being, and what data do we need to inform our recommendations and enhance the mental health and well-being of faculty, staff, and students? (**Baseline data**)
- What are we doing at the unit level and centrally to promote the mental health and well-being of faculty, staff, and students? (**Environmental scan**)
- What is considered best practice in promoting mental health and well-being in post-secondary institutions? (**Review of the current literature and promising practices**)
- What are we doing well? What is needed to ensure that the mental health and well-being of faculty, staff, and students is supported, promoted, and advanced? What are our current challenges and how might they be addressed? (**Community consultation**)
- What are the policies, processes, programming and supports necessary to advance the University of Manitoba’s commitment to the mental health and well-being of all faculty, staff, and students? How will we identify and deploy resources in implementing the findings of the Task Force? (**Recommendations**)
- How will we measure success in accomplishing our goals? What benchmarks and outcomes will we be tracking, by whom, over what period of time? (**Evaluation**)
- How will we share our findings and outcomes with the UM community? How will we develop and sustain community engagement? (**Knowledge transfer**)

Membership

- Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs) – Co-Chair
- Vice-Provost (Students) – Co-Chair

² Simons, G., & Baldwin, D. S. (2021). A critical review of the definition of 'wellbeing' for doctors and their patients in a post Covid-19 era. *The International journal of social psychiatry*, 67(8), 984–991.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/00207640211032259>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Landry, V., Asselin, H., & Lévesque, C. (2019). Link to the Land and *Mino-Pimatisiwin* (Comprehensive Health) of Indigenous People Living in Urban Areas in Eastern Canada. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(23), 4782. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16234782>

- Associate Vice-President (Human Resources) – Co-Chair
- Academic Administrators
- Faculty Members
- Students
- Staff

Resources to the Committee

- Don Stewart, Project Consultant, Executive Director, Student Support
- Oluchi Ogbu, Project Assistant, Faculty Relations Specialist
- Janique Philippe, Project Assistant, Employee Wellness Specialist
- Arlana Vadnais, Project Assistant, Associate Director, Wellness & Prevention
- Sarah Vanderveen, Communications Specialist, Provost's Office
- Jill Bonner, Confidential Assistant to the Vice-Provost (Academic Affairs)
- Marcia Davies, Confidential Assistant to the Vice-Provost (Students)
- Lindsay Menard, Administrative Manager, Human Resources

It is expected that the Task Force will be formed in April 2024, and working groups will be established in alignment with our mandate. The Task Force will meet monthly and working groups will meet more frequently in keeping with their assigned responsibilities. An interim report will be submitted in October 2024, and a final report with recommendations by July 2025.