

TO: SUNY University Faculty Senate
FROM: Student Life Committee
RE: Resolution: Recommendation for the adoption of the Okanagan Charter for Health Promotion in Universities and Colleges
DATE: October 26, 2024
LOCATION: SUNY Plattsburgh, NY
RESOLUTION #: 198-03-1 Student Life
VOTE: For: 45 / Against: 2

RATIONALE:

WHEREAS, health and well-being are fundamental to the success and flourishing of students, faculty, and staff within our campuses;

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance Data Summary & Trends Report: 2011-2023](#) stated that: 1) In 2021, more than 4 in 10 (42%) students felt persistently sad or hopeless and nearly one-third (29%) experienced poor mental health; and 2) In 2021, more than 1 in 5 (22%) students seriously considered attempting suicide and 1 in 10 (10%) attempted suicide;

WHEREAS, the [Okanagan Charter](#) for Health Promotion in Universities and Colleges provides a comprehensive framework for promoting and enhancing the health and well-being of our campus communities;

WHEREAS, embracing the principles outlined in the Okanagan Charter aligns with our campuses commitment to fostering a supportive and thriving environment for all members of our community;

WHEREAS, The [Healthy Minds Study: 2022-2023 Data Report](#) states that:

Approximately 40% of college students suffer from moderate or major depression, and more than one-in-three college students deal with anxiety.

WHEREAS, the United States Surgeon General's [Advisory on the Epidemic of Loneliness and Isolation](#) states that:

The health and societal impacts of social isolation and loneliness are a critical public health concern in light of mounting evidence that millions of Americans lack adequate social connection in one or more ways.

WHEREAS, [New York State Education Department](#) states that:

Research has shown that the quality of the school climate may be the single most predictive factor in any school's capacity to promote student achievement. When young people are educated about mental health, the likelihood increases they will be able to effectively recognize signs and symptoms in themselves and others and will know where to turn for help.

WHEREAS, SUNY is the nation's largest comprehensive system of public higher education and is a leader in public higher education in the United States;

WHEREAS, it is included in the Mission of of the State University of New York (SUNY) to provide to the people of New York educational services of the highest quality, with the broadest possible access, fully representative of all segments of the population;

WHEREAS, the following [institutions of Higher Education have adopted](#) the Okanagan Charter:

College of the Holy Cross	SUNY Albany	University of Massachusetts-Lowell
Cornell University	UCLA	University of Michigan
Grand Valley State University	University of Alabama at Birmingham	University of North Florida
Kansas State University	University of California-Berkeley	Ursinus College
Northern Illinois University	University of California-Irvine	Wentworth Institute of Technology
Northern Illinois University	University of Colorado-Boulder	Western Michigan University
Northern Michigan University	University of Connecticut	Western Washington University
Pace University	University of Delaware	
Russell Sage College	University of Massachusetts-Amherst	
Springfield College	University of Massachusetts-Boston	

RESOLUTION:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the SUNY University Faculty Senate requests that the SUNY Chancellor recommend to campus executive leadership that they work with campus governance to adopt the Okanagan Charter for Health Promotion in Universities and Colleges or comparable wellness framework and commit to implementing its principles and goals in all aspects of academic and campus life; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that the SUNY University Faculty Senate, as part of such policy development, requests that Chancellor recommend to campus executive leadership that they work with campus governance to regularly review and update their policies, programs, and initiatives to ensure alignment with the principles of the Okanagan Charter or comparable wellness framework, with the ultimate goal of creating a healthier and more supportive campus environment for all.

BACKGROUND

References:

Okanagan-Charter.pdf

<https://bp-net.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Okanagan-Charter.pdf>

The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-social-connection-advisory.pdf>

The Healthy Minds Study

https://healthymindsnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/HMS_National-Report-2022-2023_full.pdf

NYS Department of Education - School Mental Health Education

<https://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction/mental-health>

CDC - Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report: 2011-2021

https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/YRBS_Data-Summary-Trends_Report2023_508.pdf

U.S. Health Promoting Campuses Network

<http://ushpcn.org/network/>

US trends in social isolation, social engagement, and companionship _ nationally and by age, sex, race/ethnicity, family income, and work hours, 2003–2020 Viji Diane Kannana,* and Peter J. Veazieb

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9811250/#:~:text=Average%20time%20spent%20socially%20engaged.4.3:%20p%20=%200.001%5D>

Governor Hochul Expands Access to Mental Health Care to 200,000 SUNY Students

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-expands-access-mental-health-care-200000-suny-students>