



Green Mountain Higher Education Consortium

Champlain • Middlebury • Norwich • Saint Michael's

2019 GMHEC well-being
Annual Report

Message from GMHEC Executive Director

Well-being can take many shapes and forms. Well-being is something we all aspire to, whether it is physical, mental, financial, career-oriented, social or community well-being. Last year's challenges motivated me to add another day of exercise to the week, made me conscientious about how I run and to try to do it the Chi way, reminded me to track my food intake again which led to a change from a healthy but calorie heavy breakfast to a less sugar and carb heavy start to the day. I encourage you to peruse this annual report to read about examples of what has happened in the world of well-being at our member colleges and to get inspired to do something for your own well-being. Every one action counts.

Sincerely,

Corinna Noelke

Message from GMHEC Well-being Coordinator

Looking back now on the last year is abundantly clear that the themes of the year were connection and collaboration. Connection and collaboration are two of the core values of the Consortium and this year we have seen the impact of those values in action. Together with our member colleges we have implemented creative strategies and leveraged our strengths to support the health and well-being of our faculty and staff. Each and every one of the success we've had this year have only been made possible by developing and nurturing relationships. It is these relationships that will support our future work and enable us to enhance a culture of well-being at our member colleges. I am proud to share with you some of the key highlights of the year as well as feedback from faculty and staff who have participated in our programs. I have long believed that well-being is the foundation of possibility and I envision a world where we all show up as our best, where every one of us is thriving and we are able to share our gifts with the world. I imagine what it would be like for our students to live and study in an environment where everyone around them is flourishing. I know that the well-being of our faculty and staff contributes to the well-being of our students and is what will prepare our students to move into the world and live lives of value and great impact. I am committed to do my part to make that happen and I am grateful every day for the opportunity to carry out such meaningful work.

Rebecca Schubert, MS RDN, NHB-HWC

Well-being Vision

Faculty and staff of the Green Mountain Higher Education Consortium (GMHEC) member schools thrive in the five domains of well-being including physical, career, social, community and financial, enabling them to be their best possible selves in both their personal and professional lives.

Well-being Mission

Establish a culture of health and well-being at our member colleges, engaging employees and their families in finding their own well-being. Well-being will enhance productivity, overall work and life satisfaction and contain costs for individuals and our institutions.

Strategic Goals

1. Foster an environment that makes the healthy choice the easy choice.
2. Foster an inclusive and engaging culture of well-being that enables employees to bring their best self to work and life every day.
3. Educate and empower employees to effectively manage and utilize the health care system while maximizing opportunities presented to stabilize cost.

Major efforts of the past twelve months

1

Integration of well-being and safety:

To enhance staff well-being and make well-being accessible to those who may most benefit, we have worked closely over the last year with the Norwich University and Middlebury College facilities operations departments and the Middlebury College dining department. Our rationale for this was threefold: 1) Workers in blue collar occupations are more likely to be injured or become ill because of workplace hazards than are professional employees; 2) Life risks (i.e. smoking, poor diet, financial stress, depression) are concentrated in working class occupations; 3) Parallel efforts will be strengthened when they are coordinated and integrated, rather than separate and independent resulting in cost savings, increased productivity and improved health and well-being for workers. We have implemented many best practices including highlighting the connections between well-being and safety, emphasizing quality of life improvements and not just cost savings, providing ongoing communication, integrating face to face sessions as part of the work day, having a leadership champion and most of all, having fun. Our efforts are paying off as indicated by a decrease in incurred cost, open claims and claim frequency. Two of the last four months (December 2019 and January 2020) were without a single workplace accident within the facilities department at Norwich University, whereas historically there were accidents every month.

"Norwich University and Middlebury College have both embraced current best practice health and disability management thinking in their approach to optimizing the wellness of their employees and helping them avoid and recover from injuries. As a result, both organizations enjoy the benefits of outperforming their peers when considering risk financing options for their workers compensation programs, and presumably their other health and disability plans. Norwich University, in particular, has been diligent in its efforts to make a clear connection with all employees between overall health and wellness and safety on the job. Their holistic approach to employee health, wellness and safety is exemplary."

—Rick Phillips,
ARM, President Comp Risk Strategies, LLC

2

Resource guides:

To promote the plethora of well-being resources at our colleges, we developed college specific well-being resource guides. The guides, available on the GMHEC website, describe the five domains of well-being: physical, career, financial, social and community, and outline the wonderful resources that are available to our faculty and staff under each of these domains. In addition to being available online, they are also being promoted to new employees with a video. The video describes the Consortium and our well-being work. You can check out the guides [here](#) and the video , "What is Well-being?" [here](#). In addition to the resource guides, we have also published a leader's guide to well-being. This guide is for leaders at all levels and highlights the research on the connection between employee well-being and organizational success and highlights strategies that leaders can use to enhance the culture of well-being within their teams and organization.

3

Team based challenges:

Well-being challenges are a great way to build camaraderie and support social and community well-being. This year, to celebrate National Nutrition Month, we offered a nutrition challenge and this fall we offered a physical activity challenge. Over 800 faculty, staff and family members participated in the challenges. In both challenges, participants earned points for tracking physical activity, logging meals and snacks and completing weekly nutrition quizzes. Between the two challenges, participants traveled an astonishing 25,000 miles and Champlain College took the prize as the "Most Active GMHEC College." Congratulations to team Champlain and all our participants who took action to enhance their health.

"I have struggled to get back into shape after being derailed by various injuries. The well-being challenge increased my incentive to keep up a regular exercise routine. Recording my workouts on the challenge website gave me a visual reminder of how many days I'd worked out and how much I'd done. As I got to the end of the workday and was on my way home, having those reminders made it harder to justify skipping a workout."

—Terri H.
Middlebury College

4

Cigna telehealth:

To support our Cigna members to be proficient consumers of health care, we launched a marketing campaign late in the fall just after open enrollment to promote the Cigna telehealth benefit. Telehealth enables consumers to meet with a board certified medical professional from their home or office via phone or internet. Telehealth offers many benefits to patients including not having to travel or miss work or school, quicker access to care and less out of pocket cost. Eighty people signed up during the campaign and during this time there was a three fold increase in the use of telehealth at one of our member colleges.

Given the high cost of health care associated with chronic disease and the impact of stress and poor health status on worker engagement, health coaching may provide a viable option to improve the health status of faculty and staff and bend the health care cost curve.

5

Health Coaching:

Wellness coaching is associated with improvements in overall quality of life, mood and perceived stress, reduced blood pressure in people with hypertension, improved blood sugar control and a reduction in depressive symptoms. Furthermore, health coaching has been shown to reduce emergency department utilization and total health care expenditures for high risk patients. Over the past year our Coordinator, who is a board certified coach, has met with over sixty individuals through one on one or and group based coaching sessions and the feedback has been nothing but positive.

"I have truly enjoyed working with Rebecca on my health journey in our bi-weekly well-being chats. Our conversations always leave me feeling like I am making progress in the areas I am focusing on. I've learned some extremely helpful practices and ways to set mini goals that are attainable. I have never felt more focused on making me a priority."

—Champlain College staff member

6

Chi running:

When it comes to promoting health and well-being, the old saying of “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him to fish and you feed him for his life” holds true. To teach our faculty and staff the principles of running we offered a four week ChiRunning workshop with a certified master instructor. Over thirty people participated in this program to learn the world’s leading safe and efficient, natural running technique. Many of the “graduates” of the program went on to run summer races including 5Ks and marathons.

“The chi running workshop was a valuable opportunity to become more in tune with my body, and to make running the joyful, pain-free experience it should be for those who want to do it! Sarah’s coaching style is approachable and non-judgmental, and her emphasis on running as an outlet for any body was refreshing!”

—Sarah W.
Champlain College

“I’d heard of Chi Running, so I signed up for the workshop to learn more about it. What I took away was a better sense of my posture and cadence during all my runs and it was great to be exposed to a new way of moving.”

—Nicole C.
Middlebury College

7

Well-being presentations:

Peak performance in work and in life depends on personal energy. In the workplace, how leaders support the energy of their followers has a significant impact on the well-being and engagement of those followers. Over the course of the last year, our Well-being Coordinator has presented to over 100 leaders, faculty and staff about energy management, about resilience, and about how leaders can support the energy and well-being of their followers. A culture of well-being depends on all of us and it depends on everyone recognizing their role as individuals and as team members. A supervisor who attended one of the sessions said, “Thank you so much for taking the time out of your day to meet with us. We feel energized and committed to employee well-being”.

What's in store for the future?

As we look ahead to the coming year we are excited about the opportunities that lay ahead. Changes will be coming at the Consortium level that will enhance our efforts to support well-being and two of our member schools are in the process of strategic planning initiatives that clarify well-being as priorities.

In addition, GMHEC will be partnering with DIEMlife®, an online well-being platform whose mission is to organize people and resources so individuals and communities can achieve more and reach their goals. Throughout the year we will be organizing a number of team based and individual well-being challenges aimed at enhancing well-being across all domains. This platform will enable us to expand our reach and to promote connection among our faculty and staff further enhancing our capacity to build and sustain a culture of well-being at our member colleges.