

BEING WELL TOGETHER - TASKFORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

For Implementation in AY20/21

OVERVIEW

Charge

*The **Being Well Together Taskforce** is charged to build on work done to date by the relevant Futures Group, and identify and recommend a select series of co-curricular Conservatory events or initiatives for the 2020-2021 year which can **strengthen a Conservatory culture of wellbeing**. This will include providing opportunities for **students/faculty/staff** that lead to an improved understanding of healthy practice in some of the most relevant and important wellbeing dimensions to our community - **Relational, Emotional, and Physical**.*

Core guidelines for recommendations:

- Strategically supplement and complement University resources
- Increase collaboration/partnership with relevant University resources
- Financially frugal (do not require substantial new resources or large annual budget)
- Build on best practice in the higher education field
- Incorporate SU Conservatory specific needs through conducting ongoing assessment and evaluation

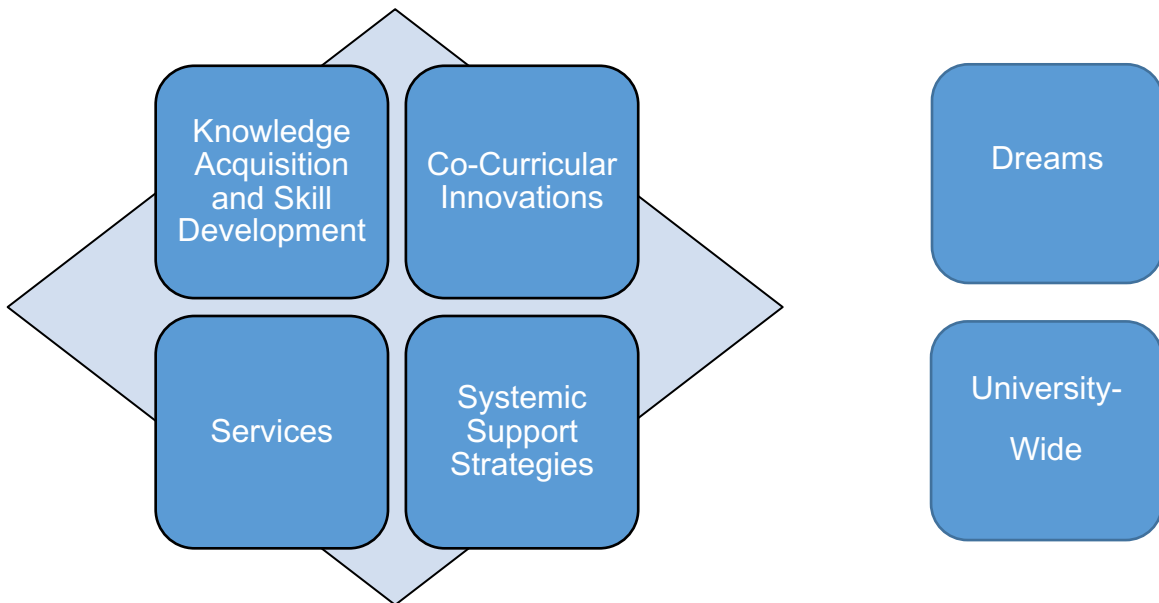
Process

*From its inception in August, 2019, the Being Well Together taskforce worked to develop recommendations based on **best-practice, Shenandoah Conservatory specific needs, and existing University resources**.*

- August – September, 2019 – Held meetings – planned, researched wellness in higher education, collated list of existing University resources, formulated and sent recommendations to ShenCo Skills Taskforce.
- October, 2019 – Sent out initial Being Well Together Survey to assess ShenCo strengths and needs – 276 *respondents*. Responses helped to inform initial recommendations.
- November, 2019 – Met with Yolanda Gibson to receive updates on existing University resources. Visited with Jeanne Mahon at Harvard University to develop recommendations and implementation strategies.
- December, 2019 – Presented initial recommendations and sent survey to staff and faculty – 17 *respondents*.
- January, 2020 – Held meetings – integrated faculty and staff feedback and fleshed out recommendations.
- February, 2020 – Presented initial recommendations and sent survey to students – 11 *respondents*.
- February, 2020 – Integrated student feedback and further fleshed out recommendations.
- February, 2020 – Dean Stepniak to approve recommendations, and then request feedback from Chris Grant and Cedric Wilson.
- February, 2020 – Present final recommendations for faculty vote.

Framework for Recommendations

Four categories of recommendations meet the core guidelines. Other recommendations (**dreams**) are important and require increased resources, or will be made for consideration at the **University level** (outside of Conservatory purview).



Implementation requires:

- 1) Being Well Together **Committee**,
- 2) Four to six Being Well Together **work study students**,
- 3) A **start-up** budget of \$400 - \$1,100,
- 4) An **annual** budget of \$3,000 - \$4,000,
- 5) **Branding** and improved communication (especially with staff and adjunct faculty), and
- 6) **Ongoing** assessment and evaluation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Knowledge Acquisition and Skill Development

Focuses on student, staff, and faculty development through providing information and training/learning opportunities

- Create and distribute University and Community resource lists
- Create and distribute evidence-based infographics (electronically and in print) on the following topics:
 - Relational Well-Being
 - Positive Communication Strategies
 - Conflict Resolution Techniques
 - Social Media
 - Healthy Boundaries
 - Emotional
 - Ways to Cope with Anxiety
 - Boost Your Creativity
 - Recognizing Mental Illness
 - Seeking Help for Mental Illness
 - How and Why to Unplug
 - Mindfulness
 - Physical
 - The Importance of Sleep
 - Healthy Eating Habits
 - Why Artists should Exercise
 - Injury Prevention for Performing Artists
- Provide *SafeZone*, *SafeTALK*, and *Mental Health First Aid* trainings at times that work for Conservatory members
- Facilitate Brown Bag Lunches (open to students, staff, and faculty) – Fridays at noon (pre-registration required)
 - Mental Health Skills 101 – Dr. Jessica Peacock (Sept.)
 - Person-Centered Teaching & Learning – Dr. Stephanie Standerfer & Bronwen Landless (early Oct.)
 - Performing arts medicine – injury prevention – Dr. Michelle Pye (end Oct.-early Nov.)
 - Mindfulness – Dr. Ting-Yu Chen & Dr. Stephanie Standerfer (Jan.)
 - Relational Wellness (Having Difficult Conversations) - Maggie McCampbell Lien (before break)
 - Being Well Together – review & moving forward (April)
- Highly recommend faculty attend two trainings per semester on Mondays from 3:00 – 3:50pm (these can count toward Well-Being section of evaluation)
 - Welcome (Back!)
 - Relational, emotional, physical resources on campus - panel: Dr. Yolanda Gibson, Representatives from the Dean of Students' office, Wellness Center, Campus Safety, Career Services, Counseling Center, Mosaic Center, Spiritual Life, Disability Services, etc.
 - Upcoming events for the year
 - Introduce new/returning staff

- Self-care Workshop
 - Dr. Keith Pomeroy-Jones
- Maintaining Healthy Boundaries in Teaching, Advising, and Mentoring
 - Cedric Wilson
- Nutrition and Lunch Networking
 - TBD

Co-Curricular Innovations

Focuses on providing opportunities to engage in well-being in and beyond the classroom

- Monthly Midweek Mindfulness
 - 1st Wednesday of each month from 8:00 – 8:50am in Goodson Chapel
 - 8:00 – 8:30am Provide coffee/tea in Goodson Lobby
 - 8:30 – 8:50am – 5-minute mindful moment (performance, deep breathing, silence, etc.) followed by 15-minute faculty-led reflection/reading or brief discussion to inspire and encourage. Faculty rotate by invitation/on voluntary basis.
- Offer a monthly rotating schedule of co-curricular innovations
 - 1st week (Monday or Wednesday, 3-4pm) Book Club - Shingleton Lobby
 - 2nd week (Monday or Wednesday, 3-4pm) Table Games/Team trivia - OBT Lobby
 - 3rd week (Monday or Wednesday, 3-4pm) Parallel Writing - Armstrong 39
 - 4th week (Monday or Wednesday, 3-4pm) Social Hour - OBT Lobby
- Host at least two (less formal/costly) pre- or post- concert receptions per semester
 - Ensure these are held for concerts that are representative of as many students as possible (especially collaboration concerts). Consider piloting this idea at the upcoming “The Body, the Voice, the Instrument” concert at the end of March, 2020.
 - Provide coffee/tea and cookies (something simple) and facilitate gathering space before or after two concerts
 - BWT work study students or ShenCo fraternities/sororities will help with organization and set-up/tear-down.
- Divisions host at least one open-house per semester
 - Provide coffee/tea and pastries for students, staff, and faculty from a division to gather informally. Division chair will coordinate/delegate coordination and will work with BWT work study students who will provide help/support as needed.
- Develop an online “open” calendar where ShenCo members can post events/social gatherings/community gigs/house concerts, etc. This can also serve to create/strengthen community relationships. Assign a graduate assistant as ‘curator/page administrator’.
- Implement awareness/mindful moments at the beginning of classes/lessons/rehearsals/meetings
 - Begin faculty and staff meetings with mindful moments
 - Provide training for faculty and students on how to facilitate mindful moments
 - ‘Mindful fellows’ – pool of students (similar to Shenandoah Conversations fellows who are available for classes to implement RSD) to be available upon request to facilitate mindful moments at the beginning of classes, rehearsals, and meetings.

Services

Focuses on providing services to support conservatory specific needs

- Make healthy food options (including foods that meet dietary restrictions) available in Conservatory buildings during relevant times of the day (Liz Albert will submit a separate proposal for this)
- Address infection control in highly frequented areas such as practice rooms and labs
 - Install and maintain 22 hand sanitizer stations in Conservatory buildings for an annual cost of \$2,420 (see Appendix A)
- Provide a food pantry to address food insecurity - a prominent need in our undergraduate and graduate student population for a start-up cost of \$400 - \$1,100 (see Appendix B)
 - Three cabinets installed in discreet locations in Armstrong, Shingleton, and Ruebush
 - Store non-perishable foods that are 1) donated by faculty, staff, fraternities/sororities, and community members/companies, and 2) accessible to students as needed

Systemic Support Strategies

Focuses on creating support strategies to address needs at a systemic level

- Create increased space for well-being in Conservatory schedules
 - Eliminate 8am classes (except for movement/dance classes and career preparation classes) to allow for increased opportunity to sleep between late night rehearsals/performances and academic engagement ✓
 - Thin out Conservatory performance/events schedule (progress already evident)
- Develop a concrete communication strategy specific to the Conservatory and consistent with existing SU policies (see Appendix C for a working suggestion – we will continue to flesh out)
- Modify Conservatory *faculty promotion evaluations* to include a component of well-being
 - Faculty seeking promotion currently write a self-assessment of their teaching, scholarship, and service. We recommend adding a section of self-reflection on how they have contributed to a culture of well-being in our shared teaching and learning community.
 - Faculty can demonstrate their commitment to professional and personal development in their annual FPPP.
- Implement one hour per month of “unplugged time” (shut off wi-fi and send email notification message to the effect of: “Shenandoah Conservatory values our student, staff, and faculty well-being. We are observing an hour of ‘unplugged time’ and will respond to your emails at our earliest convenience.”)

Dreams

Recommendations that require sizeable investments and are as important as they are costly

Relational

- Develop and design a space dedicated to well-being: a gathering place, one suited to enhance happiness and encourage students, faculty, and staff to mingle and build good relationships.

Emotional

- Employ a full-time therapist devoted solely to and trained in Conservatory needs
- Improve the overall aesthetics of Conservatory buildings – more calming and appealing colors on walls, updated artwork, etc.
- Specialized trainings
 - Whole-Hearted Musician (Dana Fonteneau)
 - Koru (Mindfulness program used by multiple universities, including Harvard. Train the trainer trainings available – train a few faculty/staff/graduate assistants to be able to provide student trainings every semester.)

Physical

- Develop a Conservatory-specific fitness facility staffed with Physical Therapists, Chiropractors, Massage Therapists, and Nutritionists who are readily available and specifically educated in the needs of performers.
- Specialized trainings
 - Alexander Technique

University-Wide

Recommendations to be implemented at the University level

- Address disparities (minority, first generational, and/or lower socio-economic status students) by implementing a “transition semester”
 - Conservatory specific input could include: Music Fundamentals, How to Practice, Staying Healthy as an Artist.
- Implement University-wide mental health app for students, faculty, and staff
 - Examples include: “Total Brain” (<https://totalbrain.com/>) (relevant for all) or “You at College” (<https://youatcollege.com/>) (relevant for students)
- Partner with app companies to provide wellness apps to students at a reduced cost
 - Examples include: “Calm” (<https://www.calm.com>), “Headspace” (<https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app>), “Smiling Mind” (<https://www.smilingmind.com.au>), “10% Happier” (<https://www.tenpercent.com>), “Wellspace” (<https://yourwellspace.com>), “InsightTimer” (<https://insighttimer.com>), Mindfulness Daily (<http://www.mindfulnessdailyapp.com>), “Stop Breathe Think” (<https://www.stopbreathethink.com>), “Aura” (<https://www.aurahealth.io>)
- Continuing education for DPS employees as first responders, particularly mental health first aid
- Address after-hours care
- Training for all faculty (especially new faculty) on boundaries, how to help, how to utilize resources
- Training for students on how to utilize resources and what faculty can and cannot help with
- Continue to bolster counseling and other wellness resources

CONCLUSION

We will commit to a culture of holistic wellness through proactive student, faculty and staff development.

In our commitment to strengthen a Shenandoah Conservatory culture of well-being, we submit these recommendations that are grounded in current research, Shenandoah Conservatory specific strengths and needs, and existing University resources. Although nuance and intention may not be as clear “on paper”, they are ever present in the planning, recommendation, and implementation process. The nuance and process inherent in shifting a culture highlight the need for 1) a standing committee to oversee this ongoing process, 2) a dedicated group of work study students to prevent from overburdening staff and faculty (supervised by a Being Well Together Committee member), and 3) intentional and ongoing branding and communication. As a taskforce, we are grateful for your support of a culture of well-being and your consideration of these recommendations.

Best,

Bronwen Landless, Chair

Jan Wagner, Vice-Chair (currently on sabbatical)

Elizabeth Albert, Vice-Chair

Rodney Bragdon
(Psychology, Arts & Sciences)

Ting-Yu Chen
(liaison between BWT and ShenCo Skills task forces)

Rachel Short

Stephanie Standerfer

Donovan Stokes

Martha Wollner

Cheryl Yancey

Denver Walker '21 (D.M.A. in Performance, Guitar)

Jenna Barricklo '21 (B.F.A. in Musical Theatre)

APPENDIX A

HAND SANITIZER STATIONS PROJECT

Being Well Together Task Force

PROPOSAL- Increasing the number of hand sanitizer stations in Conservatory spaces. The aim is to make it easier for students to comply with advice to clean their hands before and after using shared spaces and resources e.g. pianos, sound equipment, etc.

ANNUAL BUDGET:

Station Installation: Minimal or no cost

Product refill: \$100 est

Battery replacement: \$10

Annual cost per station approx: \$110

TOTAL ANNUAL COST APPROX: \$2,420 (22 stations see below)

MAINTENANCE: Currently, hand sanitizer stations in Ohrstrom-Bryant Theatre are supported by Physical Plant staff. Additional stations can be maintained by BWT Work Study students.

<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>NUMBER</u>
RUEBUSH HALL	12
ARMSTRONG HALL	7
SHINGLETON 6	1
SHINGLETON BLACK BOX	1
EWING (STATION ALREADY IN PLACE)	1
TOTAL:	22

APPENDIX B

Food Pantry Project

Proposal: Currently awaiting Dean's approval

Three portable metal cabinets to be placed in Ruebush, Armstrong and Shingleton Halls in discreet locations for the purpose of storing non-perishable foods for students in need of ready access to a food supply.

Proposed Start- Up Budget:

Purchase of cabinets

New 3 @ \$150-250.00

Used 3 at \$50 -150.00

Supplied by Facilities, if available - Free

Purchase of startup food and plastic utensils:
\$400

Total

New Cabinets plus food/supplies \$1100

Used Cabinets plus food/supplies 850

Free Cabinets plus food/supplies 400

Proposed monthly donation sources:

Faculty donation basket at all Conservatory Faculty Meetings as well as a once a month drop-off basket placed in the Conservatory mail/copy area on a specific continuous date: First Friday of every month

Conservatory Service Fraternities

Local businesses and organizations

Greater University faculty, staff and organizations

Maintenance of food supply in locations:

BWT work study students, Conservatory service fraternity members and Conservatory Faculty and Staff volunteers on a rotating basis.

APPENDIX C

Best-Practice Recommendations for Professional Communication

Conservatory faculty and staff are asked to design and review their communication expectations and personal policies on an annual basis to ensure that appropriate and healthy boundaries are set and to ensure professionalism with peers and students.

The *Faculty Handbook* requires, “Faculty at all levels should model professional behavior to our students and reflect positively on the university in the community. Professionalism includes integrity, courtesy, honesty and a commitment to the highest ethical standards. Professionalism fosters respect and trust and, therefore, serves the best interests of the entire university” (4.12.3).

Within the Conservatory, faculty and staff are encouraged to set appropriate boundaries and expectations for electronic communication with students to model professional behavior and respect. These expectations should align with those in the professional fields but attend to the health of all.

Faculty are encouraged to clearly communicate their email or other electronic communications (e.g., phones) expectations in their syllabi. An addition to email signature lines can effectively communicate your personal policy on responding to email. Outgoing email can be scheduled for delivery for a time within your own policy to help model your expectations.

Several examples of syllabus statements and email signature statements are included below:

Sample Syllabi Statements

- The best way to reach me is via email. My official school email address is **xx@su.edu**. When sending an email message, you can expect a response within 24 business hours. If you have not received a response, please try to contact me again, this time via phone. If you need to reach me via phone, please call **(xxx)-xxx-xxxx**. Please leave a message if I don't answer.
- **Using the school email is the official university policy.** If I need to contact you for any reason, I will use your **school email address**. Please make sure you check this mailbox regularly throughout the semester. If a message seeks a response, your reply is expected within 24 hours. Also, please follow proper email etiquette (see “*Guide*” to *Student Success*). I typically respond to emails within 24 hours during the week, but I do not typically respond to email after 5:00 PM or on weekends. I tend to get a high volume of email when a deadline is approaching. If you email me **before 6:00 PM on the day before a quiz or deadline**, you are **guaranteed** a reply. You are less likely to receive a reply if you email me after 6:00 PM. For emails that require a lengthy answer, I suggest that you make an appointment to see me in person instead. Contact me with questions you have but before you send me an email, please **check the syllabus, Canvas**, and other course materials for your answer.
- **Email etiquette policy:** As part of an effort to help you develop your professional communication skills, I am instituting a (somewhat) formal *email etiquette* policy. While in the past I have had a *certain* amount of patience for email messages that are written in an informal style—that is, without much attention to structure, grammar, spelling, and style—I am quite concerned that your future employer(s) and other professional colleagues will be less tolerant. They may think that if you are that inattentive in your writing, you might be just as careless when you are programming as well. (For example, please see <http://goo.gl/kB9D6>)

Sample Email Signature Lines

- Responses to email messages will typically be made during normal business hours or within one business day.
- I generally observe email-free evenings and weekends.

Resources in use as we develop these best-practices:

Establish Phone/Texting Expectations

- [Texting and Privacy Laws: What schools need to know when texting students](#)
- **[TEXT MESSAGING POLICY \(SAMPLE POLICY\)](#)**

Other Resources on Setting Communications Boundaries

- [Setting Boundaries in your Syllabus](#)
- [Developing an Electronic Communication Policy](#)
- [How to Create A Syllabus](#)