



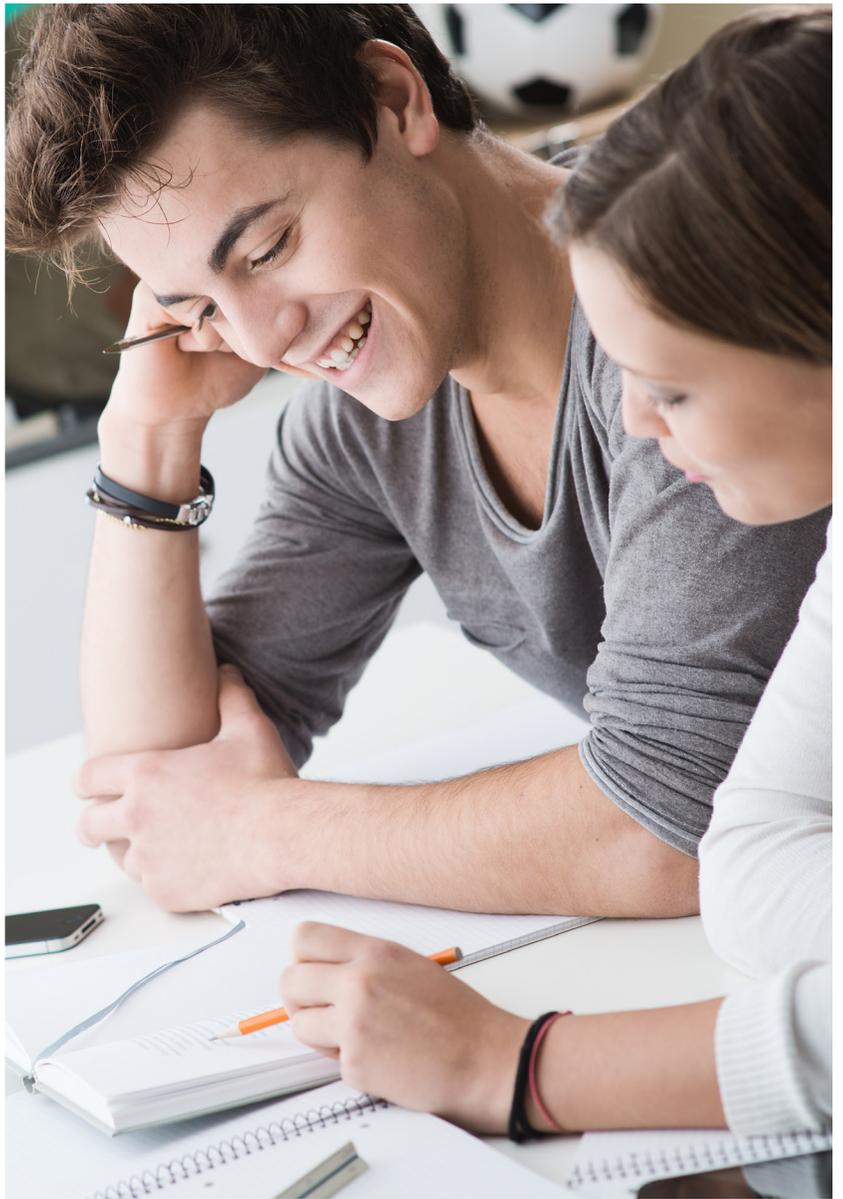
Recommendations for improved  
**WELLNESS and  
MENTAL HEALTH**

Laurentian University Campus Mental Wellness Working Group



**Laurentian**University  
Université**Laurentienne**





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## Recommendations

The recommendations are organized in three sections (year one, year two and year three to five) to coincide with our Strategic Plan. The recommendations are also strongly informed by the Okanagan Charter and promise to enhance our campus environment as a wellness laboratory, offering opportunities to study and support health and well-being, as well as sustainability and resilience in the built, natural, social, economic, cultural, academic, organizational and learning environments.



***It is with those values in mind that the working group submit the following recommendations:***



**WITHIN  
1 YEAR**

# Within 1 year we will...

1. Form a standing 'Wellness' Task Force

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2. Prioritize investment in communication resources that enhance visibility/accessibility to University wellness services, policies and procedures
  - 2.1 Promote the *Keep Me Safe* program

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3. Prioritize Train the Trainer approaches to professional development

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4. Prioritize prevention and early intervention approaches to wellness

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5. Maintain and enhance student (peer) led services

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6. Include campus wellness service information in onboarding packages/training

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7. Create a campus and community wellness hub

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8. Adopt and sign The Okanagan Charter

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9. Apply a wellness lens/filter to University policies and procedures



- 1. Form a standing 'Wellness' Task Force:** The University will create a standing Wellness Task Force composed of students, staff and faculty. The mandate of this group will be to monitor wellness initiatives for students (domestic and international as well as undergraduate and graduate), staff and faculty. The task force will recommend new activities or resources as appropriate and, through collaboration and consultation with other teams and partners on campus, will promote educational training that fosters wellness and a positive learning and working environment. A call for members will be issued by the Offices of the VP Administration and VP Academic and Provost or via other mechanisms as deemed appropriate.
- 2. Prioritize investment in communication resources that enhance visibility/accessibility to University wellness services, policies and procedures:** The University will leverage Information Technology, Communications and Marketing resources to better inform and easily connect students, staff and faculty to services, policies and procedures and to ensure better continuity of service across campus.
  - 2.1. Promote the *Keep Me Safe* program:** This is our International student mental health support program. The program offers immediate access night or day. International students can talk to someone in their own language with a call, chat or email.

**3. Prioritize Train the Trainer approaches to professional development:** Invest in students, staff and faculty who have a background and/or interest in wellness and mental health to support the development and delivery of on campus workshops and certifications in mental health and wellness. To offer these workshops and certifications to community partners to further engage our partners and to contribute to the overall wellness of our partners and community. SafeTALK, Mental Health First Aid, Mental Health First Aid (First Nations), Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) training opportunities are already offered to students, staff and faculty.

**3.1** Encourage the use of technology and software related to mental wellness (ex. various apps on this topic). Provide leadership training and workshops for staff and faculty on this topic.

**4. Prioritize prevention and early intervention approaches to wellness:** Offer workshops on mental health awareness, resilience and empathy to students, staff and faculty at the beginning of the Fall, Winter and Spring semesters. Support the Fall 2018 pilot implementation of the Mental health Commission of Canada *Inquiring Minds'* project. These workshops could be strategically embedded into two or three first year courses or made available during orientation sessions to ensure that students know early on the first signs of psychological distress in themselves and others and where they can go on campus to seek assistance before crisis.

**5. Maintain and enhance student (peer) led services:** Services such as the Student Life Mentors and LUCERT are examples of peer led services on campus. Students who offer support to other students should be connected to university services and better integrated into Laurentian's own support framework. In some cases, third and fourth year student volunteers are matched to peers who might need advice and support. In other cases, students go through extensive emergency training and respond to calls on campus.

**6. Include campus wellness service information in onboarding packages/training:** Ensure that new students, staff, administrators and Faculty members as well as new School Directors and Departmental Chairs are provided 'Fact Sheets' summarizing the various health and wellness services provided on campus for students, staff and faculty members as well as the names and contact information of staff within each service area that can be contacted. Alternatively or in parallel, the onboarding package *ii@information* could be made accessible via Google Drive or some other type of easily accessible portal.

**7. Create a campus and community wellness hub:** The working group recommends that the University centralise wellness services on campus and make available spaces in the new Wellness Hub for community and/or regionally based services to be able to offer services to students, staff and faculty. This new Wellness Hub should be located on the 2nd floor of the Parker building close to the Atrium. The proposed Wellness Hub will also act as a collaborative centre for service, program and research partnerships.

Building upon the Laurentian University Strategic Plan 2018-2023 and RELATIONSHIPS being a priority; the idea of providing a space where existing community and LU wellness related programs are housed is highly valued. We are proposing that we start with key external resources in the community that have expressed an interest in A Wellness Hub at Laurentian. Some of our partners can include Shkagamik-Kwe Health Centre, Centre Victoria pour femmes, Canadian Mental Health Association, Northern Initiative for Social Action (NISA) and others committed to a broad definition of wellness.

**8. Adopt and sign The Okanagan Charter:** This international charter is a holistic approach to health and wellness in postsecondary settings. Signing this charter would be a symbolic gesture to our community that wellness is truly valued.

**9. Apply a wellness lens/filter to University policies and procedures:** Led by the newly created Wellness Task Group, the University, using the Okanagan Charter as a guiding document, will apply a wellness perspective on existing and new policies and procedures. The University will consider the potential impact of the policy and/or procedure on the health and wellness of stakeholders and select pathways that are both efficient and healthful. An example of this could be a statement of principles that describes the relationship between the university and students.

<sup>1</sup> "New Student Mental Health Program to be Piloted on Seven Canadian ...." 7 Sep. 2017, <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/news-article/13284/new-student-mental-health-program-be-piloted-seven-canadian-campuses>. Accessed 13 June, 2018.



# WITHIN 2 YEARS



# Within 2 years we will...

10. Align wellness services and humanise interactions/contact

11. Develop and introduce a health/wellness certificate

12. Schedule campus wellness days

12.1 Introduce Well-Derness Camps

13. Support wellness research including conducting an environmental scan of wellness and mental health concerns of students, staff and faculty

13.1 Leverage the research expertise and activities of Research Centres and Institutes at Laurentian University



**10. Align wellness services and humanise interactions/contact:** The working group recommends that the University prioritizes the onboarding of wellness and health services onto a unified online service platform (exists as Fusion in other parts of the University). The objective would be to have better communication and alignment around health, wellness and support services and to guarantee a more seamless service experience for our students. The working group members emphasized that accessing and/or inquiring about services via human contact and interactions was critical to student success and wellness potential.

**11. Develop and introduce a health/wellness certificate:** Students and possibly staff and faculty will be given the opportunity to complete a certificate on wellness, health promotion theories, resilience, stress management, nutrition, first responder training and other topics as appropriate. The certificate could also be offered to the community as a professional development opportunity and partnership building exercise.

**12. Schedule campus wellness days:** The working group recommends that the University invest in staff and resources for regularly scheduled education and prevention activities for students, staff and faculty on campus and for those who are taking courses online. The wellness education plan should be inspired by a strengths-based model, encourage the development of strength-based resilience building skills and abilities that support continued well-being. Proposals for new mental wellness education sessions will be made annually by the standing wellness task force.

**12.1 Introduce Well-Derness Camps:** Some of our strengths include our natural surroundings and expertise in outdoor adventure education and learning. The working group recommends that students, staff and faculty be supported in attending regularly scheduled wilderness/nature inspired programming that promote wellness and a connection to nature.



**13. Support wellness research including conducting an environmental scan of wellness and mental health concerns of students, staff and faculty:** To maximize the effectiveness of mental wellness strategies across campus, it would be ideal to understand the types of mental wellness challenges that students, staff and faculty are facing. The working group recommends the creation of a campus wellness research fund to invest in wellness program development and evaluation. Important comparative data can also be collected by participating in the *National College Health Assessment*<sup>2</sup> project which is scheduled for a national survey in 2019. *The ACHA-National College Health Assessment (NCHA)* is a nationally recognized research survey that can collect precise data about students' health habits, behaviours, and perceptions.

**13.1 Leverage the research expertise and activities of Research Centres and Institutes at Laurentian University:** This will advance knowledge on campus wellness matters to develop best practice models of campus wellness promotion and campus wellness service delivery. The Office of Research Services could be consulted to obtain full details on seed grants (i.e. LURF, LURF-R, Advancing Indigenous Research Fund) and other forms of research grants (i.e. SSHRC, MOL, CIHR, Bell Let's Talk).

<sup>2</sup> "Survey Data – American College Health Association." [https://www.acha.org/ACHA/Resources/Survey\\_Data/ACHA/Resources/Survey\\_Data.aspx](https://www.acha.org/ACHA/Resources/Survey_Data/ACHA/Resources/Survey_Data.aspx). Accessed 25 May. 2018.



**WITHIN  
3-5 YEARS**

# Within 3 to 5 years we will...

14. Ensure adequate service staff to student ratios

15. Enhance the Indigenous Student Affairs' team services

16. Destigmatize mental health and improve campus attitudes towards wellness



**14. Ensure adequate service staff to student ratios:** The working group recommends that the University ensure adequate resourcing of support staff for counseling, accessibility, Indigenous Sharing and Learning Centre and the Centre for Academic Excellence.

**15. Enhance the Indigenous Student Affairs' team services:** This mostly grant funded service strives to ensure a positive learning environment in a manner consistent with the Indigenous worldviews. The team's intention is also to increase accessibility and retention, as well as enhance the holistic experience of students of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit ancestry at Laurentian University.

**16. Destigmatize mental health and improve campus attitudes towards wellness:** When revising and creating policies and procedures, promote the use of informal methods/processes/mechanisms as a first step towards resolutions before initiating formal processes that may cause undue stress for all parties involved. Provide opportunities in campus operations and processes to practice strengths-based learning and skills to model wellness promoting behaviours. Examples of this already exist in some University procedures such as the section on informal resolution Restorative justice in the Code of Student Conduct (Non-Academic) and Program from a Respectful Working and Learning Environment.



## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Post-secondary institutions (PSI) across Canada are increasingly recognizing their important role in promoting health and wellness of students, staff and faculty by creating learning and working environments that foster self-actualization of all stakeholders. Mental wellness within PSI has received particular attention in recent months as evidenced by several reports including the recently released report from the University of Waterloo<sup>3</sup>.

In its newly minted strategic plan *Together, Ensemble, Maamwi 2018-2023*<sup>4</sup>, Laurentian University has articulated a vision and a set of strategic priorities and outcomes that will enable the institution to build upon its existing health and wellness framework to significantly strengthen and enhance wellness services, approaches and the overall university wellness culture.

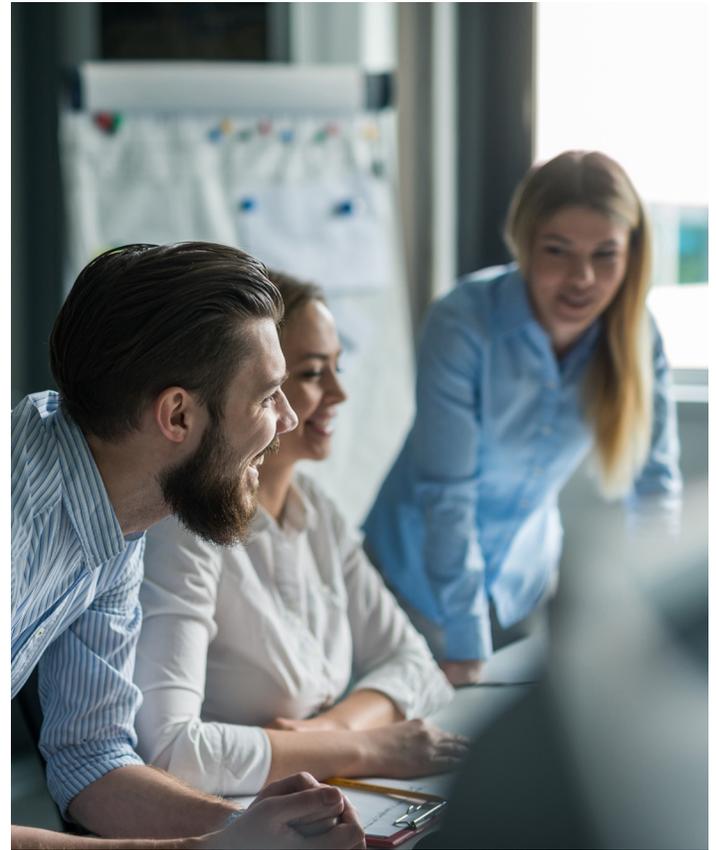
As “a microcosm of Canada”, we anticipate that the mental wellness challenges experienced by members of the Laurentian University community resemble those of the broader community. For instance, the Mental Health Commission of Canada reports that “...one in five people in Canada experiences a mental health problem or illness and it affects almost everyone in some way” (MHCC, 2010)<sup>5</sup>. For post-secondary youth, psychological distress is reportedly higher among university students compared

to other youth (Stallman, 2010)<sup>6</sup>. In a report prepared by the Mental Health Commission of Canada, the significant proportion of mental illnesses surface during the transition period from teenagehood to adulthood. Collectively, this evidence has compelled the university to envision a comprehensive approach to health and wellness promotion, which includes a strong focus on mental wellness, to help position Laurentian University to achieve its vision and strategic priorities.

Inspired by our shared valued statement “Our best solutions are collaborative ones”, the Laurentian University Campus Mental Wellness Working Group was recently tasked to propose a series of strategic, evidence-informed recommendations to the executive team by June 2018. Reporting to the Vice-President Academic and Provost, the Working Group, which is co-chaired by the Director of Student Life and the Interim Dean for the Faculty of Health (both appointed), is composed of students (both undergraduate and graduate), staff (LUSU and LUAPS), faculty members (sessional members and full-time), the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Health (appointed), the Interim Associate Vice-President, Academic and Indigenous Programs (appointed) as well as two community members (see Appendix

<sup>3</sup> “PAC-SMH Report and Recommendations | Mental Health and ....” <https://uwaterloo.ca/mental-health-wellness/pac-smh-report-and-recommendations>. Accessed 25 May. 2018.

<sup>4</sup> “Laurentian University Strategic Plan 2018-2023.” <https://www3.laurentian.ca/strategicplan/>. Accessed 25 May. 2018.



B for list of Committee members). It was also heartening that so many additional persons put their names forth to serve on this working group. Their willingness to share their time, energy and ideas has not gone unnoticed. Indeed, we are convinced that the recommendations made in this report will require the sustained efforts of many health and wellness invested colleagues across campus to make Laurentian University one of the healthiest campuses in the province and beyond. At its first meeting in January 2018, the working group decided to use the *Okanagan Charter* (see Appendix E) as well as the *First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework* (See Appendix F) to guide discussions and to help the group identify and prioritize recommendations for a campus mental health strategy. This is in alignment with outcome three of the institution’s strategic plan namely that “We will incorporate a holistic approach to wellness in our everyday practices as we embrace the beautiful natural environment that our campus offers, informed by the *Okanagan Charter: An International Charter for Health Promoting Universities and Colleges (2015)*”, and outcome 16 “We will undertake culturally appropriate research that enhances mino-bimaadiziwin and wellness among indigenous peoples and

other northern populations”. Furthermore, the working group actively sought the existing expertise within the university and in the broader community to inform strategic focus areas and recommendations on how to develop an evaluation framework for the proposed strategy and its eventual implementation. The evaluation framework will be designed by the standing wellness task force and informed by consultations with health research groups and wellness stakeholders on campus such as our Human Resource team and student associations.

The University can expect that key metrics for success will include the successful implementation of the proposed recommendations within suggested timelines. Ultimately, the success of our campus wellness efforts will be reflected in the increase in the number of well people and by positive changes to our environment.

The final report focuses on recommendations related to best practices, resource requirements, budgetary considerations for the 2018-19 budget and beyond, opportunities for collaboration and metrics to monitor campus wellness and measure our progress towards creating a healthier learning and working environment for all members of the university community.

<sup>5</sup> “Making the Case for Investing in Mental Health in Canada. 1 in 5 ....” <http://docplayer.net/10087401-Making-the-case-for-investing-in-mental-health-in-canada-1-in-5-people-in-canada-lives-with-a-mental-illness-each-year.html>. Accessed 25 May, 2018.

<sup>6</sup> “Psychological distress in university students: A ... - Wiley Online Library.” 29 Mar. 2011, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00050067.2010.482109>. Accessed 25 May, 2018.



## Appendix B

# Membership

**Co-Chair:** Erik Labrosse,  
Director of Student Life

**Co-Chair:** Dr. Céline Larivière,  
Acting Dean, Faculty of Health

Dr. Pamela Toulouse, Interim Associate  
Vice-President, Academic and Indigenous  
Programs

Dr. Line Tremblay, Associate Dean,  
Faculty of Health and Psychologist

**Two LUFA-affiliated faculty members:**  
Dr. Dickinson, Dr. Moira Ferguson

**Two students:** Mathew Dueck,  
Robyn Rowe

**Two administrative employees:**  
Imane Ricard, Xiaoxiang Chen (Hugo)

**Two LUSU:** Stephanie Harris,  
Michelle Laurence

**Two external community members  
from the health or education sector:**  
Angela Recollet (Executive Director for  
Shkagamik-kwe Health Centre),  
Marc Gauthier (Directeur de l'éducation  
pour le Conseil scolaire public du grand  
nord de l'Ontario)

# THE WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP AND MANDATE

The purpose of assembling this working group was to build on the recommendations of the new Strategic Plan (2018-2023) and to propose a series of Strategic, Evidence-Informed Recommendations to the executive team for consideration in the budget planning cycle to be delivered no later than June 2018. Reporting to the Provost, the group is chaired by the Interim Dean for the Faculty of Health and the Director of Student Life. Beginning in February 2018, the group set out to identify and prioritize recommendations for a campus mental health strategy into short (one year), medium (2 years), and long-term goals (three to five years). The group actively sought the expertise that exists within the university and in the broader community to inform strategic focus areas and recommendations and to develop an evaluation framework for the proposed strategy and its eventual implementation. The final report was to focus on recommendations for best practices, resource requirements, budgetary considerations for the 2018-19 budget, opportunities for collaboration and suggestions for appropriate metrics to monitor campus wellness and measure our progress towards creating a healthier learning and working environment. The working group recommends that key metrics would have to be identified in consultation with wellness stakeholders on campus such as the human resource unit and our student associations. The working group also felt strongly that University researchers and research teams be supported to lead, inform and implement the evaluation plan.

# OVERVIEW OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES AT LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY

In our experience, how students, staff and faculty understand and access wellness services on our campus varies greatly. Our wellness/mental health service infrastructure includes:

**Health and Wellness Services:** Located on the main floor of Single Student Residence (SSR) this clinic, serves students, staff and faculty. The clinic is managed by a Nurse Practitioner (Graduate of the Laurentian Program), family physician, two part time registered nurses and a medical secretary. In a recent discussion with the clinic team, the physician reports an average of six appointments (sometimes up to twelve appointments per day) for concerns relating specifically to mental health. As a result, we are scheduling fewer and longer appointments to address the increase in requests for mental health support and increase in complexity of care/treatment response by our team.

**Accessibility Services:** Located on the second floor of the Parker building. The accessibility office has a manager who also oversees the counseling office, one point seven (1.7 FTEs) advisors and one assistive (1 FTE) technologist. The accessibility office serves approximately 1500 students and schedules and invigilates over 4000 accommodated exams and prepares and sends 7000 accommodation letters per academic year.

**Counseling Services:** Located on the second floor of the Parker building. The team includes two (2 FTEs) counselors and an additional grant funded counselor/educator. On average, the counseling office sees an average of 50 students per week for intensive individual programming and manages a daily walk in service between 1 and 3 pm everyday where over 150 students were seen between January and March 2018.

**Indigenous Sharing and Learning Centre (ISLC):** Located on the first floor of the Parker building. The team includes one (1 FTE) counselor and several grant funded positions dedicated to holistic wellness (ex. Traditional Resource Program Coordinator; Learning Strategist; Metis Coordinator; Traditional Knowledge Keepers). The ISLC is led by a Director (1 additional FTE) who also has a social work and teacher education background.

**Important note:** *The Health and Wellness Clinic, The Indigenous Sharing and Learning Centre and the Office of Accessibility Services are expected to be first responders in emergency situations including student deaths, to offer support for non-academic conduct and for sexual assault survivors (wellness and academic) and to provide education and/or roll out health promotion initiatives on campus.*



**Equity, Diversity and Human Rights Office (EDHRO):** Accessible from the main hallway (or bowling alley) of the Arts Building, this office assists all members of the university community with questions, concerns and complaints about harassment, discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual violence and bullying. This office also offers expertise, guidance, and counsel to ensure compliance with 1) legislation (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 1990, Occupational Health and Safety Act, Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990), and 2) policies and processes (Respectful Workplace and Learning Environment, Response and Prevention of Sexual Violence, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, and Code of Student Conduct (Non-Academic). The vision of the EDHRO is an "IDEA-L community where Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility are respected and embraced at Laurentian University".



The support landscape at the University is deeply strengthened by our **student led clubs and associations** (i.e. SGA, AEF, LAMPS, GSA, ISC, Pride Office, Women’s Centre, Laurentian University Chinese Student Scholarship Association, African-Caribbean Student Association, Laurentian University Muslim Student Association) throughout campus, who, through various initiatives, activities, and advocacy efforts, support students, staff and faculty to improve the learning and working environment and to foster a sense of belonging. These groups and associations foster positive relationships with peers (whether students, faculty and staff) and help develop networks for international students, indigenous students and students from the LGBTQ2+ community.

**Centre for Academic Excellence (CAE):** Located on the main floor of the Desmarais Library, the CAE “cultivates an academic environment where students, faculty, and staff collaborate as a teaching and learning community”. The CAE offers student academic advising services, academic writing supports, instructional design assistance, learning assistance, supports for student transition and engagement, student learning commons and peer-assistance and houses the English Language Institute and Laurentian online. The student-focused services of the CAE are intended to help students develop skills around decision-making, time management, writing and learning which collectively help build student confidence, mitigate stress, and foster student success. The Faculty services include workshops on best practices for teaching and learning.

**Campus Recreation Services:** Campus recreation services are housed in the Ben Avery building. The facility boasts an olympic size swimming pool, a 200m indoor track, squash courts, two fitness training rooms equipped with a full suite of resistance and aerobic training equipment. A number of outdoor spaces including a 400m track, tennis courts, 7 km of hiking and cross country running/skiing trails are also available for use. This unit manages student Intramural activities and offers swimming and fitness lessons/workshops to the Laurentian community and to the public.

# THE OKANAGAN CHARTER

This international charter is a holistic approach to health and wellness in postsecondary settings. During the research phase of this report, the working group connected with authors of the Charter and had a presentation by the authors followed by a question and answer period with working group members. The Charter can be found at: <https://wellbeing.ubc.ca/okanagan-charter><sup>7</sup>.

The working group recommends that signing this charter would be a symbolic gesture to our community that wellness is truly valued.



**OKANAGAN CHARTER**  
**AN INTERNATIONAL CHARTER**  
**FOR HEALTH PROMOTING**  
**UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES**

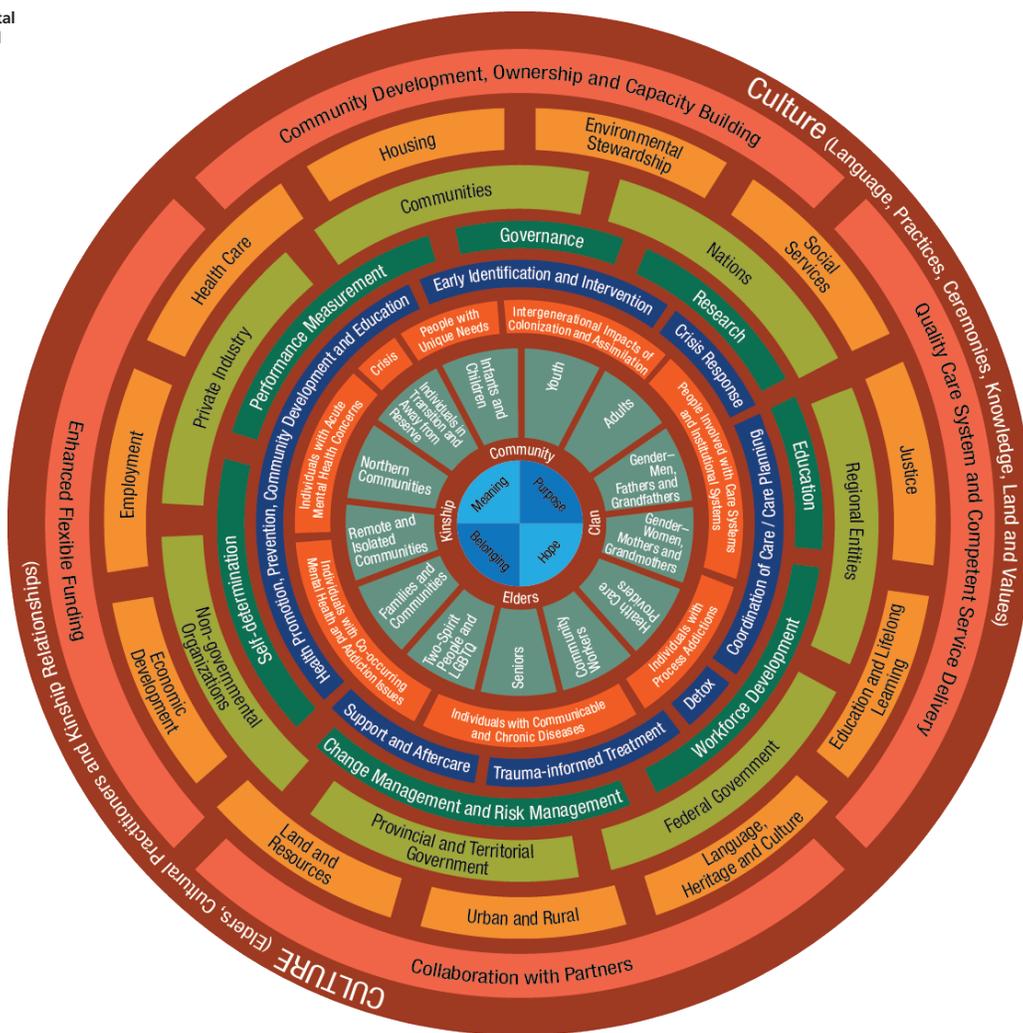
An outcome of the 2015 International Conference on Health Promoting Universities and Colleges / VII International Congress  
Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada

<sup>7</sup> "The Okanagan Charter | wellbeing.ubc.ca." <https://wellbeing.ubc.ca/okanagan-charter>. Accessed 25 May, 2018.

# FIRST NATIONS MENTAL WELLNESS CONTINUUM FRAMEWORK

Our Strategic plan is very clear that (16) “We will undertake culturally appropriate research that enhances mino-bimaadiziwin and wellness among indigenous peoples and other northern populations”. To inform this important strategic priority, the working group referenced the First Nations Mental Health Continuum Framework which can be found at: <http://thunderbirdpf.org/first-nations-mental-wellness-continuum-framework><sup>8</sup>

Figure 2: First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Model



<sup>8</sup> “First Nations Mental Wellness Continuum Framework | Thunderbird ....” <http://thunderbirdpf.org/first-nations-mental-wellness-continuum-framework/>. Accessed 25 May, 2018.



