



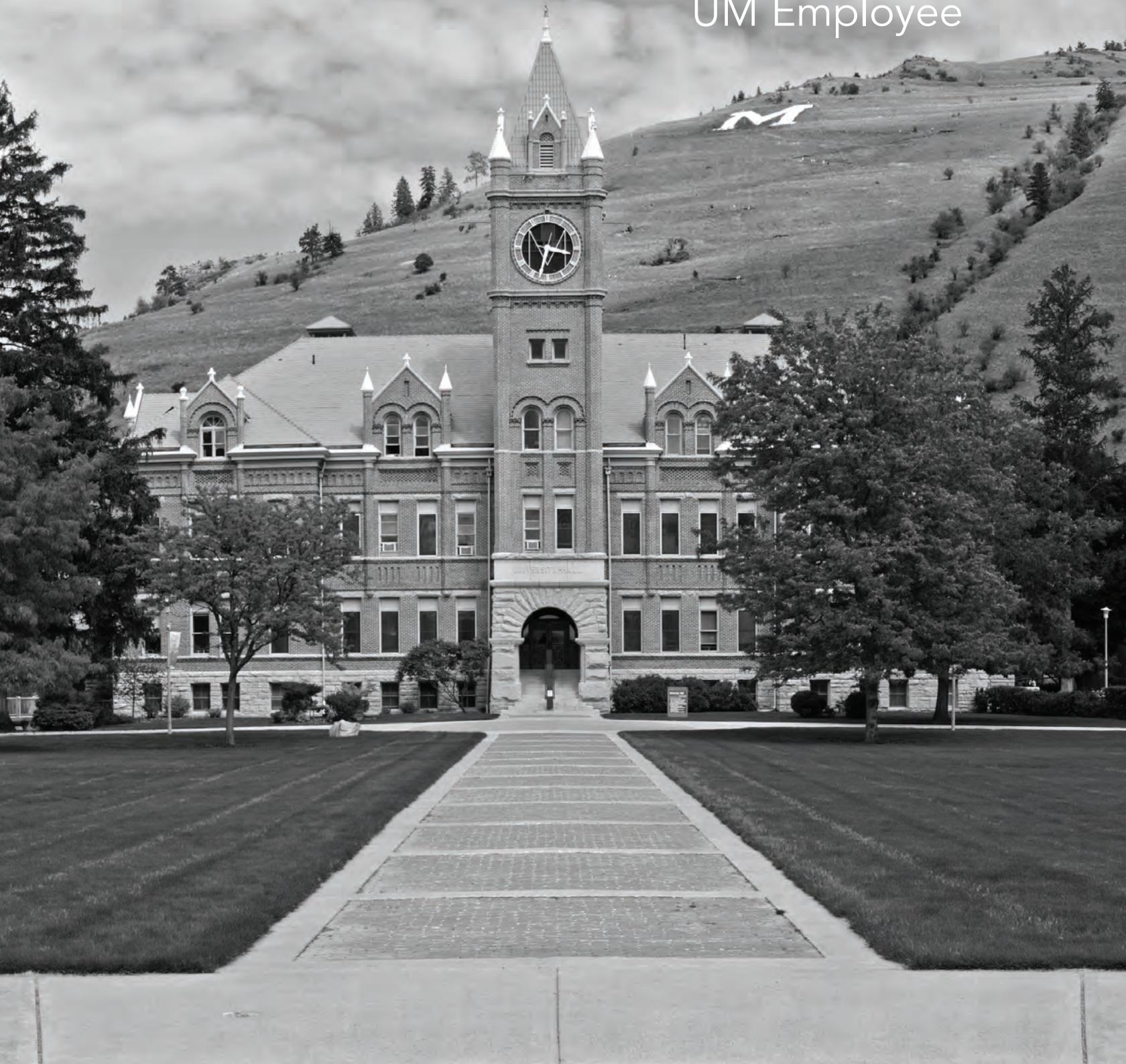
**STUDENT  
WELLNESS  
ADVOCATE**

**FACULTY TOOLKIT**

Supporting Student Learning & Success  
Through Improved Well-being

*"This place is important to me.  
It's ours. We have a chance to  
impact people's lives."*

UM Employee





Based on the well-documented concept that student wellbeing is critical to learning, success and persistence, this toolkit provides a foundation on how instructors can integrate vital conditions for well-being in the learning environment.\* Creating a classroom culture that supports student well-being has the potential to powerfully impact our students. According to UM student data, stress and anxiety are the top challenges to academic success with 63 percent of students reporting “more than average” to “tremendous” levels of stress. Extending the reach of health and wellness efforts into the academic setting is an innovative approach to ensuring UM students have the support they need to thrive both academically and personally. Thank you for your commitment to providing a classroom environment that both inspires and supports students.

The work you do makes a difference.

*\*The concept and content of this toolkit is strongly based on groundbreaking work by Simon Fraser University and their Healthy Campus Community initiative. Many thanks to the SFU Health Promotion department for sharing this and many other resources. Please refer to references page for more background information and related research.*

*“I try to engage students less with lectures and expert dump and more with introspection, group work and try to help them elicit their own insights.”*

UM Faculty

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Instructors who provide opportunities for their students' personal and professional growth increase the students' skills, resiliency and preparedness for the future.

## SUGGESTIONS

### COURSE DESIGN

- Bring in guest speakers or alumni to help students connect in-class learning to real life issues, work skills and their career development.
- Incorporate examples from the real world in class (news clips, career advice, guest speakers from the workforce.)
- Use journaling or other reflective activities to encourage personal growth.
- Create assignments that allow students to explore the ways academic content relates to their lives, families, and current or future careers.
- Use activities and practices in class to help build you & your students' intercultural competence.
- Consider what skills students will need to succeed in life and in their careers and try to find ways to foster these in class (for example teamwork, communication, problem solving, empathy, initiative.)

### BE A RESOURCE

- Offer mindfulness or other resiliency skill building activities during class breaks or as a part of the course.
- Link students to resources that support their personal resilience and well-being.
- Encourage students to seek co-curricular and volunteer opportunities.
- Provide opportunities for mentor matching.

## RESOURCES

Curry Health Center Wellness	243-2809	Career Services	243-2022
Curry Health Center Counseling	243-4711	Undergraduate Research /	
Academic Enrichment	243-2815	Academic Enrollment	243-2815
American Indian Student Services	243-6306	ASUM Student Groups	243-2451



## FLEXIBILITY

Flexible instructors provide students with multiple avenues for engaging with the course in order to offer students control over their learning experiences. Personal agency helps students feel empowered and supported, which contributes to their well-being and overall success.

## SUGGESTIONS

### COURSE DESIGN

- Offer students the option to choose their “best two out of three” for assignments or quizzes.
- Offer opportunities for students to receive feedback on writing assignments before the deadline or allow for revisions of graded writing.
- Offer students choice in assignments and opportunities to set their own deadlines or percentage of final grade for assignments.
- Seek feedback from students throughout the semester. This could be done through web-survey or an anonymous in class comment card.
- Use interactive tools like iClicker to promote class input and participation.
- Reward students for demonstrating consistent investment in the course (asking questions, being timely, and being a positive, productive member of the class.)

### ACCESSIBILITY

- In your syllabus, offer a variety of ways for students to contact you with questions or concerns.
- Consider providing students with lecture notes or power point slides ahead of class, and providing lecture recordings (particularly helpful for EASL students whereby they have more opportunities to work through the rate of speech during lectures.)
- Consider alternative forms of office hours (for example skype, webconferencing, group office hours.)
- Upload slides and lecture notes to Moodle to allow easier access to the material.
- Incorporate principles of Universal Design for Learning to help accommodate diverse learners.
- Consider using Open Educational Resources (online texts that are free, adaptable and a flexible alternative to traditional text books.)

## RESOURCES

OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

UMOnline

243-4999



## SOCIAL CONNECTION

Instructors who facilitate interaction help students build social networks which foster resilience and are an asset to well-being. Interaction in the class can help create a sense of belonging, community and positive classroom culture.

### SUGGESTIONS

#### COURSE DESIGN

- Have students introduce themselves during the first class or use icebreaker activities as part of curriculum.
- Make it clear that the quality of teamwork in group assignments is important by including marks for the group process in grading rubrics.
- Offer personality assessment or a Team Style Inventory in forming groups and to help groups function smoothly.
- Design lecture assignments that require students to collectively work on study questions and participate in small group discussions.
- Work with your teaching assistants to create opportunities for social connection and teamwork in tutorials or labs.

#### FACILITATE CONNECTION

- Ask students to keep phones off and put away during class time.
- Create class guidelines as a group to respect others and create a safe place for interaction and discussion (ie: "appreciate all perspectives," "listen for understanding," "be empathetic.")
- Encourage students to participate in study groups.
- Ask students to take down the name and number of at least one of their peers so that they can connect should they miss a lecture or want to form a study group.
- Offer mini breaks in class and encourage students to take this time to get to know one another.
- If possible, move tables and chairs into small groups to facilitate discussion (just be sure to return them after class.)

## RESOURCES

TEAM STYLE INVENTORY

FIRST DAY OF CLASS ACTIVITIES

*“When a professor is mindful of how they are teaching their class... that can make a huge difference in your stress.”*

UM Student

## OPTIMAL CHALLENGE

Students perform and feel their best when they are challenged, but have adequate resources to meet the challenge.

## SUGGESTIONS

### COURSE DESIGN

- Set clear course goals, and ensure assignments and expectations are clear from the start.
- Consider the timing of exams and assignments to alleviate undue stress.
- Publish grading rubrics in advance.
- Recognize that more tasks do not always equate to more learning.
- Avoid very heavily weighted components, such as an exam worth 50% of the final grade.
- Provide activities where students design mock test/study questions.

### MEET STUDENTS WHERE THEY ARE

- Acknowledge that students have lives outside their academic pursuits and support them to find balance.
- Provide opportunities for feedback on each stage of assignments and help students progress to the next stage for larger projects.
- Give specific targeted and timely feedback about strengths and weaknesses.
- Incorporate principles of Universal Design for Learning to help accommodate diverse learners. (UM professor Morgan Alwell is a good local resource.)
- Remind students about the resources available to them through the Office for Student Success or Curry Health Center.
- Pause and summarize or ask students to summarize (“Please summarize my example and add another,” or “Take a minute to prepare a question about this.”)
- Participate in early warning systems (e.g., Starfish, Moodle, your own.)

## RESOURCES

### UNIVERSAL DESIGN LEARNING

Office for Student Success	243-2800
Starfish	243-2297
Curry Health Center	243-4330
Disability Services	243-2243

*“When they share their struggles, that’s helpful too.”*

UM Student

## POSITIVE CLASSROOM CULTURE

Instructors who create an enjoyable and welcoming classroom culture can enhance positive well-being for students and instructors. This can be accomplished through humor, inspiration, open-mindedness, connecting with students and deeply engaging them in their learning.

### SUGGESTIONS

#### SET THE STAGE

- Create class guidelines as a group to respect differences and create a safe place for discussion (i.e. “appreciate perspectives and differences” or “remember that people are talking from personal experiences -- be empathetic.”)
- Be intentional about setting a welcoming tone throughout the semester.
- Offer breaks in class where students can take a breather or connect to one another. Consider limiting student use of phones/devices during class.
- Use active learning techniques to create an engaging and dynamic learning environment.
- Allow students space to be wrong and gently encourage alternate viewpoints.
- When possible, ensure a pleasant and inviting space through use of color, art, music and well maintained facilities.
- Incorporate inspirational quotes or laughter to lighten the mood.
- Take care of your own well-being so that you can be present and encouraging for your students -- see Self-Care page for more resources.

#### BE IN IT TOGETHER

- Acknowledge that university can be intimidating and stressful for students; provide resources that can alleviate stress and promote success.
- Share your teaching philosophy with students.
- Share a bit about yourself, your career path or setbacks you’ve overcome.
- Take time in class to check-in with how your students are doing.
- Facilitate respectful, honest discussion as part of curriculum.
- Acknowledge that not all students are ready to share in the classroom and encourage them to engage with you during your office hours.
- Seek feedback from students throughout the semester (this could be done through web-survey or an anonymous in-class comment card.)



## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Instructors who provide students with opportunities to make a valued contribution through their coursework can give them a boost to their emotional well-being. Service learning is beneficial in helping students learn about themselves and their interests therefore directing their college and career paths.

### COURSE DESIGN

- Create assignments in which the results can be utilized by a community group or campus initiative.
- Where possible incorporate community service or service learning components into your course.
- Consider requesting a Service Learning Course Designation for your class.
- Lead discussions or activities that help students develop a sense of civic responsibility.
- Recognize that universities play a role in developing the leaders of tomorrow and encourage students to explore their own values and goals.
- Consider what skills students will need to succeed in life and in their careers and try to find ways to foster these in class (for example teamwork, communication, problem solving, empathy, initiative.)

### SPARK ENGAGEMENT

- Encourage students to get involved in extracurricular volunteer work. Consider extra credit points for civic engagement activities outside the classroom curriculum.
- Remind students of UM's Volunteer Fair held each semester.
- Learn about UM's Service Saturdays program and encourage your students to participate -- email [service.saturday@mso.umt.edu](mailto:service.saturday@mso.umt.edu).
- Learn about UM's Alternative Breaks - a program for students to engage in service projects during academic breaks.

## RESOURCES:

- |  |          |                     |          |
|--|----------|---------------------|----------|
| • UM Academic Enrichment                   | 243-2815 | Volunteer Missoula  |          |
| • Montana Campus Compact                   | 243-5117 | UM Civic Engagement | 243-5331 |
| • UM Service Learning Course Designation   | 243-2815 |                     |          |
| • Volunteers in Action Student Association | 243-2815 |                     |          |

*“I go out of my way to watch out for and support students who I recognize might need it.”*

UM EMPLOYEE

## INSTRUCTOR SUPPORT

As an instructor you play an important role in setting a positive and supportive tone that can go a long way in helping students to feel welcome and at ease.

### SUGGESTIONS

#### CONNECT WITH YOUR STUDENTS

- Whenever possible, let students know you care about them and their success (e.g., general discussions to entire class, small personal connections with students.)
- Show up early to class and engage with students personally.
- Ask students about their interests, their workload, their extracurricular activities.

#### BE ACCESSIBLE

- Demystify your role by sharing an anecdote, joke, or something to reveal you too are human.
- Personally invite small groups of students to attend office hours.
- Consider alternative forms of office hours (for example web chat, group office hours.)

#### OPEN LINES OF COMMUNICATION

- Set clear expectations using syllabi and rubrics.
- Provide constructive feedback throughout the semester.
- Suggest specific actions students can take to improve.
- Seek feedback from students mid-semester (e.g., anonymous paper forms, web survey, class discussion.)
- Participate in early warning systems (e.g. Starfish, Moodle, your own.)
- Use “one-minute papers” - give students a prompt and one minute or more to respond in writing.

#### BE IN IT TOGETHER

- Use engaging pedagogical techniques such as cooperative or problem-based learning.
- Acknowledge campus events which may be affecting students.
- Encourage students to be involved on campus.
- Promote campus resources available to students.

### RESOURCES

See RESPONDING TO A STUDENT IN CRISIS  
See SELF-CARE FOR INSTRUCTORS



## INCLUSIVITY

An inclusive learning environment demonstrates an intentional consideration for all students and in doing so, can enhance positive well-being.

## SUGGESTIONS

### COURSE DESIGN

- Use activities and practices in class to help build intercultural competence.
- Encourage participation in events designed to celebrate diversity (Kyi-Yo, Powwow, DIVERSE U, Black Solidarity Summit, Pride Week.)
- Offer a values clarification exercise.
- Break large projects into a series of smaller assignments and offer opportunities for feedback.

### MEET STUDENTS WHERE THEY ARE

- Incorporate principles of Universal Design for Learning to help accommodate diverse learners (UM professor Morgan Alwell is a good local resource.)
- Pause and summarize or ask students to summarize ("I want you to summarize my example and add another" or "take a minute to prepare a question about this.")
- Provide visual support (text and/or graphic.)
- Consider Providing students with lecture notes or power point slides ahead of class and provide lecture recordings on Moodle (particularly helpful for EASL students whereby they have more opportunities to work through the rate of speech during lectures.)

### OPEN COMMUNICATION

- Create class guidelines as a group to respect difference and create a safe place for discussion (ie. "appreciate perspectives and differences" or "remember that people are talking from personal experiences — be empathetic.")
- Encourage students to speak to you about any accessibility concerns they may have.

### BE A RESOURCE

- Familiarize yourself with the intercultural awareness resources available at UM and share these with your students.
- Use inclusive language and gender neutral pronouns.
- Take an indigenous cultural competency course.
- Learn to identify "micro-agressions" and work to mitigate them in your classroom.
- Remind students what resources are available to them.

## RESOURCES:

- |                                    |          |                                 |
|------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|
| • American Indian Student Services | 243-6303 | • UM Diversity Advisory Council |
| • DSS                              | 243-2243 | • Universal Design for Learning |
| • UM Allies                        | 243-5622 |                                 |

# RESPONDING TO A STUDENT IN A CRISIS

Instructors who respond to the needs of struggling students and connect them with campus resources help support their personal well-being, resilience and readiness to learn.

## SUGGESTIONS

### BE PREPARED

- Identify your personal philosophy and boundaries about responding to students in need - what are you willing to do, give or sacrifice?
- Consult with Curry Health Center Counseling and your colleagues for guidance and support.
- Understand that you do not need to have all the answers. Students often know what they need. Just listening is a powerful helping tool.

### CREATE A STUDENT-CENTERED PLAN

- Acknowledge that it can be hard to ask for help, affirm the student for coming to you.
- Ask open-ended questions - what, how, when?
- Listen for understanding and with empathy.
- Reflect back what you hear to ensure clear understanding "What I hear you saying is..."
- Help the student identify his/her/their strengths.
- Engage your student in devising his/her/their own path forward.
- Have faith that your student can overcome any challenge with the proper help.

### BE A RESOURCE

- Familiarize yourself with the various student support services and co-curricular learning supports across campus.
- Invite guest speakers from various campus services to present on their services during class.
- Create a list referrals with names and contact information to have ready when needed - help make necessary appointments if this fits within your personal boundaries.

### RESPONDING TO A SERIOUS CONCERN

- Contact UM's Behavioral Intervention Team about students who engage in worrisome behaviors.
- Walk your student to Curry Health Center Counseling immediately if he/she/they are suicidal.
- Contact UM Police and 911 for immediate emergencies.

## RESOURCES:

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| • Academic Enrichment                   | 243-2815 |
| • American Indian Student Services      | 243-6306 |
| • Career Services                       | 243-2022 |
| • Curry Health Center                   | 243-4330 |
| • Curry Health Center Health Coaching   | 243-2809 |
| • Disability Services                   | 243-5530 |
| • Financial Aid Office                  | 243-5373 |
| • International Students & Scholarships | 243-2288 |
| • Office for Student Success            | 243-2800 |
| • Starfish                              | 243-2297 |
| • VETS Office                           | 243-2744 |

## CRISIS RESOURCES

- |                                    |                      |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Curry Health Center Counseling   | 243-4711             |
| • Student Advocacy Resource Center | 243-4429             |
| • UM Police                        | 243-4000             |
| • Behavioral Intervention Team     | 243-2081 or 243-2611 |
| • Suicide Crisis Line              | 800-273-8255         |

*"I will be a better instructor if I've taken good care of myself."*

UM Employee

## SELF-CARE FOR INSTRUCTORS

Responding to the dynamic needs of students is difficult when you are feeling depleted. Prioritizing self-care will boost your overall well-being, allowing you to be present for your students. The journey to better well-being is a personal one. One way to get started on your individual path is to identify which areas of your life are currently bringing you fulfillment or frustration. Which areas in your life might need some additional focus?

On a scale of 1 to 10, rate how satisfied or how well you feel you are doing in each area of your life.  
1 = not at all satisfied, 10 = completely satisfied

### **Career/Profession**

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

### **Personal Relationships**

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

### **Fun, Relaxation, Creativity**

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

### **Sense of Community**

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

### **Finances**

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

### **Physical Health and Wellbeing**

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

### **Sense of Purpose**

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

### **Emotional Health and Wellbeing**

1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10

What areas of your life have received the benefit of your attention and natural strengths, and which might need some additional care?

## Consider these questions to help define the first steps on your path to improved well-being:

Which areas of my life are the most satisfying and fulfilling? Why is that? What is happening in this area to cause me to feel this way?

In which areas of my life am I feeling dissatisfied or unfulfilled? What is not working? What is causing me to feel this way? What is feeling out of control? What is in my control that I can influence and change?

Which areas of my life could be even better? Where do I want to focus my time and energy? Where would I receive the most benefit for investing time and energy? Where am I feeling the biggest "nudge?"

## SUGGESTIONS

### CREATING SPACE FOR WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

- Communicate your in-person availability to students - set defined office hours and clearly communicate them.
- Clearly define your digital availability to students - consider adding an expected response time in email signature.
- Limit distractions by turning off phone notifications and logging into email at set times during the day.
- Set realistic expectations for yourself -- recognize what you are sacrificing when you say yes to something.
- Schedule times during the day to take care of yourself -- time to eat, reminders for water, daily breaks, meditation.
- Consider scheduling blocks of time during the day -- email block, prep block, grading block, personal time block.

### PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Incorporate daily movement - find exercise you enjoy, park farther away, take the stairs, walk across campus.
- Prioritize sleep -- limit caffeine and alcohol, turn off screens early and keep them out of the bedroom.
- Eat more vegetables, the act of simply adding more vegetables each day can greatly impact your overall health.

### EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Lower stress with breathing exercises -- pair breathing exercises with things you do frequently each day.
- Create a support system -- quality connection with others boosts mental well-being and happiness.
- Arrange a meeting instead of corresponding via email.
- Let go of perfectionism.
- Find the good -- consider keeping a daily gratitude journal.
- Identify what grounds you to a greater purpose.
- Recognize what gives you energy and the things that deplete you.

## RESOURCES

MUS Wellness Program  
UM Campus Recreation  
UM Mind and Body Lab  
Faculty Development Office



## BUILD THE STUDENT WELLNESS ADVOCATE NETWORK

The following are ideas for how you might support student success through wellbeing within your own department:

- Invite Curry Health Center Wellness to share resources at a faculty meeting
- Try an idea from this toolkit in your class and let us know how it goes
- Meet with someone from Curry Health Center Wellness to discuss ideas for supporting student success through wellbeing within a class you teach, or refer a colleague to connect with us
- Become your department's resource for the Student Wellness Advocate program
- Start a teaching circle in your department related to concepts presented in this toolkit
- Connect with your department's chair or dean to explore how the toolkit can be embedded in existing departmental activities
- Share with us what you are currently doing that you find works well in enhancing student well-being.
- Share feedback with us about the project and associated resources
- Learn more about the research that supports the Student Wellness Advocate project

To connect further with Curry Health Center Wellness regarding these ideas email [julee.stearns@umontana.edu](mailto:julee.stearns@umontana.edu)

*“I understand how busy they are and how demanding school can be... I really try to do my best to find a workable solution that focuses on the needs of students.”*

UM Employee

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CURRY  
HEALTH CENTER  
wellness

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[WWW.UMT.EDU/SWA](http://WWW.UMT.EDU/SWA)

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QUICK LINK GUIDE

OPEN ED RESOURCES  
UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING  
TEAM STYLE INVENTORY  
PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT  
UM DIVERSITY COUNCIL

## **Strengthen Student Support that Sets Us Apart**

*“Implement programming that empowers students to achieve health around all aspects of wellness. Recognize the promotion of wellness as a campus-wide responsibility.”*

- UM STRATEGIC VISION 1.1