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CU I&E Submission: Integrated Recreation and Wellness Centers [1]

Description

We have created what we believe is the first in the nation integrated Recreation and Wellness Centers that encompasses health, mental health, recreation, nutrition, and wellness promotion services within one integrated building and division. Health, mental health, nutrition and wellness promotion are housed within the Wellness Center located inside the expanded Recreation Center. We have been working on this design for over two years with five subgroups with representation from each area working on best practices in making this integration work. We have created regular meetings between all areas to proactively look at ways to meet students needs in a holistic approach. We now have one reception area for health, mental health, nutrition and wellness promotion which allows us to schedule students with the appropriate resource based on their concern and refer to another resource within the clinic if needed. All front office staff are cross trained to triage all student concerns which has helped us to manage the increased demands on services. We are also able to refer students in crisis within one building to the different modalities versus having to walk them across campus to be seen. Our office manager is now able to oversee all areas and manage purchasing supplies and equipment in bulk versus individually.
We have also partnered with the Helen and Arthur E. Johnson Beth-El College of Nursing and Health Sciences to utilize graduate students to provide some of these services that would not otherwise be available if we needed to hire permanent staff. We have a graduate sports nutrition intern that is a registered dietitian providing nutrition counseling and programming for students. Students are able to have three individual one hour sessions with this dietitian at no charge. We have also partnered to have a graduate student from the athletic training program to provide athletic training for club sport athletes under the supervision of the medical director for health services. This collaboration has been a huge benefit for these athletes that previously had no personal trainer to manage their injuries.
This integration has also allowed us to implement a disordered eating team that is comprised of experts from all five areas. This team will work with students struggling with eating issues and the point contact person will refer those students to experts within these departments to help manage their care. This was a gap in service prior to this team being developed.

How does this impact the University?

This concept was designed to keep students healthy in an effort to give them a better college experience and help with increased retention rates. Studies show that students who are engaged with the campus and in healthy behaviors are more successful than those who are not. The University has supported this wellness initiative because they understand that a holistic approach to wellness will have benefits for the entire campus. This integrated model

has allowed us to provide more prevention outreach and programming, as well as enhancing the services provided to manage conditions as they arise. Despite being new in implementation, we have already received very favorable feedback from students, faculty, and staff about how much they love this concept and the new building design. We also believe that our new location will provide better exposure of our services so that we are able to serve even more of the student population.
As we continue the success of this integration, it will also be a model for others to follow across the nation. We hope to begin presenting this concept at a variety of national meetings and lead the way for others to provide this same holistic approach to student wellness.

Implementation Status

The new Recreation and Wellness Center opened on the first day of the spring semester. We have already began tabling to notify students of this new model and will be hosting a grand opening ceremony on February 29th to show faculty, staff, and students what this integrated model is all about. This integration has allowed us to provide stress reduction/mindfulness yoga each Wednesday free of charge for faculty, staff, and students inside one of the group fitness rooms. We will be sharing the group therapy rooms in the evenings to host free fitness and health screenings, provide free cooking demonstrations on how to make healthy food on a budget, how to make healthy snacks when living on campus, and club and intramural sports can use the space for their mandatory meetings. We will offer meditation sessions in this shared space, as well as bringing in massage and chiropractic services. We also hope to bring in accupuncture and physical therapy services. These complimentary services are available to all faculty, staff and students at a discounted rate so that they are affordable and prevent campus members from having to leave campus in the middle of the day. As construction touch ups come to a close, we will have time to look at even more collaborative efforts that can be implemented for students. This will be an ongoing process that will be fluid in meeting the ever changing needs of our student body.

Submitter's Information

Submitter's Name: Stephanie Hanenberg
Submitter's Email: shanenbe@uccs.edu [2]
Additional Team Members: All Recreation and Wellness Center pro staff

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