Committee on
Student Mental Health
2021 Implementation Report
“The University of Waterloo continues to support and make student mental health a top priority. We are committed to the Okanagan Charter principles for enhancing the mental health and well-being of our students and the broader campus community. Much work has been done to implement the PAC-SMH recommendations, and we will continue to respond to new mental health challenges as they emerge.”

FERIDUN HAMDULLAHPUR
President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Waterloo
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Acronyms

AAS  AccessAbility Services
CEE  Co-operative and Experiential Education
CEPT  Course Evaluation Project Team
CMAHRO  Conflict Management and Human Rights Office
CMHA  Canadian Mental Health Association
CMHA WW  Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington
CoSMH  Committee on Student Mental Health
CRT  Crisis Response Team
CTE  Centre for Teaching Excellence
FTP  Foundational Training Program
GSA  Graduate Student Association
GSDA  Gender and Sexual Diversity Alliance
GSPA  Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs
IAP  Institutional Analysis & Planning
MATES  Mentor Assistance Through Education and Support
MHCC  Mental Health Commission of Canada
MHLT  Mental Health Literacy Training
MHLTSC  Mental Health Literacy Training Steering Committee
MUR  Marketing and Undergraduate Recruitment
NCHA  National College Health Assessment
PAC-SMH  President’s Advisory Committee on Student Mental Health
PACE  Provost’s Advisory Committee on Equity
PART  President’s Anti-Racism Taskforce
PSC  Post-Secondary Collaborative to Prevent Substance-Related Harms
RAISE  Racial Advocacy for Inclusion, Solidarity & Equity
RCEA  Race, Culture and Ethnicity Awareness
SMHA  Student Mental Health Advisor
SSAC  Student Services Advisory Committee
SSO  Student Success Office
SVPRO  Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office
UID  Universal Instructional Design
uMARS  user version of the Mobile Application Rating Scale
WUSA  Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association
Introduction

Universities are large, complex organizations composed of a broad range of stakeholders with diverse responsibilities and interests related to education, research, knowledge exchange, entrepreneurship, and development of civil society. Students are engaged in all aspects of university life, making their mental health and well-being essential to the viability of the organization as a whole (Robinson et al., 2016).

Challenges associated with post-secondary education, combined with psychosocial transitions from youth to adulthood, economic and housing instability, isolation from family and prior support networks, and concerns about future employment prospects can have negative effects on student well-being (Dunley & Papadopoulos, 2019; Linden & Stuart, 2020). Additional complexities affect specific groups: international students, who must adapt to new cultural contexts; students with pre-existing mental health concerns; and those from marginalized communities (Dunley & Papadopoulos, 2019; Giamos et al., 2017; Ng & Padjen, 2019). The consequences of enduring numerous stressors are evident in surveys of student mental health in post-secondary institutions across Canada, which have consistently reported high prevalence of symptoms related to anxiety, depression, and stress (Giamos et al., 2017; Linden & Stuart, 2020; Ng & Padjen, 2019; Robinson et al., 2016). For many Canadian universities, tragic events such as student suicides, combined with increased awareness of broader mental health concerns experienced by post-secondary students, has led to initiatives to improve their psychological well-being and safety (Giamos et al., 2017; Linden & Stuart, 2020; Monaghan et al., 2016; Ng & Padjen, 2019; Robinson et al., 2016).

In 2017, the University of Waterloo established the President’s Advisory Committee on Student Mental Health (PAC-SMH) to identify actions the University could take to enhance student mental health. That committee engaged over 700 students, staff, faculty members, and other members of the campus community to develop 36 recommendations for change aimed at improving the mental health and well-being of all students.¹ Within two months of receiving that report, the University established an implementation committee to bring its recommendations to life.

¹ Details of the PAC-SMH report can be found at https://uwaterloo.ca/mental-health-wellness/2017-pac-smh-report-and-recommendations
Moving from Recommendations to Action
The Committee on Student Mental Health (CoSMH) was established in May 2018 with a mandate of implementing all 36 recommendations in the PAC-SMH report. The key themes of these recommendations included social support, mental health awareness, early intervention and skills building, service levels and duty of care, service improvements, and campus-wide changes to improve student mental health and well-being. By April 2021, all but three recommendations were implemented, with the remainder expected to be completed within the next academic year.

CoSMH Structure and Function
CoSMH was established to oversee the implementation of the PAC-SMH recommendations; provide feedback on the strengths and limitations of the University’s response to the recommendations; offer advice for future initiatives; and outline proposed actions that need to be undertaken by the University to continue supporting student mental health. It was expected that some recommendations would need to be implemented in the context of new information or changes to policies and procedures (e.g., the 2020 edition of the Council of Ontario Universities’ In It Together report). The main objective, however, was to enact the changes recommended by the PAC-SMH committee and working groups.

CoSMH’s membership was formulated as a “network of networks,” with members serving as bridging ties to key parts of the University. These included:
- student bodies like the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) and Graduate Student Association (GSA)
- faculty representatives from all six faculties
- senior leadership in the University administration
- Campus Wellness
- Co-operative Education
- external partners (e.g., Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington)
- alumni

Members were identified by an initial informal committee composed of:
- the CoSMH Chair
- the University’s President and Vice-Chancellor
- Vice-President Academic and Provost
- Associate Provost, Students
- Director of Campus Wellness
- the President of the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association

The terms of reference and final committee membership was later ratified by CoSMH as it began functioning. CoSMH members were selected to provide diverse perspectives and capacities to link to a wide range of information sources that would be pertinent to the recommendations.

The Chair reported directly to the President and Vice-Chancellor and the Vice-President Academic and Provost, which provided CoSMH the necessary authority, accountability, and leadership buy-in to support its work. The committee size was kept to less than 20 members to maintain agility in decision-making.

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2 Details of the PAC-SMH report can be found at https://uwaterloo.ca/mental-health-wellness/2017-pac-smh-report-and-recommendations
3 In-It-Together-PSE-Mental-Health-Action-Plan.pdf (ontariosuniversities.ca)
making while still providing adequate linkages to the full campus community. One academic representative was appointed from each faculty based on recommendation of each dean; however, student representation was based on linkages through major undergraduate, graduate, and international student associations rather than on faculty affiliations. Two students at-large were appointed to provide undergraduate and graduate perspectives. Additional considerations in membership included linkages to the PAC-SMH working committees, lived experience with mental health concerns from the student and family perspectives, clinical expertise in mental health service delivery, and scientific expertise in mental health and emerging adults. Many constituency groups were ultimately not formally represented with voting members of CoSMH (e.g., faculty and associations, mature or part-time students, housing services); however, additional linkages occurred through members with multiple affiliations or guests engaged when the required expertise was not present among CoSMH members. Throughout the three-year mandate of CoSMH, the Chair was supported by a non-voting team composed of a project coordinator, doctoral candidate research assistant, undergraduate co-op students, and librarians supporting literature reviews. An Executive Committee composed of the Chair, Associate Provost – Students, Director of Campus Wellness, President of WUSA, and a faculty member provided oversight and problem-solving functions to ensure CoSMH continued to make progress. In addition, several working groups (see Appendix A) were created to address specific topics arising from the PAC-SMH report (e.g., academic recommendations, mental health literacy, resiliency, verification of illness processes, peer support and mentoring).

The core functions of CoSMH included: interpretation and operationalization of the PAC-SMH recommendations; prioritization of the order in which recommendations would be implemented; determination of actions required to respond to each recommendation; review of scientific evidence; and identification of existing gaps across the university. Although CoSMH was established as an implementation committee, there was early recognition that the required response involved an ongoing commitment from the University rather than a discrete, time-limited set of actions. With that in mind, CoSMH identified a recommendation as “complete” if it met one of two criteria:

  a) all necessary steps had been taken and no additional work was required (e.g., development of training programs related to specific topics); or

  b) changes had been made in response to the recommendation that were required to continue indefinitely as part of the ongoing life of the organization and entities responsible for continuation of that ongoing work were identified (e.g., academic units would work to continue to integrate curriculum focused on mental health; the Wellness Collaborative would continue work on resilience).

About half of the recommendations fell into the latter category.

The PAC-SMH recommendations covered a variety of domains relevant to post-secondary student mental health, including the following themes:

- administrative procedures
- educational approaches
- research
- health service delivery
- peer mentorship
- mental health awareness
- culture
- advocacy
As highlighted by the *In It Together* report, changes of this scope require broad-based engagement through a “whole community” approach, which has often been difficult to achieve in practice (Dunley & Papadopoulos, 2019; Giamos et al., 2017; Monaghan et al., 2016; Ng & Padjen, 2019; Robinson et al., 2016). Comprehensive implementation of the recommendations would not have been possible without collaborative input from various stakeholders on and off campus. In most cases, the actions taken to complete the recommendations were initiated by internal stakeholders without prompting from CoSMH, either as part of the University’s ongoing professional commitments or as an independent endeavour that was highly relevant and presented to the Committee.

CoSMH’s typical actions for each PAC-SMH recommendation included:

- reviewing available peer-reviewed and grey literature
- compiling and analyzing pertinent data when required
- delineating the underlying actions called for in the recommendation
- identifying key stakeholders with relevant interests, responsibilities, or activities
- scanning for and documenting work already done by others in the campus community
- determining whether the work completed or underway met the spirit and intent of the recommendation

In cases where no existing work was underway, CoSMH reached out to appropriate stakeholders to facilitate the necessary actions or established working groups composed of CoSMH members and other collaborators to address the gap and ensure completion of relevant work.

**Key Changes Related to Student Mental Health**

Over the course of the last three years, the University of Waterloo has made substantial, meaningful progress in numerous areas affecting student mental health and well-being, offering a novel approach towards addressing post-secondary student mental health in an integrated manner (Monaghan et al., 2016; Ng & Padjen, 2019). A detailed summary of each recommendation and the changes made in response is provided in Appendix C and in the [CoSMH Progress Dashboard](https://uwaterloo.ca/mental-health-wellness/progress-dashboard). However, some illustrative examples are provided below.

**Recommendations 1–9: Campus Policies and Practices (seven of nine recommendations in theme area implemented)** — Work on two recommendations is still underway: one deals with application of a mental health lens to program reviews, policies, and procedures, and the other relates to a centralized Verification of Condition form. Both are expected to be completed within the 2021 calendar year. Recommendations that were completed resulted in changes to accommodation procedures and related recourse mechanisms. An academic working group produced a report on best practices related to exams and evaluations, and a review was undertaken to reduce avoidable stresses in initial co-op placement processes. New in-person and online resources were developed to help instructors incorporate universal instructional design into their courses. In addition, new protocols were established for communicating information about student deaths and for developing community partnerships to support the response to adverse events.

**Recommendations 10–13: Inclusive and Supportive Campus Culture (three of four recommendations in theme area implemented)** — Work on a recommendation related to establishing an ombudsperson

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4 [In-It-Together-PSE-Mental-Health-Action-Plan.pdf (ontariosuniversities.ca)](ontariosuniversities.ca)

5 [https://uwaterloo.ca/mental-health-wellness/progress-dashboard](https://uwaterloo.ca/mental-health-wellness/progress-dashboard)
model for support, advocacy, and tracking data will continue with engagement of the University’s senior administration, WUSA and GSA. Recommendations that were implemented included:

- application of the WELL Building Standard and Passive House Standard principles to new construction
- requirement of faculty space committees to consider student mental health issues in use of existing space
- commitments by all deans to support peer mentoring activities within each faculty
- inclusion of mental health considerations in the University’s cultural competency strategy

For the latter point, linkages were established between CoSMH and the new President’s Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART) to include a Health and Wellness working group with specific linkages to the University’s Wellness Collaborative to ensure consideration of the intersection of mental health with other issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Recommendations 14–20: Mental Health Awareness and Communication (seven of seven recommendations implemented)** — Implementation efforts included introducing numerous training initiatives for students, faculty, and staff; incorporating mental health content and considerations into the curriculum; and expanding the information available about resources and mental issues. To incentivize faculty and staff members to complete mental health training programs, the Mental Health Literacy Certificate program was introduced by Campus Wellness and will be piloted in Spring 2021. Across the full campus community, numerous student and University-led groups have made efforts to open a dialogue on topics including suicide prevention, trauma, sexual violence, and racial injustice. This work will continue with funding received from a Bell Let’s Talk grant, which will include collaboration between numerous on-campus stakeholder groups, as outlined in Appendix C. In addition to new training content and funding to initiate dialogues across campus, an important procedural change was the adding mental health training to the activities recognized in the service component of faculty members’ annual merit reviews.

**Recommendations 21–26: Prevention and Early Intervention (six of six recommendations in theme area implemented)** — Mental health training programs were developed in the areas of resiliency, sexual violence, parental support for students, mental health literacy, and bystander intervention. In addition, mechanisms for coordinating and supporting peer support networks were established, a protocol was developed for review of digital applications for mental health by a student advisory panel and clinical staff associated with Campus Wellness, and new linkages were made with the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction’s Postsecondary Education Partnership.

**Recommendations 27–32: Service Access and Delivery (six of six recommendations implemented)** — Major changes to mental health services were made in partnership with the Student Services Advisory Committee (SSAC). This included a large influx of new funding to support a staff ratio of one mental health staff member to every 1,000 students and expansion of 24/7 virtual mental health services. Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the wait times for access to mental health services dropped substantially. For example, for urgent appointments, mean wait times dropped from three days to one day, and the percentage of same-day urgent appointments rose from 8.3 per cent to 64.1 per cent. For standard appointments (e.g., initial intake, ongoing counselling, support coordination), the 90th percentile of wait times dropped from 13.2 days to nine days.

The support for external mental health services also increased significantly with enhancements to the Studentcare extended health-care plan and Empower Me, a virtual mental health service that is
available to students 24/7 anywhere the world (an important consideration for co-op students). Additional training was developed for counsellors, new counsellors were embedded within faculties, a stepped care model was implemented for mental health service matching, and a complex care case management team was developed.

**Recommendations 33–36: Summary/Broad Recommendations (four of four recommendations in theme area implemented)** — As a major organizational commitment to student mental health, the University became a signatory to the Okanagan Charter. Under this agreement the University established the Wellness Collaborative, linking students, staff, and faculty campus-wide with a broad commitment to supporting mental health and wellness of the full campus community. Other commitments include hosting forums on mental health and wellness, developing mental health metrics for performance measurement, and using a health and wellness lens in the University's planning and to inform its policies and procedures. In addition, the University hosted the first Virtual Conference on Student Mental Health Research and reached out to provincial government officials to advocate for additional and ongoing support for student mental health.

**Challenges in the Implementation Process**

After three years of concerted effort by CoSMH members and collaborators from across the campus community, a great deal was accomplished in implementing the PAC-SMH recommendations. When CoSMH was formed, the Committee was able to consult scoping reports that summarized many challenges in addressing student mental health in post-secondary environments. However, there were no publications available to consult about other committees that had tackled these barriers comprehensively and simultaneously (Giamos et al., 2017; Monaghan et al., 2016; Ng & Padjen, 2019; Robinson et al., 2016). Further, partway through CoSMH’s term, adaptations to the COVID-19 pandemic caused disruptions to the Committee’s functional capacity, as well as student mental health needs and priorities. As a result, CoSMH encountered several notable challenges that impeded the Committee’s work, which are described here as lessons learned for future committees that seek to improve student mental health.

**Impact of COVID** — No challenge was greater than the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on all aspects of the University in 2020–21. Because most of the campus community was required to work off-site, communication and collaboration became more difficult. This was particularly true for large group meetings. In addition, the competing demands posed by the pandemic meant that campus resources and efforts had to be at least partially directed away from existing priorities to deal with emerging challenges posed by COVID-19. CoSMH meetings included updates and discussion of the impact of COVID-19, but an in-depth response to the mental health impacts of COVID-19 was beyond the scope of the Committee’s mandate.

**Turnover of CoSMH Membership** — While a number of the original CoSMH members and staff were able to serve on the Committee for its full three-year duration, there was also considerable turnover among faculty and student representatives (e.g., due to graduation, retirement, and sabbaticals). The turnover meant lack of continuity with respect to committee memory and the need for onboarding of new members who required time to catch up with the Committee’s mandate, priorities, and approach to work.

**Committee Composition** — Efforts to maintain a manageable committee size required some trade-offs in the comprehensiveness of the roles that were covered. Students represented about one quarter of the membership, but feedback provided at the end of CoSMH’s term noted that this was insufficient and
that additional and more diverse student membership may have been beneficial. For example, two faculties (Science and Environment) had no student representatives on CoSMH for the duration of its term. While it was presumed that all students could be reached through WUSA and the GSA, an alternative approach of having one faculty member and one student per faculty in addition to WUSA and GSA leadership might have been helpful.

*Ambiguity of CoSMH Role and PAC-SMH Recommendations* — A challenge noted by several members of the Committee was the ambiguity surrounding CoSMH’s ability to directly implement changes on campus, as well as the lack of clarity surrounding the wording of certain recommendations. While the representation of some PAC-SMH members on the Committee was helpful for clarifying the original intent of the recommendations, this did not always resolve difficulties in determining their nature and scope. Another issue that was raised was how ongoing work relevant to fulfilling recommendations would continue beyond the mandate of CoSMH.

*Initiatives and Priorities Not Included in the PAC-SMH report* — As an implementation committee, CoSMH was focused on fulfilling the recommendations that had been formulated in 2017. As a result, CoSMH was not able to expand its strategy for completing recommendations to integrate new information and initiatives across campus. For example, the University adopted new approaches towards addressing anti-black racism and other issues of racial injustice highlighted by global movements that gained particular prominence in 2020–21. Collaborative linkages were established between CoSMH and the President’s Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART), and this will continue beyond CoSMH’s mandate through PART’s Health and Mental Health Working Group (see Appendix C).
Recommendations for Future Directions

CoSMH’s work in fostering implementation of the PAC-SMH recommendations is now largely complete, with only three recommendations remaining as of April 2021. Although CoSMH was not formally charged with generating a new set of recommendations related to student mental health, as was done for the PAC-SMH report, the Committee members have identified a number of points that will require careful attention on the part of the University.

Continued Focus on Student Mental Health and Wellness

The work done by those who collaborated on the PAC-SMH report and CoSMH’s implementation efforts was a major contribution to improving the University of Waterloo’s response to student mental health. However, much more needs to be done to ensure that the concepts and principles embedded in the PAC-SMH report continue to inform day-to-day life in all aspects of the campus community. In that regard, PAC-SMH and CoSMH initiatives were the preliminary steps forward in what must be an ongoing journey of improvement.

We recommend that the University undertake a review of the appropriateness and feasibility of implementing the Canadian Standards Association and Mental Health Commission of Canada’s new National Standard for Mental Health and Well-Being of Post-Secondary Students, which is a companion to the CSA standard on employee psychological health and safety being implemented by the University. The University has obtained funding from Bell Let’s Talk in order to complete a review of this matter.

COVID-19 and Return to Campus

The full impact of COVID-19 on physical and mental health will not be fully understood for some time. However, current research has already suggested that the mental health consequences of the pandemic are dramatic and have disproportionately affected emerging adults (Pfefferbaum and North, 2020). COVID-19 posed many new challenges to the mental health of students, including:

- financial difficulties
- disrupted career development
- precarious labour and housing markets
- global warming/environmental crises
- social isolation
- personal health consequences
- concerns about the health of family members
- loss of loved ones

Although the return to campus will be a welcome development, it will pose its own mental health challenges as individuals will need to adapt to a return to close interaction with others outside of their household.

We recommend that Campus Wellness, the Wellness Collaborative, and other University stakeholders develop a specific plan for how to respond to the mental health consequences of COVID-19 and for the management of stresses related to the return to campus when the pandemic subsides.
Ongoing Evaluation
The designation of implementation of at least half the PAC-SMH recommendations as being complete was contingent on the expectation that an identified official, committee, or department in the University would take responsibility for ensuring the work related to the recommendation will continue.

*We recommend that the Associate Provost – Students establish a time-limited working group in May 2022 to evaluate the extent to which CoSMH’s expectations related to continuity of work on specific recommendations has continued. This should include consultations with Campus Wellness, the Wellness Collaborative, and student associations to determine the extent to which the changes envisioned in the PAC-SMH report have been realized.*

Communication
For all organizations, communication between leadership and stakeholder groups is a challenge that requires continuous attention and refinement. All members of the campus community should receive regular updates on how the University continues to prioritize and respond to historical commitments and actions required for emerging mental health concerns.

*We recommend that the University adopt regular, effective, transparent communication strategies regarding initiatives and changes made to deal with student mental health needs on and off campus. This includes those related to service provision, policies and procedures, operational matters, academic practices, and performance of mental health services.*

Evidence-informed Decision-making
As an organization committed to the use of scientific evidence to inform decision-making, the University can both learn from emerging evidence about student mental health and contribute new knowledge in this area. This includes both qualitative and quantitative evidence obtained through systematic, rigorous methodologies to measure student mental health and well-being. The University’s Virtual Conference on Student Mental Health Research on November 5, 2020 attracted a sizable, diverse audience, and there was considerable enthusiasm for continuing this work in the future. An important gap that the University has committed to address as part of the Okanagan Charter is developing and tracking performance metrics related to student mental health. In addition, efforts to establish meaningful dialogues that engage the full campus community should be supported (as called for in Recommendation #14).

*We recommend that the University continue to provide support to develop on-campus expertise in student mental health research. In addition, we recommend that the University expand its efforts to establish a performance measurement approach that will provide timely, scientifically sound, and comprehensive evidence on overall student mental health; utilization patterns and wait times for student mental health services; mental health outcomes for students using counselling, case-management and other mental health services; and support for student mental health and well-being within classroom settings. Evidence from these measures should be routinely reported in a manner that is transparent and accessible to the broad campus community. In addition, we recommend that the University expand its supports for efforts by student groups to engage the campus community in dialogues related to student mental health and well-being.*
Expanding Collaborative Partnerships
The PAC-SMH recommendations included establishing and strengthening community partnerships to provide additional supports and services to students through access to additional off-campus mental health expertise. There remain important discontinuities in service provision and information sharing with external mental health services that can be remedied. The COVID-19 pandemic was accompanied by a rise in challenges related to substance use and addictions. While the PAC-SMH report included a number of recommendations in this area, there is a general sense that much more needs to be done, particularly in the aftermath of the changes in substance use that coincides with the pandemic.

*We recommend the University engage external stakeholders in discussions to enhance the continuity of care and supports for students with serious mental health concerns who receive services from both Campus Wellness and off-campus health providers. These stakeholders include hospitals, mental health service providers within the community, and the KW4 Ontario Health Team. In addition, we recommend that priority be given to evaluating the needs of students for additional supports related to substance use and harm reduction.*
Acknowledgements
CoSMH’s efforts to foster implementation of the PAC-SMH recommendations was made possible through the dedication and hard work of our current and past members, guests who participated in our deliberations, and a team that provides tireless support to all aspects of its work. We are grateful for the engagement of students, staff members, and faculty from across campus who provided insights, encouragement, and assistance to our efforts. We also thank the senior leadership of the University for their consistent, unwavering commitment to supporting CoSMH’s work. Finally, we wish to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of all individuals who participated in the President’s Advisory Committee on Student Mental Health to create a comprehensive, meaningful, and actionable framework for enhancing student mental health and well-being.

References


## Appendix A — Committee on Student Mental Health Members and Guest Presenters

### Committee on Student Mental Health Membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role or representing</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John Hirdes</td>
<td>Chair; School of Public Health and Health Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Read</td>
<td>Associate Provost, Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walter Mittelstaedt</td>
<td>Director, Campus Wellness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chukwunonso Moneme (2020–2021)</td>
<td>Undergraduate Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katie Arnold (2018–2020)</td>
<td>Undergraduate Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meghan Crouch</td>
<td>Graduate Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abhiraj Lamba (2020–2021)</td>
<td>International Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ayana Kawe (2018–2020)</td>
<td>International Students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abigail Simpson (2020–2021)</td>
<td>Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Beauchemin (2019–2020)</td>
<td>Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association</td>
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<td>Ashley Ryan (2020–2021)</td>
<td>Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naima Naimat Samuel (2018–2020)</td>
<td>Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stephanie Denison (2021)</td>
<td>Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association</td>
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<td>Martin Cooke (2020)</td>
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<td>Bill Chesney (2018–2019)</td>
<td>Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carolyn MacGregor (2020–2021)</td>
<td>Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association</td>
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<td>Dan Davison (2020)</td>
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<td>Paul Fieguth (2019)</td>
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<td>Brent Doberstein (2019–2020)</td>
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<td>Mark Ferro (2020–2021)</td>
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<td>Chris Perlman (2018–2020)</td>
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<td>Andrew Beltaos (2020–2021)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tejal Patel</td>
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<td>Domenica De Bilio</td>
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<td>Cheri Bilitz</td>
<td>Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association</td>
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<td>Doug Ranton</td>
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<td>Jeff Stanlick (2020–2021)</td>
<td>Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brooke Young (2018–2020)</td>
<td>Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association</td>
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## Committee on Student Mental Health Guest Presenters

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alayna Frey</td>
<td>Communications Project Manager — Campus Wellness</td>
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<td>Alyssa Clarkson</td>
<td>Communications Project Manager — Campus Wellness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amanda Cook</td>
<td>Director — Sexual Violence Prevention &amp; Response Office</td>
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<td>Andrea Prier</td>
<td>Senior Academic Development Specialist — Student Success Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beth Jewkes</td>
<td>Chair of Policy 33 Policy Drafting Committee — Department of Management Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catherine Chan</td>
<td>Coordinator, Peer Mentorship — Student Success Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christine Moresoli</td>
<td>Associate Dean, Co-operative Education &amp; Professional Affairs — Faculty of Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christine Zaza</td>
<td>Online Learning Consultant — Centre for Extended Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dave DeVidi</td>
<td>Chair — Course Evaluation Project Team (now called Student Course Perceptions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gina Hickman</td>
<td>Director of Equity — Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeff Casello</td>
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<td>Jennifer Gillies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jennifer McCorriston</td>
<td>Associate Director, Health Promotion — Campus Wellness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeremy de Boer</td>
<td>Senior Case Consultant — Conflict Management and Human Rights Office</td>
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<td>Jill Knight</td>
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<td>Lauryn Poulin</td>
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<td>Nasim Shojayi</td>
<td>Early Engagement Specialist — Student Success Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Wikkerink</td>
<td>Director, Student and Faculty Relations — Co-operative Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rob Hunsperger</td>
<td>Director, Design and Construction Services — Plant Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robbyn Hesch</td>
<td>Health Promotion and Evaluation Specialist — Campus Wellness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scott de Ruyter</td>
<td>Regional Service Manager — Studentcare</td>
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<td>Seneca Velling</td>
<td>Vice-President Operations and Finance — Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association</td>
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<td>Sonya Buffone</td>
<td>Senior Research Specialist, Course Evaluation Project — Student Course Perceptions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Ruttan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trevor Holmes</td>
<td>Associate Director — Centre for Teaching Excellence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Troy Glover</td>
<td>Director — Healthy Communities Research Network</td>
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Committee on Student Mental Health Working Groups

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<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Chair</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Working Group</td>
<td>Bill Chesney</td>
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<tr>
<td>Engineering and Co-op CoSMH Recommendation 6 Working Group</td>
<td>Christine Moresoli</td>
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<td>Richard Wikkerink</td>
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<td>Mental Health Literacy Training Steering Committee</td>
<td>Kalpita Gaitonde</td>
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<td>Tanya Andrews</td>
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<td>Okanagan Charter Working Group</td>
<td>Jennifer McCorrison</td>
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<td>Recommendation 12 Working Group</td>
<td>Katie Arnold</td>
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<td>Jeremy de Boer</td>
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<td>Resiliency Working Group</td>
<td>Jennifer McCorrison</td>
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<td>Robbyn Hesch</td>
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<td>Verification of Illness Form Working Group</td>
<td>Walter Mittelstaedt</td>
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Committee on Student Mental Health Supporting Staff

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grace Wong</td>
<td>Project Coordinator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerrica Little</td>
<td>Research Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jessica Dowden (Winter 2021)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Andrew Faller-Saunders (Fall 2020)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patrick Yu (Fall 2018; Winter and Spring 2020)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natasha de Boer (Fall 2019)</td>
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<td>Krishian Camargo (Spring 2019)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shweta Mistry (Winter 2019)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katerina Pagura (Spring 2018)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agnes Zientarska-Kayko (July 2019 – April 2021)</td>
<td>Librarian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jackie Stapleton (September 2018 – July 2019)</td>
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Report Acknowledgements

Thank you to all those who provided information and support for the final report: Alex Piticco, Amanda Cook, Amanda Pfaff, Anita Taylor, Clare Bermingham, Dave Mackay, Donna Rheams, Gina Hickman, Heather Tunks, Jennifer McCorrison, Jill Knight, Joe Varamo, Kalpita Gaitonde, Lauryn Poulain, Meaghan Ross, Mike Gatchene, Nancy Schnarr, Pam Bartel, Renate Donnovan, Robbyn Hesch, Sonya Buffone, Stephanie White, and Trevor Holmes.
Appendix B — Committee on Student Mental Health Terms of Reference

1. Background
In response to increased awareness of the need to address issues affecting student mental health, the University of Waterloo established an advisory committee to prepare a report with actionable recommendations to improve the mental health of undergraduate and graduate students on and off campus. The President’s Advisory Committee on Student Mental Health (PAC-SMH) report was submitted to the President in February 2018 and publicly released on March 14, 2018.

The PAC-SMH report was the culmination of a campus-wide consultation effort that included a Steering Committee (nine members) and five advisory panels: a) mental health experts panel (16 members); b) academic panel (21 members); c) community partners panel (18 members); d) student experience panel (19 members); and e) student services panel (18 members). The report built on recommendations of the University of Waterloo’s 2012 Mental Health Review and an extensive array of submissions to the steering committee and advisory panels over a seven-month period.

The final PAC-SMH provided 36 recommendations related to campus policies and practices; inclusive and supportive campus culture; mental health awareness and communication; prevention and early intervention; service access and delivery; and broad campus-wide matters related to student mental health. Following release of the report, a committee was struck to provide leadership and oversight in order to bring these recommendations to fruition.

2. Roles and Functions of the Committee on Student Mental Health
This committee has been established to develop and implement a plan to translate the PAC-SMH report’s recommendations into specific actions consistent with the intent and purpose of each recommendation. It will also have an ongoing role to ensure the long-term continuity of the changes arising from that report in the life of the University. The committee will include stakeholders from across campus, as well as external partners, to support mobilization of the report’s recommendations into all aspects of the University of Waterloo’s culture, functions, and activities.

The Committee on Student Mental Health will:
- develop an implementation plan for enacting the report’s recommendations by:
  - prioritizing the recommendations to identify those that should be implemented in the short, medium, and long term;
  - identifying key stakeholders to be engaged and resources required to support working groups to implement each recommendation;
  - providing advice to working groups and monitor the implementation process for each recommendation with regard to the agreed timelines for achieving milestones;
  - monitoring risks to implementation and providing recommendations to reduce, manage, or mitigate those risks;
- develop a long-term strategy for integration of the work of the Committee into the ongoing culture, functions, and activities of the University.

3. Role of Individual Committee Members
The role of each member of the Committee on Student Mental Health includes:
• attending regular meetings and actively participating in the work of the Committee;
• providing diverse perspectives of students, staff, and faculty on and off campus, including satellite campuses;
• serving as a resource to the Committee providing expertise or insights relevant to the PAC-SMH report recommendations;
• acting as a liaison between the Committee and other stakeholder groups, including individual faculties, University services, student groups, alumni, and external partners;
• participating in communication and knowledge dissemination activities to increase awareness of efforts to implement PAC-SMH report recommendations.

4. General Considerations

4.1 Membership and Voting
Each Committee member will have a vote on matters requiring formal committee approval or endorsement. The Committee will be comprised of the Chair and:

- Associate Provost, Students
- Director, Campus Wellness
- Six faculty members at-large, one each from the Faculties of:
  - Applied Health Sciences
  - Arts
  - Engineering
  - Environmental Studies
  - Mathematics
  - Science
- Three students at-large, one each representing:
  - Undergraduate students
  - Graduate students
  - International students (either graduate or undergraduate)
- One representative each of the following University stakeholders:
  - Co-operative Education
  - Counselling Services or Health Services
  - Federation of Students
  - Graduate Student Association
- One representative from external mental health partner organizations (e.g., CMHA)
- One Alumni representative

4.1.1 Sub-committees — As per the PAC-SMH report, additional sub-committees will be established and will report to the Committee on Student Mental Health:

- Cultural competency strategy committee charged with reviewing campus policies, procedures, and practices in consideration of race, ethnicity, faith, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and socioeconomic status. This sub-committee’s membership includes but is not limited to:
  - GLOW Centre for Sexual & Gender Diversity
  - Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre
  - At least one of the international student association(s)

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6 Now called the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association
• Working group on exams and evaluations to develop implementable best practices regarding exams and student evaluations with a wellness viewpoint in mind. The working group’s membership includes but it not limited to:
  o Centre for Teaching Excellence
  o AccessAbility
  o Registrar’s Office
• Executive sub-committee comprised of the Chair; Associate Provost, Students; Director, Campus Wellness; one student at-large; and one faculty member at-large will meet between regularly scheduled meetings of the full Committee on an as-needed basis to ensure continuity of the workflow. A quorum will be based on attendance of at least the Chair and two other members of the sub-committee.
• Other working groups will be struck on an as-needed basis with the recommendation of the Committee. For example, it is expected that a specific working group will be created to deal with health systems issues and will include Counselling Services, Health Services, Centre for Mental Health Research, external partner organizations, and police. Similarly, there may be a need for a working group on health promotion strategies.

4.1.2 Ad Hoc Advisors — The Committee on Student Mental Health may occasionally call on other members of the University community to provide advice or support on specific matters on an ad hoc, time-limited basis. These individuals will sit as non-voting members of the Committee.

4.2 Chair
The Committee on Student Mental Health will be chaired by John P. Hirdes, Professor, School of Public Health and Health Systems.

4.3 Resources
The Chair will convene meetings and will be supported by administrative/project coordination staff through the Vice-President, Academic and Provost’s Office, a doctoral student research assistant, and a co-op student. If the Committee determines that additional resources are required, these will be arranged through the office of the Vice-President, Academic and Provost.

4.4 Reporting
The Committee on Student Mental Health will report directly to the President.

4.5 Agenda Items
Agenda items and associated materials for consideration at each meeting will normally be sent to Committee members at least five business days in advance of the meeting.

4.6 Minutes of Meetings
Minutes of meetings will be produced by the administrative support staff provided through the Office of the Vice-President, Academic and Provost and will be reviewed by the Chair prior to circulation.

Complete copies of the minutes and relevant attachments will normally be sent to Committee members within 10 business days of the meeting.

With the agreement of the Committee, out-of-session decisions will be acceptable and will be recorded in the minutes of the following regularly scheduled meeting.
4.7 Frequency of Meetings
The Committee on Student Mental Health will normally meet on a monthly basis. Additional ad hoc meetings may be required at the call of the Chair.

4.8 Proxies to Meetings
One alternate representative to the Committee on Student Mental Health will be permitted for the each of the Faculty, Federation of Students, Graduate Student Association, and Campus Wellness representatives. Where possible, members who are unable to attend a meeting will notify the Chair that the alternate will attend at least five business days in advance.

4.9 Quorum
A quorum will be deemed in effect when half the Committee plus one member are present.

4.10 Review
The composition, function, and effectiveness of the Committee on Student Mental Health will be reviewed after the first and second years of its operation.

4.11 Confidentiality
The Committee on Student Mental Health will be a forum for discussion of policy, regulatory, and operational options for the University’s approach to enhancing student mental health. In order to ensure a free flow of ideas and appropriate depth of discourse, the discussions of the Committee will be treated as confidential to the Committee. Public statements about the Committee’s deliberations will be released through the Chair or designate(s) from the Executive Committee.

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7 Now called the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association
Appendix C — Detailed Description of Actions Taken for Specific PAC-SMH Recommendations

Recommendation #1

- The University should facilitate a wellness and mental health analysis when new academic programming is proposed.
- The University should develop a mental health framework for use when writing new, or reviewing existing, policies and procedures.

CoSMH Timeline
- On January 15, 2021, the Associate Provost, Students reported on pathways forward.

Implementation Activity
- This recommendation is reflected in UWaterloo’s Okanagan Charter commitments.

Ongoing Efforts
- The Provost and Associate Provost, Students will engage the Associate Vice-Presidents on the academic side and the University Senate to build a wellness and mental health analysis into the Institutional Quality Assurance Process for program reviews.
- Policy 1 (Initiation and Review of University Policies) will need modification to include a mandatory mental health framework when drafting new or reviewing existing policies. This requires further discussion with the University Secretary.
- A range of diverse students, including students with lived experience, will be consulted and included in discussions before anything is finalized.
- All ongoing efforts are projected to be completed by Fall 2021.
**Recommendation #2**

Equip AccessAbility Services with the capacity to review mental health-related accommodation requests on campus, while maintaining the confidentiality of the student.

**CoSMH Timeline**
- On May 3, 2019, the Director of Campus Wellness presented on the formation of a working group to review accommodation requests.
- On January 15, 2021, the Associate Director of AccessAbility Services (AAS) presented on the procedures for reviewing and supporting accommodation requests.
- On January 15, 2021, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

**Implementation Activity**
- CoSMH determined that:
  - AAS fulfills the legal mandates of the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)](https://www.ada.gov), which includes challenges related to mental health.
  - AAS follows the legal procedures for maintaining confidentiality of personal health information as dictated by the Ontario Human Rights Commission. More information is available through UWaterloo’s policies on [Information and Privacy](https://www.uwaterloo.ca/policies/privacy).
  - In addition to supporting students with documented disabilities, AAS also supports students with suspected disabilities and students with conditions that do not require a formal diagnosis.
  - The [Student Academic Accommodation Guidelines](https://www.uwaterloo.ca/policies/students/accommodation) outline a dispute mechanism for students who disagree with the accommodation plan that has been created for them.
  - The process for notifying faculty of a student’s accommodation request is described on the AAS [information page for faculty and staff](https://www.uwaterloo.ca/policies/students/accommodation).

**Ongoing Efforts**
- Ongoing discussions surrounding resources and funding are being held between AAS and the Provost.
- Communication strategies are being developed to inform and educate faculty about their duty to accommodate, their role in the accommodation process, and the mechanism for addressing disputes, as outlined in the [Student Academic Accommodation Guidelines](https://www.uwaterloo.ca/policies/students/accommodation).
- A partnership with the Mental Health Literacy Training Steering Committee is being created to share information about services provided by AAS and the legal duty to accommodate.
- AAS is providing consultation on the revised Verification of Illness process, including educating faculty on the difference between considerations and accommodations. Once finalized, the process will be integrated into the services provided by AAS.
Recommendation #3

Develop a centralized physical and online system for submitting Verification of Illness Forms that notifies all students’ instructors while maintaining confidentiality of students’ medical conditions and history.

CoSMH Timeline

- A working group was struck in 2019 to address the Verification of Illness process at UWaterloo. Membership includes an associate dean, undergraduate studies; an associate dean, graduate studies; health professionals; and representatives from Co-operative Education and Experiential Learning, the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association, and the Graduate Student Association.
- On May 3, 2019, the Director of Campus Wellness presented on the formation of a working group to review accommodation requests.
- On March 12 and March 26, 2021, the Director of Campus Wellness provided the Committee with updates on the working group’s progress.

Implementation Activity

- The working group drafted a document for the Verification of Condition process, which expands on the present Verification of Illness system to include life events and psychological distress. The proposed new process offers students a variety of flexible options, such as: a limited number of self-declarations available to each student, Verification of Condition forms (with an expanded range of health-care professionals as accepted signatories), and support from AccessAbillity Services (AAS) to help students manage chronic impairments and conditions.
- The proposed process was presented to the Undergraduate Operations Committee in March 2021 and the Graduate Operations Committee in April 2021.

Ongoing Efforts

- The Verification of Condition process will be presented to the Student Relations Committees (undergraduate and graduate) and then the Senate Undergraduate Committee.
- The working group aims to conclude consultations with student groups and faculties in the Fall 2021 term to ensure inclusion in the undergraduate calendar for Fall 2022.
- The self-declaration system will be built into Quest to centralize the collection of records and better serve student needs. These forms will be based on the temporary system used for self-reporting influenza-like symptoms during the COVID-19 pandemic and H1N1 pandemic. Once students have exceeded their self-declaration limit, the system will automatically redirect them to the next level of the process (whether it is submitting a Verification of Condition form, speaking to their academic advisor, etc.). Instructors will be notified when students submit a form but will not receive any confidential health information.
- Due to the difference in academic calendars between undergraduate and graduate students, the proposed process will be implemented for undergraduate students first but will be expanded to meet graduate student needs as well.
**Recommendation #4**

The University should develop proper recourse mechanisms for students who allege staff or faculty have violated an approved accommodation request related to mental health.

CoSMH Timeline

- On September 13, 2019, the Associate Dean of Arts, Undergraduate Students presented on [Policy 70](#).
- In September 2019, the [Student Academic Accommodation Guidelines](#) were published on the Secretariat’s webpage.
- On October 11, 2019, the Associate Director of AccessAbility Services (AAS) presented on the accommodation guidelines.
- On July 10, 2020, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- CoSMH determined that AAS designed the [Student Academic Accommodation Guidelines](#), developed to align with [Policy 33](#) and [Policy 70](#). They include formal and informal processes for dispute resolution.

Ongoing Efforts

- AAS will continue to work with the Student Success Office communications team to notify students of the guidelines.
Recommendation #5

Strike a working group that recommends implementable best practices around exam and evaluations with a wellness viewpoint in mind. This includes but is not limited to an examination of:

- Final exam schedules and availability of the exam schedule during the course enrollment period.
- Weighting and overall number and type of evaluation/assessment in courses.
- A more efficient system for deferred exams.
- Confidentiality around communication of grades to students to ensure practices aren’t promoting an unhealthy competitive environment (e.g., rankings).

CoSMH Timeline

- On January 11, 2019, an academic working group consisting of all CoSMH faculty and two student representatives was struck.
- On March 8, 2019, May 3, 2019, and July 26, 2019, the Associate Dean of Arts, Undergraduate Students presented on academic working group progress.
- On July 26, 2019, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- The academic working group prepared a document detailing best practices and suggestions for handling deferred exams. The document was provided to the Registrar’s Office in Fall 2019, which is available in Appendix E.
- Public posting of student rankings is no longer performed in any of the Engineering departments. Further information on existing guidelines for communication of grades is available through the Secretariat’s webpage on guidelines for returning assignments and posting grades.
- The Centre for Teaching Excellence hosts an annual Teaching and Learning Conference. The 2021 theme explored Assessment Through Learning, providing information on best practices and building opportunities for meaningful feedback and self-evaluation.

Ongoing Efforts

- The academic working group reviewed current practices and compiled a series of recommendations for the following topics: dean’s list standardization, deferred exams, exam scheduling, and weighting of assessments. The recommendations are provided in Appendix E.
Recommendation #6

Academic programs should review for unnecessary stress those sequences in which students acquire their first co-op position in the second term. The PAC-SMH recommends that a committee be struck to investigate how to reduce the stress levels associated with this sequence.

CoSMH Timeline

- On October 30, 2020, the Faculty of Engineering’s Associate Dean, Co-operative Education and Professional Affairs and Co-operative Education’s Director of Student and Faculty Relations presented. The presentation provided information on changes to the co-op system and a collaborative working group involving representatives of Co-operative Education and Engineering.
- On October 30, 2020, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- A working group consisting of staff and faculty members from the Faculty of Engineering and Co-operative and Experiential Education (CEE) was formed.
- CEE implemented improvements to reduce the stress on co-op students, including refining interview conflict and interview relief processes, working with employers to maximize main cycle interview scheduling, creating a webcam function on WaterlooWorks, revising CEE communications to create a clearer and more compassionate tone, and embedding two counsellors dedicated to supporting co-op students.
- Communications have been enhanced to clarify core principles/processes/options.
- Co-op modules are now explicitly focused on educating co-op students on how to find and access key resources and supports at all stages of their co-op experience.
- Flexible pathways with shorter work terms and reduced work-term requirements for students have been developed in order to provide students with more options.

Ongoing Efforts

- A modified job application/interview/match cycle is being considered for students enrolled in academic programs requiring students to acquire their first co-op position in the second term.
- The working group is discussing skill-development alternatives to a work term that utilizes existing workshops, micro-credentials, and the application of a work-integrated learning environment.
- Representatives from the Work-Learn Institute will continue to collect feedback from students enrolled in varying sequences via one-on-one interviews to compare stress factors and create mitigation strategies.
Recommendation #7

- Consider universal instructional design as a valuable perspective that can be used to improve course delivery. Consider a collaborative effort between the Centre for Teaching Excellence and faculties to include universal instructional design in existing and new courses.
- Develop an online resource to record good practices for embedding universal instructional design and mental wellness into teaching.

CoSMH Timeline

- On March 8, 2019, May 3, 2019, and July 26, 2019, the Associate Dean of Arts, Undergraduate Students provided academic working group updates.
- On March 8, 2019, the Associate Director of the Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE) and CTE’s Faculty Liaison for the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences presented information on CTE universal instructional design workshops and resources.
- On July 26, 2019, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- CoSMH determined that:
  - CTE has developed a number of teaching tips that are available on their website, including a series dedicated to universal instructional design.
  - CTE offers core workshops, available in person and online for all instructors, that integrate elements from universal instructional design. Workshops focused specifically on universal design are available periodically and have demonstrated good uptake among both new and existing faculty members.
  - Faculty are offered support when updating their courses by CTE Instructional Developers through the Teaching Excellence Academy. These opportunities are used to promote evidence-based teaching practices, such as those outlined in universal instructional design.
  - CTE has translated many of its workshops into an online format to assist instructors with the move to virtual learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - The University of Waterloo Teaching and Learning Conference has featured presentations on mental health, universal design, inclusivity, and accessibility.

Ongoing Efforts

- CTE aims to expand the services and supports offered to instructors, contingent on department resourcing.
**Recommendation #8**

Openly communicate the process the University undertakes when communicating about student deaths on campus.

CoSMH Timeline

- On September 7, 2018, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- The Associate Provost, Students led the development of the protocol that the University follows when responding to student deaths on campus. This protocol incorporates input from various stakeholders, including the Executive Council.
- The Associate Vice-President, Communications distributed the protocol to the campus community by email on July 26, 2018 and published it on the Secretariat’s site in Spring 2018.

Ongoing Efforts

- No further actions required.
Recommendation #9

Develop a protocol to include community partners when communicating adverse events that involve a member of the community, while ensuring that support services are available to those impacted by the event.

CoSMH Timeline

- On October 30, 2020, the Director of Counselling Services presented on internal protocols within Campus Wellness for engaging community partners during adverse events.
- On October 30, 2020, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- Campus Wellness developed an internal protocol to manage information about adverse events on campus and alert key personnel across the department.
- The protocol equips intake specialists to ensure immediate support is provided to students in crisis. If applicable, Counselling Services reaches out to deans and associate deans, and its staff are available to speak to students in classes, in residences, and/or at athletics.
- If a tragedy has happened on campus, partners from the Canadian Mental Health Association can provide assistance by debriefing and offering on-campus drop-in support. They are also available during the week to provide on-site support to students to help Campus Wellness manage an overflow of crisis appointments.
- The Employee & Family Assistance Program is available to staff who request debriefing and support.

Ongoing Efforts

- Counselling Services is considering an outreach initiative to assist student groups and wellness coordinators with resources on providing support during adverse events.
Recommendation #10

All academic programs and student service departments should include peer mentorship activities in the delivery of their mission for the purpose of:

- Improving the frequency of connection and collaboration between students, faculty and staff.
- Developing a greater sense of belonging and community at Waterloo for all students.
- Increasing cross-campus support and advocacy for student wellness.

CoSMH Timeline

- On November 20, 2020, the CoSMH Research Assistant presented on active peer mentorship programs delivered within faculty and student service departments.
- On February 26, 2021, the CoSMH Research Assistant Co-op Student presented an inventory of peer mentorship programs offered by various student service departments and a gap analysis.
- On March 12 and March 26, 2021, the CoSMH Chair led a discussion on the definition of peer mentorship program and potential pathways forward.
- On March 31, 2021, the CoSMH Chair presented at the Deans’ Council to request faculty deans support the continual development and enhancement of peer mentorship activities.
- On April 23, 2020, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- The CoSMH support team and CoSMH faculty representatives worked closely with campus stakeholders to create an inventory of peer mentorship programs delivered within faculties and student service departments. The inventory indicates which of the three bullet points listed in the recommendation are fulfilled by each program.
- Gaps in peer mentorship services have been identified in each faculty, particularly for graduate students. The Chair of CoSMH presented this shortfall to the Deans’ Council to request faculty deans support the continual development and enhancement of peer mentorship activities in these areas.
- CoSMH created the following definition for peer mentorship programs/activities: A group of knowledgeable, approachable, and supportive individuals with varying ranges of expertise, wherein mentees and mentors are connected to foster learning and social connection. These programs or activities are intentionally planned to build relationships and positively affect developmental outcomes across four domains of learning: academic, social, psychological, and career. Examples include “lunch and learn” events; social programs to connect students, staff, and faculty; information sessions on career options; and discussion groups dealing with personal, academic, and professional development.

Ongoing Efforts

- All faculty deans have committed to supporting the enhancement of existing peer mentorship programs and activities and the development of new resources to address student-identified gaps. CoSMH faculty and student representatives will continue working with their deans and other key individuals to consult with students and identify a pathway forward to building a more supportive and engaged community.
- As part of its mandate, the Wellness Collaborative continues to increase cross-campus support and advocacy for wellness.
Recommendation #11

A committee should be struck to develop and implement a cultural competency strategy for the University regarding health promotion and student wellness. The committee would review campus policies, procedures and practices in consideration of race, ethnicity, faith, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, and socioeconomic status.

CoSMH Timeline

- On April 5, 2019, the Director of Equity presented on information pertaining to the Provost’s Advisory Committee on Equity (PACE). The [Graduate Student Supervision Series for Faculty](http://www.graduatestudentsupervision.com) workshop on cultural and gender interactions with students offered by the Centre for Teaching Excellence, in collaboration with the Equity Office, was also discussed.
- On April 5, 2019, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- The committee decided that rather than forming a parallel committee to PACE, this recommendation would be added to PACE’s agenda as a key priority.
- The Equity Office has consulted with the Mental Health Literacy Training Steering Committee to embed equity into mental health training programs.
- The Equity Office has expanded its offerings of equity and anti-racism trainings to build capacity and awareness among students, faculty, and staff.
- The [President’s Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART)](http://www.presidentsantiracismtaskforce.com) has established membership and terms of reference and has engaged BIPOC community members to collect feedback to form six thematic areas to be considered by PART. PART’s executive designate is the Vice-President, Research. This taskforce includes an executive advisory operations committee, steering committee, community collaborative, planning and communications team, five working groups, and four implementation teams. PART includes a Health and Wellness working group.
- The University of Waterloo is a member of the [National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity](http://www.facultydiversity.org).
- [The Strategic Plan 2020–2025](http://www.strategicplan.com) contains specific goals to strengthen sustainable and diverse communities.

Ongoing Efforts

- The Director of Equity is working with the Associate Director of Health Promotion to embed equity in health promotion activities, as well as to form relationships between PACE (Equity) and the Wellness Collaborative (Health Promotion).
- The University’s Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion Unit is undergoing review and restructuring. PACE will be reviewed and restructured based on the outcome of the Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion review.
- PART, through its Health and Wellness working group, will deliver recommendations regarding culturally competent mental health services.
**Recommendation #12**

Expand the range of options for students who are having challenges in interactions with their supervisors or instructors. For example, consider the model of an ombudsperson employed at some institutions with functions such as support, advocacy, and tracking data/patterns.

**CoSMH Timeline**
- On October 11, 2019, the Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs (GSPA) presented on current processes for graduate students seeking support regarding supervisors.
- On January 17, 2020, the Chair of the Policy 33 Drafting Committee presented on Policy 33 revisions.
- On January 17, 2020, the Senior Case Consultant, Conflict Management and Human Rights presented on the roles and services of the Conflict Management and Human Rights Office.
- A Recommendation 12 Working Group was struck on March 6, 2020.
- On August 29, 2020, the Recommendation 12 Working Group co-chairs presented scan of services and recommendations.
- On March 26, 2021, CoSMH discussed recommendation progress.

**Implementation Activity**
- CoSMH determined that graduate students seeking support in handling conflicts with their academic supervisors can speak to their department’s graduate chair/officer/coordinator, their faculty’s associate dean, or the GSPA office. Further details on this structure are provided in the [Guide for Graduate Research and Supervision](#).
- A new [draft of Policy 33](#) (Ethical Behaviour) was distributed to campus members through email and live information sessions and was presented to the Faculty Relations Committee and Staff Relations Committee for consideration. The Policy 33 Drafting Committee discussed an ombudsperson model but wished to focus on expanding options within existing structures first. It has also recommended the procurement of a commercial software system for case management, data tracking, and reporting.
- CoSMH determined that advocacy support is available through the following organizations:
  - Faculty: [Faculty Association of the University of Waterloo](#)
  - Staff: [University of Waterloo Staff Association](#)
  - Undergraduate students: [Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association](#) (WUSA) and its [Centre for Academic Policy Support](#)
  - Graduate students: [Graduate Student Association](#) (GSA)
- CoSMH determined that the [Conflict Management & Human Rights Office](#) (CMAHRO) is available for all members of the UWaterloo community to address concerns formally or informally. Any individuals wishing to receive confidential support are able to meet the Senior Case Consultant within 48 hours of their request. CMAHRO hired a new marketing coordinator and social media expert to promote these services more widely.
- CoSMH’s Recommendation 12 Working Group reviewed the ombudsperson model at other Canadian post-secondary institutions and conducted a scan of existing pathways for support on campus. It also identified challenges in system navigation and gaps surrounding student advocacy support.
Ongoing Efforts

- Adoption of an ombudsperson model at UWaterloo was formally raised by students at the Undergraduate Student Relations Committee and Graduate Student Relations Committee.
- WUSA has developed a formal advocacy stance in favour of the ombudsperson model.
- The Provost; Associate Provost, Students; WUSA; and GSA will continue to work together to determine whether UWaterloo will establish an ombudsperson office, and if so, how it will be funded, structured, governed, and held accountable.
**Recommendation #13**

Identify and implement University facilities and infrastructure standards and best practices into the design, planning, and rejuvenation activities for all campus physical spaces to promote and enhance student wellness and supportive learning environments.

CoSMH Timeline

- On May 22, 2020 and August 28, 2020, the Director of Design and Construction Services presented.
- On May 22, 2020, July 10, 2020, and August 28, 2020, the Director of the University’s Healthy Communities Research Network presented.
- On August 28, 2020, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- CoSMH determined that:
  - Plant Operations aims to have all new buildings on campus meet the Passive House standard. The renovation and rejuvenation of existing spaces are conceptualized in partnership with faculties and departments.
  - Design and Construction Services will pursue select methodologies of the Passive House standard and WELL Building Standard to enhance health and well-being. Requests for proposals refer to both standards, and adjustments have been made to the scoring and evaluation process when evaluating consultants.
  - The University is modernizing many aspects of its approach to design and broadening the list of design parameters and sensitivities, including an improved awareness of: sustainability, accessibility, Indigenization, inclusivity, and mental health.
  - Cooperative and Experiential Education guided the renovation of the Tatham Centre, from using more compassionate language on signage to restructuring the waiting areas, displaying student art, and having service dogs.
  - The Graduate Student Association and Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association have established a consultation mechanism to receive feedback from students on space utilization.

Ongoing Efforts

- The next iteration of the Campus Master Plan will include a statement on fostering student wellness and supportive learning environments.
- The Wellness Collaborative will work with partners on campus to promote student wellness in space and natural environments on campus.
- Each faculty’s mechanism for assessing physical space will include student learning, wellness, and engagement in their mandate and formalize a process to collect feedback and suggestions on space usage.
Recommendation #14

Open a continuous dialogue with students, staff, faculty, and the wider community about mental health and well-being, including online forums for discussion of:

- prevention of mental health issues and promotion of mental health-care strategies
- suicide prevention
- impact of trauma and sexual violence
- effects of racial injustice
- effects of transphobia
- harm reduction approaches to substance use

CoSMH Timeline

- On October 30, 2020, the CoSMH Chair, WUSA President, and GSA President shared examples of dialogues with students, staff, and faculty on the six subject areas.
- On January 7 and 12, 2021, the CoSMH Research Assistant and CoSMH Research Assistant Co-op Student met with the CoSMH student representatives to discuss the intention and interpretation of this recommendation and to draft a definition of “dialogue.”
- On January 29, 2021, the CoSMH student representatives shared the results of their meetings with the wider committee.
- On March 26, 2021, the Committee reviewed the definition of “dialogue” and identified mechanisms for continuing dialogues post-CoSMH.
- On April 23, 2021, the Committee voted with two abstentions, one opposed to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- The Student Mental Health Forum (2018) featured remarks from the President, Provost, CoSMH chair and CoSMH members; a Q&A session with all speakers; the signing of the Okanagan Charter; and an interactive open house. The open house offered all attendees the chance to dialogue with:
  - CoSMH members
  - Representatives from each faculty
  - Campus Wellness
  - Co-operative and Experiential Education
  - Housing & Residences
  - AccessAbility Services
  - Muslim Student Association
  - Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association
  - Graduate Student Association
  - Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council
  - Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington
- The 2018 President’s Town Hall celebrated some of the achievements and milestones over the preceding year, including the release of the PAC-SMH recommendations, the formation of CoSMH, the signing of the Okanagan Charter, and the $1.2 million additional annual investment in hiring needed mental health support workers.
- The 2019 President’s Town Hall was attended in person and virtually by over 650 students, faculty, and staff for a conversation on the 2020–2025 Strategic Plan, the Okanagan Charter, sustainability, social spaces, the Indigenization Strategy, and more.
The Student Mental Health Forum (2019) included an open house with campus and community partners available to dialogue on all six subject areas specified in the recommendation. Campus partners included:

- Health Promotion
- Counselling Services
- Centre for Mental Health Research and Treatment
- Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington
- Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office
- Equity Office
- Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre
- Racial Advocacy for Inclusion, Solidarity & Equity (RAISE)
- Muslim Student Association
- Making Spaces
- GLOW

Community partners included:

- Waterloo Region Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Centre — St. Mary’s General Hospital
- Waterloo Region Suicide Prevention Council
- Good2Talk
- Sanguen Health Services
- Region of Waterloo Public Health
- Waterloo Region Integrated Drug Strategy

The 2020 President’s Virtual Town Hall brought together more than 1,600 students, faculty, staff, and community members for a conversation on a number of important topics, including the impacts of COVID-19 on the mental health of students, sessional faculty, postdoctoral students, and employees.

CoSMH hosted the University of Waterloo Virtual Conference on Student Mental Health Research (2020) to bring together members of the UWaterloo community to share knowledge, connect student, staff, and faculty researchers, and promote mental wellness through presentations, posters, and interactive Q&A sessions. Topics broadly pertaining to student mental health were explored, with an emphasis on the following key themes:

- Prevention of mental health issues and promotion of strategies to enhance mental health
- Suicide prevention
- Equity and wellness
- Harm reduction approaches to substance use
- Mental health impact of COVID-19

CoSMH created the following definition for dialogue:

- Any situation (formal/informal) on campus where conversations on these topics occur
- Students, staff, faculty, and the wider community are enabled to initiate and continue conversations on these topics
- Exchange of ideas between individuals/groups
- Conversations that are free of discrimination and stigma; all participants treated with respect
- Discussion where members are present and actively listening
- When discussions are initiated, ensure that everyone feels welcome and that participants are not intimidated by fear of reprisal
Ongoing Efforts
While examples of existing on-campus dialogues were generated for all six topics included in this recommendation, CoSMH acknowledges that further work is required to establish long-term institutional mechanisms that facilitate progress in each of these areas. To promote ongoing work after the mandate for CoSMH has ended, the Committee has identified potential pathways forward:

- A research grant has been approved to support the formal adoption of *The National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students* at UWaterloo. As part of the proposal, Campus Wellness has committed to continuing work on this recommendation. The ways in which the Standard aligns with this work have been outlined in the pages that follow.
- To promote a holistic approach to addressing this recommendation, partnerships need to be strengthened among the organizations on campus that have been working to meet these needs. For each of the topic areas listed, organizations were identified that currently act as leaders in implementing and overseeing dialogues. To coordinate with the Standard, organizations provided information on their ongoing events, evaluation and reporting processes, and strategies for outreach and engagement among students. This information is included on pages 40–47.
  - No formal organization of UWaterloo could be identified that currently addresses the effects of transphobia. As such, CoSMH recognizes that this is a gap that must be filled. In the meantime, the Gender and Sexual Diversity Alliance, a new volunteer organization dedicated to advocating for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community on campus, has provided information on its objectives and can be considered a participant in establishing dialogues that support the transgender community.
- CoSMH’s student representatives, research assistant, and co-op students met to discuss ideas for new dialogue initiatives, as well as strengthening existing ones. For each idea, the following information is provided: description, topic area implicated, rationale, partner organizations, and links to other PAC-SMH recommendations. More information on the proposed dialogues is available on the CoSMH website.
MHCC-CSA Standard alignment

In July 2020, the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) and the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) published *The National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students*. The Standard was developed with input from multiple stakeholders — including post-secondary students, service providers, and clinical experts — for the purpose of identifying a set of protocols that promote student mental health and well-being. The result was a framework containing multiple sections that cover various aspects of post-secondary policy, service delivery, and culture.

The CoSMH team conducted an evaluation of the report to align PAC-SMH recommendations with corresponding protocols outlined in the Standard. As part of alignment process, 48 protocols from the Standard were identified that relate to recommendation 14, such as: best practices for each of the topic areas identified, incorporating data collection and evaluation strategies, soliciting student engagement, and cross-sector collaboration between organizations on- and off-campus.

Each of the six priority areas in recommendation 14 were explicitly mentioned in multiple sections of the report framework, highlighting the importance of addressing these topics at an institutional level. Examples of sections that mentioned the priority areas include the following: facilitating dialogues and planning events, stakeholder engagement, service structure and provision, strategic planning and key indicators, evaluation and data collection, implementation guidelines, reporting and communication, cross-sector collaboration, and ongoing improvement. By addressing each of the priority areas as outlined in the Standard, UWaterloo will be better positioned to provide sustainable and meaningful dialogues that enhance student mental well-being.

To ensure that dialogues are effectively reaching the UWaterloo community and promoting mental well-being across each priority area, we can draw on extensive detail provided in the Standard on data collection and evaluation. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches to collecting data were recommended, allowing UWaterloo to better identify strengths and opportunities for improvement. It is important that evaluation strategies are structured to be ongoing, permitting longitudinal analyses of performance and outcomes. Results from data collection and evaluation should be shared with members of the community to enable informed and transparent decisions on the dialogues. UWaterloo is responsible for ensuring that feedback from the evaluation process is incorporated into ongoing revisions to the content and structure of dialogues and made easily accessible to students. For recommendation 14, these data collection and evaluation guidelines will enable UWaterloo to assess how well dialogues are performing and understand the results for student mental health in each area.

For dialogues to successfully promote student mental health, students need to be involved in each step of the process. Several protocols in the Standard revolve around the post-secondary institution’s responsibility to promote engagement and inclusion of various student groups. One method of ensuring that students are meaningfully engaged is intentionally structuring dialogues to focus on the needs and perspectives of students. Other methods include emphasizing participation, accessibility, and inclusive environments. For the priority areas that focus on issues related to diversity, protocols from the Standard that focus on ongoing discussions surrounding equity can provide useful guidelines on how to engage students with lived experience. Another major theme related to student engagement in the Standard was resource and service navigation, ensuring that students can easily access opportunities for community involvement and support. To create effective dialogues, we need to consider the effects of each of the priority areas on student mental health and understand how best to engage students.
Finally, while there are numerous organizations that facilitate dialogues, a common problem experienced by post-secondary institutions is a “silöed” approach to organizational structure and service delivery. The Standard describes the need to connect on- and off-campus organizations to create a holistic service delivery model for student mental health, as students can experience multiple needs simultaneously and are more likely to benefit from an integrated approach. Several organizations at UWaterloo were identified as leaders in implementing and evaluating dialogues pertaining to the priority areas in this recommendation, as described in the following section. Using the Standard framework as a guideline, potential mechanisms can be developed to create an inter-disciplinary environment that brings together multiple stakeholders. By promoting cross-collaboration across campus, greater opportunities will be realized for ongoing dialogues that address the intersections between student mental health and each of the priority areas.

Overall, the Standard provides an opportunity to continue the work of recommendation 14 beyond the mandate of CoSMH. Through the framework’s approach to addressing priority areas, data collection and evaluation mechanisms, student engagement, and inter-sector collaboration, UWaterloo will have a mechanism for supporting ongoing dialogues that improve student mental health.
Prevention of mental health issues and promotion of mental health-care strategies

Campus Wellness — Health Promotion
Campus Wellness — Health Promotion informs, engages, supports, and connects members of the University of Waterloo community to build capacity for health promotion and wellness.

Ongoing Events

- **Thrive Week** is an annual, week-long event that takes place every Fall term. During the week, numerous events are hosted that seek to engage the campus community in dialogues surrounding mental health. There are also Thrive Days in the Winter and Spring terms.
- **Mental health training courses** are offered free of cost to students multiple times throughout the year. Examples of some training programs include:
  - Question Persuade Refer (QPR)
  - De-escalating Difficult Student Situations
  - More Feet on the Ground
- **Peer Health Education** is a program under Campus Wellness that is run by student volunteers. The team focuses on implementing strategies that promote positive physical and mental health behaviours in the student community.
- **Single and Sexy** is a play performed by students during first-year orientation that addresses various topics important to physical and mental well-being.
- **Campus Wellness** offers seminars and workshops to provide students with the opportunity to learn skills to help them cope with life’s challenges.
- **Community Engagement** is a series of events with different focuses around the themes of increasing health awareness and wellness-related work done by the Wellness Collaborative.
- **Sense of belonging** is one of the Wellness Collaborative’s five priority areas and is fostered through two main mechanisms: (1) responsive environments and caring community, and (2) social connections. To build a responsive environment, the Wellness Collaborative recognizes the unique needs individuals experience and critically examines and addresses structural barriers.

Evaluation and Reporting

- Following Thrive events, data are collected on participation, and surveys are distributed to gather feedback that is used to inform future programming.
- Surveys are distributed before and after the mental health training courses to measure participant engagement, effects on mental health literacy, and input on future course offerings.

Student Engagement and Outreach

- A **Student Advisory Committee** is being formed under Campus Wellness, with membership comprising previous and current UWaterloo students. Through this committee, student representatives will communicate with several committees within Campus Wellness, including the Health Promotion Team.
- Students are involved in the planning and implementation of Thrive Week events.
- The Peer Health Education team is led by students, for students.
- Single and Sexy is reviewed by students and performed during first-year orientation by students.
Suicide prevention

**Campus Wellness — Mental Health Team**
The Campus Wellness Mental Health Team promotes positive mental health and well-being and raises awareness about mental illnesses. The team provides information on the role of sleep and stress in a student lifestyle and the importance of suicide prevention on campus, and it raises awareness about various mental illnesses that may affect students.

**Ongoing Events**
- As part of the annual **Thrive Week** series, events are held that aim to improve mental health literacy surrounding suicide prevention.
- During the annual **Bell Let’s Talk Day**, Campus Wellness hosts a series of events and fundraising opportunities that focus on suicide prevention.
- Several **mental health training** courses that focus on suicide prevention are offered free of cost to students at multiple times throughout the year. Some examples of training programs include:
  - Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)
  - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
  - SafeTalk
  - De-escalating difficult student situations
- The **Skills for Safer Living** group, run out of Campus Wellness, is offered periodically to students who are experiencing persistent suicidal ideation.

**Evaluation and Reporting**
- **National College Health Assessment (NCHA)** data is collected and presented to various student and faculty groups, including data on self-harm and suicidal ideation.
- Data is collected on the number of participants for ongoing events and training courses.
- Campus Wellness includes survey data in its **Strategic Reports**, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative measures.
- Campus Wellness collects data internally on client satisfaction and service effectiveness, which is reported to the team at regular intervals.
- Campus Wellness reviews and evaluates its social media engagement strategies on an ongoing basis.

**Student Engagement and Outreach**
- To communicate services and resources to students, Campus Wellness makes use of social media strategies (Instagram) and blogs on mental health topics.
- A **Student Advisory Committee** is being formed under Campus Wellness, with membership comprising previous and current UWaterloo students. Through this committee, student representatives will communicate with several committees within Campus Wellness.
- Campus Wellness assists students in promoting suicide prevention dialogues through peer leadership training opportunities such as MATES (Mentor Assistance Through Education and Support), residence dons, and Orientation leaders.
Impacts of trauma and sexual violence

**Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO)**

The SVPRO supports all members of the University campus community who have experienced sexual violence or been impacted by it. It serves students, staff, faculty, and visitors on the main campus, the satellite campuses, and the affiliated and federated Waterloo Institutes and Colleges. The office provides a safe(r) space for people to disclose about their experience and to discuss short-term coping strategies and resources. It provides referrals, facilitates requests for accommodations, and reviews the options available for complaints and reporting.

In addition to supporting those impacted by sexual violence, SVPRO also facilitates trainings and educational opportunities and engages in awareness-raising activities; works with University departments and units to create, and continually review, internal services and responses, safety planning procedures, accommodations, and interim measures provided; and collects data and prepares reporting documents outlining SVPRO’s work and impact, which is presented the University’s Board of Governors and provided to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

**Ongoing Events**

- Consent Week is held each year during the last week of January.
- SVPRO is a campus partner for the annual Safe Love Week, hosted by the Graduate Student Association in February.
- Annual role-specific training is provided for Residence Life dons and Orientation leaders.
- SVPRO is a community partner for the annual Take Back the Night event.
- SVPRO hosts 16 Days to End Gender Based Violence annually.
- Training is provided, including:
  - SVPR101: Sexual Violence Awareness Training
  - SVPR102: Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Violence
  - SVPR201: Policy 42 and You
  - Responding to Disclosures of Sexual Violence on University Campuses in Ontario

**Evaluation and Reporting**

- SVPRO provides annual reports to the University’s Board of Governors outlining campus initiatives and services provided by the Office, an assessment of their impact and engagement statistics, and information and analysis regarding emerging trends to which the Office is responding.
- In 2020, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities required Sexual Violence Task Forces at post-secondary institutions to report on their evaluation of their institution’s sexual violence policy and programs, as well as their recommendations for improving safety on campus.
- In April 2021, SVPRO hired an Evaluation & Planning Specialist to develop and implement ongoing programming evaluation.

**Student Engagement and Outreach**

- Student representatives from WUSA and the GSA, as well as two students-at-large, participate in the membership of the Sexual Violence Task Force.
- Campus community members, including students, were asked to submit proposals in 2019 and 2020 for consent initiatives they would like to create on campus.
- Students are involved annually in SVPRO’s Consent Week and 16 Days planning committees.
• SVPRO regularly participates in events run by student organizations and groups to promote their services (an example includes the Campus Life Fair) and to provide training and/or educational opportunities.
• SVPRO is regularly invited by faculty members to provide guest lectures in their classrooms.
• As of April 2021, SVPRO has hired an Education Projects Coordinator who will focus on developing campus-wide programming related to healthy masculinities and bystander intervention.
Effects of racial injustice

**The President’s Anti-Racism Taskforce (PART)**

PART represents a BIPOC-centred team of advisors who will help advance anti-racism initiatives at the University. Its primary mandate is to connect and structure the recommendations from the various PART working groups and implementation teams into an overarching framework for addressing racism and oppression and for building inclusivity at the University. PART working groups are developing recommendations related to key areas such as safety, code of conduct, and physical and mental health. Implementation teams are engaging in activities that require immediate action, and working groups are developing recommendations that will be implemented once they are finalized. PART will also be making recommendations on other areas, including ensuring BIPOC staff, faculty and students are represented in leadership roles and developing strategies to continue dialogues past the mandate of the taskforce.

PART’s Health and Mental Health working group is engaged in conversations with the campus community to increase awareness of the effects of racial injustice and promote the mental health and well-being of BIPOC students, staff, and faculty. Its main areas of responsibility include researching and developing recommendations on:

- Training opportunities related to anti-racism for health service providers on campus
- Training of existing counsellors to understand the psycho-socioeconomic BIPOC lens
- Virtual safe meeting places and healing spaces for members of Indigenous and racialized communities to come together to learn strategies for addressing mental health concerns and anxieties arising from experiences of racism and share stories of hope and encouragement
- Strategies to increase BIPOC mental wellness services, supports, and resources
- Opportunities for increasing support for health and mental health
- How a BIPOC lens that addresses the social determinants of health could be included into the Wellness Collaborative

Furthermore, the Race, Culture and Ethnicity Awareness (RCEA) working group and implementation team are working together to coordinate and host monthly events and activities over the 2020–21 academic year that promote education, awareness, and a deeper understanding of race, culture, and ethnicity across campus. These groups work with stakeholders in various units, as appropriate, to identify themes, speakers, and platforms; manage attendees; and drive attendance. It is intended that, through the work of the RCEA working group and the recommendations that emerge from it, activities will continue beyond the 2020–21 academic year to educate the University community on systemic racism, an inclusive society, and the need for a variety of voices at all levels.

**Ongoing Events**

- Events and activities organized by the RCEA implementation team in 2021 have included the following:
  - Rooted in History: A Celebration of Black History as Canadian History
  - Communication from the President on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
  - A Year of COVID-19: Disparities, Inequities, and Inequalities
- PART is organizing a community of practice, in which leaders across the University, including students, discuss anti-racism efforts on campus. These forums will be held multiple times a year, with the inaugural forum hosted on April 28, 2021.
• Information on ongoing anti-racism events that are occurring across campus can be found on the University’s anti-racism website. These events and activities are led by various students, staff, and faculty across the University, and not exclusively by PART.

Evaluation and Reporting
• PART recommends that regular evaluations (e.g., University-wide surveys) be conducted to examine if these events and activities are effective in raising awareness on the impacts of racial injustice.

Student Engagement and Outreach
• All PART working groups include student representation.
• Students are invited to participate (e.g., as speakers, panelists) and attend anti-racism events.
Effects of transphobia

**Gender and Sexual Diversity Alliance (GSDA)**

The Gender and Sexual Diversity Alliance (GSDA) is a volunteer-based association of University of Waterloo students, staff, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty who have 2SLGBTQIA+ lived experience and who are interested in building 2SLGBTQIA+ community across the University of Waterloo and advocating for the interests of the University’s 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Its mandate includes the following responsibilities:

1. Advance the interests of the University’s 2SLGBTQIA+ communities through advocacy, community building, and action.
2. Advise on and hold the University accountable for creating access and equity for 2SLGBTQIA+ campus members through policies, services, and programs.
3. Advance intersectional equity through solidarity and allyship with other equity-deserving groups and by ensuring that the GSDA is explicitly anti-racist and broadly diverse across (but not limited to) gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, Indigeneity, class, faith, age, and ability.
4. Build 2SLGBTQIA+ community and visibility across the University’s students, staff, and faculty, and bridge the campus community to the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities of Waterloo Region.
5. Create a Community of Practice through the LGBTQ+ Making Spaces Program to stay apprised of advocacy issues current to 2SLGBTQIA+ communities, provide peer resources and referrals to any UWaterloo community member seeking support, and increase visibility and awareness of gender and sexual diversity.
Harm reduction approaches to substance use

**Campus Wellness — Mental Health Team**

The Campus Wellness Mental Health Team promotes positive mental health and well-being and raises awareness about mental illnesses. The team provides information on the role of sleep and stress in a student lifestyle and the importance of suicide prevention on campus, and it raises awareness about various mental illnesses that may affect students.

**Ongoing Events**

- Campus Wellness employs counsellors who specialize in addictions and substance misuse, working with students from a harm reduction approach.
- The Substance Use Peer Health Education Team, run out of Campus Wellness, regularly hosts events that promote harm reduction strategies for substance use. Examples include:
  - Leave the Pack Behind
  - DrinkSmart booths
  - Cannabis education
- **Motivating Yourself through Habit Change** is a seminar offered through Campus Wellness that supports strategies to effectively change habits, including those involved in substance use.
- **Mental health training courses** that cover substance use and addiction, such as More Feet on the Ground, are available at no charge.

**Evaluation and Reporting**

- **National College Health Assessment** data is collected and presented to various student and faculty groups, including data on substance use.
- Campus Wellness is collecting data from Health Canada’s Postsecondary Education Alcohol and Drug Use Survey and will provide a report.
- Campus Wellness includes survey data in its Strategic Reports, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative measures.
- Campus Wellness collects data internally on client satisfaction and service effectiveness, which is reported to the team at regular intervals.
- Campus Wellness reviews and evaluates its social media engagement strategies on an ongoing basis.

**Student Engagement and Outreach**

- To communicate services and resources to students, Campus Wellness makes use of social media strategies (Instagram), including a page dedicated to substance use and harm reduction.
- A **Student Advisory Committee** is being formed under Campus Wellness, with membership comprising previous and current UWaterloo students. Through this committee, student representatives will communicate with several committees within Campus Wellness.
- Campus Wellness staff and student representatives are members of the Post-Secondary Collaborative to Prevent Substance-Related Harms (PSC), which meets three times each year to discuss strategies to reduce substance use-related harms among post-secondary students.
Recommendation #15

Encourage faculty to integrate curriculum focused on mental health, resilience, and support resources and to develop courses in ways that promote mental wellness.

CoSMH Timeline

- On March 8, 2019, the Chair of the Course Evaluation Project Team and the Course Evaluation Project’s Senior Research Specialist presented on the Course Evaluation Project pilot (now called the Waterloo Student Course Perceptions Project), core questions, and plans to develop faculty-specific questions.
- On March 8, 2019, the Associate Director of the Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE) and CTE’s faculty liaison for Applied Health Sciences presented on the syllabi creation checklist and voluntary workshops/resources encouraging faculty to integrate mental health and resilience into their curriculum.
- On May 3, 2019, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- The Waterloo Student Course Perceptions Survey contains a question related to mental health and learning: “The instructor created a supportive environment that helped me learn.” This new mechanism is intended to help faculty refine their curriculum and promote mental wellness.
- CTE finalized a number of online resources, including teaching tip sheets. It also offers a variety of workshops that encourage faculty to integrate mental health, resilience, and support resources into their curriculums.

Ongoing Efforts

- The Student Course Perception Project Team is consulting with faculties to develop a second tier of faculty-specific course evaluation questions. The launch of the new survey has been postponed.
- The CTE Complementary Teaching Assessment Project team is considering alternative ways to assess teaching, such as a teaching dossier.
- CTE is partnering with the Centre for Extended Learning to develop new resources and expand existing resources to increase faculty participation.
- CTE is developing a communication plan to promote the versatility of CTE workshops and the utility of the faculty liaison model to STEM disciplines.
- The Provost will send an open letter to deans, directors, and chairs, asking them to share a slide at faculty council, school, and department meetings, and with all instructors and course support staff informing them of CTE’s workshop and resource offerings, the future course evaluation question on supportive learning environments, and the credit for mental health training on faculty performance evaluations. This letter will also encourage faculty to make use of five-minute presentations created by the Student Success Office on various topics about wellness, resilience, and coping mechanisms.
Recommendation #16

Support the professional development of faculty, including the following:

- Explore ways to share existing best practices between instructors on an ongoing basis, particularly in an online format.
- Encourage faculty involvement in teaching-related professional development by recognizing these efforts in their merit reviews. Go beyond numbers generated by the student survey. Acknowledge and value up-to-date course assessments, participation in CTE workshops, and pedagogical conferences.

CoSMH Timeline

- On February 26, 2021, the Associate Director of the Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE) presented on CTE workshops and resources.
- On February 26, 2021, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- CTE shares best practices for instructors through its website. The webpage for inclusive instructional practices, launched in 2020, includes materials on supporting student mental well-being through course design and instructional strategies, as well as 11 other relevant teaching tips. CTE has also hosted webinars showcasing professors’ supportive practices.
- A mental health widget is now embedded in every course and training page on LEARN. It links to a Campus Wellness page that lists on-campus and after-hours contacts, health-care centres across Canada, and emergency international resources.
- Building on CTE’s work with teaching assistant workshops, there is now an online self-paced course in LEARN: Supporting Student Mental Health (for Instructors).
- CTE offers a two-day Graduate Supervision Series to help new faculty receive Approved Doctoral Dissertation Supervisor (ADDS) status sooner. Two of the six workshops in the series have directly relevant content, and all of them indirectly support considerations of graduate student mental health. This training is also available for faculty looking for information on how to support graduate student mental health in a mentor/mentee relationship.
- CTE has provided over 5,300 staff consultations on remote teaching with professors across all faculties between March 2020 and March 2021, including some best practice considerations for student mental health.
- The Course Evaluation Project Team (CEPT) brought recommendations to Dean’s Council and University of Waterloo Senate for approval. In September 2020, Senate endorsed the deans’ decision to implement the new Waterloo Student Course Perceptions Survey, which replaced previous course evaluation surveys. CEPT tested the new survey in a 2018 pilot and has published reports on its results, available online.
- The Complementary Teaching Assessment Project Team (CTAPT) has completed phases 1 and 2 of their project, the goal of which is to recommend additional methods that can be used campus-wide to complement course evaluations.

Ongoing Efforts

- CTAPT has resumed its efforts in the second quarter of 2021.
• Through the Director of Teaching Assessment Process, the Associate Vice-President, Academic will consider recommendations on complementary evaluation methods from CTAPT, such as peer review, teaching dossiers, and methods for the evaluation of graduate supervision.
Recommendation #17

Ensure that faculty have appropriate and timely information to support students through the following means:

- Make mental health training part of the on-boarding process for new faculty.
- Strongly encourage mental health training for existing faculty.
- Provide clear guidelines to instructors regarding who they can contact when they have concerns about a student’s welfare, even if he or she does not yet require interventions.

CoSMH Timeline

- On September 7, 2018, the CoSMH Research Assistant presented a literature review covering mental health training research.
- On October 5, 2018 and November 30, 2018, the Manager of Counselling Services presented on training programs offered through Counselling Services. The formation of the Mental Health Literacy Training Steering Committee was announced in the November meeting.
- On November 30, 2018, the Associate Director of AccessAbility Services presented feedback from the AccessAbility Services Student Advisory Committee.
- On February 8, 2019, a statement was drafted to include mental health training as part of the service component in faculty’s annual performance reviews. During the meeting, five of Waterloo’s six faculties and the Faculty Association of University of Waterloo accepted the statement.
- On February 8, 2019, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- Mental health training is now included as a service component in every faculty’s annual performance review.
- On August 14, 2018, the Supporting Our Students guide was created and publicized. Available training was also highlighted.
- A literature review of mental health training research is available on the CoSMH website.
- The Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE) has released a self-paced course to allow instructors to better support student mental health in an online learning environment. Additionally, it has conducted nearly 5,000 staff consultations to assist with the transition to remote teaching.
- CTE has contributed to outcomes and design for Mental Health Literacy Training Steering Committee modules and created content for new faculty related to student mental health.

Ongoing Efforts

- Campus Wellness is continuing to add new mental health literacy training resources for UWaterloo faculty and staff, including the development of a six-module Mental Health Literacy Certificate program to be piloted in 2021.
- CTE offers on-boarding workshops covering student mental health for new faculty members in September and January.
- Campus Wellness will examine options for creating a small item that faculty and instructors can display to show they support student mental health, such as a sticker or button similar to the Making Spaces training stickers.
**Recommendation #18**

The Sexual Violence Response Coordinator should provide training related to sexual violence to other healthcare workers on campus.

**CoSMH Timeline**
- On March 8, 2019, the Director of the Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO) presented an overview of the work of SVPRO, including the multiplicity of training programs, educational opportunities, and awareness raising initiatives offered on campus for all employees, including health-care workers.
- On April 5, 2019, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

**Implementation Activity**
- The Director of SVPRO presented to Counselling Services and Health Services staff to outline the mandate of SVPRO. These presentations included information on supporting campus members impacted by sexual violence, training and engagement opportunities available on campus, and ongoing collaboration and referrals mechanisms. SVPRO provided guidance to Health Services staff on their role in supporting survivors and responding to disclosures on campus (as per Policy 42 – Prevention of and Response to Sexual Violence).
- In March 2021, SVPRO presented to the Campus Response Team (CRT) on best practices for responding to disclosures and supporting survivors experiencing crisis, their roles and responsibilities according to University policy, as well as relevant sexual violence resources.
- SVPRO hosted Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy training specifically for Counselling Services staff and Neurobiology of Sexual Violence and Related Trauma training for all student-facing staff, including health-care workers.
- The Director of SVPRO collaborated with the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children at the University of Western Ontario, adapting the online Responding to Disclosures on Campus module to both in-person and virtual UWaterloo-specific training, which is available to all staff and student leaders. A Community of Practice for all trainers has been initiated to support the implementation and enhancement of train-the-trainer programs. Health Services staff have participated in these meetings, which are held every two months.

**Ongoing Efforts**
- The SVPRO continues to provide awareness-raising initiatives, educational opportunities, and training for all campus members, including health-care workers and the CRT. The SVPRO continues to collaborate with the CRT to provide annual training and to update the CRT’s guidelines.
- The SVPRO regularly engages with Counselling and Health Services staff in their joint work to support campus members impacted by sexual violence. It also engages with Health Promotion staff in Campus Wellness on joint outreach, awareness, and engagement initiatives related to sexual health, consent, and sexual violence.
- A second Train the Trainer program for Responding to Disclosures will be offered in Summer 2021, prioritizing areas of campus where trainers are not yet represented. The affiliated
Community of Practice continues to meet, support each other, and collectively brainstorm ways to enhance training sessions.

- The Director of SVPRO is a member of the Campus Response Advisory Board, which continues to consider how to best support first responders on campus.
**Recommendation #19**

Develop an integrated marketing and communications plan to inform students about all the available support options, including the following:

- Implement opt-in information sharing and transition programming during Orientation for incoming students living with mental illness.
- Create a centrally maintained database of available supports for students. Allow on-campus departments to contribute their own initiatives.

**CoSMH Timeline**

- On July 26, 2019, the Director of Campus Wellness and the Associate Provost, Students presented on the Campus Wellness collaboration with University Communications to create regular wellness content.
- On July 26, 2019, the Associate Director of Student Transition and Learning Services at the Student Success Office (SSO) presented on opportunities during Orientation for students to receive support and wellness information.
- On July 26, 2019, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

**Implementation Activity**

- The Campus Wellness Communications Project Manager and the CoSMH Project Coordinator have collaborated with the University Communications Social Media Specialist to create and schedule regular wellness content, including information about available support options.
- A centrally maintained database of available supports (on campus, off campus, in person, virtual, telehealth, and more) is available for students.
- Counselling Services created an informational package on services and supports for Marketing and Undergraduate Recruitment to distribute to high school guidance counsellors as a resource to share with high school students who are interested in connecting with Counselling Services early.
- **Waterloo Ready** (launched during Orientation 2020) incorporated messaging on mental health resources and supports into orientation materials for incoming students and parents.

**Ongoing Efforts**

- Campus Wellness is exploring the development of an online workshop and materials on available supports to disseminate with other Orientation materials. These materials may also be distributed along with information about AccessAbility Services for incoming students.
- Campus Wellness staff participate in online "open houses" where incoming students and parents have the opportunity to ask questions directly about services.
Recommendation #20

Make information and resources about mental health easy to find, including but not limited to the following:

- Implement one platform to access services and supports.
- Develop a comprehensive list of peer supports on campus and provide opportunities for knowledge sharing.
- Enhance existing peer support resources.
- Clearly describe available mental health resources in the Region.

CoSMH Timeline

- On September 7, 2018, the Communications Project Manager at Campus Wellness presented on the wellness resource database.
- On October 5, 2018, the Peer Mentorship Coordinator at the Student Success Office (SSO) presented on how the SSO supports and connects student leaders and mentors on campus.
- On November 2, 2018, the Director of Services of the Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington (CMHA WW) presented on CMHA data and services.
- On November 2, 2018, the CoSMH Chair presented on a peer support inventory for UWaterloo developed by the CoSMH co-op student.
- On November 30, 2018, the Associate Director of AccessAbility Services (AAS) presented on feedback provided by the AAS Student Advisory Committee.
- On February 8, 2019, the Committee voted with one abstention to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- Campus Wellness created a single platform to access services and supports — the Wellness Resources Database. This page includes feedback mechanisms for content and website improvement. Campus Wellness updated the database to reflect information about the sliding scale fees, funding, and insurance for community resources.
- Peer support resources were collected and updated by the CoSMH research assistant co-op student. The inventory was enhanced by identifying additional information for ease of use, such as target audience, structure, and training.
- A mental health widget was developed for LEARN with the support of the Centre for Teaching Excellence. The widget redirects to a Campus Wellness page listing virtual and in-person resources for students, staff, and faculty, located locally or internationally.

Ongoing Efforts

- The SSO is continuing to enhance support, including standardized training for peer support groups, such as Mental Health First Aid.
- The SSO continues to collect and publish information on peer support services on its website. For more details on how it supports peer programming, please refer to Recommendation #24 on page 60.
Recommendation #21

Develop a campus-wide training program in resiliency. Ensure that a common definition of resiliency is used across all program delivery platforms and training providers.

CoSMH Timeline

- On November 1, 2019 and August 28, 2020, the Associate Director of Health Promotion and the Health Promotion and Evaluation Specialist presented on Resiliency Working Group progress.
- On August 28, 2020, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- The Resiliency Working Group conducted a literature review and held consultations with campus stakeholders to develop a common definition of resiliency for adoption across UWaterloo: *Resiliency is “a process of using internal and external resources to manage challenging circumstances.”*
- The Resiliency Working Group used the results of internal and external environmental scans and feedback from stakeholders to develop a resilience strategy focused on internal and external protective factors using pillars of the Okanagan Charter.
- The train-the-trainer module for Surviving to Thriving resiliency training is available.
- Cultivating Resiliency training for students is available through Counselling Services.

Ongoing Efforts

- The working group launched a resiliency story campaign supported by the Wellness Collaborative to increase help-seeking behaviour and sense of belonging.
- The working group is planning future activities to fill the gaps identified in its environmental scan, including resiliency-based slides for faculty to incorporate into lectures and resilience-informed conversations on campus.
- Resilience training will be included as a module in the new Mental Health Literacy Certificate program.
Recommendation #22

- Implement a comprehensive education and training strategy to increase mental health literacy among students, staff, and faculty. Create situational mental health training based on role and/or faculty and make it available to all. Ensure training is offered for receptionists and student staff who may deal with students struggling with mental illness and suicidal ideation. Invest in a dedicated full-time resource for mental health training. Stagger or reiterate Orientation presentations throughout the year.
- Encourage capacity building through a train-the-trainer approach.
- Ensure all staff and faculty are aware of the supports for students that already exist both on campus and off campus and what to do in case of an emergency or when they suspect a student is in need of additional support.
- Distribute the “Do You Need Help” poster detailing what people should do in particular situations to all Waterloo campuses, faculties, schools, departments, etc. so they know where to find help in the event of a crisis.

CoSMH Timeline

- On September 7, 2018, the CoSMH Research Assistant presented a literature review covering mental health training research.
- On October 5, 2018 and November 30, 2018, the Manager of Counselling Services presented on training programs offered through Counselling Services. The formation of the Mental Health Literacy Training Steering Committee (MHLTSC) was announced in the November meeting.
- On February 8, 2019, the Associate Provost, Students described the collaboration process with campus stakeholders to design mental health training for teaching assistants.
- On March 8, 2019, the Health Promotion and Evaluation Specialist presented on behalf of the MHLTSC. Membership and objectives were described.
- On May 3, 2019, the Health Promotion and Evaluation Specialist provided a progress update.
- On July 26, 2019, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.
- On April 17, 2020, the Health Promotion and Evaluation Specialist presented final recommendations made by the MHLTSC to CoSMH. The main recommendation was to develop a Mental Health Literacy Training (MHLT) Certificate Program.

Implementation Activity

- The MHLTSC was formed and the role of the Health Promotion and Evaluation Specialist was created.
- The Student Success Office (SSO) developed five-minute presentations for instructors to integrate into their course material, covering various topics within wellness, resilience, and coping mechanisms.
- A train-the-trainer module for Surviving to Thriving resiliency training is available.
- Communication strategies have been developed to promote awareness of on-campus and off-campus supports for students, and emergency referrals. The implementation team for the MHLT Certificate Program is also discussing methods for raising awareness of training programs as part of their mandate.
- CoSMH determined that mental health literacy courses for undergraduate (AHS 105) and graduate students (HLTH 620) of all faculties were created and launched by Christine Zaza,
Ph.D., Online Learning Consultant with the Centre for Extended Learning (CEL) and Lecturer in the Faculty of Health. There are two sections of AHS 105 offered every term.

- The “Do You Need Help” poster has been distributed and is available in print or online through Campus Wellness.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been significant changes in the delivery of Orientation content. As a result, much of the material is available online and on an ongoing basis.

Ongoing Efforts

- The implementation team for the MHLT Certificate Program has developed a six-module training program for employees. A counsellor has been assigned to piloting this program in Spring 2021.
- The MHLTSC recommended the creation of a new role: Senior Education Officer. This role would allow training modules offered through Campus Wellness and the Equity Office to be streamlined and reviewed, in consultation with the University’s Centre for Mental Health Research and Treatment. The decision on hiring a Senior Education Officer is still pending.
- The implementation team for the MHLT Certificate Program is working with Human Resources to embed mental health training requirements as a base competency in job requirements.
- The Provost will distribute a letter to faculty deans and chairs to encourage faculty to embed the SSO’s five-minute presentations for student orientation in courses.
- Upcoming Orientation Steering Committee agendas will include discussions on staggering or reiterating orientation presentations throughout the year.
**Recommendation #23**

Use research on best practices and review opportunities for self-assessment/self-management and early intervention through digital applications.

**CoSMH Timeline**

- On November 2, 2018, the CoSMH Research Assistant presented on literature review results and the prevalence of mental health applications.
- On January 15, 2021, the Director of Campus Wellness reported on a grant proposal to enhance digital applications and tools.
- On March 12, 2021, the CoSMH research assistant co-op students from the Fall 2020 and Winter 2021 terms presented on the user version of the Mobile Application Rating Scale (uMARS) framework and its effectiveness for rating mental health applications.
- On March 12, 2021, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

**Implementation Activity**

- A literature review was conducted to understand the current state of mental health applications in terms of their effectiveness, reliability, and interactivity. While the evidence around reliability and validity is mixed, these applications can be helpful.
- An analysis of the 14 mental health applications listed on the Campus Wellness website was conducted using the user version of the uMARS. This analysis offered a mechanism for rating the applications’ engagement, functionality, aesthetics, information, perceived impact, and subjective quality, as well as demonstrating good reliability and validity.

**Ongoing Efforts**

- Campus Wellness has drafted a guideline to help staff assess potential apps in terms of their effectiveness, ease of procurement and terms of licensing. Apps will also be assessed to ensure they comply with health information privacy standards.
- Campus Wellness’ Student Advisory Committee and the Quality Assurance and Program Evaluation Committee will review mental health applications on an annual, ongoing basis using the uMARS framework. Applications that pass a score threshold in the uMARS will be reviewed by the Director of Campus Wellness or the Director of Counselling Services to ensure that the content is clinically appropriate.
**Recommendation #24**

Assess the current level of coordination of peer support networks. Create a mechanism for coordination and knowledge sharing.

**CoSMH Timeline**
- On November 20, 2020, the Student Leadership Program Coordinator and the Peer Mentorship and Student Leadership Program Coordinator of the Student Success Office (SSO) presented on SSO’s peer support coordination mechanism.
- On November 20, 2020, the Committee voted with one abstention, one opposed to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

**Implementation Activity**
- The SSO developed a community of practice, bringing together staff who oversee and support mentorship and peer programs available to students. This includes members from SSO, the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA), faculties, university colleges, academic support units, Housing & Residence, and Athletics.
- A centralized resource bank of information and best practices around mentorship and peer supports is available on Microsoft Teams to staff members of the community of practice.
- The SSO offers the Foundational Training Program (FTP) to any students who want to develop core skills for working in a peer-to-peer program. It includes four modules on LEARN and a student-led synchronous workshop. Feedback on the program is continuously collected and assessed.

**Ongoing Efforts**
- The SSO is planning on making the resource bank currently housed on Microsoft Teams accessible through the SSO website, listing all known peer support groups and including a form for students interested in being connected to a group. The Peer Mentorship and Student Leadership Program Coordinator proactively connects with all known peer groups (student-led and staff-led) to share information about resources and training.
- The SSO intends on hosting monthly community of practice meetings to identify needs and gaps and is exploring ways to connect student leaders, build a “network of peers,” and provide professional development opportunities.
- FTP content undergoes regular reviews, informed by research and student feedback, including exploration of new training topics.
- The SSO will be increasing marketing and promotional efforts for the FTP.
Recommendation #25

University of Waterloo should join the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction Postsecondary Education Partnership — Alcohol Harms, a partnership that other universities across Canada have joined. It focuses on:

- Reducing harm associated with drugs and alcohol
- Developing an institutional implementation and measurement plan based off the framework

CoSMH Timeline

- On September 13, 2019, the Director of Campus Wellness described the requirements for joining this partnership.
- On October 11, 2019, the Director of Campus Wellness presented on the Post-Secondary Collaborative to Prevent Substance-Related Harms (PSC), which includes membership representation from the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University, and Conestoga College.
- On January 15, 2020, the Provost signed the documentation to join the partnership.
- On January 17, 2020, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- CoSMH determined that UWaterloo is part of the Post-Secondary Collaborative to Prevent Substance-Related Harms (PSC). This is a committee of representatives across the three schools in this area (Waterloo, Laurier and Conestoga), along with community partners (Public Health, Police, EMS, etc.) and is co-chaired by the Associate Director of Health Promotion.
- UWaterloo representatives on the PSC include Counselling Services, Health Services, Housing & Residences, Health Promotion, Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association and Graduate Student Association.
- In 2018/2019, PSC focused on the legalization of cannabis and providing resources, along with harm reduction messages for Homecoming.

Ongoing Efforts

- No further actions required.
Recommendation #26

Develop new training programs in the following areas:

- How parents can support their students
- Strategies to prevent sexual violence
- Bystander intervention training in Orientation leader training

CoSMH Timeline

- On March 8, 2019, the Director of Sexual Violence Prevention and Response presented to CoSMH. In this presentation, she provided an overview of the work of the Sexual Violence Prevention & Response Office (SVPRO), including the multiplicity of training programs, educational opportunities, and awareness-raising initiatives offered on campus for employees, student leaders, and students related to sexual violence and bystander intervention.
- On May 3, 2019, the Mental Health Literacy Training Steering Committee presented on bystander intervention training.
- On February 26, 2021, the Student Success Office’s Senior Academic Development Specialist presented on parent supporter programing and resources.
- On February 26, 2021, the CoSMH Research Assistant Co-op Student presented on resources for parent training at other post-secondary institutions in Canada.
- On February 26, 2021, the CoSMH Project Coordinator presented on resources available through the SVPRO to address sexual violence on campus and bystander intervention training.
- On February 26, 2021, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- Campus Wellness developed a guide for parents and supporters that includes resources and tips to promote student mental health.
- The Student Success Office has revised its online resources for parents and supporters of students. This includes updated webinars, newsletters, and online parent guides to assist in communicating more effectively with their student and accessing resources at the University.
- The Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Office (SVPRO), established in 2017, developed a Sexual Violence Prevention Strategy utilizing the Okanagan Charter framework. Online modules on Responding to Disclosure are available to all staff and faculty. Additionally, Sexual Violence Awareness, Prevention and Response training is available to students, staff, and faculty through LEARN.
- SVPRO has met with Orientation leaders to provide introductory information on bystander intervention, SVPRO resources, responding to disclosure, practising consent, and creating an Orientation culture that supports survivors. This training covers the processes to move from being a bystander to taking action, the four key skills one can use to intervene, and examples relevant to sexual violence.
- The Mental Health Literacy Training Steering Committee has reviewed bystander intervention training programs for mental health. Training programs are offered to students, staff, and faculty through Campus Wellness.
Ongoing Efforts

- The Student Success Office continues to develop and update parent resources to support student mental health.
- Campus Wellness is continuing to evaluate and implement bystander intervention training programs for mental health.
- The SVPRO continues to provide awareness-raising initiatives, educational opportunities, and training for all campus members.
- SVPRO’s website includes information about bystander intervention to interrupt sexual violence.
- SVPRO continues to provide annual role specific training to all Orientation leaders via an in-depth online module created by SVPRO, which is followed by an in-person review by SVPRO staff of key concepts.
  - This training covers key definitions related to sexual violence and the “RedZone” (the first six to eight weeks of a university or college year in which the rates of sexual violence increase dramatically), as well as best practices for responding to disclosures, modelling consent praxis, and tips for creating an inclusive orientation culture, and detailed information about SVPRO and other related resources.
  - It also covers bystander intervention praxis (specific to sexual violence), including how to move out of the bystander effect towards taking action, the four key skills one can use to intervene, and reflective considerations for deciding which tactics are best used in differing scenarios.
- As of April 2021, SVPRO has hired an Education Projects Coordinator who will focus on developing programming related to healthy masculinities and bystander intervention campus-wide.
- SVPRO continues to regularly evaluate and update/introduce sexual violence awareness and bystander intervention training programs and resources.
- SVPRO staff provided information over the life of the CoSMH, via email correspondence to the CoSMH Project Coordinator, regarding yearly bystander programming offered to Orientation leaders related to sexual violence (specifically), as well as feedback regarding the potential for more comprehensive bystander programming to be co-created and delivered within annual Orientation leader training, combining bystander intervention praxis within the areas of sexual violence, anti-oppression/intersectionality, and mental health.
Recommendation #27

Review staffing practices and plans in Counselling Services, with an emphasis on the following:

- An external review to determine whether a recent reorganization, as well as the existing on-call system, has achieved its purpose.
- Investigate the utility of embedding counsellors within each faculty and residence.
- Within cost constraints, implement the recommended ratio of one counsellor/psychologist FTE for every 1,000 students (36.67 FTE), taking into account counsellor leave and other absences. Further ensure there are additional resources to meet increased demand during peak periods (e.g., exam time).

CoSMH Timeline

- On November 2, 2018, the Director of Counselling Services presented on embedded counsellors.
- On September 13, 2019, the Interim Director of Counselling Services presented on the external review of Counselling Services and hiring.
- On September 13, 2019, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- Since March 2018, Counselling Services has received funding for an additional six full-time employees.
- The Credence & Co. conducted an external review of Counselling Services in December 2018 and produced a Workplace Assessment Report with recommendations based on the anonymous qualitative data collected. Counselling Services has addressed those recommendations and included a summary of progress on its website.
- All off-site locations and every faculty have a designated, embedded counsellor. Usage data and feedback from students, faculty, and clinicians is collected and routinely evaluated for effectiveness.
- Campus Wellness has exceeded the recommended ratio of one mental health worker to 1,000 students. In addition to psychologist/counsellors, this ratio includes dedicated mental health workers such as a psychiatrist, a clinical case manager, and a mental health nurse. Outside of this ratio, many students’ mental health needs are also met by Campus Wellness physicians.

Ongoing Efforts

- Counselling Services conducts annual client satisfaction surveys to collect qualitative and quantitative data and reviews web feedback forms on a regular basis.
- As of April 2021, Campus Wellness, including Counselling Services, has formed a student advisory committee.
Recommendation #28

Invest in training and research for underserved/disproportionately affected populations.

- Ensure counsellor training is kept up to date and relevant to student needs (with a specific focus on cultural competence).
- Conduct a climate survey on the experience and perception of supports specifically designed to meet needs of international students.

CoSMH Timeline

- On November 1, 2019, the Interim Director of Counselling Services presented on cultural competency training for counselling staff.
- On November 1, 2019, the CoSMH Research Assistant presented data pertaining to international student experiences provided by Institutional Analysis & Planning (IAP) on November 1, 2019.
- On March 6, 2020, the Committee voted with one abstention to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- CoSMH determined that:
  - Counselling Services staff have access to professional development funding to keep their training up to date. A Counselling Services psychologist with a research background in cultural diversity developed a cultural competency training package that was disseminated to Campus Wellness staff.
  - Various institutional surveys contain questions that are designed specifically for international students, and all questions can be stratified by international student status through IAP or Campus Wellness.
  - IAP measures have been implemented, and reports on a number of performance indicators for UWaterloo are available. Under the core area representing “Students,” information on the percentage of international students by faculty and degree type is available, as well as country/region of citizenship of new international students.

Ongoing Efforts

- Training for Counselling Services staff is an ongoing priority.
- Institutional surveys are administered at regular intervals, which can be used to evaluate international student experiences and needs.
- In the 2020–2025 Strategic Plan for UWaterloo, one of the key institutional priorities is to strengthen sustainable and diverse communities. As part of this objective, the following goal is highlighted: “create a supportive environment for international students that also celebrates their contributions to our diverse community.”
- As of April 2021, Campus Wellness has initiated multiple staff development activities, including workshops, individual consultations with managers, and ongoing reading groups to improve responsiveness to racialized student/clients.
Recommendation #29

Update and promote available funding for mental health services on and off campus.

- In light of the recent government change in funding of prescription drugs, use any surplus from the Student Health Plan toward mental health (including off-campus services).
- Inform students about the funding and services available to receive mental health services off-campus.
- Review the feasibility of funding a 24/7 service providing counselling by telephone, video-counselling, or internet-based counselling.
- Review the need for expanding services on campus relating to substance abuse.

CoSMH Timeline

- On January 17, 2020, the Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) Vice-President, Operations and Finance presented on behalf of the Student Health Plan Committee.
- On March 6, 2020, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- As the government reversed the policy decision on the prescription drugs funding, action cannot be taken for the first point in the recommendation.
- In 2020, the Student Health Plan expanded mental health coverage, doubling it to $800/year.
- The Student Health Plan Committee procured Empower Me, an uncapped 24/7 counselling service that can be accessed by students located in various countries. This service is available in over 200 languages and is culturally sensitive and gender- and faith-inclusive. Counselling Services also supports the use of Good2Talk and Here 24/7.
- Empower Me offers addictions counselling services, and an Alcoholics Anonymous group is also available to students, staff, and faculty on campus. Students with severe substance abuse are referred to Here 24/7 and House of Friendship.
- The University has published Policy 21 on Alcohol Use and Education and Policy 29 on Smoking (tobacco and cannabis). A cannabis working group has developed harm-reduction resources and made revisions to Policy 29.
- CoSMH determined that Campus Wellness co-leads the Post-secondary Collaborative to Prevent Substance-Related Harms (PSC), which includes membership from Wilfred Laurier University and Conestoga College. This group also discusses new ideas for interventions in this area.
- CoSMH determined that UWaterloo collects data on substance use through the National College Health Assessment survey.
- CoSMH determined that the Peer Health Education Substance Use Team educates students on safer substance use practices and harm reduction on campus.

Ongoing Efforts

- Counselling Services is working with community practitioners to determine support packages within the $800 annual cap for mental health coverage under the Student Health Plan.
- Campus Wellness, WUSA, and GSA continue to promote and communicate dynamic information on funding and coverage on and off campus.
- The Wellness Collaborative is in the process of drafting a letter to the President to ask the campus to consider a smoking and vaping ban.
• The Senior Management Team of Campus Wellness is discussing the possibility of introducing group programming for substance use on campus and is also seeking partnerships with organizations in the KW community.
Recommendation #30

Mental health supports and resources for students’ off-campus (e.g., international placements, co-op placements) should be developed, and the level of support available should be clearly communicated.

CoSMH Timeline

- On September 25, 2020 and November 20, 2020, the Director of Employment Relations at Co-operative and Experiential Education (CEE) presented on the development of a Student Mental Health Advisor role and other mental health initiatives at CEE.
- On November 20, 2020, the Communications Project Manager of Campus Wellness provided information on communication strategies.
- On November 20, 2020, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- The CEE Employment Relations team developed 12 Student Mental Health Advisor (SMHA) roles in November 2018 to provide support for students who may be experiencing emotional, psychological, or personal difficulties. SMHA staff have completed mental health literacy and suicide prevention training modules. Students who disclose issues with employers are notified of the confidential, internal escalation process.
- CEE has a Mental Health Resources page for co-op students, listing health-care centres across Canada, 24/7 virtual supports, and other resources available through Campus Wellness.
- The CEE Mental Wellness Support working group was formed to identify new approaches to strengthening resources and supports for co-op students.
- Through a collaboration between CEE and Campus Wellness, two CEE-specific embedded counsellors were hired to provide additional support for co-op students. The Co-op Embedded Counsellors — Steering and Operations Committee provides oversight on the service structure, intake process, attendance logistics, referrals, and feedback mechanisms.
- A mental health widget is now embedded in every course and training page on LEARN. It links to a Campus Wellness page that lists on-campus and after-hours contacts, health-care centres across Canada, and emergency international resources.
- Students located off campus who contact Counselling Services during business hours can request information on local supports in their area and are informed on how to connect to Empower Me. Empower Me is promoted through the Campus Wellness, Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association, Graduate Student Association, and CEE websites.
- Campus Wellness has been working with the Centre for Teaching Excellence to embed health and wellness content into course syllabi. Information about wellness resources is regularly disseminated through social media channels, newsletters, emails, and other campus partners (including University Communications social media channels).

Ongoing Efforts

- A training plan for 2021/22 will be established in collaboration with SMHAs, CEE-embedded counsellors, and the Co-op Embedded Counsellors — Steering and Operations Committee.
Recommendation #31

Engage with off-campus mental health services and community partners (e.g., Connectivity KW4 and Here 24/7) to better support students, particularly during peak times.

- Develop a protocol to connect students from an on-campus wellness service to an off-campus service (e.g., have a Campus Wellness staff member connect via phone directly with an off-campus service provider with the student present to arrange ongoing/additional supports).
- Organize outreach sessions with local community partners (e.g., high school teachers) to explore innovative ways to serve student mental health needs.

CoSMH Timeline

- On November 1, 2019, the CoSMH Research Assistant Co-op Student and the Alumni Representative presented on opportunities to connect with local guidance counsellors.
- On April 17, 2020, May 22, 2020, and July 10, 2020, the Interim Director of Counselling Services presented on community partnerships and the protocol connecting students to off-campus service providers.
- On April 17, 2020, the Director of Services for the Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington (CMHA WW) presented on CMHA services.
- On July 10, 2020, the Associate Provost, Students presented on Marketing and Undergraduate Recruitment (MUR) programming for guidance counsellors.
- On August 28, 2020, the Director of Counselling Services presented on an outreach strategy between MUR and guidance counsellors.
- On August 28, 2020, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- CoSMH determined that UWaterloo is connected to community health-care partners through the Ontario Health Team network, as well as the CMHA-WW.
- During peak times, Here 24/7 is available to students located in the Waterloo-Wellington region. The Student Health Plan Committee also procured Empower Me, an uncapped 24/7 counselling service that can be accessed by students located in various countries.
- CoSMH determined that Counselling Services regularly reviews service use data during peak times (e.g., final examination period) and has adjusted its service model to meet student needs. All clinicians are able to make referrals to other counselling or addictions agencies.
- Counselling Services’ protocol on connecting students to off-campus wellness service providers can be found in Appendix F.
- CoSMH determined that MUR engages in outreach to prospective students and local high schools. For example, events are hosted for local guidance counsellors on a variety of topics, such as student mental health, equity and inclusion, and varsity and recreational sports. Guidance counsellors also receive regular newsletters and information packages on clubs, services, and more.

Ongoing Efforts

- Counselling Services is working with community practitioners to determine support packages within the annual $800 cap on mental health coverage outlined in the Student Health Plan.
• To facilitate the transition to UWaterloo for incoming students with mental health needs, Counselling Services will develop an information package for MUR to disseminate to high school guidance counsellors that outlines available mental health resources and supports.
**Recommendation #32**

Tailor the level of mental and physical health-care provision to the needs of the individual.

- Continue to develop a complex care team to respond to students with more complex mental health issues.
- Continue to develop and implement a stepped-care approach within Health Services and Counselling Services.

**CoSMH Timeline**

- On September 13, 2019, the CoSMH Research Assistant and CoSMH Research Assistant Co-op Student presented the results of a [literature review](#) and an environmental scan of complex care management in Canadian universities.
- On September 13, 2019, the Director of Campus Wellness presented on complex case management at UWaterloo.
- On September 13, 2019, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

**Implementation Activity**

- In July 2018, Campus Wellness developed a job description for and hired a [Clinical Case Manager](#). One of the initiatives she oversees is the Back to Campus program, in partnership with local hospitals. Through this program, students who access hospital care for mental health concerns are connected directly with staff members at Campus Wellness after discharge to facilitate ongoing treatment and support.
- Campus Wellness established a Complex Care Team, including a senior psychiatrist, an intake manager, a mental health nurse, a psychologist, and a clinical case manager. This team manages and advises on students presenting with severe mental health concerns, developing a care plan for each student and regularly reviewing student progress.
- Counselling Services has secured additional funding for physician participation.

**Ongoing Efforts**

- A survey seeking feedback regarding the current processes, resources, and functions of care for students with more complex mental health issues has been sent to mental health practitioners working on campus, and their responses are currently being analyzed.
- Campus Wellness is exploring the adoption of a standardized assessment tool that aligns with the stepped-care service delivery model.
- Campus Wellness is engaged in recruitment and hiring strategies for unfilled psychologist positions and is examining connection of the Complex Care Team with the newly developed Senior Advisor, Student Services role.
Recommendation #33

- A committee should be established to oversee implementation of the recommendations of this report, as well as to provide consistent feedback and advice regarding the strengths and limitations of the University response to the mental health and wellness of students. In the Implementation Committee’s early deliberations, the PAC-SMH recommends that the committee determine priorities and classify proposed actions based on what is needed from the University (e.g., statement of commitment, financial commitment, human resources, standing committee, or working group) to move forward.

- Make the full collection of recommendations, strategies, and ideas brought forward through the PAC-SMH process available to the implementation committee for ongoing consideration.

CoSMH Timeline

- In May 2018, the Committee on Student Mental Health (CoSMH) was formed. We concluded our mandate in April 2021.

Implementation Activity

- At the beginning of CoSMH’s term, members of the Committee ranked each recommendation to prioritize the order in which they were to be addressed.

- As needed, smaller working groups were formed to address specific recommendations. Further, several organizations on and off campus collaborated with CoSMH to fulfill the requirements of various recommendations.

- The status of each recommendation was recorded on a Progress Dashboard, and regular updates were published on the CoSMH website. Additionally, annual townhalls were held to inform the campus community of the Committee’s progress and to receive feedback.

- The committee published this final report to detail the steps that were taken to fulfill each of the 36 President’s Advisory Committee on Student Mental Health (PAC-SMH) recommendations.

Ongoing Efforts

- The CoSMH Executive Sub-Committee identified the Wellness Collaborative as a leading organization to continue overseeing strategies for student mental health.

- The appendices attached to this final report provide several suggestions for ongoing work to address specific student mental health concerns.
Recommendation #34

Undertake a full adoption and promotion of the Okanagan Charter. A significant transition for the University will be the movement from a perspective in which mental health and wellness is the responsibility of a few professionals to an environment in which a healthy campus becomes the business of all stakeholders. The Okanagan Charter affords an opportunity to support this transition.

CoSMH Timeline

- On June 28, 2018, the Director of Campus Wellness and the Associate Director of Health Promotion presented on the Okanagan Charter. A working group was formed to oversee its implementation.
- On August 16, 2018, the working group presented the Okanagan Charter Commitments.
- On October 5, 2018, CoSMH members provided in-depth feedback on each of the commitments. On October 19, 2018, the final list was approved by the Committee.
- On October 24, 2018, UWaterloo’s President signed the Okanagan Charter.
- On November 2, 2018, the University of Waterloo became the 16th Canadian post-secondary campus to officially adopt the Okanagan Charter.

Implementation Activity

- The Wellness Collaborative was formed to oversee the implementation of the Okanagan Charter Commitments. It includes representation from students, faculty, and staff.
- The Campus Wellness Health Promotion and Evaluation Specialist began serving as a Co-Chair of the Canadian Health Promoting Campuses Network Committee in January 2021. This network is guided by the Okanagan Charter and aims to engage higher-education institutions to advance the health-promoting universities and colleges movement within Canada.

Ongoing Efforts

- The Wellness Collaborative continues to carry out the commitments of the Okanagan Charter and to promote student mental well-being and health.
Recommendation #35

Further exploration of the development of a research institute or specialty area in student mental health and wellness.

- There are some examples of institutions that have marshalled this expertise to create a research institute dedicated to addressing questions that are, so far, difficult to answer.
- These might relate to our population of students, to the range of service options, or the most effective promotion, prevention, and intervention options.

CoSMH Timeline

- On March 6, 2020, April 17, 2020, July 10, 2020, and September 25, 2020, the CoSMH Chair presented on potential pathways forward, beginning with a research conference on student mental health.
- On September 25, 2020, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- On November 5, 2020, the Committee hosted University of Waterloo’s inaugural Virtual Conference on Student Mental Health Research as part of Thrive Week. The conference prioritized presentations on the topics outlined in Recommendation 14, in addition to the mental health impact of COVID-19. On the day of the event, there were:
  - 14 oral presentations delivered by graduate students, faculty, staff, and external partners
  - 14 posters submitted by staff and students
  - Nearly 300 registrants
- Recordings of all oral and poster presentations are available online.

Ongoing Efforts

- Campus Wellness and the Graduate Student Association (GSA) are working together to continue hosting an annual student mental health research conference.
- UWaterloo will endeavour to develop a network of researchers that specialize in the area of student mental health and well-being, similar to UWaterloo’s Network for Aging Research.
**Recommendation #36**

The PAC-SMH recommends University of Waterloo endorse and actively advocate to the provincial government, using its government affairs/relations apparatus, to implement the 26 recommendations in the *In It Together* report. The report and its recommendations outline sector-wide consensus of the role of the provincial government has to play in order to address mental health concerns in post-secondary campuses.

CoSMH Timeline

- On January 15, 2021 and February 26, 2021, the CoSMH Chair presented on steps taken and consultations with UWaterloo’s Government Relations department.
- On February 26, 2021, the Committee voted unanimously to confirm the completion of this recommendation.

Implementation Activity

- The CoSMH support team consulted with Government Relations to draft a letter to the Minister of Colleges and Universities and local Members of Provincial Parliament advocating for the implementation of the *In It Together* report, and offering the University of Waterloo as an ongoing resource to the province for consultation on post-secondary student mental health initiatives (see Appendix G).
- The letter received approval from President Hamdullahpur, Provost Rush, Government Relations, and CoSMH. Signatories included the Chair of CoSMH, the 2020/21 Waterloo Undergraduate Student Association (WUSA) President, and the Graduate Student Association (GSA) President.

Ongoing Efforts

- UWaterloo will continue to advocate for the implementation of the *In It Together* report. Mental health experts across campus, as well as WUSA and GSA representatives, are committed to providing input on UWaterloo mental health initiatives to the provincial government.
Appendix D — Report from Academic Working Group Subcommittee to CoSMH on Recommendations #5, #7, and #16

May 3, 2019

RECOMMENDATION #5

Strike a working group that recommends implementable best practices around exam and evaluations with a wellness viewpoint in mind. This includes but is not limited to:

- Final exam schedules and availability of the exam schedule during the course enrollment period.
- Weighting and overall number and type of evaluation/assessment in courses.
- A more efficient system for deferred exams.
- Confidentiality around communication of grades to students to ensure practices aren’t promoting an unhealthy competitive environment (e.g., rankings).

The working group asserts that in the main, the current final exam scheduling practice works for UW students, particularly in how it is supported by the protocols around adjacent exams, and the accommodation landscape more broadly. It is unclear how changing the system would improve student mental health wellness, and might well result in unforeseen negative consequences. If further investigation is required, the next step would be to examine practices at other institutions where the exam schedule is made available at the time of course selection (How do they do it? Is there evidence of any impact, positive or negative, on student mental health wellness?).

The working group identified numerous units – for example, School of Accounting and Finance, Engineering first year, School of Pharmacy – where formal arrangements are in place for all faculty within the unit to meet and compare course syllabi for potential scheduling conflicts or overloads with regards to mid-term exams or other significant assessments. Consideration is given not only to the timing of these assessments, but also to their relative grade weight, and demand on students. It is known that numerous other units do this at the departmental level – for example, Psychology and Economics in Arts; Chemical and Electrical Engineering – either formally or informally, with the same goals of reducing student stress. These practices could be gathered into a document outlining best practices for any unit to adopt. These best practices might well include mention of Universal Instructional Design (UID) principles for assessment creation.

The working group recommends that CoSMH develop a best practices guideline for the managing of deferred exams – both assessing the requests and the evidence for allowing them, as well as the mechanisms for providing them. For example, the Faculty of Science’s use of ExamSoft software, and protocols established in the department of Economics in Arts, potentially allow for a more timely access to an exam rewrite, with appropriate and compassionate systems for assessing requests, and functional systems for ensuring alternative exams are available. The working group sees timely access to exam rewrites as a best practice.

There is not an issue surrounding the confidentiality of rankings that the working group has been able to uncover. With the exception of Engineering, student rankings are used solely for the awarding of merit-based awards and scholarships, and the results (beyond announcing the winners) are never published. Within Engineering, the practice and use of rankings is being re-examined, and the working group applauds this development. One recommendation is that if class or cohort rankings are to be utilized,
announcements be carefully considered for their appropriateness and utility, and be restricted to identifying only the top X percent of the class (for example, the top 10 students only).

There really isn’t anything in the UW commitment to the Okanagan Charter that addresses competition head-on: statements like “individuals can learn and work according to their own needs” and “Waterloo is a place where knowledge can thrive” can be interpreted a number of ways. Therefore, the committee believes CoSMH ought to consider a prefatory statement that acknowledges some amount of competition as an inevitable part of university life. The statement should include some broad distinctions regarding healthy vs. unhealthy practices, and might assist CoSMH to promote ways to inculcate a healthy atmosphere around competition.

RECOMMENDATION #7
Consider universal instructional design as a valuable perspective that can be used to improve course delivery. Consider a collaborative effort between the Centre for Teaching Excellence and faculties to include universal instructional design in existing and new courses. Develop an online resource to record good practices for embedding universal instructional design and mental wellness into teaching.

After the March 8 meeting of CoSMH, where presentations from CTE addressed many of these topics, the working group is of the opinion that this recommendation may be considered to have been completed, once the action noted in the March 8 CoSMH minutes has been fulfilled: “Action (CTE): Communicate the versatility of CTE workshops and the utility of the faculty liaison model to STEM disciplines.”

RECOMMENDATION #16
Support the professional development of faculty, including the following:

- Explore ways to share existing best practices between instructors on an ongoing basis, particularly in an online format.
- Encourage faculty involvement in teaching-related professional development by recognizing these efforts in their merit reviews. Go beyond numbers generated by the student survey. Acknowledge and value up-to-date course assessments, participation in CTE workshops, and pedagogical conferences.

Discussion continues for this recommendation. There are numerous initiatives underway on campus: for example, the recent “Applying Universal Design” panel session at this year’s Teaching and Learning conference, as well as CTE’s Teaching Squares, and the presence of Teaching Fellows in each faculty as a means to disseminate best practices. We note the intersection between this recommendation and #7 and #17. We also consider that fulfilling the second bullet point necessitates a review of each Faculty’s Annual Performance Review guidelines, to determine best practices for implementation.
Appendix E — Best Practices — Deferred Exam Decision-Making and Scheduling (Undergraduate)

DRAFT – December 16, 2019

BASIC PRINCIPLES:

• Normally, a deferred exam is granted solely for reasons of illness or incapacity at the time of the originally scheduled exam. University-level criteria for allowing a deferred exam may be found in the undergraduate academic calendar.

• A deferred exam arrangement is normally applied to the final exam in the course. Term tests (including mid-term exams) are not normally deferred; instead, the grade weight of the missed test is transferred to other remaining test assessments in the course, which may include the final exam.

• A request for a deferred exam is supported by appropriate documentation; such documentation may include a statement by the student, as well as whatever official documentation is necessary (e.g., Verification of Illness form; confirmation from AccessAbility Services of ongoing need for accommodation; confidential assessment of medical documentation as provided by the Registrar’s Office or other official body; etc.) to support the expressed need for accommodation.

• Provision of documentation does not automatically confer a deferral; rather, the documents are considered along with all other available information in order to make a decision.

• Timely access to a deferred exam is considered a best practice.

• Normally, the instructor of record has responsibility for assessing and submitting the final grade for the course. In the event that an instructor is unavailable (e.g., end of sessional contract), the department or unit shall manage all aspects of scheduling, invigilating, and grading the deferred exam. If the student has ongoing arrangements for exam writing in place with AccessAbility Services, then those practices and protocols will be followed.

• Exam deferral decisions are subject to petition or appeal as appropriate under Policy 70.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

• The University shall establish clear and consistent policies for managing deferred exam requests; such policies must conform to the basic principles as articulated here, as well as all current UW policies for exams as expressed in the academic calendar, the Registrar’s Office website, and elsewhere.

• Once confirmed by the University, deferred exam policies are operationalized on behalf of the Faculty by the department or unit offering the course for which a deferred exam has been approved (a shared responsibility with the Centre for Extended Learning in the case of fully online courses). This includes securing alternate exams as necessary; facilitating and managing the assessment of deferral requests; managing and scheduling the deferred exams and all related correspondence with students; and ensuring that such decisions align with the expectations for best practice as embodied in University policies.

• Faculties shall publish all eligibility criteria, operational procedures, and documentary/evidentiary requirements, and shall ensure the information is continuously updated and freely available to students.

• Eligibility for a deferred exam arrangement will be determined by the instructor of the course, in conjunction with another individual, normally the chair of the department or unit offering the course. In the event that an instructor is unavailable (e.g., end of sessional contract), decision-making will fall to the chair or director of the department or unit offering the course. Such
decisions will be communicated in a timely fashion to students (no more than 10 business days after receipt of the request).

- In cases where consensus regarding eligibility cannot be reached within the unit, or where breach of academic integrity policies is suspected, the deferred exam will normally be granted, and the matter referred to the appropriate associate dean for investigation and resolution (which may include rescinding the grade that derives from the deferred exam).
- Normally, a completed Incomplete Grade form will be provided to the Registrar’s Office for students approved to write deferred exams. The INC grade will be replaced in due course with the final grade, once the deferred exam has been graded and the final grade calculated. It is expected that deferred exams will be graded within 10 business days of writing.
- Deferred exams are to be scheduled as soon as is feasible for the student and the instructor/department, and in any case no later than during the final exam period of the following term. Exceptions to this policy (for example, that deferred exams are scheduled the next time the course is offered, when that offering is later than the following term) must be approved on a one-time only basis by the Dean of the Faculty sponsoring the course, and may not be ongoing in nature.
- Faculties may elect to build slots for regularly-scheduled deferred exams into the existing timetable for the term, in addition to facilitating deferrals arranged on an as-needed basis.
Appendix F — Procedures for Connecting Students to Off-campus Wellness Service Providers

- Referral to off-campus providers is initiated when a student requests assistance in connecting to an off-campus provider or when a clinician (e.g., Intake Specialist, Counsellor, Clinical Case Manager) determines that referral to an off-campus provider is appropriate. Common reasons for referral to an off-campus service provider:
  - The student is unable or unwilling to access service(s) provided on-campus
  - The student needs or is requesting service(s) not provided on-campus
  - The student would be able to access needed or requested service(s) from an off-campus provider sooner than may be available from an on-campus provider
- Once a referral is requested or deemed appropriate, the clinician determines with the student what, if any, access the student has to extended health-care benefits via the Studentcare health plan, the Empower Me Student Assistance Program, or other (e.g., family) extended health-care plans.
- In consideration of the service(s) sought and the student’s ability to access and pay for service(s), the clinician will suggest one or multiple options of off-campus service(s) available.
- If the student intends to access their benefits through the Studentcare health plan, the clinician provides the student with information regarding the process for reimbursement.
- The student and the clinician determine together if the student will be initiating the connection to the off-campus provider on their own or if the clinician will be providing further assistance in making this connection. Common forms of assistance provided by clinicians include making introductory phone calls connecting the student and the off-campus provider, assisting the student in completing registration forms for off-campus providers, and providing relevant information about the student’s circumstances and goals to the off-campus provider.
  - Clinicians ensure that students grant permission for any release of their personal health information to off-campus providers.
- Students are encouraged to return to Campus Wellness for further support if their needs change or if they are not satisfied with their off-campus provider.
- The referral process and associated recommendations are documented in the student’s health record.
Appendix G — Letter to Minister of Colleges and Universities

February 25, 2021

Hon Ross Romano, Minister
Ministry of Colleges and Universities
5th Floor, 438 University Ave.,
Toronto, ON
M7A 1N3

Re: In It Together, 2020

Dear Minister Romano,

The University of Waterloo would like to thank the Government of Ontario for its collaboration with the postsecondary sector to support the mental health and wellness of students during these difficult times. The world has continued to change since the collaborative In It Together, 2020 report was submitted. The COVID-19 global pandemic has had an enormous impact on the well-being of all Canadians; however, the effect on students has been particularly pronounced. The province’s increased investment into mental health supports for 2020-2021 will allow the postsecondary sector to provide students with additional resources they need to succeed academically, professionally and personally.

The mental health and well-being of post-secondary students is a shared responsibility requiring collaborative action through a “whole-of-community” approach. This includes timely access to effective on-campus mental health services, preventive interventions, harm reduction initiatives, and continued access to appropriately resourced mental health services over the life course.

We recognize that postsecondary institutions play a key role in supporting and improving the mental health of students on campus. The University of Waterloo’s Committee on Student Mental Health (CoSMH) is comprised of students, faculty, staff, and external community partners tasked with implementing a set of 36 recommendations to make our mental health services more accessible, diverse, and inclusive in order to address the wide range of needs of our student body, and in incorporating mental health and wellness into everything we do. We feel that Ontario has made important strides in improving student mental health services on campuses, but a great deal more remains to be done.
Minister, we would like to request a meeting with you and your colleagues to share the University of Waterloo’s experience and expertise in responding to matters related to student mental health. We believe that what we have learned from our work can be helpful to other stakeholders in the sector who are engaged in efforts to improve student mental health, but we realize that much remains to be done and will be best-achieved through partnership with government.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours truly,

Cc:
Catherine Fife, MPP Waterloo
Laura Mae Lindo, MPP Kitchener Centre
Mike Harris, MPP Kitchener-Conestoga
Amy Fee, MPP Kitchener South-Hespeler
Belinda Karahalios, MPP Cambridge
Randy Pettapiece, MPP Perth-Wellington
David Piccini, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Colleges and Universities
James Rush, Vice-President Academic & Provost, University of Waterloo
Feridun Hamdullahpur, President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Waterloo