

Tuesday 23 Nov

Student success & wellbeing

Hosted by UNSW Canberra & the Healthy Universities Initiative

12.30 - 1pm

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Poster Viewing & Discussion Session Gather.Town

Note. The whole Student Success & Wellbeing event will only use one Teams meeting link throughout all sessions (besides Gather.Town)

1.00 - 1.10pm

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Chair: Dr. Gavin Mount

Event Welcome & Welcome To Country

Professor Liz Ritchie-Tyo, Associate Dean of Education, UNSW Canberra
Aunty Violet Sheridan (thanks to UNSW Canberra EDI for their support)

1.10 - 1.40pm

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In Discussion with Chi Baik on Enhancing Student Wellbeing

Associate Professor Chi Baik, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne
Professor Nalini Pather, Medicine and Health, UNSW



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1:40 - 1:55pm

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A Campus Conversation - Victoria University of Wellington & UNSW Campus Approaches to Student Wellbeing

Charlotte Long, Dr Bill Kefalas, Natalie Nickson, Rachel Anderson-Smith, Kirstin White,
UNSW PVCESE & Victoria University of Wellington

1:55-2:00pm

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A Proposal for a Whole of University Approach to Support Student Wellbeing

Professor Nalini Pather, Medicine & Health, UNSW

2.00 - 2.05pm

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Supporting Course Convenors to Integrate Wellbeing-Supportive Strategies into the Curriculum

Dr. Leesa Sidhu, UNSW Canberra

2:05-2:10pm

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Medicine Program Student Wellbeing Advisory Group (SWAG)

Mr Josh Lowinger, Professor Gary Velan, Medicine & Health, UNSW

Student success & wellbeing

Hosted by UNSW Canberra & the Healthy Universities Initiative



IMPORTANT:
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2:15 - 2:55pm

PechaKucha Session 1 - Chair: Professor Nalini Pather

Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture Peer-to-Peer Wellbeing Calls

Ms Tierney Marey, Mr James Perez, Arts, Design & Architecture, UNSW

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Supporting our students: sw@pping stress for solicitude

Ms Karan Bland, Medicine & Health, UNSW

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Student Learning Insights – Proof of Concept

Dr. Felipe Crisostomo, Mr Sam Hegarty, PVCSE, UNSW

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Building a sense of belonging via group work during times of stress

Dr. Nirmani Wijenayake, Science, UNSW

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Session 1 Q&A

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3:00- 3:40pm

PechaKucha Session 2 - Chair: Dr. Dijana Townsend

Mental Health Network: a partnership project

Ms Belinda Meggitt, Mr Dae Uk Han PVCSE, UNSW

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Student centered-learning: Flexible deadlines

Dr. Deborah Barros Leal Farias, Arts, Design & Architecture, UNSW

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Collaboration and Community Building: Learnings from Student Minds at UNSW (PVCSE) (peer-led growth and support)

Ms Nayonika Bhattacharya, PVCSE, UNSW

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Staff Survey and Faculty Comparative Analysis

Dr. Gavin Mount, UNSW Canberra

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Session 2 Q&A

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3:45- 4:25pm

PechaKucha Session 3 - Chair: Dr. Leesa Sidhu

Enhancing Recovery from Stress

Professor Peter Heslin, Ms Sabrina Gao, Business, UNSW

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Supporting equity cohort transition: Gateway Scholars and Faculty initiatives

Ms Isabelle Vertucci, Ms Jessica Luquin, Dr. Mick Warren, Ms Jeni Engel, Associate Professor Silas Taylor EDI, UNSW

[Read abstract](#)

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Empowering students to self-reflect and proactively plan their self-care as learners and professionals of the future

Dr. Melanie Fentoullis, Dr. Megan Kalucy, Ms Catherine Marley, Medicine & Health, UNSW

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Student engagement activities – do they alienate or engage

Dr. Sharon Oberstein, Dr. Vinod Maseedupally, Medicine & Health, UNSW

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Session 3 Q&A

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4:25-4:45pm Closing statements/summary

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In Discussion with Chi Baik on Enhancing Student Wellbeing

Associate Professor Chi Baik, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne
Professor Nalini Pather, Medicine and Health, UNSW

Associate Professor Chi Baik, draws on her experience of leading the [national student wellbeing project](#) and on currently leading the first year experience at Melbourne University in discussing the challenges and opportunities for university leaders and academics in supporting students' academic success and wellbeing. She describes the current initiatives at Melbourne University, including using a wellbeing lens to re-examine our notions of good assessment practice and of constructive alignment. Chi challenges us to adopt a whole of university approach to supporting students to achieve their academic goals and develop strategies for lifelong learning and resilience.

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Associate Professor Chi Baik
University of Melbourne, MCSHE

Chi is Deputy Director of the Melbourne Centre for the Study of Higher Education and an Associate Professor in higher education. Her broad research interests centre on the quality of the student experience and factors affecting the educational experiences and outcomes of students from diverse backgrounds. She has led major studies that have contributed to informing institutional policies and practices including national projects on the first year experience, student mental wellbeing, and international student engagement.



Professor Nalini Pather
UNSW Medicine & Health

Nalini Pather Co-Leads the Healthy Universities Initiative with Cranney, Sidhu, and Velan. Nalini is Co-Director of the Scientia Education Academy (SEA) and has won several teaching awards including the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence and Australian Award for University Teaching. Nalini is internationally recognised for contributing to medical education scholarship, focussing on educational technologies, course design, humanistic education, and mentoring. She is a Co-Editor of a Q1 education journal.

A Campus Conversation - Victoria University of Wellington & UNSW campus approaches to Student Wellbeing

Charlotte Long, Dr Bill Kefalas, Natalie Nickson, Rachel Anderson-Smith, Kirstin White, UNSW PVCESE & Victoria University of Wellington

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Students need their wellbeing needs to be met before they can thrive in learning. Universities in Australia and New Zealand have experienced growing student enrolments and increasing diversity and intersectionality within the student community and reports on both sides of the Tasman have highlighted the mental health pressures on tertiary students. In Australia, at least one in four students will experience mental ill-health in any one year. Campus based counselling and disability services have seen an increasing demand for services over the years, with over 20,000 mental-health related appointments made by UNSW students annually.

There is an increasing approach in the sector to build proactive campus-wide approaches to wellbeing. As UNSW shares its Inaugural Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, staff from UNSW and Victoria University of Wellington engage in conversation about wellbeing, campus-wide approaches and the impact of the COVID19 pandemic on the wellbeing space.



Charlotte Long
UNSW PVCESE

Charlotte Long, Head Student Success, has worked in the student engagement, advocacy and support space for 20 years. Charlotte leads teams to work with students, understand diverse and changing student experiences and review service delivery to meet student needs.



Dr Bill Kefalas
UNSW PVCESE

Dr Bill Kefalas MBBS(Melb), M.Med.Ed(Syd), is a GP and UNSW Head of Health in the PVCESE Wellbeing Pillar. Bill leads the University Health Service, Psychology and Wellness and Health Promotion Units and advises UNSW in matters pertaining to student, staff and community health.



Natalie Nickson
UNSW PVCESE

Natalie Nickson, Head of Student Life manages a team who's purpose is to support, engage and enable UNSW to succeed. Natalie is completing her Masters in Counselling and is part of the National Speaker and Ambassador team for Beyond Blue.



Rachel Anderson-Smith
Victoria University of Wellington

I am a Manager of Disability Services, one of New Zealand's leading providers of disability advice, expertise and support. I work in collaboration with the University community and wider disability community to achieve the University's equity goals, which include becoming a fully inclusive tertiary institution.



Kirstin White
Victoria University of Wellington

Kirstin has worked in Student Academic Services for 11 years across a range of roles. She has been in the role of Health Navigator for 18 months. Health Navigator is an outreach role that works with students to access support services available to them in the University and wider community. Health Navigator is an advocate to reduce barriers to access.

A Proposal for a Whole of University Approach to Support Student Wellbeing

Professor Nalini Pather, Medicine & Health, UNSW

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The Healthy Universities Initiative (HUI) is an inclusive, multi-faceted, trans-disciplinary initiative that promotes curricular approaches to supporting student success and wellbeing. Created in 2018 by Scientia Education Academy Fellows, the HUI is positively framed, builds on previous UNSW projects and demonstrates inclusive leadership by collaborating and promoting initiatives by academics across UNSW (e.g. members of the Student Wellbeing CoP).

HUI is aligned with the 2025 Strategy & Scientia Education Experience domains that support students in effectively working towards meaningful learning and professional goals. The HUI Ecosystem (see figure) outlines a holistic framework for supportive curricular design, highlighting HUI engagement across UNSW to support student wellbeing.

HUI draws upon evidence-based teaching principles and psychological research, including the Dual-State Theory of Mental Health, which has two dimensions, psychiatric disorders, and psychological wellbeing (Keyes, 2005). Educators contribute by: (1) effective referral and adjustments for those students with psychiatric disorders; and (2) creation of learning-supportive curricular environments that support all students to succeed academically. Regarding the latter, the empirically supported Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000) provides a useful framework for any educator to identify strategies that can support the psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness/belonging, and thus wellbeing. This presentation provides a broad overview of the HUI support for all

UNSW academics to provide students with opportunities to succeed by: (a) developing and promoting accessible resources/tools; (b) providing professional development training, (c) supporting personalized assistance for courses and convenors, and (d) coordinating a 'whole-of-university' approach.



Professor Nalini Pather
UNSW Medicine & Health

Nalini Pather Co-Leads the Healthy Universities Initiative with Cranney, Sidhu, and Velan. Nalini is Co-Director of the Scientia Education Academy (SEA) and has won several teaching awards including the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence and Australian Award for University Teaching. Nalini is internationally recognised for contributing to medical education scholarship, focussing on educational technologies, course design, humanistic education, and mentoring. She is a Co-Editor of a Q1 education journal.

Supporting Course Convenors to Integrate Wellbeing-Supportive Strategies into the Curriculum

Dr. Leesa Sidhu, UNSW Canberra

Jacky Cranney and I, in collaboration with the Student Wellbeing CoP Curriculum Project team (Linda Ferrington, Jess Macer-Wright, Ben Kelly, Gavin Mount, Jenny Richmond, Rebecca LeBard, Sue Morris, Adi Torda, Gayani Ranawake and Umairia Malik) and our Healthy Universities Initiative co-leaders (Nalini Pather and Gary Velan), have been supporting course convenors to integrate wellbeing-supportive strategies into the curriculum.

We apply a positive framing of wellbeing which supports the success and wellbeing of all students. The underlying premise is that, since all students need to engage with the curriculum, this is the setting in which we can best support them. We use self-determination theory as a framework to support course convenors to undertake an analysis of their curriculum and identify where they can improve their support of students' three psychological needs, relatedness, competence and autonomy, which increases student success and thus wellbeing.

Through this project, course convenors are empowered, firstly by finding that they already have some effective strategies in place, and secondly by being able to share their successes and failures with like-minded educators. You'll find some great course convenor examples focusing on relatedness, competence and autonomy, on the Healthy Universities Initiative website includes web page (<https://www.teaching.unsw.edu.au/healthyuni-main/cc-practical-examples>). Evaluation of these strategies has provided evidence that they are effective in supporting students. With professional development and support, we believe that all course convenors can implement and evaluate strategies that support student success and wellbeing. We encourage interested staff to contact us for further information.

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Dr. Leesa Sidhu
UNSW Canberra

Leesa Sidhu is Deputy Head of School (Education) and Senior Lecturer in Statistics in the School of Science at UNSW Canberra. She has a strong interest in supporting student success and wellbeing and has led several projects in this area. Her teaching awards include the inaugural Australian Mathematical Society Award for Teaching Excellence (2018), the UNSW Vice Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence (2017) and the UNSW Canberra Rector's Award for Teaching Excellence (2015).

Medicine Program Student Wellbeing Advisory Group (SWAG)

Mr Josh Lowinger, Professor Gary Velan, Medicine & Health, UNSW

UNSW Medicine & Health recognises the importance of student wellbeing, and the challenges students experience in preparation for their future medical careers. In 2018, in partnership with the UNSW Medical Student Society and in recognition of the need to develop overarching strategic planning to guide and inform all initiatives and activities relating to student wellbeing, a Student Wellbeing Action Group (SWAG) was established.

SWAG is co-chaired by a senior faculty member and a student. Its membership is intentionally inclusive of students with diverse perspectives (Indigenous, Rural, International, LGBTIQ+). The SWAG facilitates a coordinated approach to the provision of support to students throughout the Medicine program. Consistent with the Dual State Model, specific working groups have been established by SWAG: Building Communities; Enhancing Wellbeing; Successful Transitions; and Support for Students with Mental Health Issues. The working groups have adopted a quality improvement approach to identify the best evidence to support changes within teaching and learning and the student experience, reporting this information to SWAG quarterly. SWAG's initiatives include the introduction of self-care days, aligning with students' self-care plans as trainee health professionals. Following the success of the Medicine SWAG, similar groups have been established for the Vision Science / Optometry and Exercise Physiology programs.



Josh Lowinger
UNSW Medicine & Health

Josh Lowinger is the President of UNSW Medical Society. He is a Third Year UNSW Medicine student who has been a member of SWAG since its inauguration in 2019, as a past Vice President, Secretary and Year Representative of the UNSW Medical Society. He is also the Vice President External of the NSW Medical Students' Council, Director of UNSW MedShow and the representative of all 40,000 UNSW undergraduate students on the UNSW Academic Board.



Professor Gary Velan
UNSW Medicine & Health

Professor Gary Velan is an award-winning medical educator. Gary is Senior Vice Dean (Education) in Medicine & Health and a Fellow of the Scientia Education Academy, through which he led the development of myEducation Portfolio, as well as contributing to the Healthy Universities Initiative. Partnering with students, Gary co-Chairs Student Wellbeing Action Groups (SWAGs) for undergraduate programs in Medicine & Health. He is internationally recognised for medical education research, focusing on eLearning, assessment and feedback.

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Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture Peer-to-Peer Wellbeing Calls

Ms Tierney Marey, Mr James Perez , Arts, Design & Architecture, UNSW

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In recognition of the augmented social, academic and wellbeing challenges of Covid-19, the ADA Student Experience Team piloted Peer-to-Peer calls in T3 2021. This initiative was based on leading best practice and existing successful initiatives within the faculty.

A team of ADA Peer-to-Peer callers from diverse backgrounds were onboarded as casual staff and received specialised training for this project. The calls were aimed to foster a sense of connection and community within the faculty, provide targeted early intervention when needed, and raise awareness of central and faculty support available to students. Calls were made during weeks 3-5 of term and were targeted at a sample of domestic, undergraduate students. The selection of students who received a call were determined by the ADA Student Experience Team based on a range of demographic and academic factors.

Students received timely and relevant guidance from peer callers on key central and faculty services available to them. Over 130 tailored referrals were given over the phone with an additional 100 referrals completed as follow-ups from the ADA Student Experience Team.

Key concerns and qualitative comments from the calls were logged and then analysed by the ADA Student Experience Team. This data is used to inform future initiatives and support from the faculty and reflects ADA's commitment to robust evaluation and evidence-based practice. The initiative is planned to be expanded in 2022.



Tierne Marey
UNSW Arts, Design & Architecture

Tierne Marey is the Manager of Student Experience for the Faculty of Arts, Design and Architecture. Tierne has a specialist background in equity, diversity and inclusion and is currently completing her PhD on the embodiment of equity labour in Australian higher education. She is passionate about delivering evidence-based, inclusive, and impactful student experience initiatives.



James Perez
UNSW Arts, Design & Architecture

James Perez is a Project Officer, Student Experience and has 5 years of diverse experience in the higher education and child protection services industry. He is passionate about equity in education, design thinking and community building. He believes that engagement is relational based and hopes to foster positive learning and teaching communities within ADA. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in Education, Pacific Studies and a Diploma in Psychology. James is also a proud Tokelauan and Samoan.

Supporting our students: sw@pping stress for solicitude

Ms Karan Bland, Medicine & Health, UNSW

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The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent shift to on-line teaching in 2020 highlighted the importance of remaining connected with students. Phase 1 staff at the Port Macquarie Rural Clinical School implemented a connectedness initiative during the on-line period which resulted in increased engagement by students (and staff). Returning to face-to-face teaching in early 2021 we recognised the need and benefits of remaining connected with our students.

A formalised program was developed with the intent to provide personal, pastoral and academic needs support to each student - Student Wellbeing at Port Macquarie (SW@P). Individual students are assigned a phase 1 staff member with whom they meet at least once per teaching period. These meetings allow students the opportunity to discuss any issues they may have, from academic to social to mental health and everything in between. SW@P allows us to proactively check in on students and provide individualised pastoral care and educational support where needed.

Since the introduction of SW@P, we have been able to assist several students with issues which may typically be overlooked. Whilst COVID prompted the introduction of these strategies it only served to highlight the uniqueness of what we have at our small rural campus and the importance of connectedness and personal interactions with students. The move back to on-line teaching sees SW@P continuing with face-to-face online meetings.



Karan Bland
UNSW Medicine & Health

Karan currently teaches across all aspects of the Phase 1 Medicine program, facilitating small group teaching, and co-ordinating and running laboratory based practical classes. She is also involved in pastoral support of students and was instrumental in initiating a wellbeing program for P1 in 2021 (Student Wellbeing @ Port – SW@P). Karan has a warm, empathetic nature and is motivated to create a safe and supportive learning environment for her students.

Student Learning Insights – Proof of Concept

Dr. Felipe Crisostomo, Mr Sam Hegarty, PVCESE, UNSW

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The PVCESE Innovation Pillar has been working on developing a data infrastructure that will enable greater use of data analytics in a range of contexts to personalise and simplify the UNSW student and staff experience.

We are currently working on a proof of concept (POC) that displays student learning insights using Moodle data, and a student calendar synchronising with important course, academic and UNSW dates.

In 2022, we wish to develop a range of accessible and easy to use data driven reporting, automation, and interventions for students and staff to help them in a range of everyday learning, administrative, support and wellbeing, and social activities.



Dr. Felipe Crisostomo
UNSW PVCESE

Felipe has worked at PVCESE since 2017. He completed the Digital Uplift of 30+ courses under the Inspired Learning Initiative and has collaborated in other special projects such as Inpera and Moodle Enhance. He is currently leading the Student Learning Insights POC Project.

He possesses PhD in Engineering and has more than 10 years of experience in delivering engineering and educational projects. He is passionate about modern Project Management methodologies applied to innovative projects.



Sam Hegarty
UNSW PVCESE

Sam is the Senior Manager of Digital and Learning Environments. He's been at UNSW since 2015, working in various roles including digital learning and transformation.

Sam is passionate about making a difference in education. He has a wide range of experience in planning, designing and implementing digital technology solutions in the tertiary sector.

Building a sense of belonging via group work during times of stress

Dr. Nirmani Wijenayake, Science, UNSW

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Big Fat Myths is a fully online general education course that requires students to work on the course material independently throughout the Term with minimal interactions with instructors and peers. Under normal circumstances students don't have a big problem with this, but due to the pandemic all courses are fully online, and students have been feeling isolated, unmotivated, and disconnected from each other.

This task really helped me feel connected to my students because for the first time this year I got to see their faces and get a glimpse of how they have been managing their wellbeing and dealing with the pandemic. The videos themselves was a show of how resilient and amazingly diverse our students are and gave me insights into what kind of support they may need during the Term.

This year, I designed a group assessment with multiple components that allows my students to celebrate their diversity, showcase their skills, and share their experience while forming a supportive learning community. The success of group assessments is always dependent on how well the group clicks with each other. To help them form a connection straight away, I challenged the groups to produce a video together of what they have been up to during the pandemic. The main instruction was to ensure the video had a common theme. The purpose of this low stake task was to get students talking to each other immediately, make them feel comfortable showing their faces to others in the group, understand they all have similar interests and acknowledge they are all facing similar challenges.



Dr. Nirmani Wijenayake
UNSW Science

I am an education focussed lecturer from the School of Biotechnology and Biomolecular Sciences who have developed a strong reputation as an inspiring teacher, a digital pioneer, a creator of sustainable teaching resources, and a leader and mentor within my School and University. I have always tried to foster learning environments where students feel comfortable reaching out to ask for help, reduce their stress, evaluate their knowledge, and be able to try new things and make mistakes with minimal consequences.

Mental Health Network: a partnership project

Ms Belinda Meggitt, Mr Dae Uk Han, PVCESE, UNSW

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HDR candidates in MedFac are often geographically disparate from the university and lack the peer-support available to other HDR candidates. Recognising the need to connect and support this young research community, MedFac developed a partnership with the Health Promotions Unit (HPU) to pilot a Mental Health Network.

The model developed placed students at the centre of the partnership. Candidates from each of the 12 schools applied to represent their peers and two Coordinators were selected from this cohort. Each received training in Mental Health First Aid and targeted education of the resources in place to support wellbeing at UNSW. Candidates were empowered to develop a network that enabled accessible peer-support across the faculty, but also to work collaboratively to develop and lead mental wellbeing initiatives, becoming an active and visible voice normalising conversations about mental health in the HDR community.

A recent HDR Health and Wellbeing survey undertaken by these candidates assessing the impact of COVID-19 on MedFac HDR students indicates that a disproportionate 90% of candidates report challenges to their mental health (n=105) 1,2. For 80% candidates, this was reported to be in a moderate to very high range of impact, affecting research progress.

This presentation will share the experience of this project from the perspective of the student coordinators, looking at the role of peer-to-peer support and feedback received from their peers. The HPU will outline the support structures enabling its success and opportunity for expansion.



Belinda Meggitt
UNSW PVCESE

Belinda is a public health professional with a passion for social justice and promoting health. With a background as a Physiotherapist and Nutritionist and having worked in global health development and in Aboriginal communities in Australia, she brings a community and capacity development lens to her role as the Team Lead for Health Promotions at UNSW.



Dae Uk Han
UNSW PVCESE

Dae Uk is a 2nd year PhD candidate within School of Population Health at NeuRA and is a Health and Wellbeing Ambassador. Dae Uk's research is around his passion in bridging health services disparities. In addition to his research, Dae Uk is actively engaged in the community, as a field and rescue operator, for the SES.

Student centered-learning: Flexible deadlines

Dr. Deborah Barros Leal Farias, Arts, Design & Architecture, UNSW

Deadlines are a known source of stress for everyone, especially for students. Time limitations exist all around us, and learning how to manage them is a skill. In this presentation, I will discuss an in-class experiment I did regarding flexible deadlines. In a context of two 25% assignments and a 50% exam, students were allowed to 'push' the deadline of one of the small assignments by 48h, no questions asked on why they were using it. After that, all late penalties accrued as normal. The goal was two-fold.

First, to encourage autonomy, having students reflect on whether they actually needed the 'extra' time or not. Second, to see if this small flexibility in one deadline could have an impact on student success and wellbeing. In total, about half of the class (32 out of 59) used the flexible deadline. According to feedback from students, this experiment helped them deliver a better assignment and was successful in reducing overall stress over the course's deadlines. This was also the feedback from students who chose not to change their deadlines: many said that just knowing the option was there for a flexible deadline was enough to reduce their stress. The experiment and the response from students prompt reflection on student autonomy, effective wellbeing actions, and concrete ways to reduce stress.



Dr. Deborah Barros Leal Farias
UNSW Arts, Design & Architecture

Dr Deborah Barros Leal Farias is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Social Science, where she teaches in the Politics and International Relations stream. In 2020 was awarded Vice-Chancellor's Award for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning (Early Career). She is currently ADA's Wellness Co-Champion and a passionate advocate for student mental health and wellbeing.

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Collaboration and Community Building: Learnings from Student Minds at UNSW (PVCSE) (peer-led growth and support)

Ms Nayonika Bhattacharya, PVCSE, UNSW

Student Minds at UNSW is a peer-led program that aims at supporting students at UNSW across the Kensington and Paddington campuses. Students often feel overwhelmed and are unsure about the pathways through which they can access ongoing support – for academic and welfare-related resources offered by UNSW. The Student Minds at UNSW model looks at developing an ongoing three-fold partnership with students who might experience low or high impact wellbeing concerns, student volunteers who across different portfolios to organise events, discussions and raise awareness and UNSW service teams to assist students to seek relevant and appropriate support they may need.

Our Mission, Vision and Purpose are:

- Mission – To contribute to long term student wellbeing and success through community education and encourage help-seeking behaviour among students.
- Vision – Increase community awareness about mental health issues and their impact on participation in University academics and cocurricular activities.
- Purpose – To promote positive psychological resilience for those experiencing stress and supporting students to seek professional medical support by reducing stigma around mental health issues.



Nayonika Bhattacharya
UNSW PVCSE

Nayonika is a 5th year Arts/Law student from Oman. She is currently the Student Minds Coordinator with the Health Promotions Unit at UNSW, General Secretary, and incoming President of the UNSW Student Rep Council. She is passionate about student wellbeing – and wants to further international student stories on all topics sexual, mental, and physical health and legal support related. She leverages her experience as an international student advisor for Multicultural HIV and Hepatitis Services and previously as a City of Sydney, International Student Ambassador to improve student support service experiences.

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Staff Survey and Faculty Comparative Analysis

Dr. Gavin Mount, UNSW Canberra

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Universities need to actively 'build the capacity of academic educators to... better support student mental wellbeing' (Baik et al., 2017). We draw upon pedagogic research that student wellbeing requires a 'whole of university' response (Neeves & Hillman 2019) and that self-determining (Ryan & Deci, 2000) wellbeing resources need to be accessible and integrated into 'the curriculum environment' (Cranney et.al. 2016). The study had human ethics approval (HC190900).

The results of the staff survey reaffirmed our main expectations that both academic and professional staff want a whole-of-university approach; but also revealed the importance of Faculty and Campus specific resources. Capacity-building was framed in terms of enhancing student empowerment "in learning how to deal with stress and manage difficult situations". While staff can readily identify prominent educators who integrate student wellbeing in their curriculum; they are not always confident integrating wellbeing strategies directly into their own classrooms.

The Faculty staff focus group discussions were conducted during the first (COVID) Lockdown. The Faculty report identified common areas of student wellbeing, and further reaffirmed the need to recognise Faculty specific innovations and informal approaches to student wellbeing curriculum integration. The Faculty report was presented to the SEA and disseminated across the University to Faculty ADEs.

A conference paper was presented at ISSOTL 2021 which revealed that UNSW is unique in establishing a Student Wellbeing CoP. Concurrently, the CoP has been conducting student surveys and focus groups. The next steps will be to expand this research to expand and replicate this study across Australian universities.



Dr. Gavin Mount
UNSW Canberra

Gavin Mount is the co-leader of the UNSW Community of Practice on Student Wellbeing. He has received two Teaching Awards (2010 and 2020) and is an innovative leader in pedagogy and practice of simulations, actionable feedback and online engagement.

Enhancing Recovery from Stress

Professor Peter Heslin, Ms Sabrina Gao, Business, UNSW

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How do you recover from stress? This presentation will outline insights from decades of stress recovery research (Sonntag, Venz, & Casper, 2017) for supporting UNSW students' wellbeing and success.

"Recovery activities" are what we do to bounce back to our pre-stressed state. Recovery activities are most rejuvenating when they provide "recovery experiences", such as psychological detachment (fully "switching off" from thinking about study or work), relaxation, mastery experiences, control, and enjoyment.

Some recovery activities typically provide richer recovery experiences than others. Adequate high-quality sleep and moderately intense physical exercise are the most reliable sources of recovery. Other promising routes to recovery experiences are social activities; receptive and creative leisure activities; and spending time in "green" or "blue" environments.

People differ in what most enables them to recover. Students may enhance their wellbeing and success by (i) auditing the recovery value of how they spend their leisure time, and (ii) jettisoning downtime activities that provide minimal recovery experiences; and (iii) experimenting with alternative activities that may provide rich recovery experiences. A UNSW MBA(Exec) student Sabrina Gao will describe how she audited and tweaked her recovery activities.

Avenues for enabling students to routinely have enriched recovery experiences include messaging in course outlines, providing readily accessible resources such as <https://theconversation.com/exhausted-by-2020-here-are-5-ways-to-recover-and-feel-more-rested-throughout-2021-152608>, class activities, student advising and mentoring, and role modelling by UNSW staff.



Professor Peter Heslin
UNSW Business

Professor Peter Heslin is a UNSW Scientia Education Fellow whose PhD pioneered the study of mindsets in organisations. Peter created and has published extensively on the concept of being "in learning mode" to enable experiential leadership development. He wrote the most highly cited sole-authored article ever published on "career success." Peter is interested how proactive recovery from stress may facilitate sustainable career success; that is, happiness, health, and productivity across one's career.



Sabrina Gao
UNSW Business

Sabrina Gao is a leader in a commercial and governance role in the private technology sector. She participates in leadership programs such as the Young Leadership Dialogue. Sabrina has worked in different professional fields (such as IT, International infrastructure, Financial, and Privacy). She has adapted and delivered exceptional results in her various roles. Sabrina is currently an AGSM MBA Executive student and who continually seeks to improve her professional contributions and personal well-being.

Supporting equity cohort transition: Gateway Scholars and Faculty initiatives

Ms Isabelle Vertucci , Ms Jessica Luquin, Dr. Mick Warren, Ms Jeni Engel, Associate Professor Silas Taylor EDI, UNSW

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A key target of the UNSW 2025 Strategic Plan is a significant increase in the participation of low-SES students. Towards this goal Access and Equity (Students) launched the Gateway Admission Pathway (GAP) in 2020, an early conditional offer scheme which provides eligible high school students a reduced ATAR requirement to gain entry to UNSW. Eligibility for the scheme is determined by attendance at a school with demonstrated educational disadvantage (a 'Gateway school') or UAC Educational Access Scheme (EAS) criteria for low-socioeconomic status.

Along with the challenges of being admitted to university, it is well recognised that students from equity backgrounds face added complex challenges in their transition to higher education (Ball and Vincent, 1998; Whitty and Clements, 2015; Lamb et al., 2020). To ensure they can meet these challenges, GAP students are offered targeted support via the Gateway Scholars program run by Student Experience (PVCESE). PVCESE presenters will detail the early steps taken at an institutional level in conjunction with Faculties to support students who enrolled at UNSW via GAP in 2021.



Isabelle Vertucci
UNSW EDI

I am a Senior Peer Connections Officer as part of the Student Engagement Team and one of the Disability Champions for UNSW. As a UNSW alum, I am passionate about equity, diversity and inclusion for students in all aspects of their University life, creating fun community spaces in our Peer Connections programs. I have a background of work in the disability space and am currently running the Gateway Scholars program for students from low-SES backgrounds.



Jeni Engel
UNSW EDI

Since 2005, I've worked at UNSW Law & Justice in various capacities, including eight years as Director of Indigenous Legal Education, to deliver impactful outreach and preparatory programs for Indigenous high school students interested in becoming lawyers. UNSW Law & Justice's on-going transitional support has been a key contributor to our Indigenous students' success. My expertise, and an earlier career as a high school teacher, position me effectively to contribute to Gateway scholars' success and well-being.



Jessica Luquin
UNSW EDI

I'm the Team Lead of the Student Engagement Team. My team aims to ensure every first-year student at UNSW has access to a qualified First-Year Mentor, and a quality Orientation experience. I'm a qualified Social Worker with experience working with students from low-SES and disadvantaged backgrounds. I've also worked on targeted interventions for different cohorts of students (Domestic and International) facilitating support and inclusion through data analysis and resource building.



Associate Professor Silas Taylor
UNSW EDI

Associate Professor Silas Taylor has expertise in Clinical Skills teaching and as a curriculum designer. Silas chairs the Faculty Clinical Learning and Assessment Committee, and is a member of the Medicine Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee, working to increase the intake of medical students from low socio-economic background into the Medicine program.



Dr. Mick Warren
UNSW EDI

As Program Officer (Strategic Initiatives) with Access and Equity (Students) I am responsible for educational design and contribute to evaluation and reporting. I was trained as an historian, completing my PhD in Australia history in 2017. I have since taught in several fields including Indigenous history and environmental history before I became an educational designer and higher education equity practitioner.

Empowering students to self-reflect and proactively plan their self-care as learners and professionals of the future

Dr. Melanie Fentoullis, Dr. Megan Kalucy, Ms Catherine Marley, Medicine & Health, UNSW

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The Medical Board of Australia 'Code' requires doctors to reflect regularly on their practice and maintain their own wellbeing. Healthcare students and professionals, whilst caring for others, can overlook their own self-care needs. Regular engagement in self-care activities maintains and enhances our health and well-being, reduces or prevents symptoms of stress and anxiety, and improves resilience and productivity[1]. The Clinical Transition Course (CTC) is a 4 week course in the UNSW Medicine program where ~250 (Year 4) medical students are required to reflect effectively on their experiences within the course to refine their approach to learning and professional development as a student and future health professional accordingly. Students were engaged as partners in curriculum review and, responding to their feedback, a novel CTC self-care curriculum was implemented with flexible and practical opportunities for students to connect with their peers, supported by faculty and industry professionals, to individually or collaboratively apply, share and reflect on their positive self-care strategies. At the end of the program, our students have pro-actively developed their own self-care plan - at a time when they are (hopefully) thriving and 'well' - so they can utilise this plan for future challenges and refine this plan over time.

The design of our self-care curriculum, embedded within a discipline specific curriculum, strongly aligns with the UNSW Integrated Curriculum Framework ensuring our students master both the Medicine program and UNSW Graduate Capabilities.

The self-care curriculum design and resources are generic and may be integrated into any health or UNSW program.

[1] https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19_Self-Care-Planning_Black-Dog-Institute.pdf?sfvrsn=8 Accessed November 2021



Dr. Melanie Fentoullis
UNSW Medicine & Health

As a Paediatrician and early career Education Focussed Senior Lecturer (Clinical Education Fellow) in the UNSW Faculty of Medicine & Health and recently appointed Academic Lead of the Medicine Program Redesign I combine our Faculty's vision to provide a transformational educational experience for our students with my own drive to equip our student's with the skills to be effective, reflective, self-directed lifelong learners to thrive as workplace-ready graduates and medical professionals of the future.



Dr. Megan Kalucy
UNSW Medicine & Health

Megan Kalucy is an Education Focussed Senior Lecturer in the School of Psychiatry and Lead in Undergraduate Psychiatry Education. She convenes the Medicine Phase 3 Psychiatry course as well as Foundations, the first course in the medicine program, and co-convenes the Clinical Transition Course. She has a clinical background in youth mental health and is keen to support student and graduate mental health and wellbeing through promoting reflective self-care, primary prevention and early intervention approaches.



Catherine Marley
UNSW Medicine & Health

Catherine joined Faculty in 2020 working across all programs, including medicine. Catherine has extensive therapeutic clinical experience as a child and youth mental health clinician working with children, young people and families across various settings including refugees, AOD and complex trauma. Prior to joining UNSW she worked as a Senior Social Worker and Youth Counsellor in St Vincent's Hospital, and as a Manager and Senior Clinician with children and young people with complex developmental trauma.

Student engagement activities – do they alienate or engage

Dr. Sharon Oberstein, Dr. Vinod Maseedupally, Medicine & Health, UNSW

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Background: Positive student engagement creates an inclusive environment for effective student learning, wellbeing, and success. However, student activities designed to engage may in fact alienate.

Aim: To determine whether formal and informal activities designed to foster student engagement at the School of Optometry and Vision Science (SOVS) were engaging or alienating.

Methods: First and third year SOVS students were surveyed in term two (2021), to determine the impact of formal and informal activities on student engagement. Formal activities included school led early professional experiences such as attending the SOVS welcome presentation, eye examinations at the UNSW Optometry Clinic and participating in research projects. Student led informal activities included attending a student-led barbeque and gala dinner (eyeball).

Results: A total of 31/147 first year students and 21/109 third year students responded to the survey. Student attendance was higher in school led (formal) activities, compared to student led (informal) activities. For example, 74% of respondents attended the SOVS welcome presentation, yet only 47% attended the student-led barbeque which followed directly after. Those that attended both formal and informal activities reported they were engaging, 97% and 96% respectively. 53% reported not attending any student led activity, reasons included COVID-19 restrictions, no interest and unawareness of the activity.

Conclusion: Preliminary results suggest that formal activities result in better attendance and engagement compared to informal activities. This supports and highlights the value of formal activities across all years of the SOVS's programs. Students may benefit from initiatives to improve attendance in informal activities.



Dr. Sharon Oberstein
UNSW Medicine & Health

Dr Sharon Oberstein is senior lecturer, Deputy Clinic Director, UNSW Optometry Clinic and program director of the Graduate Diploma in Orientation and Mobility, UNSW Sydney. She qualified as an optometrist in South Africa (Cum laude), a PhD at UNSW Sydney (with the Menzies Research Scholarship in Allied Health Sciences) and is a senior fellow of the HEA, UK. Recognition of low vision expertise is evidenced through invited presentations at optometric conferences and rehabilitation planning committees.



Dr. Vinod Maseedupally
UNSW Medicine & Health

Dr Vinod Maseedupally is a passionate Lecturer and an Education Focused academic at the School of Optometry and Vision Science. He has a keen interest in developing educational resources that engage students in online and hybrid teaching environments. While teaching core optometry skills to undergraduate and postgraduate students, Dr Maseedupally also mentors upcoming sessional teaching staff by imparting knowledge on teaching, assessment, and feedback practices.