Lethbridge College Health & Wellness: Needs Assessment / COVID Implications

Prepared for Lethbridge College

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

In 2019, Wellness Services at Lethbridge College began to plan for a needs assessment (NA) focusing on health and wellness issues experienced by its students and employees. The goal was to determine health and wellness needs related to capacity, infrastructure, training, partnerships, evaluation, and defining practice-based evidence.

In January 2020, HelpSeeker, a social innovation company based in Calgary, Alberta, was hired to undertake this work. HelpSeeker supports leaders in large-scale social change through community engagement, data analysis and visualization, best practice research, and evaluation to meaningfully and measurably accelerate social impact initiatives. In March 2020, with the onset of the global pandemic COVID-19 and subsequent national lockdown, this NA has pivoted focus to also explore a recovery process for COVID-19.

The NA provides the basis for a new HW Strategy Blueprint outlining a suite of comprehensive supports required across infrastructure, knowledge exchange, and evaluation to be able to support the effectiveness of Wellness Services and broader health and wellness activities via a "whole school" approach to addressing student and employee needs on campus, and in light of the vast changes that are currently happening as the pandemic shifts global political, economic and social processes.

This NA is comprised of the following elements:
- Virtual Design Labs with employees and students - one topic for each cohort was COVID
- COVID-19 Impact Surveys
- HelpSeeker Analysis
- Review of the document by various stakeholders at Lethbridge College.

Identified needs for students included:

FGI Needs:
- Mental health issues related to school, financial, personal matters
- Risk taking behaviours - alcohol
- COVID-19 changes to study and home life

COVID Survey Needs:
- Overall dissatisfaction with online changes
- mental health issues
- perceived lack of services available during the COVID-19 pandemic

Identified needs for employees included:

FGI Needs:
- Switching to online teaching
- Mental health-related concerns - anxiety
- WLB - overload with work and need to be "on" all the time

- WFH - can it stay? Now vs Later/Have to vs Want to

COVID Survey Needs:
- Mental health - COVID-19 - isolation
- WLB - ergonomics
- School/workload challenges
- Management relationships, personal/family-related issues and preoccupations regarding the best ways to support students and colleagues.

HelpSeeker Insights:

The HelpSeeker platform has been rolled out across the College. It allows for a fulsome analysis of the local resources relevant to health and wellness to inform identification of local needs and their corresponding responses. The most common services searches included indigenous, health and wellness, and learning Cafe.

COVID Considerations:
- Impacts of COVID have been uneven - strengthen HW supports for underserved populations
- Mental health - isolation, anxiety, job loss, stress
- Financial hardship - social service safety net
- Food security - income assistance, food banks
- Communication - open and transparent about key decisions about services, re-openings, rules, safety
- Remote teaching and learning - internet access, tech support,
- Ongoing Engagement - platform to voice concerns

The impact of the global pandemic on different population groups has been uneven, often affecting already marginalized communities and thus intensifying existing inequalities. When leading in a crisis such as this, it will be critical for the College to think about long-term outcomes for the campus community, after the crisis has abated.

Acknowledgement of Siksikaitsitapi

Lethbridge College is located on lands traditionally occupied by Siksikaitsitapi, the Blackfoot Confederacy. Blackfoot lands extend north to south from the North Saskatchewan River in Alberta and Saskatchewan to the Yellowstone River in the state of Montana, and east to west from the Great Sand Hills in the current province of Saskatchewan to the mountainous Continental Divide. Today, four nations make up Siksikaitsitapi: the Apaitsitapi or Kainai (Blood Tribe), the Aapatohsipiikani or Piikani Nation, and Siksika Nation in southern Alberta, as well as the Ampskaapi'piikani or Blackfeet Tribe located in northern Montana. As both the traditional and current Land Keepers of this area, the Blackfoot Nations have welcomed people from other Indigenous territories, including all signatory Nations of Treaty No. 7, members of the Métis Nation of Alberta Region 3, and non-Indigenous people who have come to call the City of Lethbridge home.

It is the intent of our college community to honour the land from a place of connection, Kakyosin, to become fully aware and truly recognize the knowledge encompassed of what it means to say we are on Blackfoot Territory.

About this Research

In 2019, the 2019-22 Lethbridge College Comprehensive Institutional Plan (CIP) was launched with the purpose of continuing growth and sustainability along with the provision of relevant, high quality education in a changing world. As the 2019-22 CIP aims to be responsive to market demand and reflect the ongoing changing educational, cultural and economic landscape in the community, the provision of relevant, high quality programs that strengthen the economy and set graduates up for employment is crucial. Through this 2019-22 CIP, the Lethbridge College renews its commitment to:

1. Provide relevant, high quality education through excellence in teaching and learning, applied research, strategic enrolment management, and collaborative partnerships.
2. Promote an inclusive healthy learning and work environment that nurtures the health and well-being of all students and employees.
3. Improve the lives of learners and communities through the recognition and respect for the distinct cultures, languages, histories and contemporary perspectives of Indigenous people and Indigenous-centred education.
4. Support the development of its people to align their strengths, passions, purpose, skills and capabilities with the needs of a shifting and changing educational landscape.
5. Ensure that Lethbridge College continues to be relevant and sustainable in a changing environment.

To this end, the CIP established a number of goals, priorities, expected outcomes and specific performance measures key to achieve the aforementioned Lethbridge College's commitments. In particular, for the promotion of an inclusive healthy learning and work environment that nurtures the

health and well-being of all students and employees, the Plan has set as first priority the development of an Organizational Health and Wellness framework with the purpose of:

- Creating an inclusive **healthy learning environment** that nurtures the physical, emotional and mental well-being of all employees and students, resulting in greater professional and academic success, and;
- **Building partnerships** with community agencies to ensure organizational health and wellness are relevant and sustainable within a broader context.

Lethbridge College has partnered with HelpSeeker,[1] a social innovation company based in Calgary, Alberta, to complete an Integrated Needs Assessment to inform the creation of a Campus-wide Health & Wellness Strategy through the development and delivery of a number of items including:

1. Health and Wellness Program Best Practices Scan
2. Health and Wellness Services on Campus Review
3. Integrated Needs Assessment
4. Community Engagement (Admin, Staff, Student consultation)
5. Emerging priorities to inform the strategy

Each of these deliverables are expected to align with the *Lehtbridge's Community Wellbeing & Safety Strategy* (2019), and particularly coincide with its the primary areas of focus identified below:

Systems Planning & Integration	Focused on the need to improve the integration of diverse services, efforts, and resources towards the creation of a community-based model for strategically advancing common objectives
Safe & Resilient Communities	Focused on prevention/intervention measures to mitigate vulnerability to addictions, abuse, violence, trauma, etc. and enhance resiliency for individuals and communities to be safe and to thrive
Basic Needs	Focused on ensuring the basic necessities of life are adequate and accessible, including shelter, food, transportation, as well as access to education, recreation, employment, and training
Social Inclusion	Focused on engagement and building strengths to create welcoming communities, social cohesion, and belonging

The ultimate goal of this expected alignment in strategies is to coordinate diverse organizational and system efforts towards common priorities across Lethbridge and spur the collapse of silos through the

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[1] **HelpSeeker** is a social innovation company based in Calgary, Alberta. HelpSeeker builds capacity in non-profits, government and private sector partners to accelerate social impact by leveraging research, community engagement, and creative technologies. We support change-makers, thought leaders, and social entrepreneurs to maximize social impact. HelpSeeker supports leaders in large-scale social change through community engagement, data analysis and visualization, best practice research and evaluation. We provide change-makers with technical and strategic support to meaningfully and measurably accelerate social impact initiatives.

creation of a community-based governance and coordinating infrastructure to better leverage annual investments in the Lethbridge social safety net.

This document is the **third deliverable** of the broader Health and Wellness Strategy Blueprint being developed for the Lethbridge College.

Phase 2 (Jun-Jul 2020) will target the learnings from the Best Practice Scan, Health and Wellness Review and this COVID-focused Needs Assessment to create a Strategy Blueprint with an outline of the priorities and implementation actions for wholistic Health and Wellness priorities for students and employees at Lethbridge College.

Covid-19 Global Pandemic

At the close of 2019, the World Health Organisation (WHO) China Country Office was informed of a pneumonia of unknown cause, detected in the city of Wuhan in Hubei province, China. By January 30, WHO declared the 2019-nCoV outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, and on February 11, the disease was named Covid-19. On March 11th, WHO characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic.[2] By April 1, over 1 million cases had been recorded globally, over 50,000 people had died, and Canada declared a state of emergency with a national lockdown to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus. This NA has pivoted focus to also explore a recovery process for COVID-19.

This work uses data and community input to determine priorities, goals, and action steps in an integrated manner (rather than on an issue-by-issue basis) to consider the COVID-19 impacts amplifying any pre-existing opportunities and challenges. The focus of the NA process is virtual community engagement and detailed research examining Lethbridge College health and wellness trends, gaps, and strengths.

The Institutional Health and Wellness Strategy Blueprint will be generated using this information, and recommendations for implementation actions, COVID-19 pandemic recovery, and allocation of resources are provided.

Purpose

This Needs Assessment (NA) summarises the health and wellness needs of students and employees at Lethbridge College, with an emphasis on COVID-19 pandemic impacts affecting the college community. The objectives of this NA are to:

1. Conduct Virtual Focus Groups with employees and students to complement the survey data and add further context for the needs assessment.
2. Complete system mapping of Health and Wellness programming in Lethbridge College, and analyze the capacity of the system.

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[2] WHO. 2020. Rolling updates on coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Retrieved from https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/events-as-they-happen

3. Provide recommendations to address student and employee health and wellness needs considering COVID-19 impact and outcomes.
4. Inform the creation of a Campus-wide Health & Wellness Strategy at Lethbridge College to improve the overall wellbeing of all community members.

Approach and Methodology

For the development of this report we looked at health and wellness-related programs and services at Lethbridge College, broader campus strategies and background reports, various student and employee surveys related to health, wellness, and engagement, and several stakeholder interviews. Community consultations with employees and students were conducted virtually, given the community isolation measures put in place from March to June, 2020 to stop the COVID-19 virus from spreading.

This analysis includes:
- A summary of the Health and Wellness Best Practice Scan.
- A summary of the Health and Wellness Review (surveys, activities, and resources).
- Key informant virtual focus groups with community partners.
- Virtual Design Labs with employees and students - one topic for each cohort was COVID-19 focused.
- COVID-19 Impact Surveys.
- HelpSeeker Analysis.
- Review of the document by various stakeholders at Lethbridge College.

The present NA is embedded with COVID implications for health and wellness on campus, and summarizes participation and engagement from the broader college community to allow stakeholders to work through local issues and scale possible solutions.

Challenges and Limitations

The COVID-19 pandemic affected planned data collection efforts, particularly those requiring face-to-face contact and travel, such as design lab sessions and stakeholder interviews. Remote data collection (video conferencing, and virtual discussion platforms) replaced these, and the virtual method of delivery may miss nuances in communication.

Personal experience and knowledge influence observations and conclusions from the virtual design labs. Because there is no way to analyze qualitative data mathematically, the findings are based more on opinion and judgment rather than results. Cross-references with various survey data results are made where possible.

The move to work-from-home, online schooling (March-June) during the COVID-19 pandemic and into the summer months (July-August) lowered student engagement rates.

Lethbridge College Context

Lethbridge College is located in Lethbridge, a city in the province of Alberta, Canada. Lethbridge College (previously Lethbridge Community College) opened in 1957 as the first publicly funded community college in Canada. The main campus is in Lethbridge, with regional campuses in Claresholm, Vulcan County, and the Crowsnest Pass. Lethbridge College recognizes that it is located on traditional Blackfoot territory and it is important for the institution to honour the land and culture of the Blackfoot people.

Enrolment Trends

From 2012 to 2019, the number of students registered to postsecondary programs at Lethbridge College grew at an annual increase rate of 1.5%, adding 644 new students for the 2018/2019 period compared to 2012/2013. On average, 51% of all students between 2012 and 2019 registered part-time.[3]
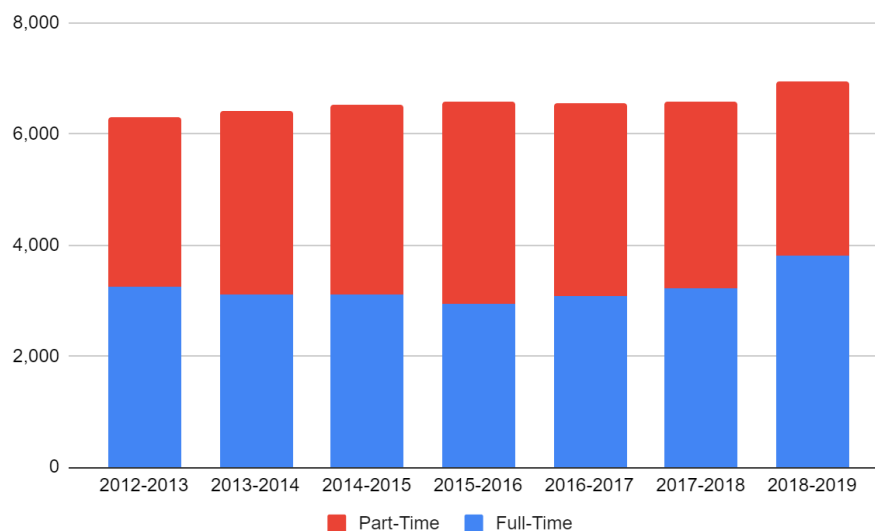
Demographic Trends

According to the 2019 municipal census, Lethbridge's city population is 101,482, which is an increase of 9.4 per cent since the 2016 federal census. Of these, almost 1,000 are employed by the College and approximately 6,000 students attend college courses every year.

The following table provides an overview of the context in which the population of Lethbridge lives, using 2016 federal census data. Lethbridge College data is also displayed to provide a snapshot of the student and employee population: complete data for 2018/19.

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[3] Alberta Government. 2019. Headcount Enrolment within the Alberta Post-Secondary Education System. Retrieved from: https://open.alberta.ca/opendata/system-wide-headcount-enrolment-within-the-alberta-post-secondary-education-system

	Lethbridge, CSD		Lethbridge College Students		Lethbridge College Employees	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population	92,729	100%	6,947	100%	822	100%
Male	45,430	49.0%	3,478	50.1%	422	43.8%
Female	47,300	51.0%	3,466	49.9%	527	54.7%
15-24 years	13,015	14.0%	3,668	52.8%	110	11.4%
25-44 years	25,800	27.8%	2,293	33.0%	402	41.7%
45-64 years	22,625	24.4%	278	4.0%	400	41.5%
65 years and over	15,160	16.3%	7	0.1%	51	5.3%
Median age	37.2		22.5		43.1	
Indigenous Identity	5,290	5.8%	457	6.6%	Not collected	-
Postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree	29,380[4]	61.2%	1,524[5]	21.9%	TBC	-

Youth Breakdown

With more than 50% of the student population considered Youth (15-24) - a further age group breakdown shows most students in this category are 18-20.
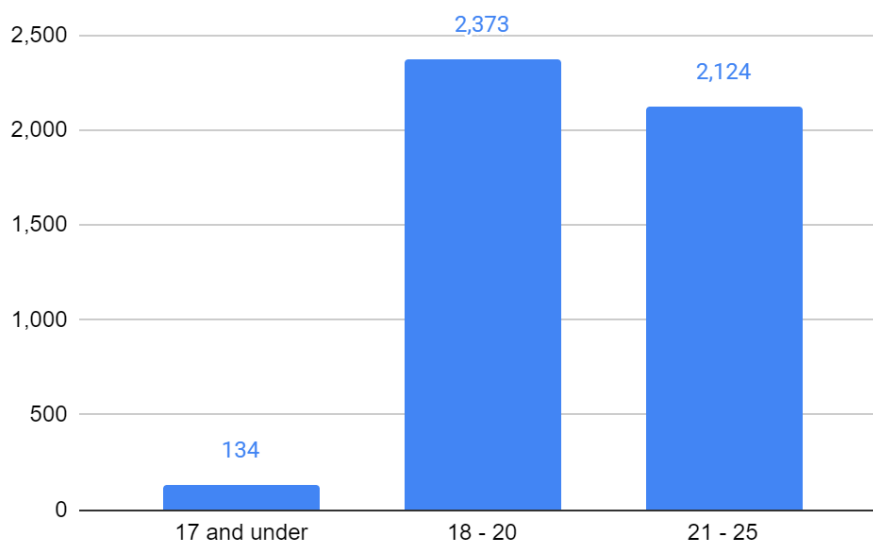

Diversity

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[4] Highest certificate, diploma or degree for the population aged 25 to 64 years in private households - 25% sample data

[5] Headcount of completers by credential.

During this last 5 years, the number of international students enrolled in postsecondary programs at Lethbridge College grew by 126% from 2012 to 2019, where 2019 saw the greatest annual increase rate of 10%. The number of Indigenous students has also increased, but at a much lower rate of 3% per year.
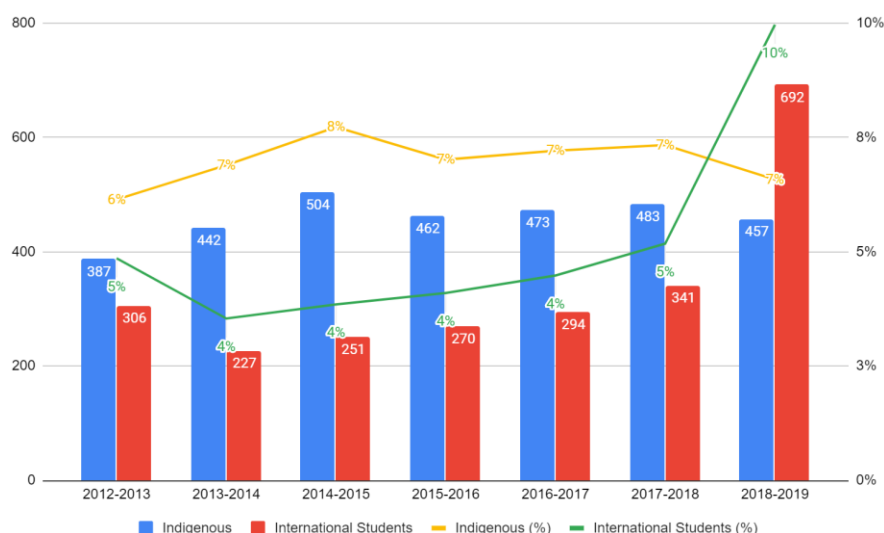
Lethbridge College is becoming more diverse as the immigrant/refugee and Indigenous populations in the City increase.

In 2019, 248 new international students registered to different programs offered at the College. Some countries with significant international student populations are 350 of the total number of international students are from India (350), Kenya (82), Nigeria (28), Japan (23), the Philippines (17), and Brazil (14).[6]

Southern Alberta is Blackfoot traditional territory, and Lethbridge College's First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) student population is steady at 7 percent of the total student population.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total FNMI Students	497	423	462	485	433	427

The health and wellness implications of this growing diversity in the Lethbridge College community are considerable in terms of culturally appropriate programs and services. Student housing, equal employment and education opportunities, and the need to strengthen social cohesion for different ethno-cultural groups on campus are growing needs.

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[6] Lethbridge College. 2019. Another big jump in Lethbridge College Enrolment. Retrieved from: https://lethbridgecollege.ca/news/campus-news/another-big-jump-lethbridge-college-enrolment

Health and Wellness at Lethbridge College

Health and Wellness, Mental Health, Psychological Safety are all terms used interchangeably to describe an individual's overall well-being. Lethbridge College understands the importance of being safe – physically, mentally, spiritually, socially, emotionally – whatever the case may be. The college has made this a priority and has taken steps to ensure that employees and students are "holistically" safe. Several strategies are in place, including the Comprehensive Institutional plan, Student Health and Wellness Plan (2016-2019), and the Employee Health and Wellness Plan (2017-2018). Diverse populations at the College also have plans. For example: Indigenous Service: Niitsitapi Indigenization Plan.

Programs and Services

The priorities and policies of these plans are implemented around campus through various departments with related strategies and initiatives. While Lethbridge College has 51 departments, the following have been identified as providing key health and wellness services to the campus community.

● Wellness Services	● Career Development
● English Language Centre	● Recreation Services
● Students' Association	● Learning Cafe
● Indigenous Services	● Accessibility Services
● Student Awards and Financial Aid	● Testing Services
● Residence Life	● Human Resources
● Career & Academic Advising	● Occupational Health and Safety
● International Student Supports	

Post-Secondary Health and Wellness Best Practices

Over the last decade, a significant number of strategies have been designed and implemented across postsecondary institutions in Canada with the purpose of improving the wellbeing of all community members. Wellness services and programs have grown naturally as an activity of student services originally active in Canadian post-secondary institutions to connect students with needed services such as counselling and general navigation and assistance during the student post-secondary experience. Student services have since evolved and grown to be considered a more clearly defined department run by a "more highly sophisticated group of professionals who bring expertise from any number of specialties."[7] For post-secondary employees, health and wellness services generally focus on supports for injury and illness, psychological health and safety, wellbeing and worklife, training, and engagement.[8], [9]

Campus-based health and wellness services are prevalent in almost all Canadian post-secondary institutions to varying degrees and include topic-based health education and campaigns, fitness amenities, primary care, prevention-focused programming and immunization services. Wellness programs in Canadian post-secondary institutions vary by population size, location, and provincial health care service delivery.

In the report "Best Practices: Health and Wellness Programming in Post-Secondary Institutions," prepared for the Lethbridge College by HelpSeeker, 31 plans/strategies were reviewed along with a number of other background documents and grey literature. Some contextual, programmatic and conceptual challenges were identified in the literature review on health and wellness in postsecondary institutions in Canada. Some of these challenges are the diversity of needs and enrolment, the changing of learning methods, and the issues related to help-seeking behaviours, accessibility, scope, policies/protocols and evaluations.

With the onset of COVID, these challenges are exacerbated. Faced with closed classrooms and limited contact, students and faculty are facing myriad challenges as they confront the growing stresses of COVID-19 and look to finish the school year through remote teaching and learning. As these issues are occurring in real time, the community engagement section discusses in more detail the challenges and possible solutions to enhance remote learning.

The health and wellness response by the education sector to the emerging issue of the 2019 novel coronavirus is currently in flux. Various institutions note the health and well-being of postsecondary

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[7] Cox, D. and Strange, C. (eds) 2010. Achieving Student Success. Retrieved from:
https://books.google.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=r2LUzJxYjo4C&oi=fnd&pg=PR5&ots=Mriig2FBuX&sig=ojHNplMdRMkywM2uqmHrt29jQvQ#v=onepage&q&f=true

[8] Mental Health Commision of Canada. 2018. National Standard of Canada - Psychological health and safety in the workplace Retrieved from https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/English/what-we-do/workplace/national-standard

[9] Best Practices in Canadian Higher education. 2019. An Environmental Scan of Canadian Campus Mental Health Strategies. Retrieved from https://bp-net.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Canadian-Campus-Mental-Health-Strategies_2019.pdf

students and faculty from Canada and abroad need to be prioritised with new processes for servicing and monitoring health and wellness.

Six different areas were identified as key characteristics of good practices of health and wellness-related strategies at universities and colleges in Canada. These characteristics are summarized below:

1. **Comprehensive & Holistic**, viewing the **whole campus** as the scope to be addressed and as responsible for enhancing and maintaining the health and wellness of community members;
2. **Focused and Staff and Student-Directed** beyond the individual and strategies such as treatment, skill-building and awareness to the **whole campus -** its environment, organizational structure, policies and practices. The strategy should be grounded in values of informed choice and inclusion of campus voices in strategy development and decision-making, especially of employees and students with lived experiences.
3. **Inclusive & Engaging,** involving all stakeholders in a collective, shared responsibility for creating campus environmental conditions that support whole campus health and wellness.
4. **Creative** of environmental conditions for the flourishing of all students that are grounded in values of social equity and sustainability; supports integrated development and capacity building; provides targeted programs for students who would benefit from assistance; and provides specialized services for students experiencing health and wellness issues.
5. **Proactive & Iterative** in establishing strategies to prevent potential undesired experiences of health and wellness from happening in postsecondary institutions, with structures to measure and monitor goals and outcomes of the strategy.
6. **Diverse & Safe** for all community members to conduct their activities in an environment free of violence, discrimination, and harassment.

Incorporating these components should dovetail the prioritization of the unique needs and characteristics of the population at postsecondary campuses. Some of the key populations to be targeted in a comprehensive health and wellness plan are: indigenous, international, LGBTQ2S+, mature students, and community members with disabilities. It is imperative to note that COVID-19 will magnify the health and wellness needs of these diverse groups.

Finally, programs/plans aimed at implementing iterative evaluation to better adapt to unforeseen circumstances, and understanding of the diversity and need for collaboration and establishment of strategic alliances to improve the health and wellness of everyone at Canadian campuses are also recommended.

On Campus Health and Wellness Needs

Health and wellness are a priority at the highest level at Lethbridge College where promotion of an inclusive healthy environment for students and employees is one of five overarching goals at the institutional level. Health, wellness and safety efforts are undertaken by Wellness Services and Occupational Health and Safety teams, and in order to understand the needs of the campus community, a number of data collection activities take place during the year, to ensure service provision is relevant and tailored to these identified needs.

Survey Data Summary

Students

Lethbridge College Student Health is largely informed by the American College Health Association National College Health Assessment.

- 85% students reported feeling overwhelmed by all they had to do and exhausted - though not from physical activity. **Mental health** challenges are escalating, i.e. personal stress, anxiety, and depression were highlighted. More **complex needs** addressed with the support of a professional include Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) (9.6 %), learning disability (10.6%) and Physical Disability (mobility, sight, hearing, speech) (9.1%).
- Students score higher than provincial averages on 8 out of 10 violence, abusive relationships and personal safety indicators. This includes slightly higher reported rates of experiencing a physical fight (+2.7%), a physical assault (+2.5%) and being in an emotionally abusive relationship (+1.2%). Sexual violence is higher at Lethbridge College compared to the Canadian average.
- 50-60% of students have **healthy behaviours** such eating 1-2 servings of fruits and vegetables per day, and moderate-intensity cardio or aerobic exercise for at least 30 minutes. 60.9% of college students reported using **alcohol** and 25.7% reported using marijuana in the last 30 days, both of these rates are at or below provincial averages.

Shepell's Student Support Program data also indicates mental health findings with added insight into **personal stress** and **personal relationships** needs. There are added concerns with **finances** being a major stressor for students. **Study habits support** was also flagged as a growing need.

This is also reflected in the 2019 Indigineous Student Survey where 35% were very concerned about the difficulty of the courses, although this is slightly down from 2018 (41.9%). **Health and wellness, fitting in, and paying for school** also rated as major concerns.

Vocantus data indicates that **studying** and **maintaining healthy, balanced lifestyles** was the top priority identified by students self-reporting need for help, as almost one in four respondents indicated need.

Employees

Surveys for employees focus on engagement and how they can support their students, rather than individual health and wellness.

In 2018, the Employee Pulse survey showed the majority of employees are **engaged** (58.9%), trend data suggests there is a **widening gap** between these people and almost 10% of employees who are not engaged, up from 5% two years earlier.

Positions with a greater proportion of disengaged or indifferent employees were Faculty and Support Employees. Employees indicated areas for improvement are **showing recognition**, **working collaboratively**, and **relationships with senior management**.

Guarding Minds survey which employs a variety of psychosocial factors known to have a powerful impact on organizational health and the health of individual employees also adds insight to **organisational culture**: 13% expressing serious concerns and 28% with minimal concerns.

Further this survey explores psychological health and safety. Area of concerns focused on mistreatment:
- 8.4% (n = 17) of employees reported experiencing **discrimination** in the workplace because of their cultural/ethnic background, disability, sexual orientation, gender or age.
- 10.3% (n = 21) of employees reported being **bullied or harassed**, either verbally, physically or sexually in the workplace.
- 1.5% (n = 3) of employees reported being treated unfairly in the workplace because they have a **mental illness**.

Shepell's Counselling Supports are most commonly utilized for **personal/emotional** concerns as well as **couple/relationship** issues. The most common reasons employees utilize worklife services is for **legal, financial and personal well-being** support. According to the Shepell data reports, concerns about **personal relationships and personal stress** are emerging issues for the employees that are reaching out.

Student Support Surveys indicate that students have initiated a personal conversation with employees related to their own health and wellness, or the health and wellness of someone close to them regarding **stress: academic and/or financial**; and **learning disabilities**. Employees are able to provide guidance and support for these issues. Just under 30% of employees indicated being unsure how to support students with **social challenges**, if that arose in conversations.

College Community Engagement

Student and Employee engagement is central to planning and decision-making as it will help to build a local strategy that is person-centred, and that has broad-buy-in from the community. The following activities took place during May and June, 2020.

1. Student and Employee Consultations. Several virtual design labs were conducted, which helped identify challenges and recommendations for health and wellness considerations at Lethbridge College.
2. A COVID-19 focused online questionnaire. This was used to learn more about the individual experiences of students, faculty and staff at Lethbridge College during the Winter (Jan-April) 2020 national lockdown to prevent the spread of infection.
3. Community Partner Focus Groups. Two virtual focus groups with six participants.

Virtual Design Labs

Design Labs are an opportunity for students and employees to collaborate, provide ideas and recommendations with others on their own areas of interest. These Design Labs were hosted online to comply with Social Distancing regulations in Lethbridge due to COVID-19 onset and included the following topics:

Students

- 1.1 Student Design Lab: COVID-19 challenges and strategies.
- 1.2 Student Design Lab: Stress Management (School Related and Personal) challenges and strategies.
- 1.3 Student Design Lab: Violence (Sexual, Physical, Intimate) concerns and strategies.
- 1.4 Student Design Lab: Financial Stress and Balancing Work/Study concerns and strategies.
- 1.5 Student Design Lab: Risk-taking Behaviour concerns and strategies.

Employees

- 2.1 Employee Design Lab: COVID-19 challenges and strategies.
- 2.2 Employee Design Lab: Stress Management (Workload/Time Management) challenges and strategies.
- 2.3 Employee Design Lab: Relationships (Senior Management and College Leadership) challenges and strategies.
- 2.4 Employee Design Lab: Relationships (Personal/Family) challenges and strategies.
- 2.5 Employee Design Lab: Supporting Students challenges and strategies
- 2.6 Employee Design Lab: Supporting Colleagues challenges and strategies

A total of 16 students and 71 employees (faculty and staff) registered to participate.

The Student Experience

COVID-19 challenges and strategies

In terms of COVID-19 challenges, mental health, financial concerns, program delay, and disinfecting protocols were all reported as issues. Students are worried about access to mental health professionals when returning to campus. Unemployment during the pandemic creates financial stress through the increasing of student debt and dwindling savings. Students are also concerned about having their

programs delayed further, should campus reopen and then close again unexpectedly. If the campus does reopen, disinfecting protocols and keeping COVID off campus adds to the stress of returning to school.

Suggested solutions for COVID safety include social distancing and hand hygiene, increasing the availability of hand sanitizer, and teaching strategies and expectations for keeping students safe. Regarding mental health, extensions can be made for students who cannot finish their courses on time due to curriculum changes, and online events can be leveraged to promote student life on and off campus.

Stress Management (School Related and Personal)

Stress, both school-related and personal, affects students ability to be healthy and well. Stresses are amplified by attending classes, needing to mesh with new classmates or cohorts, managing busy class schedules, limited physical activity, and uncertainty about practicum placements.

To address this, potential solutions include advertising mental health services available to students better, getting sufficient sleep and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, using online exercise videos for small spaces that require no equipment, and making oneself flexible and available to other students.

Financial Stress and Balancing Work/Study

Balancing work and study is a tricky balance for most students, as financial stress often looms in their minds. Tuition is rising, and students who have lost their income from being unemployed have no clear view of being able to work again, either due to the economy or spending their time at school. Students with children at home face more expenses than students without dependents. Work-study opportunities can improve the work/study balance, as can creating and sticking to a budget. To help students find employment, virtual opportunities to meet with potential employers can also reduce financial stress.

Risk-taking Behaviour

The design labs found that risk-taking behaviours were prevalent, including alcohol use and abuse, risky sexual behaviour, skipping classes, and late night parties, despite existing rules. Ground rules set at the beginning of the semester and rewards for perfect attendance can incentivize students to attend class more often. Participants also suggested teachers can also stress the importance of coming to class.

The Employee Experience

COVID-19 Challenges and Strategies

COVID-19 issues are different for employees than they are for students, save for a few commonalities. Employees mentioned difficulty with completing their tasks since they were not made aware of who has been laid off.[10] Further, fear of layoffs is affecting employee morale. Working from home poses its own challenges, since it affects each person differently and sticking to working hours can be difficult. Meeting burnout, caused by frequent and unnecessary meetings disrupts workflow as well. Like students,

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[10] Lay offs, and the lack of communication of same, occurred before COVID due to budget cuts. Then with COVID there were many more temp. lay offs that were not communicated.

employees are nervous about returning to in-person work before it is perceived as safe to do so, especially for those with compromised health or family members at risk. Poor ergonomics and social isolation add to issues with physical and mental health.

To manage these challenges, employees indicated a desire for a list of who is still on employees during temporary layoffs and information about the potential permanency of layoffs as permitted. Employees mentioned they would like to see supervisors meet with each employee member to develop individualized work from home plans, and more frequent use of emails to communicate updates and solicit feedback. Flexibility around returning to in-person work is important for employees, as they indicated desire for PPE and arrangements that are respectful of personal situations. Employees should be made aware of resources for ergonomic assessment. To manage social isolation, social committees and events can be created.

Stress Management (Workload/Time Management) challenges and strategies
Stress management related to workload and time management is an area for improvement. According to employees in the design labs, workloads are too high for the time and resources they are given. Operations are also very siloed, as there is a lack of departmental and interdepartmental cooperation, communication and knowledge about services provided. Additionally, concerns exist about non-ergonomic workstations and the cost of acquiring office supplies. Employees would like to have greater control and choice over their goal-setting rather than having mandated tasks.

Solutions suggested by the lab participants are many. First, employees suggest conversations about workload that set clear priorities, focus on outputs, and avoid rewarding efficient workers with more work. Second, education about what different departments do can improve communication and support strategy development between them. Third, providing employees with ergonomic supplies and resources such as office supplies, furniture, and printers can improve the work-from-home experience. Next, shared performance goals and plans between employees and leadership can help create a common vision, and finally, frequent use of communication channels can increase the transparency of decision making.

Relationships (Senior Management and College Leadership) challenges and strategies
There is a perception that the College is fairly top-heavy, but at the same time, those leaders are not approachable or visible. Some employees feel disconnected from the College's greater vision and are unclear about priorities and the future of the College. Regarding relationships with senior management and College leadership, employees indicated concern about decisions being made without consulting employees who work in those areas. Participants also expressed worries about supervisors not providing appropriate performance feedback.

Solution-wise, employees suggested having consultations with employees and transparency about who is being consulted and why when decisions are made. There was also a desire for coaching of supervisors by senior leadership. Employees would also like to see better feedback mechanisms between employees and supervisors to prevent the ostracization of those with concerns, a stronger

commitment to understanding the stresses of trades instructors, and overall, more connection between leadership and employees especially through having senior leaders be champions, be more physically present, and demonstrate that they appreciate employees.

Relationships (Personal/Family) challenges and strategies

Because of work-from-home arrangements, there is now a stronger overlap between personal lives and professional lives. Caring for aging parents, spouses, children, and financial interferes with work/life balance. Further, the scheduling of meetings during lunch and after-hours emails contribute to the lost separation of work and personal lives. Other concerns exist around the implications of social isolation, getting sick, and the stigma of mental health. Finally, employees often find themselves using vacation time due to sick children or family members.

Based on feedback from the design labs, employees would consider work-from-home permanently if their roles allow for it. To manage work/life balance, education and training could be used and exist in different formats. Realistic expectations are needed to prevent fear of failing or falling behind, as are cultural expectations around "knowing when to quit for the day." Reduced work hours and transition plans should be supported by HR, as should flexible start and end times, mental health days, casual illness days, allowing work-day changes due to school PD days, and before and after-school programs.

Supporting Students challenges and strategies

Employees also have to support students with challenges they face. Students have lives outside of school that impact their studies, and need space to have private talks and confidentiality in online settings. Helping students is a significant time commitment that not all management seems to understand, according to lab participants. As well, large class sizes and an online environment add to the difficulty of catering to students' individual needs, monitoring for drug use, and preventing cheating.

There are opportunities to connect virtually with students through chat rooms and virtual meetings that can act as a means of supporting students. While student support specialists are always needed, lab participants believe that those resources are especially important now. Employees also suggested integrating the Student Health and Wellness Plan with the institutional plan, and giving students more options for Shepell counsellors, including Indigenous-focused, male, and female counsellors.

Supporting Colleagues challenges and strategies

In supporting colleagues, clarification is needed between what supervisors should do vs formal health and wellness programs. Supervisors do need to be trained to support employees, although they should not be forced to handle every situation. Lab participants pointed out that employees with sick family members and children cannot do the same workload as others, which often leads to other employees getting overloaded. The unequal distribution of work, sharing, and appreciation is taxing to employees, a problem that is amplified by the perceived lack of permission to say no, heavy workloads, lack of time, having to adapt to new things, and exhaustion. Temporary layoffs also are taxing, as employees feel angry and sad that they cannot contact their work friends if they were not friends outside of work.

For a solutions, lab participants expressed there is a need to realize people just want to talk and not have their problem be solved necessarily. Accountability was also mentioned, as participants viewed assigning accountability as a part of creating a healthy work environment. Employees would like to see better, more consistent communication, options for back-filling positions, and wellness bonus days to mitigate the burden of supporting their colleagues.

Virtual Design Labs - Needs Summary

Mental health issues related to school, financial, personal matters, risk taking behaviours or COVID-19 were the areas of major concern amongst students. To reduce the effects of these issues in their overall health and wellness, students recommend the implementation of better advertisement of the mental health services available, increasing work-study opportunities, connections with core competencies, rewards for mental health achievements, and the introduction of social distancing and hand hygiene as part of student's everyday life.

In turn, similar mental health concerns associated with COVID-19 and school/workload challenges were raised by employees during the design labs. In addition, management relationships, personal/family-related issues and preoccupations regarding the best ways to support students and colleagues were other areas of concerns for employees. Strategies recommended spun around the establishment of better communication channels between supervisors and employees to have conversations regarding lay-offs due to COVID-19, workload and performance goals, as well as to implement feedback mechanisms between employees and supervisors.

COVID-19 Impact Surveys

Student Impact Survey Results

In total, 899 students responded to the online survey during May of 2020.

Demographics
Of this cohort, 70% (632) identified as female and 29% (263) as male. About 10% of respondents (91) were international students and 7% (62) identified as Indigenous students. Of note, 10% reported having a disability and being registered with Accessibility Services.

COVID-Related / Transition to Online Learning / COVID Impact
In-person courses were the most common way of course delivery for 48% (432) of respondents during the Winter 2020 term. A significant 39% (348) of participants were either taking courses entirely delivered online (23% or 206) or a blend of in-person and online courses (16% or 142).

Changing to online learning as a result of COVID-19 increased dissatisfaction amongst respondents with their learning experience during the Winter 2020 term. 72% (498) of respondents noted this situation decreased satisfaction (somewhat and greatly) with their experience during the term.

> *"It is difficult keeping in contact with people when you are not physically with them. It can also be very difficult to motivate yourself to get tasks completed at home, and it can also feel lonely."*

> *"I was less motivated, there was an increase in confusion/disconnect with learning."*

> *"Overall less satisfaction. It is a new learning curve for both students and teachers. A lot of anxiety towards school as the online learning is not very positive for me."*

> *"I have no internet access so i have to reply [SIC] on my textbook but i have a learning disability do [SIC] relying just on my textbook will not get me the best results academically."*

The transition from in-person to online learning has also had impacts in student's mental health and wellbeing. In particular, 73% (505) respondents reported being negatively affected by this transition primarily in their ability to stay motivated, their feelings of loneliness or isolation (57% or 393), and their overall mental health and wellbeing (58% or 399).

> *"I am in a difficult course so it impacted my mental health ad [SIC] made it hard to be motivated. I didn't get along with classmates. I was very lonely and isolated living in a new city alone."*

> *"It is hard to stay motivated while being at home 24/7."*

> *"Because of my learning disabilities, the in-person classroom experience is better for me because I can ask questions, read the teacher's lips, learn visually, and audiology from my teachers as well as fellow classmates."*

> *"I had to move home where wifi and cell service are not good which added lots of stress. [...] it has made it hard for me to stay positive, stay motivated, and be in a good mood."*

> *"I feel anxiety all the time and lack of motivation to study and stay on track."*

Overall, due to COVID-19, 91% (819) of students reported to be, to a certain extent, concerned about their finances, 89% (804) about getting a job after finishing their studies, 80% (725) about paying debts related to their education, and 70% (631) about their housing situation.

> *" I am currently laid off work therefore have little income. If it stays that way I will have to go reduce my work load [SIC] to the 1 course min."*

> *"If Lethbridge college can reduce the course fees it will be greatly helpful as most us have been laid of [SIC] in the child care /caregiver/schools."*

Support during the transition

With respect to the supports implemented by Lethbridge College to lessen the impact of the transition to online learning due to COVID-19, the majority of students participating in the survey did not have any idea about these supports or did not consider them as useful: when asked about the help that a Faculty Liaison could provide to support the transition to online learning, 49% (336) of respondents did not know what a Faculty Liaison was and when amongst the ones that did, 35% reported that having access to a Faculty Liaison did not help with this transition.

While the College's emphasis on online support services during COVID-19 increased, over 60% of respondents reported that health, accessibility, academic, advising and technology support services did not have any impact in their educational experience during the transition to online learning. It is worth noting that while these services did not have any impact for the majority of respondents to the survey, some of the students reported that accessing those services was harder during this transition, especially those that require human connection. Some students reported that appointments with Wellness Services were being pushed back many times to the point that students ran out of medication and had to get an emergency prescription from the pharmacy. Others discussed having no access at all to any of these services after switching to online courses while others mentioned having to call Shepell counselling multiple times to get help.

> *"I some times [SIC] need tutoring or help with financial services and it is harder to access now."*

> *"Although we are able to email advising, I have done so and have received no response even though it has been a week."*

> *"A couple times I needed additional assistance with my computer but was unable to seek help."*

> *"I was not able to connect to the doctors on campus for health concerns."*

> *"I am not good with technology. Having the assistance of the members at the college was something I relied on."*

Overall, about 50% (347) of students reported no change in the frequency they accessed the college's services, and 34% (236) considered that their usage of these services decreased during the Winter 2020 term. Similar results were obtained when inquiring about the availability of the college's students services with 47% (317) of the students considering it stayed the same and 28% (194) feeling they decreased during COVID-19.

Future plans
24% (216) of all respondents, were planning to graduate at the end of the current term (Winter 2020).

While about 65% (442) of students indicated they plan to continue studying at Lethbridge College at the same or increased course load for Fall 2020, 12% (85) plan to reduce their course load. 6% (43) of respondents are planning to continue studying at another institution and 4% (25) have not yet made

plans for Fall 2020. Of note, concerns about whether in-person classes will resume at Lethbridge College play an important role in planning for Fall 2020 classes, for at least 297 (43%) respondents.

> *"Unsure [about my educational plans for Fall 2020] [...]. I am not in favour of completing my studies in the Justice Program on online classes."*

Additional comments

Improvements to the online learning experience during the COVID-19 crisis were suggested: increase the availability of technology such as printers and computers, as well as mental health and wellness services. Other suggestions were paying more attention to the way classes have been delivered and to ensure active interactions can still occur between students and teachers.

Many respondents feel grateful about what the College has done to keep everyone safe and support their overall wellbeing.

> *"[...] encourage the instructors to answer their emails as this is our only link to them and out [SIC] classes that affect us and our livelihood."*

> *"i would propose just having a consistent [SIC] conversation with the students whether that be via email or a quick comment at the bottom of a rubric."*

> *"I am disappointed with the global state of emergency, but grateful that Lethbridge College has put in proper procedures to keep everyone safe and healthy."*

> *"I think it's great the college is able to accommodate so many students and allow them to finish online. Thank you!"*

Student COVID Impact Needs

Overall dissatisfaction with the transition to online learning, mental health issues (anxiety, isolation), and perceived lack of services available during the COVID-19 pandemic are the most cited challenges experienced by students at Lethbridge College. The establishment of new services or the implementation of better strategies aimed to reach out to the most vulnerable students to help them increase their ability to stay motivated, improve their feelings of loneliness or isolation, accessibility to services, and help them with their financial concerns during the continuation of online learning should be considered in the design and implementation of health and wellness-related strategies as changes to the education and learning experience are being realised.

Employee Impact Survey Results

In total, 459 employees responded to the online survey during May/June of 2020.

Demographics

Of this cohort, 51% (236) identified as female and 45% (205) as male. About 9% of respondents (40) identified as members of a visible minority group 2% (11) reported having a disability. The majority of respondents (72% or 331) were faculty (37% or 169) and AUPE (35% or 162) employees. 80% (369) of participants do not manage employees.

Work

There were 281 (61%) of employees that reported working from home more than 80% of the time. Further, 132 (29%) and 217 (48%) prefer working on-campus over working from home. As the lockdown extended, 41% (186) felt that working from home helped them to be more productive compared to working on-campus, and 43% (197) felt less distracted when working at home.

> *"I have enjoyed working from home. I am still able to effectively communicate with my coworkers and team, and have not noticed a lack in my productivity."*

> *"I am so much more productive and the lack of distractions from well-meaning colleagues."*

> *"I find myself and my team to be more productive without the f2f social time in the office stealing hours in the day for socializing."*

In general, 54% (248) of respondents said they have a formalized list of tasks/projects/outcomes that they review with their supervisor in either a one-to-one or team meeting setting. However, while 32% (146) review this list together at least once per week, 22% (102) do so less than once per week or not at all.

COVID Impact

Changing to online teaching as a result of COVID-19 increased dissatisfaction with their employee experience in the Winter 2020 term. 33% (151) of respondents this situation decreased satisfaction (somewhat and greatly) with their experience during the term.

Under the circumstances posed by COVID-19, a significant proportion of the college's employees (88% or 404) feel that they were contributing to the sustainability of the institution during the pandemic. Further, 85% (391) of respondents agreed that the college is responding effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic.

> *"The response by the college and management has been outstanding from what I can see."*

The transition from in-person to online learning has also had significant impacts in employee's mental health and wellbeing. In particular, respondents reported being negatively affected by this transition primarily in their connection to the college as a whole (45% or 207), and their overall mental health and wellbeing (42% or 189).

> *"I experienced fatigue, screen fatigue, and had headaches. I had to learn to take more breaks and space my meetings."*

"I found it extremely difficult and affecting my overall mental health. This could be for a variety of factors. If I were able to have a designated space at home and access to daycare it could be a positive working situation."

In contrast, 55% (251) of college's employees reported that the changes resulting from COVID-19 had no impact on their feelings of loneliness or isolation, connection to supervisors or Associate Dean (48% or 219), or ability to stay motivated (38% or 175).

"I have also been taking better care of my physical and mental health with structured breaks that include exercise. I also actually stop for lunch and eat at a regular time now."

In terms of their workload, 64% (295) of all respondents reported that their workload increased compared to times where pre-COVID-19 affecting their productivity. Access to a printer and appropriate ergonomic office furniture (e.g. desk, chair) were also reported as negatively affecting the productivity of 54% (262) and 55% (249) employees, respectively. In addition, 20% (91) do not have access to a dedicated workspace at home that allows them to be free from distraction for most or all of the work day, and 32% (148) typically have children under the age of 15 in their home during work hours (including their own kids, grandchildren, etc.), which distract them from work.

"Going 100% on-line has increased workload, stress, and time required to do things well."

"My work load [SIC] has doubled working online. It takes so much more time! I'm working at least 10 hours/day at least 6 days/week."

"I find that I work well above and beyond the hours that I am paid for."

"I do not have an office setup at home."

"Home is not set up the same as the office for ergonomics and technology."

"I have children at home and it is difficult for them to understand why dad is home but not available. It leads to a fair number of disruptions in my schedule."

"I have two teenagers and my wife all working at home. Our house is not designed for this."

About 28% (125) of respondents feel that the level of one-to-one interaction with their supervisor is less compared to before the COVID-19 changes. Yet, 72% (332) want the frequency of this interaction to stay the same.

"I find a very high disconnection with my supervisor, as well as fellow co-workers [...] since working from home we can't just pop in for a quick question."

"Very little regular/ongoing communication between my manager/associate dean and myself. I can go entire days without speaking or meeting with anyone in the college community whether its team members or other departments."

"The one negative effect of transitioning to online teaching and working from home was the complete disconnection from the associate dean, chair, and co-workers."

Of the 20% (90) of employees that currently manage others, 56% (50) reported that supporting employees' health and wellbeing have been a challenge when managing their employees since the COVID-19 changes. Similarly, ensuring these employees have the tools and resources they need to perform effectively and manage employees' tasks and deliverables were also reported as challenging situations faced by 48% (43) and 47% (42) of employees managing others during the pandemic changes.

"As a manager, the work has been intense with long hours, more emails, more meetings, more people needing answers, more information gathering, basically, more of everything."

Overall, due to COVID-19, 89% (411) of employees reported to be, to a certain extent, concerned about the health and wellbeing of friends and family, 83% (377) about maintaining employment, 82% (379) about personal health and wellbeing, and 79% (331) about household finances.

"I'm disconnected and unmotivated."

"I have experienced tremendous feelings of isolation due to working at home and living alone during COVID-19."

"Found it extremely difficult and affecting my overall mental health. This could be for a variety of factors."

"If I were able to have a designated space at home and access to daycare it could be a positive working situation."

"Layoffs looming for my position for the last 2 months."

Additional comments

Comments regarding the impact that the pandemic has had on employees focused primarily on the mental and physical health aspects of wellbeing. Many respondents to the survey mentioned they miss interactions with coworkers and other community members. For some of them, reduced contact with students and colleagues outside of the department have led to loneliness and feelings of isolation. For some others, working from home has been hard to draw closure from work and move into their private life.

Some employees reported the difficulty they have experienced working from home in spaces usually not set up for an office without proper furniture and technology. For them, having access to printers or copiers would improve their productivity and overall satisfaction working during the pandemic.

"[The College] Should have kept the small printers for times like this where we could actually take them home to be able to work rather than having to come in just to print required documents."

"I think it will be interesting to take this survey again in November to see if things have changed once we get better at working with the tools and start discovering what works and what doesn't."

"Allow for faculty to prepare NOW for the next two semesters [...] Students will be more likely to enrol if they know what we as an institution are doing. We are losing a tremendous marketing opportunity that the aforementioned educational institutions have taken full advantage of now."

"I would love the opportunity to be given more choices over my work environment. It's actually enhanced my mental health to not be dealing with office politics/games/drama and those attention seekers who dominate our time/days/meetings."

"Managers need to buy in to communicating regularly with their employees during the COVID-19 pandemic."

Others enjoyed the flexibility, less distractions, and multiple resources offered to help transition to online teaching.

"I work well on my own and am doing well working from home. The college is giving many wonderful resources to help transition courses and that is appreciated. My leaders are all doing a wonderful job, as are my coworkers. In fact, in many ways, this has been a very positive experience - we are breaking free of old barriers and discovering new and creative ways to teach and work together. I thrive on challenges and this experience is making my creativity flow!"

"I have greatly appreciated being able to work at home at this time, and hope this flexibility remains even after we are able to return to campus. Continuing to acknowledge that some individuals are more productive working at home is important, as is providing this option even when we are able to return to campus."

Employee COVID Impact Needs

In general, switching to online learning as a result of the pandemic has increased overall dissatisfaction and mental health-related concerns amongst employees at Lethbridge College. The implementation of services focused on reducing stress associated to the perceived increase of workload and fears of job loss, as well as improving employees' access to technology and proper spaces and furniture to work during the possible continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic is encouraged. Further, flexible working arrangements such as flex time, reduced hours/part time, compressed work weeks, and job sharing may be considered when evaluating work options as the College re-opens.

HelpSeeker Analysis

Over 200 communities are currently participating in the nation-wide roll-out of HelpSeeker, a systems mapping platform that generates real-time insights for better decision-making for funders and policy-makers, while connecting vulnerable people to the right services. HelpSeeker offers an interactive platform/app with information about programs and resources for mental health, counselling, addictions, housing, and other services available in the local community. The HelpSeeker platform helps local service providers better understand service duplication or gaps, trends in user searches or needs, feedback, demand, and sources of funding that exist in the community.

This platform/app is a free resource to connect people to over 100,000 help services across Canada.

HelpSeeker: Systems Mapping Analysis

To date, HelpSeeker has 13 programs available for students and employees at Lethbridge College.[11] The table below shows the programs currently listed in HelpSeeker and the service tags associated with each program.

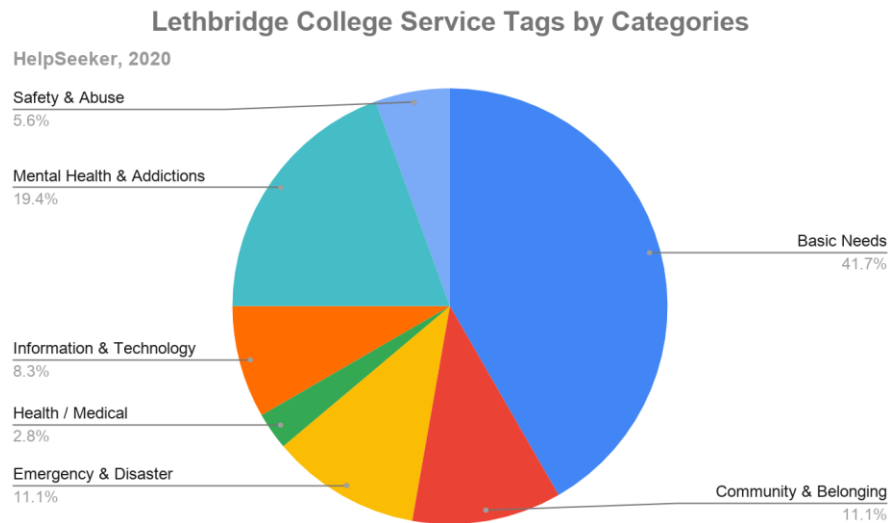| Programs	Service Tags
English Language Centre	Adults, Women, Immigrant, Education/Training, Men, Language/Translation
Students' Association	Adults, Recreation , Advocacy
Indigenous Services	Indigenous, Education/Training
Student Awards and Financial Aid	Adults, Education/Training, Financial, Covid-19/Coronavirus
Residence Life	Adults, Housing, Education/Training, Housing-Transitional
Career & Academic Advising	Adults, Education/Training, Covid-19/Coronavirus
International Student Supports	Adults, Immigrant, Education/Training
Career Development	Adults, Employment, Mentoring/Coaching
Recreation Services	Adults, Recreation
Wellness Services	Children, Adults, Women, Families, Indigenous, Lgbtqi2s+, Health, Mental Health, Addictions , Counselling, Education/Training, Men, Bullying, Info And Referral, Trauma, Free, Crisis, Suicide, Domestic Violence, Harm Reduction
Learning Cafe	Adults, Education/Training, Covid-19/Coronavirus
Accessibility Services	Adults, Disabilities , Education/Training, Covid-19/Coronavirus
Testing Services	Adults, Education/Training

Of all service tags associated with programs available for students and employees at Lethbridge College, adults (13) and education and training (11) are the most recurrent service tags amongst all services available at Lethbridge College.

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[11] As of June 2020, all services and programs available in Lethbridge College have been mapped and included in HelpSeeker's database.
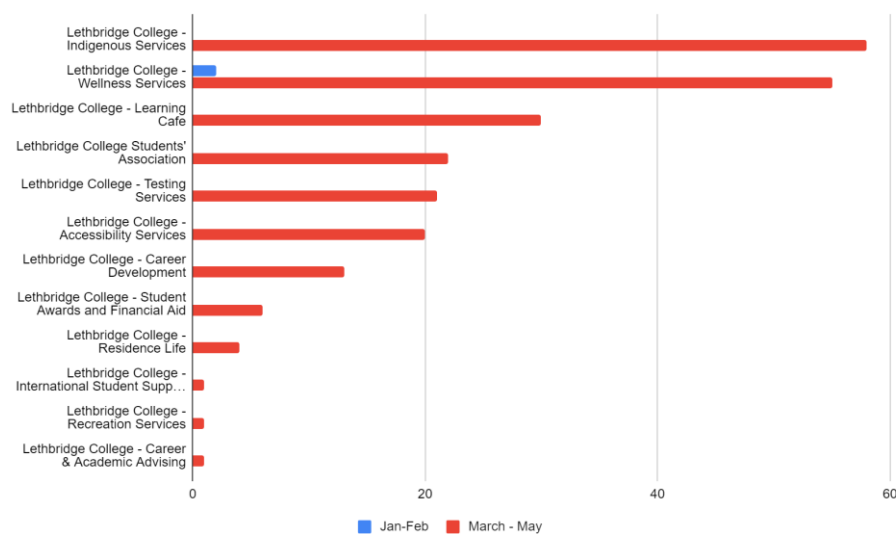
Category	Service Tag	Number of tags
Basic Needs	Education/Training	11
Basic Needs	Employment	1
Basic Needs	Financial	1
Basic Needs	Housing	1
Basic Needs	Housing-Transitional	1
Community & Belonging	Recreation	2
Community & Belonging	Advocacy	1
Community & Belonging	Mentoring/Coaching	1
Cost	Free	1
Emergency & Disaster	Covid-19/Coronavirus	4
Health / Medical	Health	1
Information & Technology	Info And Referral	2
Information & Technology	Language/Translation	1
Mental Health & Addictions	Addictions	1
Mental Health & Addictions	Counselling	1
Mental Health & Addictions	Crisis	1
Mental Health & Addictions	Harm Reduction	1
Mental Health & Addictions	Mental Health	1
Mental Health & Addictions	Suicide	1
Mental Health & Addictions	Trauma	1
Population	Adults	13
Population	Men	3
Population	Women	3
Population	Immigrant	2
Population	Indigenous	2
Population	Children	1
Population	Disabilities	1
Population	Families	1
Population	Lgbtqi2s+	1
Population	Youth	1
Safety & Abuse	Bullying	1

Safety & Abuse	Domestic Violence	1

By service category (below), the data shows that 47% of all services available primarily target basic needs 22% focus on Mental Health and Addictions services, 13% on Community and Belonging programs and 13% on Emergency and Disaster services primarily related to COVID-19.

Lethbridge College Service Tags by Categories

HelpSeeker, 2020

- Safety & Abuse 5.6%
- Mental Health & Addictions 19.4%
- Information & Technology 8.3%
- Health / Medical 2.8%
- Emergency & Disaster 11.1%
- Basic Needs 41.7%
- Community & Belonging 11.1%

The chart below shows the number of interactions registered in HelpSeeker from January 1st to February 29th and March 1st to May 31st, 2020. As seen, 99% of all interactions have occurred from March to May with the majority of them being for indigenous (25%) and wellness services (24%).

Lethbridge College - Indigenous Services
Lethbridge College - Wellness Services
Lethbridge College - Learning Cafe
Lethbridge College Students' Association
Lethbridge College - Testing Services
Lethbridge College - Accessibility Services
Lethbridge College - Career Development
Lethbridge College - Student Awards and Financial Aid
Lethbridge College - Residence Life
Lethbridge College - International Student Supp...
Lethbridge College - Recreation Services
Lethbridge College - Career & Academic Advising

Jan-Feb   March - May

HelpSeeker's systems mapping analysis shows interesting insights about the supply and demand of services at campus. In the first place, current programs focus primarily on services for adults with few services for other populations with higher numbers of community members representing other populations. Likewise, education and training, and COVID-19-related programs account for 17% and 6% of all services available to the Lethbridge College community.

In turn, programs with the highest demand for services are an illustration of needs. In particular, the increase in the number of interactions registered from March to May represent the need for an increasing attention to the indigenous and wellness services offered to the College community.

Discussion

Health and wellness are a priority at the highest level at Lethbridge College where promotion of an inclusive healthy environment for students and employees is one of five overarching goals at the institutional level. Indeed, Lethbridge College has received national recognition for its promotion of physical and mental health. Excellence Canada and Canada Life named the college one of the 2019 Canada's Healthy Workplace Month Great Employers.

Given the robust Student and Employee Health and Wellness Plans, the present report on needs at Lethbridge College has focused on the particular issues identified in available statistics and surveys conducted to students and employees before and during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Several implications resulting from this analysis have been identified calling upon the implementation of focused COVID-19 recovery strategies and the establishment of better ways to reach out to the most vulnerable individuals in the community.

Along with the increasing numbers of individuals enrolled in postsecondary programs at the College, the share of international and indigenous students have significantly grown over the last years. While the existence of programs and services targeting the general student population is desired, research has suggested the need for the implementation of actions targeting the specific challenges that indigenous and international students face across postsecondary institutions in Canada particularly those referring to historical legacy of colonialism, cultural differences, and other barriers related to language, adaptation to the academic system, relationships to tutors, classroom participation, group work and assessment (see Scan for Best Practices in Postsecondary institutions in Canada).

Similar targeted strategies are needed with respect to health and wellness services for students and employees at Lethbridge College. As the median age for students currently sits at 22.5 years, 20.6 years of difference compared to the median employees' age sitting at 43.1 years, programs dedicated to the improvement of the overall mental health and wellbeing amongst students should be tailored for early adults needs. These will differ from programs and services focusing on older adults needs required by the majority of employees at the College. Furthermore, underserved populations such as LGBTQ2S+, indigenous, immigrant, and individuals with disabilities, need to be also considered in a comprehensive health and wellness strategy with tailored priorities.

HelpSeeker's systems mapping analysis shows the existing programs available to students and employees at Lethbridge College primarily focus on services for adults with fewer programs offered to other populations with higher representation at College. Further, the increase in the number of interactions registered from March to May, 2020, represent the need for an increasing attention to the indigenous and wellness services offered to the College community.

For promising results regarding the design and implementation of health and wellness programs/plans, Lethbridge College should also consider the inclusion of at least six characteristics identified as best

practices across postsecondary institutions in Canada and that successful strategies are to include. In particular, health and wellness programs/plans should be comprehensive and holistic, focused and employee and student-directed, inclusive and engaging, creative, proactive and interactive, and diverse and safe.

Additional gaps and needs were identified through survey data conducted prior the COVID-19 pandemic have suggested the need for improving access to health and wellness-related services; enhancing inclusive and culturally appropriate practices; integrated service provision, particularly with health care services; and implementing performance monitoring processes to track success.

COVID-19 Specific

As aforementioned in this report, the current COVID-19 pandemic has challenged the traditional ways by which education has been delivered at all educational institutions across Canada. At Lethbridge College the transition to online learning with teaching undertaken remotely and on digital platforms happened quickly. According to the surveys conducted through the months of May and June, 2020 mental health issues related to school, financial, personal matters, risk taking behaviours or COVID-19 were the areas of major concern amongst students. In turn, similar mental health concerns associated with COVID-19 and school/workload challenges were raised by employees during the design labs. In addition, management relationships, personal/family-related issues and preoccupations regarding the best ways to support students and colleagues were other areas of concerns for employees.

The current COVID-19 outbreak has exacerbated the feelings of personal stress, anxiety, and depression, along with increasing financial concerns, work-related stress, program delay, and sleep difficulties for both employees and students at College. Moreover, as referred to in this report, balancing work and study has been a challenging balance for most students, as financial stress often looms in their minds. Tuition is rising, and students who have lost their income from being unemployed have no clear view of being able to work again, either due to the economy or spending their time at school. Students with children at home face more expenses than students without dependents.

As the COVID-19-related guidelines and restrictions are likely to continue regarding physical distancing and cleaning and sanitation, the continuation of online classes or blended in-person/online instructions are expected to continue along with increasing mental health and overall wellbeing concerns at Lethbridge College. Thus, thorough health and wellness strategies are recommended to focus more on the prevention of such challenges rather than on intervention. As well, programs/plans aimed at implementing iterative evaluation to better adapt to unforeseen circumstances, and understanding of the diversity and need for ongoing collaboration and establishment of strategic alliances to improve the health and wellness of everyone at Canadian campuses are also recommended.

COVID-19 Implications

As of June 30, 2020, it is unknown how long the pandemic will last or how many waves are ahead. The City of Lethbridge has 43 cases, eight listed as active and 35 recovered.

1. Strengthen HW supports for underserved populations as the impacts of COVID have been uneven.

2. Expand mental health supports - isolation, anxiety, job loss, stress - free/affordable/unlimited access to counselors: both online, phone, and face-to-face.

3. Prevent financial hardship - Assess the current local social service safety net, address gaps.

4. Increase food security - ensure food banks are stocked, but the real cause of food insecurity is lack of income - provide student assistance.

5. Ongoing and clear communication - open and transparent about key decisions about services, re-openings, rules, safety, and expectations.

6. Support remote teaching and learning - internet access, tech support, ergonomics

7. Ongoing Engagement - consistent platform for both students and employees to voice concerns

As of July 31, 2020, recent data suggests that the mental health of Canadians has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with reports of anxiety and depression increasing as a result of economic loss, concern for family members, self isolation, household conflict, and social media and news exposure.[12] The implications for Lethbridge College are critical, and the College must reassess and monitor health and wellness risks for students and employees based on the best available evidence as the situation evolves.

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[12] Bell, K. 2020. The Psycho-Social Impacts of Covid-19: A Review of the Literature. Retrieved from https://www.povertyinstitute.ca/news/2020/7/30/the-psycho-social-impacts-of-covid-19

Emerging Themes for Strategy Blueprint

While successful programs differ, those that are coordinated, comprehensive, and planned intentionally to address specific workplace and study environment needs have been found most beneficial.

Celebrate Success

A global survey of 200,000 employees showed that feeling appreciated at work is the most important aspect of job satisfaction.[13] While there are many ways to show appreciation, personalized verbal praise is preferred by most employees. Physical gifts are the least preferred form of appreciation because of their generic nature. Employees report that gifts feel meaningless if the employer doesn't also check in on their well-being, offer verbal praise and help when needed.[14]

Feedback from the employee surveys conducted showed that employees are feeling stressed by workload demands. It was frequently reported that there is too much to do and not enough time or resources. Employees remarked that efficiency is rewarded with more work. Frank conversations about workload and individualized appreciation will help alleviate this tension.

Concerns about lack of transparency and flexibility, communication issues and disconnect from the larger institutional vision need also be addressed for appreciation efforts to feel genuine. While COVID-19 heightened employee stress, these issues seemed to be present prior to the pandemic.

Integrated response

An integrated Wellness strategy is best practice at any time, but it is imperative to keeping employees and students well as Lethbridge College navigates through COVID-19. The pandemic has fundamentally changed the way that employees and students interact with the institution and each other. Moving traditional supports online is only one step of the process and a deeper understanding of how the community is functioning is imperative to ensure that wellness supports are showing up in the ways that they are needed. Embedding wellness support into the curriculum and daily lives of employees is an important step that will require collaboration and teamwork.

Given that an institution-wide approach is needed, everyone needs to clearly understand their role. One theme that emerged from the data is that supervisors are unclear about steps they should be taking to ensure the health and wellness of their employees. While some supervisors take many steps to ensure their employees are well, others expect that health and wellness initiatives will largely be addressed by Wellness Services.

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[13] Strack, R. 2014. "Decoding global talent: 200,000 survey responses on global mobility and employment preferences", Boston Consulting Group, available at: www.bcg.com/en-us/publications/2014/people- organization-human-resources-decoding-global-talent.aspx

[14] White, P. 2017. How do employees want to be shown appreciation? Results from 100,000 employees. *Strategic HR Review*. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318069790_How_do_employees_want_to_be_shown_appreciation_Results_from_100000_employees

Similarly, as mentioned before, an integrated Wellness strategy should also consider the implementation of targeted strategies towards employees and students focusing on their particular needs at Lethbridge College.

Communication

Students identified that better advertisement of Health and Wellness supports is needed. Given that some students are struggling more than usual due to the online transition, outreach and intrusive advising approaches are essential. Anticipating student needs, proactively checking in on student wellness and being flexible with expectations are ways to communicate that student wellness is being prioritized.

Communication practices can contribute or detract from overall wellness. Qualitative feedback from employees suggests that the implementation of communication protocols and best practices are needed. The following principles need to be applied to communication:

1) *Feedback*- employees and students feel empowered to give feedback to superiors without fear of reprisal or negative consequences
2) *Engagement*- employees and students feel that their perspectives are heard and incorporated into decision making
3) *Transparency*- employees and students are informed about how and why decisions are being made and who was consulted
4) *Collaboration*- the community works together towards shared goals and shares information across departments and with community partners

Mental Health

Work-life balance is a priority of both employees and students, particularly as they navigate working from home. While working from home is ideal for some, it has created challenges for others and there is no one-size-fits-all solution.

The following themes emerged as solutions:

Boundary setting

To be successful, boundaries need to be mutually agreed upon and regularly reviewed. When boundaries are crossed, it needs to be addressed immediately.

Flexibility

Develop a flexible work framework with input from employees, supervisors and senior leadership.

Ergonomics

Ergonomics applies scientific theory, principles and methods to explore the relationships between the worker, job tasks and the workplace. Poor ergonomics in the workplace often leads to fatigue, frustration and pain amongst workers. A workplace ergonomics improvement process removes risk

factors that lead to musculoskeletal injuries and allows for improved human performance and productivity.

According to some of the surveys cited in this report, a significant proportion of respondents reported that working from home helped them to be more productive and less distracted compared to working on-campus. Yet, some concerns were raised regarding the lack of proper workplaces set up at home for employees and students during the transition to remote learning.

As some of the restrictions related to COVID-19 are expected to remain in place for the months to come, it is advisable to develop information sheets about the ways employees and students can improve their workplaces for a better ergonomic set up at home.

Financial Support

A good proportion of employees and students have reported to be, to a certain extent, concerned about their current employment situation and household finances due to COVID-19. Some strategies implemented by other postsecondary institutions to help domestic and international students have included the establishment of supplementary bursary programs (non-repayable) that provide funds for students who demonstrate a financial shortfall for the current school year's academic and basic living costs. Other strategies have included emergency loans for students with an emergency expense who are able to repay at a later date, or laptop lending programs for those facing difficulties with remote access due to lack of technological equipment.

While no good practices can be found to help with the financial needs of employees at universities and colleges, similar strategies to those to support students are encouraged to help faculty and staff with their own financial struggles that can potentially lead to other mental health issues.

Food Insecurity

While virtually every college and university campus in the country is home to a student food bank, relatively little is known about food insecurity among post-secondary students.[15] In 2016, the report "Hungry for knowledge: Assessing the prevalence of student food insecurity on five Canadian campuses" found that nearly two in five (39%) of students surveyed in this study experienced some degree of food insecurity. At 31%, most students who faced food access issues were moderately food insecure, while another 8% experienced severe food insecurity. As the report outlines, the cost of food (53%), tuition fees (51%), and housing costs (48%) were the most commonly self-reported contributors to food insecurity. One in four (24%) food-insecure students reported that their physical health was affected by food insecurity, while slightly less (20%) reported that their mental health had been impacted.

While there is no specific evidence on the impact that the current COVID-19 pandemic is having on students and employees at postsecondary institutions, rising costs of food as a result of COVID will likely

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[15] Silverthorn, D. 2016. Hungry for knowledge: Assessing the prevalence of student food insecurity on five Canadian campuses. Toronto: Meal Exchange. Retrieved from: http://mealexchange.com

to exacerbate employees and students' food insecurity. Moreover, as aforementioned in this report, many students and employees at Lethbridge College reported to be concerned about their current financial situation due to COVID-19 impacts on their employment and consequently on their income.

Although the establishment of strategic alliances with local food banks to guarantee access and mitigate the food needs of everyone at Lethbridge College is desired, the implementation of the type of financial support described before could better contribute to alleviate the impact of the current pandemic on everyone at campus. As food insecurity is primarily an income problem that erodes individual's health, the implementation of measures beyond food accessibility would have better impacts on employees and students at Lethbridge College as it would not only provide the means for them to help with their food concerns but also would contribute to improve their overall mental health and wellbeing.

Iterative Evaluation
One of the main challenges identified in the literature about postsecondary institutions in Canada is the lack of evaluation and the implementation of performance indicators to monitor goals and outcomes and measure the impact of initiatives to better understand whether an institution is doing well in supporting health and wellness or if it's time for an adjustment. This lack of iterative evaluation limits the possibility of implementing proactive health and wellness strategies able to prevent potential undesired experiences of health and wellness from happening in postsecondary institutions.

Examples of good practices have emphasized the need of building capacity to recognize early indicators is important for response and support at the earliest possible time. The design and implementation of proactive strategies to create or control a potential health and wellness situation and plans aiming at evaluating ongoing initiatives is key to the prevention of undesired health and wellness experiences in postsecondary institutions, as well as to accountability.

Existing strategies on this front have implemented metric reporting systems to evaluate and report on outcomes of wellness initiatives, recognize and respond to an individual who may be experiencing difficulties, and adapt to unforeseen circumstances.

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