

to student health

nationally-renowned experts in student health and higher education conducted a thorough review of Colorado Colleges' programming, resources, policies, documentation, and communication strategies. **Based on this study, it is**

clear that Colorado College is committed to providing a healthy and supportive environment for its students, faculty, and staff. In recent years, there has been a growing focus on mental health and wellness on campus. This report outlines the current state of mental health and wellness at Colorado College and makes recommendations for improvement.

The panel identified several factors that contribute to mental health and wellness at Colorado College. These factors include the academic demands of the College, the stress associated with major transitions, and the trauma related to the COVID-19 pandemic and student deaths. Some of Colorado College's greatest strengths also present some of its greatest challenges: Colorado College is a selective institution with motivated and high-achieving students, faculty, and staff – this is positive, but it can also lead to stress and pressure experienced by students as well as faculty and staff. Colorado College is a close-knit community, which leads students, faculty, and

staff to care d

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of these definitions and indicators to adapt to contextual changes, assess pr

the true experience and pressures that come with the Block of

Integrating wellness messaging into student, faculty, and staff orientations and any other longstanding first-year programming.

Ensuring comprehensive information on mental health resources is available to the Colorado College community either in person or through handouts.

Creating a written 'First Year Student Guide' for first-year students that is devoted to wellness; potentially "How to Grow and Thrive" at Colorado College.

Creating programming or written resources for graduating students to help prepare them to maintain wellness during the major transition out of college and into their next life phase.

Compiling information on wellness resources in a format suitable for parents/families, so they know who to contact at Colorado College if their student reaches out to them in crisis.

Developing a communications strategy to engage and inform alumni of the expanded focus on campus wellness. This could lead to increased external support.

Working to inform the Colorado College Board of Trustees of all of the student wellness-related efforts on campus and confirm their support for the initiatives.

More preventative communication methods are needed. Some Colorado College staff members noted that they rarely interact with students on "good days;" often, staff's only options are "reactive." Prioritize messaging that encourages students to seek assistance before they are in crisis, when possible. Recommendations for preventive and proactive communication include:

Promote proactive use of campus and community resources before a crisis occurs.

Develop a communication campaign centered on wellness for a specific Block that could include a tagline such as "We All Want to Be Well" or "Be Healthy, Feel Well, Make a Difference".

Develop a website that contains resources with useful tools and strategies for students to use when they are feeling distressed (possibly on the counseling center site); For example:

How to stay healthy while facing the challenges of college life.

How to thrive during "Hard Blocks".

Brief Mindfulness and Breathing Strategies to R

Promote Consistency in Policies, Procedures, and Information Transfer

Historically, Colorado College has

As stated on the Student Health Center webpage, "The College has made health care services available to students since 1936." The new state-of-the-art Student Health Center and Wellness Resource Center provide a tremendous resource to launch a more integrated culture of wellness on campus. With these recent changes, the partnership with Optum Health, and all of the ongoing efforts to improve student wellness at Colorado College, it is important to bridge efforts when possible, for consistency and efficiency. A sense o

Provide students with increased access to counseling services, including brief therapy services in group or single sessions.

Enhance relationships with external

Syllabus development tips for faculty that include standardized language on mental health and wellness.

"How to talk with a student in distress" for faculty and staff.

"The signs of suicidal ideation" for faculty, staff, and students.

Most Colorado College faculty and staff members are not trained mental health service providers. However, they can provide immediate "aid" for students in crisis while they facilitate a hand-off to trained service providers. Consider creating a faculty and staff guide to support student mental health (for example, a "Mental Health First Aid Kit"). This guide could list resources for faculty and staff, within the boundaries of their role, and information to help them detect the warning signs (for example repeated absences, potentially alarming content or disclosures in class or on assignments, continuously sad affect, and poor personal hygiene). Consider creating a "Do's and Don'ts List" for faculty and staff - accessible on the Colorado College website - that includes information similar to the following:

Do: Find a quiet space to discuss difficulties.

Do: Acknowledge and validate a student's struggles.

Don't: Invalidate or minimize how much a student could be struggling

Do: Provide resources to students in crisis.

Don't: Promise confidentiality if there

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gender/sexuality. Visible efforts should be made to address disparities related to community members' physical abilities, neurodiversity, and other forms of difference across campus. Additionally, work to identify areas where staff members

Consider providing incentives for departments/units to make progress toward promoting unit-level well-being, that will improve the collective campus experience for students, staff, and faculty. Provide materials and guidance resources to help them meet their goals.

Consider developing a campaign, similar to many physical health campaigns on campus, where students, staff, and faculty can earn rewards for engaging and progressing toward mental health and wellness goals.

Leverage Human Capital & Campus Networks

Colorado College students, staff, faculty, and administrators are working extremely hard to make the campus better each and every day. One of the great strengths noted by the panel during their campus visit was the high level of care and support community members expressed for one another. This scale was balanced a bit by consistent concerns stemming from a general lack of trust across groups on campus. Part of this is owed to the fact that each community member is working extremely hard to live up to the Colorado College ideal for their role on campus. That is compounded by a general lack of awareness on how or why some College decisions are made, and what shared governance should look like in those decision-making processes.

In some cases, the staff workplace environment at Cole, t" ÷ (p

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staff, faculty, and administrators – meant to give them license to communicate when their workload is becoming untenable – staff and administrators have major concerns with putting this advice into practice. Most were not concerned about the direct negative repercussions of saying “No” or any form of retaliation; however, they are concerned saying “No” might have indirect, long-term adverse effects on their workplace relationships and career prospects at the College. Colorado College staff members care about their colleagues, and they know that if they decline a task, it will fall to a peer who might be just as overwhelmed. There was also a sense that, while the community appreciates the “1,000 flowers” metaphor, all 1,000 do not need to be planned at the same time; more can be done to prioritize tasks and initiatives to address staff workload concerns.

Human Resources should have a more defined role in shifting organizational culture among faculty and staff. This could be embedded in the performance appraisal process or through ongoing training. Administrators can identify students, staff, and faculty who are going above and beyond on efforts related to wellness and demonstrate alignment with the College’s well-being goals and provide acknowledgment and awards (awards, certificates, mini-grant awards) to continue wellness initiatives across campus. Additionally, Colorado College can create

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compliance. Each respective VP should consistently assess the extent to which their areas are collaborating to reinforce long-term wellness improvements.

Additional Human Capital & Campus Network Recommen

Additional Innovation Recommendations

Faculty and staff have created lists of on-campus and off-campus mental health resources. A 'resource exchange and consolidation' effort could help spread new ideas and offer more consistency in guidance and recommendations to students across the

Cultivate a learning environment that promotes strong emotion regulation skills, stress management, and interpersonal skills.

Encourage healthy risk-taking and low-stakes failures, where there are opportunities to fail, step back, adjust, try again, then succeed, all in a supportive context.

Infuse these skill-building exercises into the curriculum and extend them to other student-centered experiences in the College

the campus conversations on wellness began long before this panel was assembled. Rather, we hope this report will serve as both a milestone and a signal identifying the need for clearer communication, policies, and procedures and outlining much-needed conversations about student wellness at Colorado College.