



**SLU**  
*Thrives*

# Shaping a Campus Experience Rooted in Student Well-Being

2026 CCNY Conference

June 5, 2026

# Objectives

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Identify positive impacts comprehensive models of well-being have on college mental health



Identify strategic steps to create and implement a well-being model on your campus



Identify 3 strategies to engage campus partners and the student body in participating and owning well-being

# Impact of Well-Being Models on College Students

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Identify & support mental health needs

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Destigmatizes mental & physical health

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Improves academic engagement and supports retention

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Saturates environment around awareness & resources

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Develop life skills

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Increases flourishing

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Effectiveness in careers and experiences beyond college

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Relieves pressure on college counseling centers

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“It takes a village” approach

## Organizations that Support Comprehensive Well-Being in Higher Education

Jed Foundation

NASPA Wellness  
& Health  
Promotion

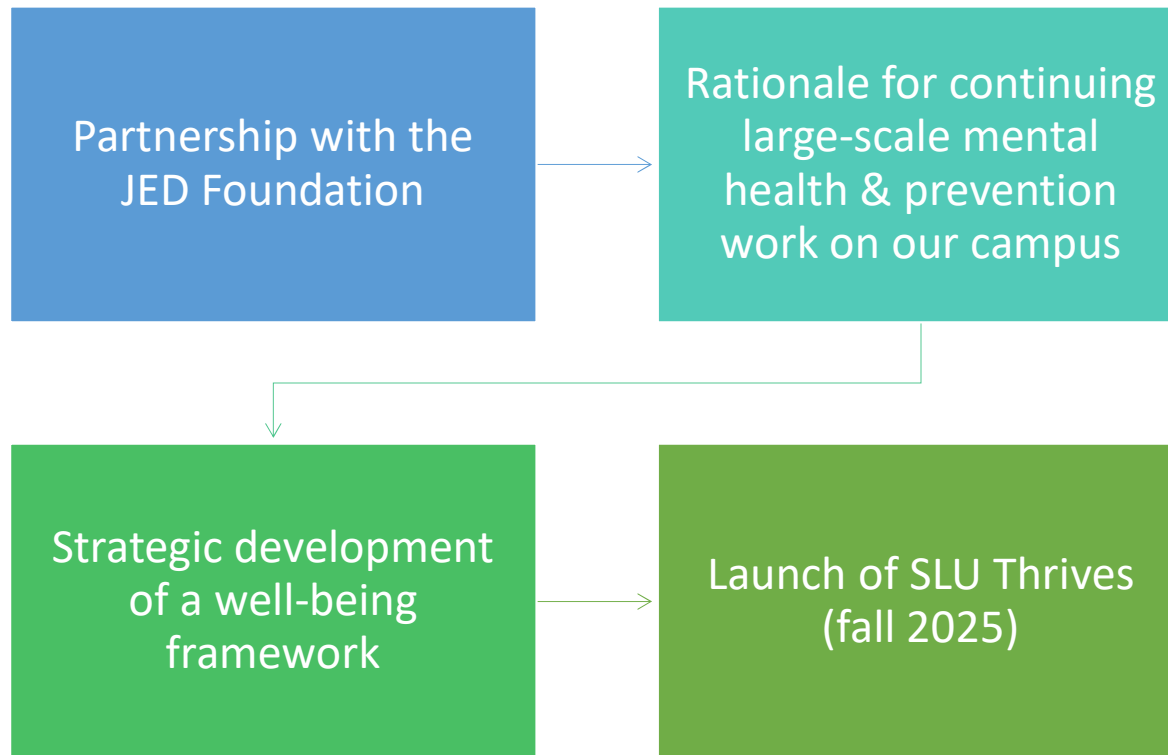
The Steve Fund

Active Minds

Okanagan  
Charter

Learning Well  
Coalition

# Learn About St. Lawrence University's



# Where We Started...



**Healthy Minds Study Data 2021,  
2024,  
HMS National 2024**

	<b>2024 SLU HMS</b>	<b>2021 SLU HMS</b>	<b>2024 HMS National</b>
Flourishing	43%	29%	36%
Severe Depression	6%	12%	18%
Severe Anxiety	13%	19%	14%
Suicide Ideation	11%	14%	11%
Academic Impact (negative)	40%	67%	37%
Know Where to go for mental/emotional health on campus	93%	83%	82%
<b>Loneliness</b>			
Lack Companionship (often)	17%	25%	19%
Feel Left out (often)	15%	25%	21%
Feel Isolated from others (often)	16%	31%	24%

**Healthy Minds Study  
Comparison**

# How can we help more students flourish?

- Flourishing is linked to retention and academic performance
  - 57% of SLU students are “Not Flourishing”
  - 40% of our students indicated that mental well-being challenges negatively impacted their academics (HMS 2024)
- “I am confident that I will be able to finish my academic program no matter what challenges I may face.”
  - Of those who answered 'unsure', 97% are not flourishing.



# Rationale for Continued Investment in Student Well-Being

4 in 10 students considered dropping out due to emotional stress  
(Inside Higher Ed, 2023)

Reducing stress is students' top health and wellness goal, followed by eating a healthier diet, getting more sleep and exercise  
(Inside Higher Ed, 2023)

Skill & habit development is key to student success

*We may not be able to reduce stress*, but our focus on well-being positions students to take responsibility for how they manage stress by building skills and resilience that will carry through their lifetime

# Developing a Well-Being Framework

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# Framework Creation

- Leadership from the top – VP of Student Life
- Created a steering committee
- Explored models
- Held a retreat with committee members – focused on SLU culture to define our 7-dimension model
- Engaged Marketing and Communications





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**SLU Thrives Steering Committee:**

Franco Bari, Director of Athletics

Jodi Canfield, Associate Dean for Student Life

Maverick Cummings, Director of Residence Life

Brian Giesler, Associate Professor, Psychology

Diane Husic, Executive Director, Center for the Environment

Jessica Kennedy, Associate Director, Digital Strategy

Laura Lavoie, Director of Wellness Education

Jillian McKernan-Walley, Director Center for Career Excellence

Tara Tent, Director of Student Counseling

Jon Duraj, Vice President for Student Life



## Seven dimensions rooted-in holistic well-being management:



**DIGITAL  
WELLNESS**



**INTELLECTUAL &  
CAREER EXPLORATION**



**ENVIRONMENTAL &  
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**



**FINANCIAL  
LITERACY**



**SOCIAL BELONGING  
& INCLUSION**



**MEANING-MAKING  
PURPOSE & SPIRITUALITY**



**MIND & BODY**



# Launch Time!

- Launched in fall of 2025
- Recruited a student steering committee
- Created signature experiences related to our 7 dimensions

## SLU Thrives Student Steering Committee:

- Over 55 referrals from faculty staff, and peers
- All class years
- MA, CA, NY, Kenya, Palestine, Curaçao
- Student Government, LEED, Baseball, Lacrosse, Laurentian Singers, Rugby, Soccer, Islamic Culture Club, CA/Thrive mentor, Football, Agape, WORD Studio, Track and Field, Club Hockey, Investment Club





# Signature Experiences

- Thrive Mentors
  - Live in 1<sup>st</sup> year dorms
- Thrive Lectures
  - Balance & Boundaries: Navigating Technology and Social Media with Intention
  - Budgeting Basics
  - Thriving Amid Climate Challenges
  - The Mind/Body Connection
- SLU Thrives connected courses: Financial Literacy



- Pilot program with BRICK App
- Physical device that temporarily removes access to apps, websites, or other distractions



- Well-Being Assessment
- Customizable to SLU
- SLU alum partnership



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SLU Thrives Defined

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## DIGITAL WELLNESS

- Helps students develop tech fluency and hone the skills necessary to manage technology, social media, and AI with balance and purpose.
  - Smartphone use and social media has been linked to declines in academic performance and an increase in mental health issues.



## ENVIRONMENTAL & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- This dimension focuses on caring for our Laurentian community, the North Country, and our world.
  - Caring for and engaging with nature improves mood, focus, and well-being.
  - Volunteering has positive mental and physical health benefits.
  - 80% of SLU students report feeling anxious about climate change (HMS 2024).



## FINANCIAL LITERACY

- This dimension helps students build smart, sustainable habits around personal finance.
  - Having control over your finances and living within your means reduces stress.
  - 33% of students who withdrew last year had a financial hold in the semester they withdrew.



## **MEANING-MAKING PURPOSE & SPIRITUALITY**

- Discovering one's values, beliefs, and goals by intentionally exploring coursework, activities, and experiences to help students better understand themselves and their place in the world.
  - Developing a sense of meaning & purpose builds resilience to take on life's challenges.
  - "He who has a why to live can bear almost any how",  
Friederich Nietzsche



## INTELLECTUAL & CAREER EXPLORATION

- Pursuing challenging coursework and experiential opportunities to prepare students for an impactful career and life.
  - Investing in coursework and career preparation will give students the skills to take on a diverse and fast-changing world.



## **SOCIAL BELONGING & INCLUSION**

- Building connections and finding community on a campus where every Laurentian is heard, valued, and respected.
  - A sense of belonging and mattering can improve mental health and well-being.
  - Students who feel a sense of belonging socially & academically are more likely to succeed in college.
  - A strong community fosters resiliency among individuals and the group.



## MIND & BODY

- Cultivating physical, mental, and emotional wellness and recognizing the connections between them.
  - Physical and mental health are core components to overall well-being.
  - Stress management, healthy diet, exercise, and sleep are top priorities for college students. (Inside Higher Ed)



Looking  
Ahead:  
Upcoming  
Initiatives

- Faculty/Staff Thrive sessions
- Faculty development library for wellness practices in class
- Thrive Day
- Tagged events in SLU Central
- Wellness campaigns



## Challenges & Advice

- Everyone already has their own job to do
- Budget
- Silo perspectives
- Assessment
- Management of ideas



# Worksheet Part 2 & Questions