Division of Student Success Inaugural Annual Report

CLARK UNIVERSITY | Academic Year 2022–2023

Welcome

October 1, 2023

Dear Campus Community:

I am happy to present the first annual report for the Division of Student Success. This has been an exciting year for the new division, filled with opportunities for learning and change.

In creating the new division, the Student Success Leadership Team (SSLT) — Danielle Morgan Acosta, Ph.D., Kamaro Abubakar, Ed.D., Jennifer Plante, M.A. (August 2022 to June 2023), and Micky Roberts, M.Ed. — with guidance from our Faculty Advisory Council —Amy Richter, Ph.D., Jing Zhang, Ph.D., Laurie Ross, Ph.D., Michael Boyer, Ph.D., Scott Niemi, MFA, Kathleen Palm Reed, Ph.D., and Nancy Budwig, Ph.D. — set out to achieve the following:

1. Identify the division's priorities for optimizing student experience and success outcomes, including working with University Marketing and Communications on our new communication assets: our website, brochure, social media presence, and more.

2. Create a divisional culture representing the best of Clark University, focused on fostering the division's why, purpose, guiding principles, and priorities, as well as divisional expectations among our team members (see page 5).

3. Work to ensure that each unit within the division understands and values the purpose, function, expertise, and subculture of every other unit. This focus has informed the division's organizational structure and continues to be a work in progress as we identify shared and integrated services and experiences, including merging units.

4. Build cohesion and trust within the division and across campus.

Some of our key accomplishments with significant collaboration with campus partners include:

1. Increasing student experience offerings and participation in career workshops, initiatives, student events, and community engagement experiences, and enhancing academic resources.

2. Launching the First-Year Success Advisor unit and the Student Success Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, Insight.

3. Supporting our 88% retention rate with the largest class size and increasing our sophomore-year retention by 1.8%

4. Facilitating the partnership between Clark University and Jeremiah's Inn to combat food insecurity, a partnership specifically led with FIRM, and the VP of Government & Community Affairs.

5. Securing financial resources to bolster student engagement experiences through the development of the Student Activity and Programming Fee Policy.

For this upcoming year, we will focus on four primary goals:

1. **Improve Student Outcomes:** To support the increase of our graduation rate, we will specifically emphasize the sophomore year experience to increase the retention of our students from their sophomore year to their junior year. Our data shows that once our students enter their Junior year, we retain them at a high rate until they graduate.

2. **Bolster Career Outcomes:** To bolster career outcomes, we will work to pipeline students into internship experiences; often, there are more internships than students taking advantage of them. Additionally, we will increase students' career competencies and how they make meaning of their Clark experience. To create an environment where students live and breathe the development of their career competencies, we will develop deeper integration between career advising and academic majors and be a robust, active campus partner in the curriculum & career initiative with the Dean of the College and Faculty Affairs. Lastly, we will collaborate to launch career communities at Clark, a hallmark of the undergraduate student experience.

3. **Enhance Academic Advising:** To ensure students capitalize on their Clark experience; we will create a well-coordinated academic, holistic advising experience for our students, with tighter synergies between faculty advisors and professional advisors, enhanced resources for all advisors, inclusive of training and development, technology, and improved practices.

4. **Easier Access to Resources:** To enhance students' access to resources and create a smoother, seamless experience when accessing multiple resources simultaneously. We hope to create a one-stop-shop experience for students, faculty, and staff; we hope to innovate the concept of the ITS Help Desk for the Division of Student Success.

I am very proud of the work we have accomplished as a division and especially of the team members within the division, , in partnership with many of you, and I am beyond grateful for the support and championing of the new division's vision by many campus partners. I consider it a privilege and a crucial responsibility to build a division that delivers outcomes for the Clark community.

One of the key guiding principles of the Division of Student Success is integrity:

> *We espouse a set of aspirations through our why, vision, and guiding principles to guide our day-to-day actions and decision-making. We enact these aspirations through integrity as community members who call ourselves in (to account) to ensure the alignment of these aspirations with our actions. We facilitate learning that cultivates student habits (or behaviors) of integrity to promote a vibrant, cohesive, and just community. We believe role modeling is an effective way to bolster students' integrity.*

In the spirit of operationalizing our integrity guiding principle, I present this first annual report for the new division. Each core area outlined in the report is first described with an overarching summary, and within each core area, each unit provides a snapshot and key performance indicator (KPI) from the past year and the upcoming year.

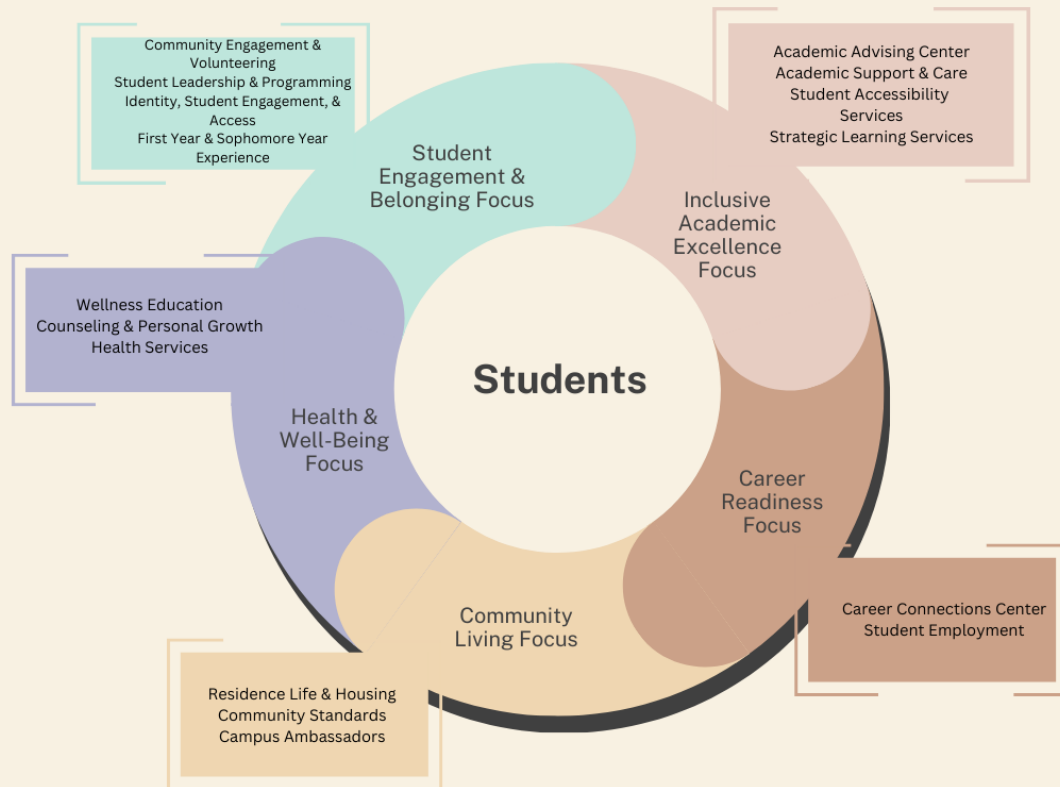With appreciation and best wishes for the new academic year,

Kamala C. Kiem, Ph.D.
Associate Provost for Student Success
and Dean of Students

Launch of the Division

Please see the appendix for the University Announcement and the ClarkNow article

Organization of the Division

Community Engagement & Volunteering
Student Leadership & Programming
Identity, Student Engagement, & Access
First Year & Sophomore Year Experience

Academic Advising Center
Academic Support & Care
Student Accessibility Services
Strategic Learning Services

Student Engagement & Belonging Focus

Inclusive Academic Excellence Focus

Wellness Education
Counseling & Personal Growth
Health Services

Students

Health & Well-Being Focus

Career Readiness Focus

Community Living Focus

Career Connections Center
Student Employment

Residence Life & Housing
Community Standards
Campus Ambassadors

Division of Student Success: Why, Vision, Guiding Principles, and Strategic Document

WHY

To create a community that provides every Clark student with the opportunity to find their sense of purpose, cultivate their authentic self, feel a sense of belonging, foster lifelong connections, achieve inclusive academic excellence, and engage in transformational experiences to change the world.

VISION

We graduate students at a high rate to be imaginative, engaged, and positive change agents of the world, to advance the frontiers of knowledge and understanding through rigorous scholarship and creative effort, and, ultimately, to meet the challenges of a complex and rapidly changing global society.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Excellence

We instill and cultivate excellence in everything we do. We inspire students to rise to their potential, encouraging them to undertake research and experiential learning opportunities grounded in diversity, equity, and inclusion to influence their overall learning and development. Students demonstrate that they are prepared to excel in a challenging work environment and be responsible members of society in a diverse democracy and that they are ready for life after Clark.

Community

We are committed to learning from and celebrating our shared community within our curricular and cocurricular experiences. We welcome the diverse experiences of each member of Clark University and prioritize fostering an equitable and just community for all. We value our sustained connections to one another, to our campus, and to the greater Worcester community.

Social Justice

We foster a socially just environment through our practices and services, recognizing the necessity of developing an equitable approach to addressing the needs of our student body through implementing policies, programming initiatives, and leadership development. We ensure that these policies and procedures are fair and just by prioritizing our students' experiences as the center of our practice, especially for our underrepresented students (e.g., BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, diverse-abilities, and first-generation students).

Leadership

We develop leaders who understand themselves and their relation to others while recognizing shared ownership in their communities. We maximize opportunities for students to engage, invest, and lead, centering community and the ways that the intersections of identities impact their understanding and practice of leadership. We recognize that leadership goes beyond formal positions and is a relational and ethical process focused on creating change.

Wellness

We prioritize the health and well-being of the campus community. We create a culture of equitable wellness, resilience, and adaptability, and participate in intentional self-care and community wellness practices that support our holistic well-being. We are committed to ensuring that Clark community members approach their time on campus with peace of mind and body, and that essential services and resources are in place and easily accessed when the need arises.

Integrity

Through our why, guiding principles, and values, we espouse a set of aspirations to guide our day-to-day actions and decision-making. We enact these aspirations through integrity as community members who call ourselves in (to account) to ensure the alignment of these aspirations with our actions. We facilitate learning that cultivates student habits (or behaviors) of integrity to promote a vibrant, cohesive, and just community. We believe role modeling is an effective way to bolster students' integrity.

Priorities

We work collaboratively across campus and strive to be effective campus partners in accomplishing the following priorities:

- Priority 1: Support the increase in student success outcomes — retention, graduation rate, and career outcomes — through data analysis, research, and engagement with a variety of stakeholders.

- Priority 2: Build the culture and operations of the Division of Student Success.

- Priority 3: Invest in human resources to facilitate productivity and innovation.

- Priority 4: Develop the bedrock of student policies, processes, and procedures regarding conduct, crisis management, and compliance.

- Priority 5: Bolster inclusive academic excellence.

- Priority 6: Prepare students for their life after Clark (e.g., career readiness and graduate studies).

- Priority 7: Curate Clark experiences that bolster student learning, meaning-making, identity development, and engagement in the greater community.

- Priority 8: Develop a culture of health and well-being for our students.

Student Engagement & Belonging Focus

The Student Engagement & Belonging team curates Clark experiences that bolster student learning, meaning-making, identity development, and engagement in the greater community. Student Engagement & Belonging is a highly collaborative area that brings people together for synergy around essential student experiences, hosting associate dean and director connections, Orientation Committee meetings, and Senior Onboarding Committee meetings to support cross-campus collaboration. The team is developing and will launch pilot first-year and second-year experience programs.

The Student Engagement & Belonging team saw increased programming across the board for undergraduate and graduate students by student organizations and staff.

Welcoming the largest-ever first-year class led to collaboration across campus to support a new checklist and onboarding process and long-term staff engagement, and to the development of a more holistic first-year orientation experience in August 2022 that held summer melt to only 9.5% and supported the much-needed orientation fee increase. Programming additions included heritage month experiences for students, the launch of the identity leadership retreat, pathway programming through Clark Engage, efforts to make Clark events more inclusive to graduate students and our neurodiverse population, and a foundation for building additional fall and spring traditions on campus.

Key Performance Indicators, 2022–2023

- Logged 31,3197 unique attendance records for Clark Engage events utilizing the Check-In App. With 3,819 (18%) events or meetings using the Check-In App and 3,122 unique attendees in the first year of using the technology, we are better able to understand program attendees, provide opportunities for feedback, and create more intentional programming.

- Launched a new Senior Offboarding Committee, and increased student participation in Senior Week (346 unique students) and in the senior offboarding survey (90%).

- Expanded identity-work resources through a dedicated LGBTQIA+ position and launched the First-Year Student Success Program to provide wraparound student care.

Overarching Goals for Student Engagement and Belonging, 2023–2024

- Pilot new features of the First-Year Experience, including requiring student programming attendance; launching the CRM; rebuilding the orientation experience; continuing to enhance the Navigator curriculum; and expanding staff-driven programming, particularly in the first six weeks, by extending "Clark After Dark" and developing "Clark Day Trippin'" weekend events geared toward first-year and sophomore students.

- Soft-launch a pilot Sophomore-Year Experience programming model with campus partners.

- Establish greater efficiencies for and elevate the comprehensive senior offboarding program, club training and support, leadership development, identity exploration and development, Worcester engagement, and civic participation for the Clark community.

- Launch and leverage technology — for example, Clark Engage, Insight, and Give Pulse — to support student engagement, belonging, and success while supporting staff time.

Inclusive Academic Excellence Focus

The goal of the inclusive academic excellence focus is to help and encourage students to make the most of their learning experience through their engagement in research, through experiential learning opportunities — and other forms of enhanced learning activities — and by applying for prestigious scholarships and fellowships. We hope for our students to achieve high academic performance as they progress through and complete their college experience.

The units comprising this focus aspire to model inclusive academic excellence, whereby *inclusive* refers to the involvement of historically underrepresented groups in higher education and *excellence* implies that these students will demonstrate traditional measures of excellence (e.g., high GPA, honors), moving the discourse around these students from mere persistence to high achievement and leadership."[1]

Ultimately, Clark University seeks to be an intentional institution that focuses on our educational processes that facilitate inclusive excellence, specifically on our high expectations around learning that allow us to graduate students at a high rate to meet the challenges of a complex and rapidly changing society.

Through close monitoring of our students in collaboration with each unit and with faculty and other campus partners, this area engages with students both proactively and reactively and assists them with any questions or concerns around courses, academic supports, and accessibility needs. Students often require assistance from all the units in this area or other supports within the division to help them complete their goals while attending Clark.

Key Performance Indicators, 2022–2023

- Reviewed and revised the university's *Academic Advising Handbook* and posted the updated version on the Academic Advising Center's website to ensure clarity of academic policies and procedures across all advising venues. Consistently and collaboratively reviewed policy and procedures with key campus partners to ensure equitable outcomes among our students.

- Launched the piloted Summer Student Success Grant for students with a 2.0 to 2.5 GPA to recover credits and increase their GPA. The initiative had a 77% success rate with the 13 students who participated.

- During FY 2022–2023, Student Accessibility Services (SAS) served more than 600 students who required some medical/academic accommodations. This number will grow by at least 10% each academic year.

- The Inclusive Academic Excellence Team identified the need to leverage partnerships and relationships with faculty, academic departments, and offices across campus to bolster student success. From fall 2023 through spring 2024, the team will leverage three to five new relationships/partnerships with individuals across campus.

Overarching Goals for Inclusive Academic Excellence, 2023–2024

- Within the Academic Support & Care area, identified and implemented at least two new practices for fall 2023, providing proactive and reactive interventions to increase our students' academic and overall success: implementing the Behavior Intervention Team (BIT) for fall 2023, which will case-manage higher-level student concerns, and hiring a second individual within the care team to assist the director due to the high touchpoint needed for many of our students.

- Initiate an Academic Advising Task Force to standardize the academic advising experience and ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities.

- Build out a holistic advising model for all advisors.

- Review AY2023–2024 policies and procedures regarding academic advising and identify best practices. Identify three to five policies and or procedures that need to be updated.

- Increase new campus relationships by 10% to help increase student success over the next academic year.

- Identify how Accommodate (accessibility software) can streamline the intake process, improve email response time, and enhance distribution of academic accommodations for students — with the goal of increasing proficiency in this area by 30%.

- Ensure that students receive necessary academic support through Student Accessibility Services, the Academic Advising Center (AAC), and Academic Support & Care to increase their academic success and retention. Data will be gleaned from Accommodate, Insight, and Advocate in hopes of seeing a percentage point increase in retention for all class years, respectively.

- Measure what programs/supports students are accessing for assistance and which may be aiding their academic success at Clark, in hopes of seeing a 1% increase in second-year students retained from second-semester sophomore to first-semester junior year.

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1   From the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) "Briefing Paper on Academic Inclusive Excellence" (2005)

Career Readiness Focus

The career readiness focus is designed to ensure that students complete their degrees or educational intent at high rates, live purposeful lives, and find meaningful work. Students move through a career development process incorporating curricular and cocurricular experiences over time, chart experiential learning opportunities, and clarify and prepare for postgraduate plans. Students "demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college-educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management."[2]

The career readiness focus consists of the new Office of Student Employment and the Career Connections Center, which has four core focal areas: career education/curriculum; employer and alumni engagement; internships and experiential learning; and operations and communications.

Key Performance Indicators, 2022–2023

- Created the Office of Student Employment, focused on enhancing the equitable distribution of campus jobs, maximizing career development outcomes, and servicing our student employees more effectively.

- Augmented career readiness culture through the division by increasing the visibility of our student programming through the division newsletter, Handshake, ClarkCONNECT, flyers, and by having more of a presence across campus.

- Leveraged multiple experiential cocurricular and other learning opportunities to promote career competencies/readiness for undergraduate and graduate studies.

- Reviewed and infused National Association for Colleges and Employers (NACE) career competencies within any new programming or curriculum established within the unit. NACE competencies are currently used in the Career to Curriculum Journey Maps and career curriculum being designed.

- Examined ways to increase career readiness experiences and engagement. Thirty-one students were awarded academic internship programs (AIPs) for summer 2023, which begins for most students in May.

- Worked to increase employer and alumni engagement by engaging new companies and former Clarkies to attend career fairs and events that help students explore meaningful career opportunities.

Overarching Goals for Career Readiness, 2023–2024

- For the 2023–2024 academic year, the unit would like to see a 20% increase in the following areas: internships, job shadow programs, and career readiness programs.

- Increase collaboration with other units within the division, faculty, and campus partners to enhance career readiness in and out of the classroom.

- Increase by 10% the number of students (seniors) who feel career-ready, as determined by feedback from the First Destination Report.

- Promote the Career Lab going mobile across campus so that it will be more accessible to all students. The Career Lab will be located within residence halls, the Academic Commons, and other campus locations as well as at the Career Connections Center.

- Increase academic internship programs (AIPs) by 20% to allow more students to participate in at least one internship while attending Clark. This will also encourage students to participate in community volunteer programs, experiential learning opportunities, and study abroad, and to understand how these experiences add value to their academic journey.

- Increase by 20% the number of unique employers and alumni who attend and participate in career fairs and pop-up events throughout the fall and spring semesters. This initiative increases students' access to various employers and alumni who can connect with the students and help them explore their academic and career endeavors.

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2   Higher Learning Commission. (2019). *Defining student success data: Recommendations for a glossary of terms.* Higher Learning Commission.

Community Living Focus

The Office of Community Living aims to provide holistic support for our students' well-being and success. Our three functional areas, the Office of Community Standards, the Office of Residential Life and Housing, and the Campus Ambassadors Program, work harmoniously to cater to our student community's diverse needs.

- Office of Community Standards: Upholding institutional regulations and the student code of conduct is essential for maintaining an environment conducive to learning and personal growth. Our experts handle violations of campus policies, conduct thorough investigations, and conduct disciplinary proceedings fairly. This ensures that students' rights are protected while maintaining a respectful and harmonious community.

- Office of Residential Life and Housing: Our dedicated team ensures students have a safe and comfortable living environment both on and off campus. From managing housing assignments and addressing facilities-related concerns to organizing community-building events, we strive to create a welcoming home-away-from-home for all students.

- Campus Ambassadors Program: Our Campus Ambassadors serve as peer mentors and guides, aiding students, faculty, and staff in navigating campus resources and acclimating to Clark University. Their support fosters a sense of belonging and helps newcomers and visitors on campus.

By seamlessly integrating these three functional areas, the Office of Community Living offers a comprehensive support system that addresses every aspect of students' lives. Our team is here whether students are seeking assistance with housing arrangements, guidance on campus policies, or a friendly face to help them find their way around.

Key Performance Indicators, 2022–2023

Please see annual report for unit specific KPIs

Overarching Goals for Community Living, 2023–2024

- Launch courageous dialogues on campus to facilitate a supportive community around complicated and nuanced issues that can often create social isolation.

- Create and launch a series of living and learning communities to increase student engagement across campus. Conversations about leveraging the residential living experience in creating career communities are currently being discussed.

- Continue to clarify policies and processes around protocols related to divisive issues, such as free speech, protest, demonstration, and bias incidents policies for the campus communities, especially our students.
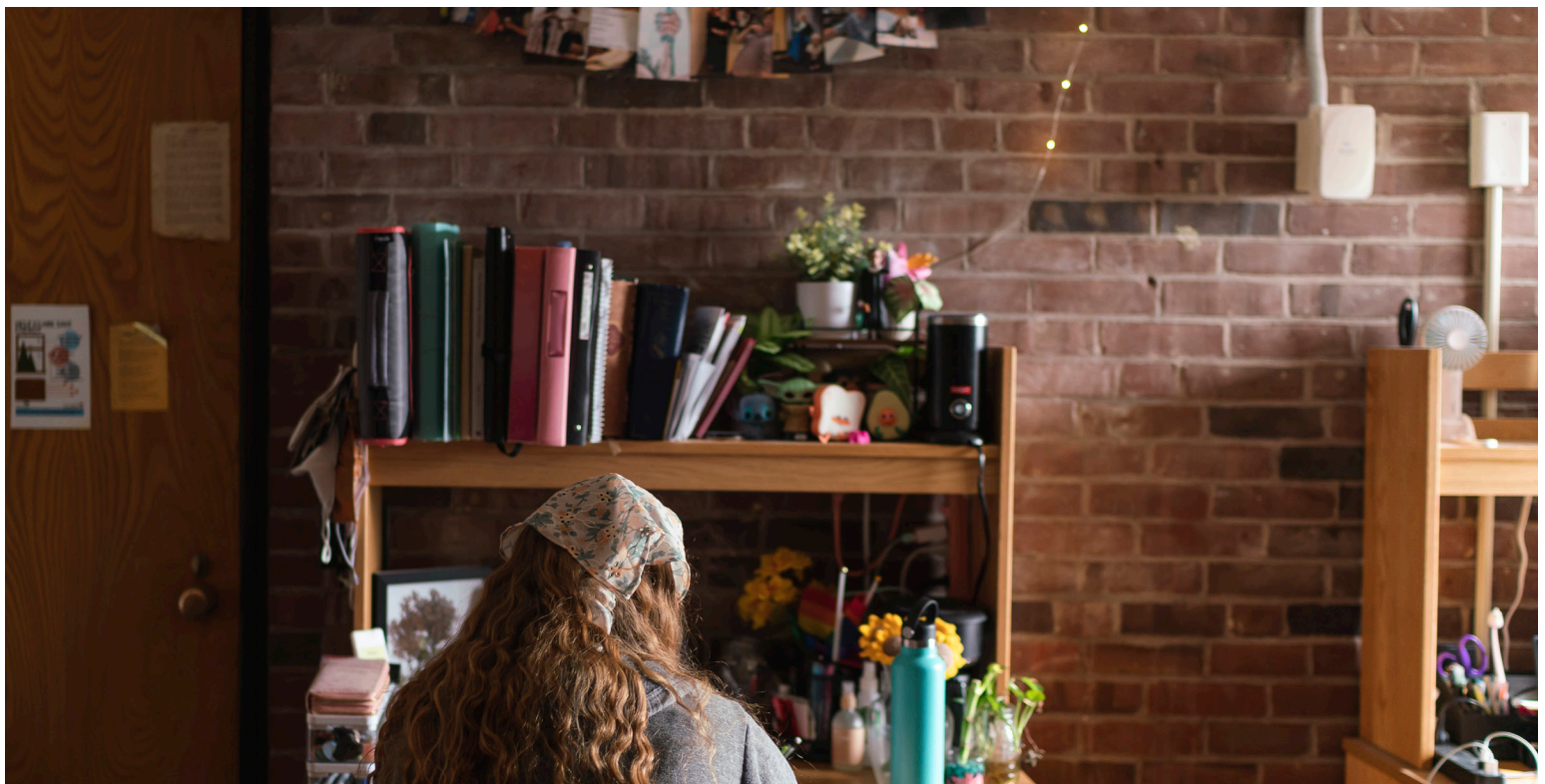
Health and Well-Being Focus

The health and well-being focus provides leadership, strategic vision, and coordination of campuswide programs, services, and operations that promote health and well-being. The units within this focus work to promote student learning around health and wellness and contribute to the university's goal of creating an environment that ensures effective and efficient delivery of innovative health and holistic wellness-related services to the campus community, including implementing appropriate prevention and response strategies for student crises and students of concern, including concerns related to students' basic needs (e.g., financial insecurity and food insecurity). More specifically, the areas within this focus provide students with educational training and outreach about health and wellness in suicide prevention, alcohol and other drugs, sexual health and wellness, spiritual development, physical fitness and nutrition, and healthy relationships.

The associate dean position overseeing this focus has gone through two turnovers this past year, stunting forward momentum on achieving major strategic elements to bolster the health and well-being of our students. We are fortunate to have the new associate dean, a more seasoned higher education professional, overseeing the focus starting October 16, 2023.

Key Performance Indicators, 2022–2023

Please see annual report for unit specific KPIs

Overarching Goals for Health & Well-Being, 2023–2024

- Ramp up the implementation of the Health and Wellness Task Force recommendations centered on building a health campus and community culture, orienting physical and organizational infrastructure to promote health, educating the community on prevention strategies, strengthening comprehensive care and direct services, and knowing the pulse of our community.

- Launch the UWill Teletherapy Platform to ensure that all students can access the services they need when they need them.

- Incorporate health and well-being habits within the holistic advising model for our students.

- Work with students and faculty on maintaining academic excellence as they navigate the impact of student mental health conditions.

Thank You

In closing, the Division of Student Success would like to thank you for your time and support. We are always listening. Please do not hesistate to reach out to us with feedback by contacting success@clarku.edu or (508) 793-7423.