Notes: Faculty Engagement Working Group

Notes on conversation for ways to leverage existing courses –

- Promoting nursing mindstrong in our courses (work with advising to advocate for adding this?)
- Grad seminars – can we build in mental health and suicide prevention into these? Many programs currently require or offer (sometimes focused on professional development, research methods, or pedagogy. Can we pitch a wellness day/hour to grad chairs to incorporate into the curriculum as a shared expectation/competency?
  - Can also work with grad school/UIITL GTA coordinator to advocate that these types of courses meets a variety of needs expressed by students that would show community of care or decrease underlying stressors that affect mental health (ex: navigating personal professional relationships, how to work with an advisor)
  - Feel this would be more successful if there was guidance or recommendation from grad school or university to encourage these kinds of proposals at department level or to advocate with grad coordinators
- GE program is having structural changes anyway- timely to leave or require information about wellness and mental health.
  - Can GE Carmen courses be pre-loaded with module that links out to digital flagship wellness app and/or SLCCS resource page?
  - Idea of reflection at the end could include metacognition about wellness, struggles and overcoming setbacks. Could this be incorporated into SEIs or pre-loaded end of term reflection? This would leave instructors ability to opt-out but increase awareness and adoption
  - Promoting and showcasing courses that utilize “wellness days” in their curricula (good sub for days instructor would normally cancel class for conference travel or near holiday- online module to complete on Wed before thanksgiving for example?) Use model libraries has grown for integrating research and inquiry support on “library days” or library field trips.

Summary of takeaways:

Major problem we see with faculty involvement:

- Faculty have complex and often contradictory pressures and messaging around how to address this-. Also need strong directives to change the culture.
  - Message for tenure stream is teaching doesn’t matter
  - Faculty also face mental health/life stress issues – not always modeling good practice or aware of how to help. How to even help themselves, let alone students. Seems to currently depend on kindness/awareness of your mentor or chair.
  - Inequalities of the system mean this burden often falls to women, associated faculty, and humanities instructors. Need to find systemic ways to balance that responsibility and reward it equitably if we want to make culture change

Forward moving ideas:

- Can’t force a change in teaching but can create pathways that require opt-out rather than opt-in
Mental Health @ OSU conference 8/22/2019

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- Example: Use existing annual check points for grad students- if they’re not meeting academic standards (publications, progress toward dissertation etc) rather than requiring more isolating actions (extra writing, extra lab time) require connections – join writing group, take a wellness course like mindstrong, join community partner group like Friends of international students etc.?
- Points in the GE – if you’re struggling make connections part of the remediation plan just like we make Dennis Learning Center courses required about time management etc.
- What resources or wellness materials can be pre-loaded in Carmen modules for new courses for all instructors? (would still be able to opt out, but should increase adoption)
- Curriculum applications for new GE approval processes should ask questions about wellness and syllabus language to create a pathway/expectation that this has been considered in course design
- Guidelines or suggestions to grad/prof chairs about what to include in seminars/prof dev for students within programs
  - Rewarding and publicizing instructors who are proactive about making small but key choices in their teaching (make it feel manageable and as if many others are doing it all around us)
  - Reviewing your syllabus anyway, look for places to include wellness – when instructors are missing class, have wellness days.
  - Feature instructors/departments that have chosen to prioritize smaller sections, emphasize low stakes assessment,
  - Incentivize this as a priority with formal rewards/recognition (Work with UITL on this)
    - inclusive teaching endorsement, teaching awards, P&T weight on teaching specifically to inclusion/mental health support, grants programs for associated faculty? Learning community?
  - Reduce separation between advisors and faculty and community partners. Finding events/ways to get faculty connected to student life (Friends of International students, wellness center, etc.)
  - Central resource page for mental health and other faculty facing resources: student life? Central training? Where to house? – app path for faculty?