Wellness and Developing Environmentally Conscious Behavior

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EVS 300
ABSTRACT:

A sense of connection between individuals and the environment is essential in order for people to be willing to make environmentally sustainable decisions. Yet connection to the environment is difficult to establish within a society that demands busyness: the stress people experience due to the busyness of this culture prevents people from connecting with nature, and thus prevents many from making responsible decisions regarding the environment. Extreme consequences of stress, mental imbalance and illness further alienate individuals from the environment. Investigating the ‘culture of stress’1 at Smith College, my objectives included: determining whether a majority of students experience stress due to Smith; assessing whether the effects of stress on Smith students deepen their disconnection with the environment and shape irresponsible behaviors that affect the environment; and investigating what is being done at Smith College to promote wellness of students.

INTRODUCTION:

In his book, The Nature of Design, David Orr says that “the greatest impediment to an ecological design revolution is… human” (Orr, 2002). He states that human connectedness to the environment is crucial in order to compel people to make ecological decisions:

The success of ecological design will depend on our ability to cultivate a deeper sense of connection and obligation without which few people will be willing to make even obvious and rational changes in time to make much difference (Orr, 2002).

Along similar lines, deep ecologists believe that to work towards long-term environmental sustainability, human interactions with the environment must change and people must act as if nature mattered (Zimmerman, 1998). Yet this disconnect between nature and man has come to be part of our culture and will not be easy to overcome; because we are so disconnected from the

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1 Term used by Hayat Nancy Abuza and Dean Mahoney.
natural world (Orr, 2002), it seems unlikely that we will simply come to an understanding of our dependency and relationship with the environment.

Reconnecting people to the environment will be a difficult task, partly because modern-day life is so frenzied and demanding. Living in this fast-paced society, people are often consumed and stressed by the busyness of life: we hardly have time to reconnect with ourselves, let alone the natural world. Not only does busyness often keep us from connecting with the environment, it can also create a state of mental disarray that can work to reinforce our disconnection with the natural world. This ‘mental scattered-ness’, caused by a stressful life, acts as yet another impediment to feeling connected to one’s environment: constantly thinking about future obligations and past events, many people are so consumed by their thoughts that they cannot consider their surrounding world, their place in it, or how they affect it (communication with Professor Apffel-Marglin).

As college life is a notoriously busy and stressful time, it is likely that students are especially affected by the problems of busyness and disconnect. Faced with the pressures of college and consumed by their own problems, some students may completely disregard how their actions affect the environment. Additionally, it is plausible that deeper mental problems caused by stress can strengthen the disconnection with the environment: if individuals lack their own sense of well-being and balance, it is unrealistic to assume that they will promote the balance and well-being of the natural world. Therefore, it is important to help students learn to cope with these new pressures in order to prevent breakdowns and to foster an awareness of the natural world. As students develop habits in college that they will take with them throughout life, it is important to help students develop coping skills while they are in college in order to ensure that
they can maintain balanced lives later on. Therefore, promoting the long-term wellness of students is the first step in promoting the well-being of the natural world.

This project was approached with an understanding that there is a fundamental need to reconnect people with the environment in order to foster positive human intentions. Because busyness and stress can prevent people from connecting with the environment, the overall objective of this study was to assess whether the ‘culture of stress’ at Smith College contributes to the prevention of sustainability. This was assessed by determining whether Smith College students are generally stressed and whether this prevents them from appreciating the natural environment; and by investigating what is being done at Smith College to promote the wellness of students. Special attention was given to programs at Smith College that promoted students’ wellness, while also connecting them with the natural world.

**METHODOLOGY:**

- Interviews:

  I met with the following people to inquire about the Wellness Initiative at Smith College, to determine whether wellness is considered an important issue at Smith College, and to find out what the administration is doing or planning on doing to promote wellness at Smith.

  1. *Hayat Nancy Abuza:* the Interfaith Coordinator at Smith and leads the Wellness Initiative (W.I.) and Festival.

  2. *Michele Turin Wick:* a Psychology professor at Smith.

  3. *Frederique Apffel-Marglin:* an Anthropology professor at Smith.

  4. *Maureen Mahoney:* Ms. Mahoney is the Dean of the College.
• Classes attended:

I attended a ‘Wellness Zone’ class, which is offered as part of the Wellness Initiative and taught by Hayat Nancy Abuza. The class is designed to help students “find respite from everyday stresses and learn to develop inner resources of peace and calm”\(^2\).

• Other Research:

More research was conducted via the internet, books, academic journals, and magazines. Research primarily focused on the following subjects: deep-ecology, ecopsychology, and stress-reduction.

• Surveys:

The survey was made with the intention of assessing the following: whether students’ feel stressed; how stress may affect different aspects of students’ lives; whether students perceive Smith to be supportive of their well-being; and whether students know about the Wellness Initiative (W.I.) and have attended W.I. programs. The survey was reviewed by L. David Smith before distribution. Surveys were distributed to 76 students at various locations on campus: Park House, King/Scales Dining Room, Campus Center, Young Science Library, and a Spanish class. The surveys were distributed over the course of about two weeks (from April 15\(^{th}\) until April 30\(^{th}\)) and students were allowed to fill out their survey independently.

Included below is a sample survey:

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Survey for EVS 300 Project

**Please fill out the following information:**

- Class: ____________________
- Major (if applicable): ____________________

**Please briefly state what the term “well-being” means to you:**

**Please circle the response that most accurately reflects your feelings about the statement:**

1) I often feel stressed. ____________________________________________
   - Strongly Agree
   - Agree
   - Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

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**If YES, continue to question 2  
**If NO, move on to question 8 
2) I feel stressed because of the demands of Smith College.  
3) Stress has a negative impact on my relationships with others.  
4) I appreciate and value the natural environment.  
   **If YES, continue to question 5  
   **If NO, move on to question 8 
5) Being outdoors helps me to reduce stress.  
6) When I am stressed, I do not act in ways that are environmentally friendly.  
7) Being stressed prevents me from taking time to appreciate and value the natural environment.  
8) My sense of well-being has improved since coming to Smith College  
   **If so, how?  
9) Smith is supportive of its students’ well-being.  
10) Smith could improve in its support of students’ well-being.  
How?  

Please circle your response to the following questions:  
11) Have you heard of the Wellness Initiative (W.I.) at Smith?  
12) Have you ever attended a W.I. program?  
   **If so, which one(s)?  
   **If not, why not?  

RESULTS:  

- Results from (and Discussion of) Interviews:  

1) Hayat Nancy Abuza:  

    Hayat was a huge help in both her willingness to give information to me about the activities and goals of the Wellness Initiative, as well in her general support of my project. Although I contacted her via email over the course of the semester, we met twice formally to discuss my project and I contacted her once over the phone for an interview.
I initially contacted Hayat in late February to get her opinion on my project proposal. We met in early March to discuss my idea, and Hayat was kind enough to read over my project proposal and give me her thoughts. Hayat gave me information regarding what she has been doing as the Wellness Initiative director and what she would like to do in the future, as well as general information on mental-health promotion at other college campuses. Hayat explained to me that although she has been teaching stress-reduction classes at Smith for six years, she also began leading the Wellness Initiative when it was created three years ago. The initiative was created after a series of discussions amongst members of the administration, religious life, residential life, and health services who were interested in trying to come up with ways to improve the mental-health and well-being of students. Hayat and the Dean of Religious Life, Jennifer Walters, were particularly interested in the interplay between spirituality and wellness.

The programs offered by the Wellness Initiative include: stress reduction classes, ‘Hot Seat’ and ‘Moral-i-Tea’ programs, an ‘Escape to Nature’ retreat, the Wellness Festival, and haiku workshops. Hayat also helped to reinstate the non-credit yoga classes (which had been cut) in 2004 for stress-reduction reasons. The ‘Escape to Nature’ overnight trip is offered twice a year, and has been offered since 2001.

These are some of the programs being offered so far, but Hayat has hopes of expanding the reach of the Wellness Initiative in order to make wellness a campus-wide goal and to affect the general student-body. She acknowledges that there is a “culture of stress” at Smith, and says that it needs to be shifted to a culture of well-being and balance. She believes that such a cultural shift would have to incorporate everyone, including students, faculty, staff, and administration. To work towards such a goal, some of the ideas that are under discussion\(^3\) include: direct link to the Wellness Initiative website from the Smith homepage; a phone-line (as in the 2EAT model)

\(^3\) These ideas are just preliminary – no concrete plans have been established.
featuring the wellness events for the day; a “Common Hour” once a week where the campus stops for an hour of renewal or quiet. More suggestions are listed on the Wellness “Menu of Options for Smith College” (attached in the appendix) that Hayat has composed. Additionally, Hayat has created a list of “Life Capacities” (attached in the appendix) that students should have when they graduate: this list includes fundamental skills needed to live a balanced life. Such a list would complement the President’s list of proposed “Intellectual Capacities”.

2) Michele Turin Wick:

I spoke with Dr. Wick for an hour about her interests in stress and environmentally-driven behavior. She told me that there seems to be a discrepancy between the actions people say they make and what people actually do. Additionally, we discussed the idea that stress can prevent even the most environmentally-inclined person from acting in a sustainable way. For instance, stress can drive people to take actions out of convenience, rather than out of what they know to be sustainable. Dr. Wick supports the idea of taking human-stress and behavior into account when designing environments (environments such as offices, homes, appliances, etc.) in order to prevent stress from causing people to damage the environment. I didn’t focus on Dr. Wick’s approach to stress, however, because I was more interested in understanding how to help students develop coping skills that will prevent them from making irresponsible decisions in the first place.

3) Frederique Apffel-Marlin:

I met with Professor Apffel-Marlin on April 12th. Having taken Professor Apffel-Marlin’s class on ‘Political Ecology’, which focused on human connectedness and disconnectedness with the environment, I spoke with her about whether she believed students’ stress and overall busyness to be affecting their ability to connect with the natural world.

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4 Both lists are tentative and haven’t been firmly established.
Confirming my belief, she said that stress and anxiety deepen our disconnectedness with the 
world by preoccupying us with our thoughts and keeping us from connecting with the natural 
world. In her class, Professor Apffel-Marglin uses a ‘presencing’ exercise to allow students to 
slow their thoughts and connect with their surroundings. Such an exercise closely resembles the 
mindfulness exercises led by Hayat during her stress-reduction classes (see below).

4) Maureen Mahoney:

   I spoke briefly with Dean Mahoney on April 26th. My intention was to find out whether 
the administration considers wellness on campus to be an important issue and what they are 
doing to promote wellness. The Dean said that the President has asked her to address the issue 
and that achieving wellness and balance on campus has become one of her top priorities. In turn, 
she asked Hayat to research what can be done in order to improve wellness on campus (this has 
led to the “Menu of Options for Smith College”, composed by Hayat), and said that, given the 
money, she would like to build a ‘Center for Wellness’. She admits that wellness hasn’t become 
a ‘public’ issue on campus yet, but said the reason for this is that the administration is still in the 
process of researching ways to address the issue. However, she maintains that just 
acknowledging the importance of wellness on campus is a step in the right direction.

• Results from Attending a Stress-Reduction Class

   During the stress-reduction class, Hayat led a ‘mindfulness meditation’, similar to 
Professor Apffel-Marglin’s ‘presencing’ exercise. Although the exercises had similar effects and 
were directed in almost the same way. Although Hayat’s exercise wasn’t given with the intention 
of helping the student connect with the environment (as was Professor Apffel-Marglin’s 
exercise), the fact that the exercises were almost identical makes one believe that they could have 
similar results.
• **Outside Research**

I researched whether there are any studies showing that connecting with the environment improves human wellness, as well as whether human restoration in the environment increases a sense of stewardship for the environment. According to a reference of a study done by Kaplan and Kaplan, it was found that students participating in an Outward-Bound-like wilderness program reported feeling “a sense of peace, wholeness and the ability to think more clearly” (although I couldn’t access the actual study, a reference to the study was made in: Gorrell, 2002). On a similar note, a study done by Hartig, et al. (2001) suggests that restorative experiences in nature encourage ecological behavior.

• **Survey Results:**

Of the total 76 surveys distributed, the percentage of seniors, juniors, sophomores, and first-years was 12%, 18%, 34%, and 34%, respectively. Additionally, there were thirty different majors represented (including ‘undeclared’ as a major), including majors from all of Smith’s “seven major fields of knowledge” (i.e. literature, historical studies, social science, natural science, mathematics and philosophy, the arts, and foreign languages).

The percent responses for the ten statements and two questions have been graphed and the graphs can be found in the appendix. Note that for the first ten statements the measures for the x-axis are “SA”, “A”, “D”, or “SD”. These refer to the four responses: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree, respectively. Below is a summary of the survey results:

**Statement 1** (see figure 1): “I often feel stressed.”
Sixty-one percent said that they agreed that they often feel stressed, while 26 percent strongly agreed. While no student strongly disagreed with this statement, 13 percent did disagree.

**Statement 2** (see figure 2): “I feel stressed because of the demands of Smith College.”
Sixty-six percent of students said they agreed with this statement, and 27 percent strongly agreed. While no students strongly disagreed with this statement, 7 percent did disagree.

**Statement 3** (see figure 3): “Stress has a negative impact on my relationships with others.”

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5 The discrepancy in the percent-total is due to the fact that some students didn’t indicate their years.
Thirty-nine students agreed with this statement, and 27 percent strongly agreed. However, 44 percent of students disagreed with this statement and 2 percent strongly disagreed.

**Statement 4** (see figure 4): “I appreciate and value the natural environment.”
Fifty-two percent of students strongly agreed, forty-six percent agreed, and one percent did not agree. No students strongly disagreed.

**Statement 5** (see figure 5): “Being outdoors helps me to reduce stress.”
Fifty-nine percent of students agreed with this statement and thirty-four percent strongly agreed, while five percent disagreed and two percent strongly disagreed.

**Statement 6** (see figure 6): “When I am stressed, I do not act in ways that are environmentally friendly.”
Sixty-three percent of students disagreed with this statement and 13 percent strongly disagreed, while 18 percent agreed and 10 percent strongly agreed.

**Statement 7** (see figure 7): “Being stressed prevents me from taking time to appreciate and value the natural environment.”
Sixty-two percent of students agreed and 10 percent strongly agreed, while 18 percent disagreed and 3 percent strongly disagreed.

**Statement 8** (see figure 8): “My sense of well-being has improved since coming to Smith College.”
Forty-eight percent of students surveyed disagreed with this statement and four percent strongly disagree. Thirty-nine percent agreed and 8 percent strongly agreed.

**Statement 9** (see figure 9): “Smith is supportive of its students’ well-being.”
Sixty-two percent of students agreed with this statement and 6 percent strongly disagreed, while 39 percent disagreed and 3 percent strongly disagreed.

**Statement 10** (see figure 10): “Smith could improve in its support of students’ well-being.”
Sixty-four percent of students agreed with this statement and 21 percent strongly agreed; while no students strongly disagreed, 15 percent did disagree.

**Question 11** (see figure 11): “Have you heard of the Wellness Initiative (W.I.) at Smith?”
Seventy-three percent of students surveyed said that they had not heard of the W.I., while 27 percent said that they had.

**Question 12** (see figure 12): “Have you ever attended a W.I. program?”
Ninety-six percent of students said that they had not attended a program, while 4 percent said that they had.

In addition to circling a response to the previous twelve questions, students were allowed to write in a response for several questions. Below are some of the responses, along with the corresponding question:

- For question #8, students were given the opportunity to explain how their well-being has improved:
  “I am more confident and independent”; “I feel like my mind is being improved, although the balance is not always good”; “I’ve learned more about who I am”.

- For question #9, students were given the opportunity to write how Smith could improve in its support of students’ well-being:
  “Less pressure to succeed”; “Provide more resources and outlets for stressed and overwhelmed students, allow for at least one total reprieve from work…a “homework-free weekend”…to promote students’ mental health and prevent breakdowns”; “promoting taking care of yourself in aspects beyond physical health.”
DISCUSSION:

According to Hayat and Dean Mahoney, there is a pervasive “culture of stress” at Smith. The responses from the first three survey questions support this statement. A majority of students are stressed, and for many of these students the stress is caused by the demands of Smith. As I was particularly curious as to whether an individual’s stress can indirectly affect the environment, the third question on my survey was asked to assess whether stress can indirectly affect personal relationships; if stress has the ability to affect one’s relationships with others, then the effects of stress go beyond just the individual. A little more than half of the students surveys responded affirmatively to question 3 (see figure 3), suggesting that stress does have the ability to affect more than just the individual.

Questions four through seven were asked to better understand the students’ relationships with the environment and whether stress affects this connection. Most students replied that they appreciate the natural environment, and a majority of these students said that being outdoors helps them to de-stress. Unfortunately, many of the students who agreed ‘being outdoors helps me to reduce stress’ also said that stress prevents them from appreciating the natural environment (see figure 13). As stress prevents students from being able to take the time to appreciate nature, they also do not receive the restorative benefits from being outdoors. This seems to suggest that stress has a ‘downward-spiral’ effect: the more stress students have, the less likely that they are to take care of themselves; and, perhaps, the less likely that students take care of themselves, the more stressed they become.
Figure six is interesting in that it seems to suggest that students aren’t stressed to the point that they behave in anti-environmental ways. However, this question was probably both poorly interpreted by students (a number of students asked me to explain it to them) and may not actually reflect the way students actually act. From my interview with Professor Wick, people often report that they act in ways that are environmentally conscious, while their actions prove otherwise.

Questions eight through twelve were asked to assess whether students think that their well-being has improved since coming to Smith, whether they perceive Smith to be supportive of their well-being, and whether their perceptions of Smith’s support match their knowledge of what Smith has actually been doing. This was measured by assessing their knowledge of the Wellness Initiative specifically (questions 11 and 12) and didn’t take into account other ways that students could perceive Smith to be supportive of their well-being. The data from these questions seem to indicate some inconsistencies in students’ opinions. Although a little more than half of students felt that their well-being hadn’t improved since coming to Smith, about two-thirds thought that Smith was supportive. At the same time, responses from question 10 suggest that even if Smith is supportive, students believe that it could still be doing more. The comparison between these responses and the responses for questions 11 and 12 are interesting: it appears as though many students (a little under three-fourths) do not know about the Wellness Initiative, and that more than 90% do not take advantage of the programs offered through the initiative. This supports the idea that stress prevents students from taking the time to care for themselves (as was suggested from the comparison of question 5 and 7). However, these results could also just indicate that students are not interested in the W.I. programs (although, given that

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6 Professor Wick explained that the people in these studies were under some type of surveillance in order to assess if what they said they did matched up with what they actually did.
so many students didn’t even know about the initiative, it is hard to say whether there is a lack of interest.

Although the survey definitely has flaws\(^7\), the responses support the statement that there is a “culture of stress” at Smith. Although many students may believe that Smith could be doing more to support their well-being, the Wellness Initiative (an initiative specifically to promote students’ well-being) is generally unheard of. However, from my interviews with Hayat and Dean Mahoney, it appears that the administration is in the process of making wellness an important issue on campus, and is presently trying to understand how they can best transform the “culture of stress” into a culture of wellness and balance. Changing the underlying culture is necessary to promote long-term wellness, as it seems that students don’t care for themselves when they are under stress and probably won’t take advantage of stress-reduction programs while they are stressed. Clearly, changing the underlying culture will take time.

While Dean Mahoney explained that the plans for the initiative are not public because they have not been finalized, I believe making the plans public would both speed the acceptance of the wellness plans (whatever they may be) and would allow students to give their input. Also, keeping the plans private allows these goals to be put aside while other ‘more important’ matters take the foreground. Yet, due to the importance of wellness for the students, the larger community and the environment, these wellness objectives shouldn’t be set aside.

Although the Wellness Initiative wasn’t specifically designed to integrate environmental awareness and students’ wellness, integrating the two could promote both students’ enduring wellness and environmental sustainability. As the health of the environment is necessary for human wellness (as the two are interrelated), promoting environmental awareness and

\(^7\) The survey probably should have been given to more students and there are questions that are not particularly telling (i.e. questions 4 and 6).
sustainable behavior is connected to the promotion of long-term human wellness. Furthermore, although it is generally thought that being in the environment is deeply restorative (this idea seems obvious, but it is referenced in: ecopsychology.athabascau.ca), it is also now being researched whether restorative practices in the environment can enhance individuals’ sense of responsibility to those environments: it was hypothesized by Hartig, et al. (2001) that “people who see greater potential for restorative experiences in natural environments also do more to protect them”. After doing a study on 488 college students, they reported that “ecological behavior is associated with a perceived potential for restorative experience in a natural environment”. Thus, it would be wise to take advantage of the restorative benefits of nature to help people, while also fostering ecological behaviors that are necessary to ensure long-term wellness.

The ‘Escape to Nature’ retreat (as well as other W.I. activities that connect students with the environment) is a great example of one way that Smith promotes both students’ wellness and connection to the natural world. As this retreat is only offered once a semester, additional programs of this kind could be implemented throughout each semester. If it’s difficult to have more than one overnight trip a semester, the nature-activity could just be an afternoon (or moonlight) hike.

In the eventual ‘wellness goals’ (if goals are eventually established), the college might also consider adopting the ‘Seven Dimensions of Wellness’ from the Frostburg State University Health Promotion and Wellness Program (www.accd.edu): among other dimensions of wellness, this university has established an ‘Environmental Wellness’ dimension that promotes “the process of making choices which will contribute to sustaining or improving the quality of life in
the universe”. It should also be noted that Hayat initially investigated these dimensions and shared with me her findings, and thus there is already an interest in such wellness goals.

In conclusion, based upon my interviews with Hayat and Dean Mahoney, it is encouraging that the administration is aware of the fact that there is a stress-culture at Smith and that they would like to work towards creating a ‘culture of well-being’. Under the guidance of Hayat and Dean Mahoney, Smith is headed in the right direction with respect to promoting human wellness. As connecting students with the environment via restorative programs appears to promote human wellness and stewardship of the land, the long-term wellness of both students and the environment may be promoted through such programs. Working towards a culture of well-being, Smith has the ability to encourage long-term sustainable behaviors.
Literature cited:


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Personal communication:


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**APPENDIX:**

Graphs display the percentage of responses that were “strongly agree” (SA), “agree” (A), “disagree” (D), or “strongly disagree” (SD) for each of the twelve survey questions.

Figure 1: Percent of students that responded either SA, A, D, or SD to statement 1: “I often feel stressed.”

Figure 2: Percent of students that responded either SA, A, D, or SD to statement 2: “I feel stressed because of the demands at Smith College.” **Note that only students who responded affirmatively to statement 1 responded to statement 2.

Figure 3: Percent of students that responded either SA, A, D, or SD to statement 3: “Stress has a negative impact on my relationships with others.” **Note that only students who responded affirmatively to statement 1 responded to statement 3.

Figure 4: Percent of students that responded either SA, A, D, or SD to statement 4: “I appreciate and value the natural environment.” **Note that only students who responded affirmatively to statement 1 responded to statement 4.
Figure 5: Percent of students that responded either SA, A, D, or SD to statement 5: “Being outdoors helps me to reduce stress.” **Note that only students that responded affirmatively to statement 4 responded to statement 5.

Figure 6: Percent of students that responded either SA, A, D, or SD to statement 6: “When I am stressed I do not act in ways that are environmentally friendly.” **Note that only students that responded affirmatively to statement 4 responded to statement 6.

Figure 7: Percent of students that responded either SA, A, D, or SD to statement 7: “Being stressed prevents me from taking time to appreciate and value the natural environment.” **Note that only students that responded affirmatively to statement 4 responded to statement 7.

Figure 8: Percent of students that responded either SA, A, D, or SD to statement 8: “My sense of well-being has improved since coming to Smith College.”
Figure 9: Percent of students that responded either SA, A, D, or SD to statement 9: “Smith is supportive of its students’ well-being.”

Figure 10: Percent of students that responded either SA, A, D, or SD to statement 10: “Smith could improve in its support of students’ well-being.”

Figure 11: Percent of students that responded either Yes or No to question 11: “Have you heard of the Wellness Initiative (W.I.) at Smith?”

Figure 12: Percent of students that responded either Yes or No to question 12: “Have you ever attended a W.I. program?”
Figure 13: Percentage of students who responded either SA, A, D, or SD to statement 7 (“Being stressed prevents me from taking time to appreciate and value the natural environment”) who also responded affirmatively to statement 5 (“Being outdoors helps me to reduce stress”).
CAPACITIES for LIFE

# Relational Capacity:

To smile, converse, and engage with people
To strengthen and nurture relationships and reciprocity
To be a friend to someone who is hurting
To find mentors for oneself and be a mentor to others

# Capacity for clear communication:

To speak one’s needs clearly and assertively
To understand and negotiate differences
To give and receive criticism constructively

# Capacity for spiritual/ethical reflection and action:

For spiritual renewal and self-reflection
For satisfying activism and service
To cleave to one’s own moral and ethical compass

# Capacity for joy:

Ongoing curiosity outside one’s vocation
Ability to express gratitude, praise, and happiness
Desire to connect to beauty, art, and music

# Capacity for health, resiliency and self-nurturance in life, work and family:

Developing good fitness, nutrition and sleep habits/awareness
Gaining skills in stress reduction and time management
Ability to learn something useful from a crisis
Skills to prevent burnout and enhance equanimity
Advantages of flexibility, humor and fun
Developing self-esteem
Self-acceptance for being “good enough”

Hayat Abuza
April, 2005
--WELLNESS—
A Menu of Options for Smith College

• Annual Julia Child Day: Festival of Pleasure and *Joie de Vivre*
• Naming contest for the Smith College Wellness Initiative, eg “WOW” – Working on Wellness/ Be WELL
• Link to Wellness Initiative from Smith home page; funding to develop Wellness webpage and keep it updated. Make Wellness a prominent part of the Smith package and recruiting via collaboration with Admissions
• Dedicated Phone Line (as in the 2EAT model) featuring the week’s “hot” Wellness events, plus Wellness tips, promos, humor, thoughts for the day, etc.
• Use of plasma screens in Campus Center and projections in Olin Fitness Ctr.
• Pilot program for students to develop extra-curricular Capacities (see attached), perhaps beginning with first year class and focusing on one “capacity” each semester for eight semesters
• “Common Hour” once a week – an oasis in the day - whole campus stops for an hour of renewal or quiet or for all-campus wellness events
• Book group to discuss Mind/Body/Spirit connection (first year summer reading?)
  1. Faculty/staff
  2. Students with faculty discussion leaders
• A new pre-orientation program in August 2007: Conscious Communication (and negotiating conflict); continue throughout year--peer mediator model
• Wellness Retreats off-campus for groups of first-year students
• Panel Discussion on Finding Mentors and navigating Turning Points in one’s life
• One or two-credit course (or Interterm courses):
  1. Assertiveness training
  2. Conflict resolution
  3. Time Management
  4. Developing an online portfolio
  5. Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction - research/practice/outcomes
  6. Dialectical Behavioral Therapy – identifying and managing emotions
  7. Online portfolio design and documentation of skills
  8. Public speaking skills; social encounters
• Rally Day honoree from the field of wellness, holistic health or stress management
• Liberal Arts Luncheon Speaker on Mind/Body research
• Book display in Neilsen, featuring writers in the field of health and wellness
• C.H.I.L.L.
• Get Fit Smith – expand existing Athletics Dept. programming to reduce crowding; offer a Wellness Festival and prizes
  1. More hours for the pool
  2. Publicize King and Baldwin locations
  3. More aerobic machines to be placed on old fitness plaza
  4. On-campus bike and skate rentals
• Create Student/Faculty Wellness Council
• Reinvigorate House Health Rep. position to include Wellness initiatives
• Wellness programming during orientation and at Friday Teas or other ongoing events
• Design and host major conference on College Student Wellness: Research/Programs/New Directions
• Stipends for students to attend conferences or do internships in Mind-Body Wellness
• Wellness T-shirts, posters, mugs and other ways of branding the program across campus
• Non-credit workshops and training
  1. Playshops – art and dance
  2. Dating WELL – dating tips from faculty/staff/student panel
  3. Yoga – continue drop-in program
  4. Speak WELL – finding your voice in tough situations
  5. Listen WELL – the keys to conflict resolution
  6. Laugh WELL – a day of fun on campus
• Bus trips off-campus during each semester
  1. Mass MoCA
  2. Butterfly Museum and Mount Sugarloaf
  3. Sunrise/sunset hikes
  4. Whole Foods/Trader Joe’s
  5. Bridge of Flowers in Shelburne
  6. Leverett Peace Pagoda
• Expanded fitness opportunities – reduce crowding
  5. More hours for the pool
  6. Publicize King and Baldwin locations
  7. More aerobic machines to be placed on old fitness plaza
  8. On-campus bike and skate rentals
• Assignment of upperclass mentor to all sophomores in each department
• More comprehensive health support:
  1. Drop-in hours at health services
  2. Provide more mental health info and have counselors lead open discussions about mental health issues
  3. Provide condoms in the houses
  4. Help for students in finding dental and eye care

Hayat Abuza April 2005