

# Campus Life

# TODAY

## WELL-BEING EDITION

E

May 2025

### What is a guiding structure? And why do we need one to improve well-being?

A simple problem, like baking a cake, calls for a simple solution—a recipe. But what about a complex challenge, like cultivating a culture of well-being in a diverse university setting? One where people bring unique backgrounds, values, and needs, all within a web of interrelated systems? That kind of challenge can't be solved with a recipe—it requires a guiding structure.

This structure helps us address complexity with clarity and shared purpose, while holding nuance specific to a campus. Over the years, guiding structures allow space for evidence-based frameworks that help communities tackle seemingly unsolvable issues—from public health crises to educational reform—by identifying common principles that lead to real, lasting change.

Last month, we explored the **Collective Impact** model. This month, we introduce a powerful structure that universities across the globe are embracing to strengthen, not only student well-being, but the entire campus culture.

### The Okanagan Charter

In 2015, faculty, staff, students, and health leaders from around the world gathered at the University of British Columbia's Okanagan campus in Kelowna, Canada, for the decennial International Health Promoting Campuses Conference. Their mission: to build on decades of global health promotion work and shape a unified approach for colleges and universities to "transform the health and sustainability of our current and future societies, strengthen communities, and contribute to the well-being of people, places, and the planet."

The result was the **Okanagan Charter**—a bold, visionary guide that defines what it means to be a Health Promoting University. Instead of attempting to be a one-size-fits-all solution, it presents a flexible and values-driven structure that helps institutions embed well-being into every aspect of campus life.

### Infusing well-being into campus culture

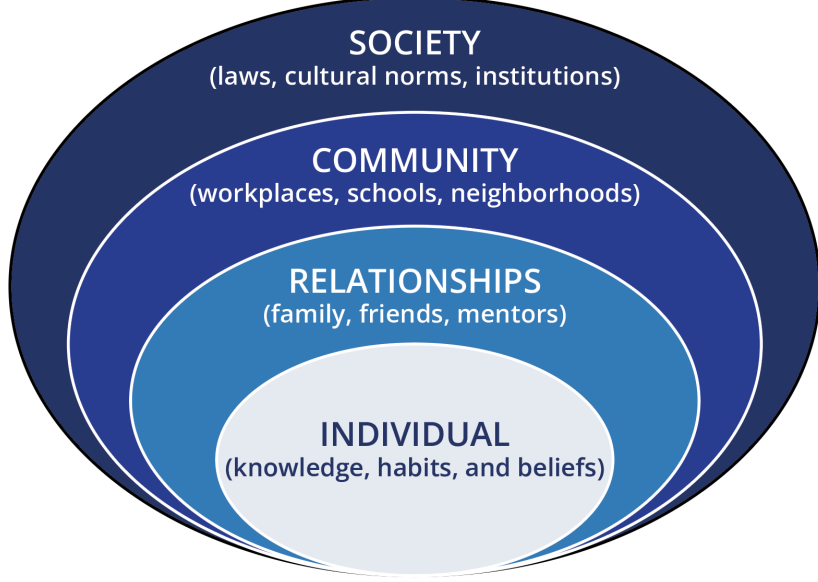
At its core, the Okanagan Charter challenges institutions to

*"Infuse health into everyday operations, business practices, and academic mandates. By doing so, health-promoting universities and colleges enhance the success of our institutions; create campus cultures of compassion, well-being, equity, and social justice; improve the health of the people who live, learn, work, play and love on our campuses; and strengthen the ecological, social and economic sustainability of our communities and wider society."*

This holistic vision is built on the **Socioecological Model**, which reminds us that health and well-being are never just about personal choices. They are influenced by everything around us—from our relationships and communities to policies and systems.

The model includes several layers:

- **Individual** – knowledge, habits, and beliefs
- **Relationships** – family, friends, mentors
- **Community** – workplaces, schools, neighborhoods
- **Society** – laws, cultural norms, institutions



To truly support well-being, we must take action across all levels. Helping someone flourish means not only encouraging personal resilience, but also creating environments that are safe, inclusive, connected and supportive.

The Okanagan Charter calls on universities to do just that—by embedding well-being into everything we do, from policies and teaching to physical spaces and campus culture.

### Our aspirations

The creation of the Center for Student Wellbeing marked a key action in our commitment to weaving well-being into the fabric of campus life. The intentions are to not only to support students—it's to nurture a thriving, compassionate campus community, where everyone has the opportunity to flourish.

This is complex work. It requires reflection, collaboration and courage. But it is also deeply hopeful work—because every effort we make ripples outward, strengthening not just individuals, but the whole community.

Together, we are shaping a culture where well-being isn't just something we talk about—it's something we live. And in doing so, we're not just transforming Emory—we're helping shape a healthier, more just world.

**Next month:** Get ready to explore a fresh, student-centered approach that turns well-being from a buzzword into a meaningful, everyday practice – the Elements of Wellbeing.

### Learn more about the Okanagan Charter

Ginter, P. M., Kennedy, R., Erwin, P. C., & Reed, W. (2024, December). The Okanagan Charter to improve wellbeing in higher education: shifting the paradigm. In *Frontiers in Education* (Vol. 9, p. 1443937). Frontiers Media SA.

Okanagan Charter. *An international Charter for health promoting universities and colleges.* (2015). Available at: <https://open.library.ubc.ca/cIRcle/collections/53926/items/1.0132754>

### Well-being updates

#### Did you know our Wellbeing Coaches are offering virtual and in-person sessions this summer?

Well-being coaching helps students manage stress, improve sleep, build connections, and reach personal goals through personalized support, practical strategies, and a space for meaningful change. Coaching is **free** for all students and there are no session limits. Encourage your students to take advantage of this great resource over the summer when they might have a little more time in their schedules!

For more information and instructions on how to sign up, please visit our [webpage](#).

#### Health Access Vending Machines now available on Atlanta and Oxford Campuses!

Emory University's Atlanta and Oxford campuses have recently unveiled new Health Access Vending Machines, providing free, 24/7 access to health supplies for all students.

This project was led, researched and championed by student leaders from SGA, Planned Parenthood Generation Action, Sexual Assault Peer Advocates (SAPA), and the generous philanthropic giving from the Women of Emory Impact Circle.

Students can find the machines in the following locations:

- **Atlanta Campus:** AMUC 1st Floor, next to the community fridge
- **Oxford Campus:** Oxford Student Center, near the Blue Room

Contact [laura.calvert@emory.edu](mailto:laura.calvert@emory.edu) for any questions.

#### May is Mental Health Awareness Month — let's move beyond awareness into action.

This summer, Campus Life is offering several opportunities for you to become a certified QPR Gatekeeper through a 90-minute suicide prevention training. QPR stands for **Question, Persuade, Refer** — practical steps you can take to recognize when someone is in distress and connect them to help.

As staff, you are on the front lines of creating a supportive and caring campus environment. Whether you work directly with students or behind the scenes, your awareness and readiness matter. Together, we can strengthen a culture of compassion, connection, and care across Emory.

The Center for Student Wellbeing will offer trainings throughout the summer. [Sign up here](#) to reserve your spot. All sessions will be hosted in AMUC 235 from noon to 1:15 p.m.

- Thursday, May 29
- Wednesday, June 18
- Monday, July 14

If you would like for us to train your department on a separate date, please [submit your request here](#). Direct questions to Laura Calvert at [laura.calvert@emory.edu](mailto:laura.calvert@emory.edu).

#### Staff focus group: Share your voice on well-being at Emory

The Center for Student Wellbeing invites Emory staff to participate in a dedicated focus group this May. Your insights are vital in shaping a campus environment that supports holistic well-being for all. By sharing your experiences and perspectives, you contribute to meaningful enhancements in our community's well-being initiatives.

*Interested in participating?* Please fill out [this form](#). If you have questions, contact Simran Bhatia, associate director for collective impact at the Center for Student Wellbeing at [simran.bhatia@emory.edu](mailto:simran.bhatia@emory.edu).

### Tips to enhance your well-being

provided by [Healthy Emory Connect](#)

- **Move More Challenge inspires a healthier Emory community**  
The annual Move More Challenge is back for the month of May, encouraging members of the Emory community to engage in daily physical activity and serving as a way to foster teamwork, friendly competition and overall well-being.
- **Is it prostate cancer—or something else?**  
Prostate cancer, which occurs when cells in the prostate gland start to grow irregularly, is the second most [common cancer](#) among men in the United States, behind only skin cancer.
- **Worried about money? 4 ways money anxiety hurts you—and 4 ways to fix it**  
You're not alone. Money is a top-rated stressor for adults, but too much anxiety could harm your health.
- **Nature can improve your health**  
Find out how [getting outside to celebrate](#) can make your body feel great.

EMORY | Campus Life



#### Campus Life Today newsletter summer 2025 publishing schedule

The following publishing schedule may change. All dates are Wednesdays. Academic year weekly schedule resumes August 13.

**Regular CLT Newsletter\***: May 28, June 11, June 25, July 9, July 23, August 13  
**Wellbeing Edition\*\***: June 4, July 2, August 6

\* Deadline for items submitted for publication are due Thursday prior to requested publication date.  
\*\* No submissions are accepted for the Wellbeing Special Edition.