



MRU Adoption and Commitments to OK Charter

What is the Okanagan Charter?

Vision

Health and wellbeing promoting universities and colleges transform the health and sustainability of our current and future societies, strengthen communities and contribute to the well-being of people, places and the planet.

Calls to Action

1. Embed human and environmental well-being into campus administration, culture, academics, and operations.
2. Lead human and environmental wellbeing promotion action locally and globally.

Principles

- Use settings and whole system approaches
- Ensure comprehensive and campus-wide approaches
- Use participatory approaches and engage the voice of students and others
- Develop trans-disciplinary collaborations and cross-sector partnerships
- Promote research, innovation and evidence-informed action
- Build on strengths
- Value local and indigenous communities' contexts and priorities
- Act on existing universal responsibility

How is MRU translating the into action?

1. Commitment to support the inclusion of well-being in the University's strategic planning process.

MRU's Learning Together, Leading Together Strategic Plan (2015-2025) identifies goals and strategies embedded within it to impact individual and community well-being. These include:

Goal 2: Foster a Sense of Belonging Among Students

We will create an environment in which student are engaged and have a sense of belonging.

Goal 5: Facilitate Student Success

We will reduce barriers to academic success by improving access to and awareness of quality student services.

Goal 6: Foster a Healthy Work Environment

We will provide services that support a healthy and productive work environment.

We will foster a safe and positive working environment which is respectful and inclusive.

2. Commitment to promote well-being in priority areas identified by campus community such as:

Work at MRU has transitioned from a Health and Safety Task Force to a **Healthy Campus Steering Committee**. As such, members of this campus-wide group work with the MRU community members to impact individual and campus well-being. The intentional shift allows a broader interpretation of health and well-being and the many opportunities to embed wellbeing within the campus culture. Some examples include the following:

→ Mental health & resilience

In 2012-13 MRU participated in a community engagement process to learn from people about their experiences with student mental health. This work evolved from a community consultation with 105 people, to eventually become a report recommendations generated through **The President's Task Force on Student Mental Health**. Recommendations have been developed and mapped over an 8 year span. Annual Reports to the Community can be found on MRU's Website.

These recommendations were developed by students, staff, faculty and administrators aligned with a systemic framework recommended by CACUSS/CMHA. These recommendations are grouped in dimensions include:

- Review and develop policies, procedures, and processes that impact well-being.
- Increase community members' awareness, knowledge and skills to identify, respond to and/or refer anyone who may be experiencing mental health challenges.
- Collectively work with students or student groups who may be at risk for academic and personal success.
- Provide accessible services to support student mental health and illness including having processes in place to identify and support students who are in crisis.

→ Learning & working environments

In 2015, a cross divisional team developed **MRU Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace Framework and Strategy**. Two Psychological Factors identified as priorities for MRU are 1) Psychological Support, and 2) Civility and Respect.

Collaborative work with students and faculty began in 2014 to begin to explore **well-being in the learning environment**. Supported by the Provost, faculty were provided with wellbeing information to include on their course syllabi. A Mental Help Blackboard module was developed through wellness and also disseminated by the Provost to embed the module within the course Blackboard.

→ Built & natural environments

MRU is in process of campus master planning. A report was commissioned by Student Affairs and Campus Life through EAB to share with and engage campus facilities planners to consider a well-being lens when renovating and/or building new spaces. Many opportunities for community engagement were embedded throughout the process of the planning and building of MRU's newest building the Riddell Library and Learning Centre.

→ Food & nutrition

MRU convenes a campus team to determine the priorities for campus food services during contract competitions. Wellness Services has been of this team in the past to bring a nutritional lens to the process.

Community engagement has been a part of the process to learn from campus stakeholders what their desires and priorities are for food on campus.

→ Inclusion & connectivity

Identified in the MRU Strategic Plan, fostering inclusivity and creating a sense of community is a priority. Processes leading to MRU's Diversity and Meaningful Inclusion Strategic Framework (2015) engaged students, staff, faculty and administrators. Access, Climate, Learning, Capacity are identified as four broad "Essential Elements" of a diversity and inclusive campus.

→ Indigenizing MRU

The Indigenous Strategic Plan was developed in thoughtful consultation with the MRU community and guided by an external advisory committee of local Indigenous leaders and experts.

3. Commitment to invest new and ongoing funds into well-being through allocations to:

MRU invests new and ongoing funds into well-being as demonstrated by campus programs, services, and processes to support and foster campus wellbeing. Resource investments have been made to support work in mental health, employee engagement, diversity and inclusion, early support processes, dating, domestic and sexual violence response, and furniture and space design to promote wellbeing and sense of belonging. The creation of Healthy Campus Unit, through restructuring within Wellness Services, loudly demonstrates MRU's commitment to strategically facilitate and enhance MRU's commitment to the "Healthy Campus" concept.

4. Commitment to evaluate and report on health promotion outcomes including:

MRU is committed to collect data to inform programs and services. Some assessment tools include the NCHA, NASPA Consortium Recreation and Wellness Benchmark Survey, NSSE (sense of belonging), Education Advisory Board's Climate Survey Sexual Assault, and Employee Wellness Survey. Assessment occurs regularly within programs and services to inform continuous improvement. Annual report is a commitment and requirement.

5. Commitment to convene conversations and share best practices across Canadian and international campuses.

MRU was a provincial co-lead in promoting, developing, and hosting a dialogue for university and colleges to explore and understand their roles and responsibilities in creating safe place and supportive and responsive processes for campus members who have experienced sexual assault. Representation of students, staff, faculty and administrators from 22 of 26 post-secondary institutions in Alberta participated in two face to face sessions in spring 2016.

In addition, MRU students, staff and faculty participate in and contribute to many professional organizations and opportunities to learn from and share best practices for campus well-being. Some examples include: host provincial and national webinars, present at conferences, contribute to design teams and CoP's including Healthy Campus Alberta and CACUSS CoP's, MRU students contributed to designing the Alcohol Harm Reduction Tool Kit for Campuses, and finally dissemination of best practices through writing articles and contributing to book chapters.