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# President's Task Force on Student Mental Health

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Student Mental Health Implementation Task Force  
Community Update 2016-2017

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## Summary

We are pleased to provide you with an update on the progress of the fourth year of implementing the recommendations of the President's Task Force on Student Mental Health.

In May of 2013, the President's Task Force on Student Mental Health (PTFSMH) delivered a full report containing recommendations that would serve to enhance, existing services or engage in new initiatives to support students at Mount Royal University. The recommendations were divided into timelines of short term (1-3 years), medium term (3-5 years), and longer term (5-8 years). With year one-four having passed, we are now reporting on the progress of the recommendations for the time period of year four.

Due to the dedication and support of students, faculty, and staff we are pleased to say that there has been tremendous progress made on the recommendations set out by The PTFSMH. In 2013 there were 78 recommendations made that were to be addressed over an 8 year period ending in 2021. As of 2017 only 6 recommendations remain; the rest have been satisfied, embedded within institutional work, or removed if no longer relevant. The decision has been made to transition the work of the remaining 6 recommendations from the Implementation Committee for the PTFSMH to the Healthy Campus Steering Committee.

The following list identifies many programs and initiatives that have emerged over the past 3 years to support mental health:

- Mental Help Folder
- Mental Health comprehensive website "I Need Help, Help Others, Staying Healthy"
- Digtible Pathways to Student Mental Health (co-led by SAMRU and more recently by Wellness Services) through *LIVEWELL Twitter*
- Ask a Counsellor blog
- SAMRU Wellness Wheel, more recently co-supported with Wellness Services
- SAMRU Executive Members working with faculty to create "space" for mental health presentations in the classrooms
- Peer to Peer (P2P) Mental Health program
- Mental Health Blackboard Module
- Early Support program
- The Working Mind - aimed at staff and faculty, although some students have participated
- The Inquiring Mind - aimed at students and co-delivered by a student and staff or faculty
- Faculty Options for Responding to Students in Distress
- A,B,C's of Helping - online and face to face delivery to students who are in leadership positions to support other students
- A,B,Z's of Sleep
- Breathing Room on-line resiliency tool for all students
- The Zombie Event - to bring awareness to the impact of lack of sleep and positive sleep hygiene
- Presidential commitment to the Okanagan Charter
- MRU Academic Plan with reference to the Okanagan Charter

- Presidential commitment to Post-secondary Education Partnership - Alcohol Harms (PEP-AH)
- Participation in several mental health awareness campaigns such as:
  - Depression Screening Day/Week screening
  - Movies for Mental Health
  - Bell Let's Talk
  - The Jack Project - MRU students nominated and participated in this national initiative
  - I Believe You campaigns (sexual violence, how to respond when someone is seeking help)
- MRU Indigenous Strategy development with Wellness Services participation
- Transitioning of the Health and Safety Task Force to the Healthy Campus Steering Committee which broadens the scope from mitigation of harms to also include health promoting initiatives such as prevention, intervention, and education
- Restructuring of Wellness Services to create the Healthy Campus Unit to complement the more direct client focused services of Student Counselling and Health Services
- Creation of interdisciplinary Wellness Services Teams (WIT's), for both mental health and Indigenous students
- First Nations, Metis and Rural *HEADSTRONG Summit* hosted in collaboration with the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) and MRU
- Elder participation in Wellness Services annual team planning event to increase awareness and competence for supporting Indigenous students
- Improved triage system in Student Counselling and Health Services
- Student Affairs and Campus Life Strategic Plan 1 of 4 goals is Wellness
- MRU Strategic Plan goals identifying "sense of belonging", "student success", and "healthy work environment"
- Increased access for students seeking support for mental health services on campus
- Improved referral process to the community

In addition to the development of extensive programming and initiatives, we have also been able to use data gathered by several different surveys to track student need and perception of services.

*"Mount Royal University is invested in the wellbeing of students. As a community, we have accomplished recommendations and embedded others into institutional work. This commitment comes from all corners of campus through dedicated students, staff, faculty and administrators."*

- *Kandi McElary, Director of Wellness Services*

Moving forward the Healthy Campus Steering Committee is committed to continuing the phenomenal work of the PTFSMH and striving to ensure that MRU is a welcoming and safe space for the entire campus community.

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Respectfully submitted by,

**Student Mental Health Implementation Task Force**

Kandi McElary, Director, Wellness Services (Chair)

Jim Zimmer, Dean, Faculty of Teaching and Learning (Dean's Council)

Phil Warsaba, Associate Vice-President, Enrolment Management (Dean's Council)

Melanie Rogers, Director, Marketing and Communications, University Advancement

Marcy Fogal, Executive Director, Students' Association of Mount Royal University

## Outstanding Recommendations for Review

Recommendation	Rationale	Next Steps
Increase number of sections of courses that reduce barriers to learning, increase knowledge, skills of personal wellness i.e., UGST 1002 “Change, Challenge and Choice” and HLTH 2301 “Wellness and the Student”	Reduce stigma and raise awareness of mental health challenges by incorporating relevant information into program curricula.	Currently exploring adding additional offerings of UGST 1002 and HPED 1040
Connect research and learning related to wellbeing to services where appropriate.	Identify students earlier that would benefit from more supports in order to improve health and educational outcomes.	Three faculty members shared their research interests related to mental health and met with the Wellness Services Leads. Follow up is currently being explored for potential next steps with 2 of the 3 faculty members.
Work with the foundation to create other scholarships or bursaries for students addressing mental health on the MRU campus.	Acknowledges the efforts being put forward by individual students, creates an environment that supports student initiatives related to SMH.	MRU Institutional Strategic Plan Goal 5 to increase scholarships for students.
Encourage research on classroom wellbeing through the Institute of Teaching and Learning.	Evidence-based practice allows for increased understanding and increase appropriate practices.	Work with institutional stakeholders to promote this area of research.
Work with ADC to develop workshops for faculty to address classroom wellbeing, i.e., collect MRU case studies of classroom wellbeing examples.	Faculty have ongoing contact with students at particularly stressful times and may be able to mitigate the impact in the classroom.	Work is being furthered for 2017-2019
Consider implementation of appropriate workplace standards for mental health with Human Resources (Link to human rights policy; CMHC; PTFSMH)	Reduces employee illness leave and increases employee satisfaction. Recognition of mental health concerns and interventions.	Reserve funding allocated for an employee consultation process Winter/Spring 2018.