

Champlain College

Management & Innovation Capstone Project

Champlain Health and Mindfulness Program:

**A New Vision For Wellness At Champlain
College**

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Tables of Contents

Defining the Problem.....	4
Opportunity.....	5
Development & Programming Recommendations.....	6-22
Nutrition & Food Systems.....	6-11
Kitchen.....	8-10
Teaching Kitchen.....	8-9
Alternativen Teaching Kitchen.....	9-10
Community Meal.....	10-11
Community	
Collaboration.....	11
Green	
Space.....	11-12
Solarium.....	12
Physical Space.....	13-15
Collaborative Space.....	13
Outdoor Structures.....	13-14
Sun Lamps.....	14-15
Oil Diffuser.....	15
Recreational Activities.....	16-22
Outdoor & Off-Campus.....	16-19

Hiking Club.....17

Outing Club.....17-18

Gardening Club..... 19

Hall Activities.....19-22

 Yoga and Meditation..... 19

 Journaling.....20

 Aromatherapy.....20

 Sustainability Education21

Organizational Structure.....22-32

 Sophomore Mentorship Program.....22

 Class Requirement.....23-24

 Community Project.....25-28

 Community Builder.....28-31

 Resident Assistants & Community Builder: What is the
 difference?.....31-32

How to Apply.....32

Conclusion.....33

Defining the Problem

Approximately 45% of students who voluntarily withdrew from Champlain College identified mental health issues as the driving force behind their decision. Transitioning into college can be an immensely stressful time in young people's lives. Newly navigating and balancing the social, emotional, physical, and familial stressors can have adverse effects on students' mental wellbeing. In recent years, college campuses across the country have seen unprecedented rates of students struggling with mental illness among all levels of degree completion. Nationally, nearly 30% more students sought out counseling in the 2014-2015 school year than in 2009-2010, yet schools' counseling services only reach 15-20% of students (English, 2019). This rapid, dramatic increase has outpaced the capacity of most institutions to provide appropriate support to students, as well as develop long-term solutions to address the crisis.

Champlain College is no exception. The counseling center is overburdened with students struggling with mental health. To counter increased demand, session limits have been implemented, capping students at eight appointments per semester (15 weeks). Due to its location, the school and the community as a whole is also heavily impacted by long cold winters. People are faced with seasonal challenges such as coping with limited sunlight and often below freezing temperatures, accessing green space, maintaining physical recreation, and meeting nutrition requirements-- all having a significant effect on a person's health. The season can be especially difficult for newcomers who have no past experience under such conditions. The

overload of transitional lifestyle factors and lack of services to support them leaves first-year students vulnerable.

Opportunity



Figure 1: Exterior of McDonald Hall. The Victorian-mansion was built in 1897 and houses approximately 50 students.
(Source: Champlain College)

The future of Champlain's success and retention will be founded on generating community and creating programming that focuses on improving students mental health and wellbeing. Beginning in 2020, McDonald Hall is due for renovation. As an optimal outlet for this achievement, building upon the strengths of McDonald Hall and the potential of Champlain's community could bring a modern translation to the space.

This document is a proposal for the development of McDonald Hall (Figure 1) to be devoted to implementing a wellness themed learning community for first-years. The community's focus would look at strengthening students' connection to their physical, mental, and emotional health, food, and community. Creating supportive spaces such as this will allow residents to take full advantage of their education without sacrificing their health.

Development & Program

Recommendations

Program recommendations have a four-pronged categorization: nutrition and food systems, green space, physical space, and recreation.

Nutrition & Food Systems

The hall pizza party is a classic first-year event. While free pizza is especially delicious to the average poor college student, the power of connecting food, the self, and community is underwhelming served by the delivery driver. Quick, cheap, and easy- the trifecta keystone in students' dietary decisions. This poor guideline association creates a major disconnect between health and consumption (Thomashow, 48). Poor diets increase rates of physical and mental illness and impede a students ability to learn.

An understanding of nutrition is an essential aspect of wellness, especially mental health and productivity. Equipping students with the knowledge and tools to fuel themselves in a healthy and mindful way is a lifestyle game changer. A healthy balanced diet prevents and alleviates depression and anxiety while a diet high in processed foods and sugars increases the risk of these mental health issues (Dasgupta, 190). In tangent, an understanding of food systems, a subject that is often overlooked, would expand the relationship between food and the self to the community. (Figure 2) Studying food systems acknowledges the interconnected systems that constantly impact all of us while aiding students in maintaining a healthy lifestyle and supporting sustainable development. Through developing a lasting relationship with the food students eat,

mindful food systems and behaviors will improve students' dietary behaviors and overall community morale.

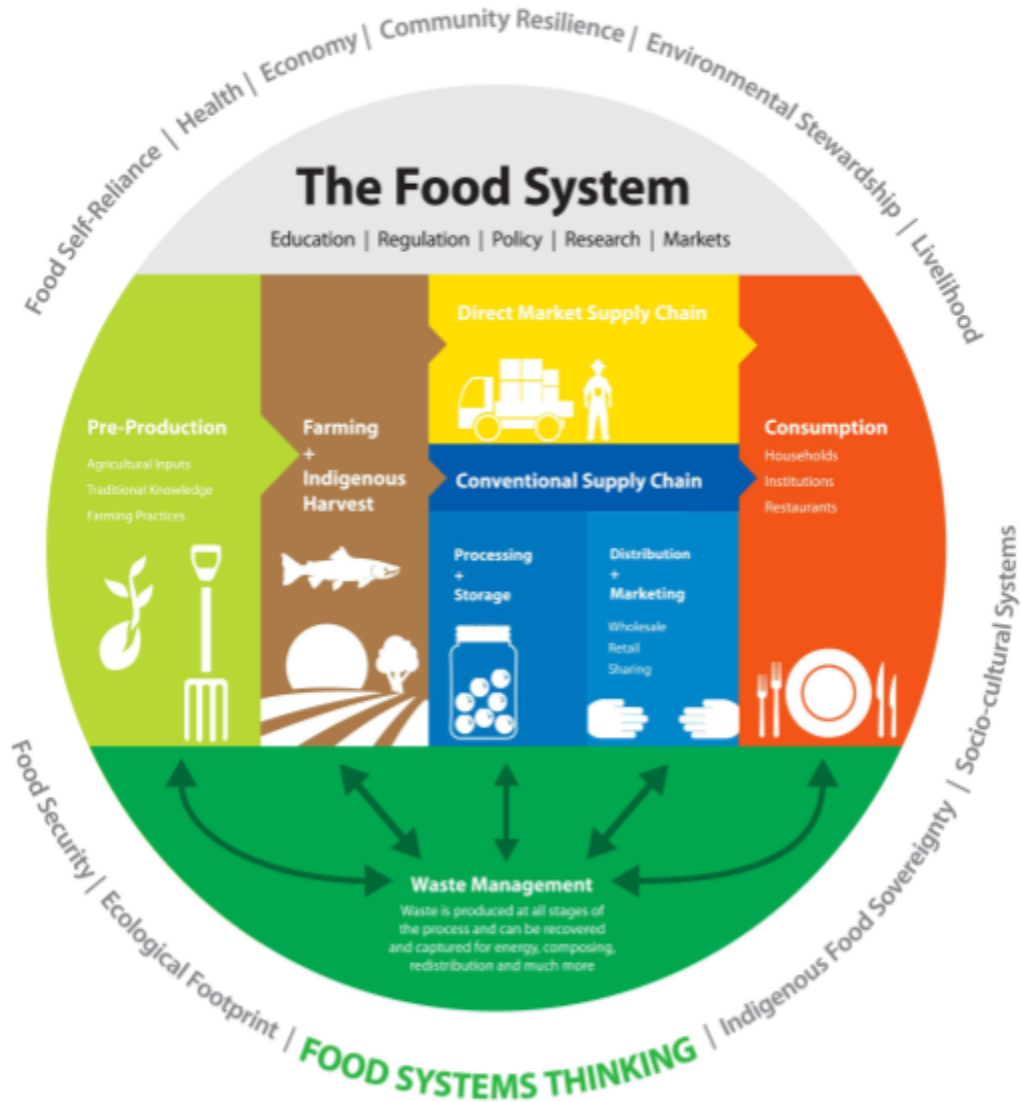


Figure 2: Food systems are complex in design, but understanding the components and stakeholders is crucial in understanding community and sustainable development. (Source: Southwest British Columbia Bio-Region Food System Design Project, <http://bcfoodsystem.com/test-page/>)

Kitchen

Constructing a kitchen in McDonald Hall would be an optimal opportunity for improving the experience of the hall's residents. The kitchen would make nutrition, self-sufficiency, and community bonding more accessible to residents. Most of these students will be living on their own for the first time and it's crucial to help them develop the skills to sustain themselves in a healthy and efficient way. By creating good habits around nutrition and mealtime, students can carry forward these habits into adulthood, preventing negative health effects later in life.

Teaching Kitchen

Teaching kitchens are kitchens that are mindfully designed with the focus of being a collaborative space for a cooking laboratory. The space combines resources such as culinary instruction using healthy whole ingredients, nutrition education, ingredient and food systems mindfulness, and personalized health coaching. Dr. David Eisenberg, Director of Culinary Nutrition at Harvard Chan's Department of Nutrition and a lead researcher on Teaching Kitchens, when asked about teaching kitchen being a learning lab for life skills says, "Participants learn which foods they should eat more of, or less of, and why. They learn the hands-on cooking techniques necessary to prepare almost any delicious, nutritious, easy to make, affordable recipe; they learn that movement and exercise are as important to optimal health as diet; they learn that being mindful is essential, when eating and in all aspects of living; and, perhaps most importantly, by exploring and working with a personal health coach, they learn why they want to change, and that they can use this newfound motivation to help them succeed

at change.” Having a kitchen within the hall itself would allow for greater immersion, increased opportunities for usage, personalized touches, and flexible event scheduling.



Figure 3: The Teach Kitchen Collaborative is an organization with goal of “advance personal and public health through culinary literacy and integrative lifestyle transformation.”
(Source: Teaching Kitchen Collaborative, <http://www.tkcollaborative.org/>)

Alternative Teaching Kitchens

The incorporation of a kitchen within the building would optimize the user experience, but may be immediately written off in the design process due to the architecture of the building, cost, and loss of resident rooms. Cutting this part of the experience from the program’s design would create a hole in what makes up wellness. In the event of such a scenario on-campus alternatives may include:

Portable Station(s)

The Champlain Room is a large space with ample tables and seating. The instructor would be set up on the stage and a live-stream camera would film close-ups of what was happening, similar to an actual cooking show, that would be blown up on the presentation screen behind the stage.

McDonald residents would break-up into teams and convert the tables into workstations. If the spaces and amount of resources allow for it, students and faculty beyond the wellness community would be invited to come watch and/or participate. For those that can not attend, the live-stream would be shared on social media to share the wealth of information and be used to gain engagement and attraction to the program.

Science labs, on a much smaller scale, could apply the same outline as proposed for the Champlain Room. The benefit of using this space would be the potential of a more intimate experience and surfaces that would be easily picked up and cleaned.

Collaboration with IDX

IDX would be the cheapest option for a teaching kitchen, but could prove to be the most functionally difficult. The space has all the necessary equipment and the group would be able to collaborate with IDX's chefs. The downside is event timing may not always be optimal with having to work around IDX's service schedule and health codes may be stricter due to the fact it is a commercial kitchen similar to a restaurant.

Community Meals

Not only do most students dream of having delicious home-cooked meals, but sharing a community meal connects people to one another. According to the University of Oxford, "Research has revealed that the more often people eat with others the more likely they are to feel happy and satisfied with their lives," and that, "communal eating increases social bonding and feelings of wellbeing, and enhances one's sense of contentedness and embedding within the community." (Dunbar, 2017) Students within the wellness community will not only be

encouraged by RAs and Community Builder to join them for meals in IDX, but the community leaders will hold hall meals or snack breaks at minimum once a month with the potential to be based around the teaching kitchen experiences.

Community Collaboration

Looking around the city's farmers market or strolling down Church Street or the Old North End,



Figure 4: Members of City Market, Onion River Co-op receive a 7% discount for two hours of volunteer time and a 12% discount for four hours of volunteer time. Discounts begin the first of the following month after you volunteer.
(Source: City Market, <https://www.citymarket.coop/memberwork>)

it is clear that the Burlington area is fortunate to have numerous unique and delicious food experiences and producers. The Community Builder will be tasked to reach out to these community members and organizations to have collaborative learning experiences for the hall. This may look like going to a local farm or restaurants and students volunteering their time to understand

the process or do a small sampling, taking advantage of [City Markets volunteer discount program](#) (Figure 4), or asking local chefs to come and do a demonstration within the teaching kitchen.

Green Space

An essential component of wellness is access to green space, land that is partly or completely covered with grass, trees, shrubs, or other vegetation (United States Environmental Protection Agency). Green space has been shown to have a positive effect on anxiety, cortisol levels and overall wellbeing (Barton, 2017). In addition, people living near green spaces have also reported

less feelings of loneliness and isolation, a serious problem many first-year students face (Williams, 111). The creation of indoor green space on campus would give students an that would allow them to feel connected with nature.

Solarium

McDonald has a large porch that is not currently utilized due to necessary repairs. Maximizing the building's potential, improvements would include bringing the space up to code and glassing the porch, transforming the porch into a solarium (Figure 5)- a room with extensive areas of glass to allow plenty of sunlight in. The space would give students a peaceful place to socialize, study or just soak up the sunlight. Wellness students would have card access to the solarium and be permitted to store houseplants as space allows. Wall planters are one of many green wall and furniture installations that could be easily incorporated into the design to provide additional greenery within the solarium and throughout the hall. Watering the plants would be assigned to residents on a rotating schedule in generating community trust and responsibility.



Figure 5: The solarium would be a peaceful place for students to socialize, study or just soak up the sunlight.
(Source: Great Day Improvements, <http://www.greatdayimprovements.com/solarium-ideas.aspx>)

Physical Space

Design features outside the realm of green space helps ensure students have an adequately stimulating environment that supports their mental health. Any combination of these components could be utilized.

Collaborative Space

Friendships begin for many students within their first-year hall. Resident halls greatly benefit from having a common room. The space gives students a space to socialize and get to know their community members and serves as a close alternative to students' assigned rooms- homework, group activities, and an escape from roommates (a living situation that is a first to many). Having a large enough space to fit if not all then most of the students would allow this to be a hotspot for experiential learning and community bonding as is the goal of the program.

Outdoor Structures

Playgrounds are slowly being recognized for adults as more than just a place for young children and memories of their own childhood nostalgia. By placing a jungle gym, or similar outdoor climbing structure on the front lawn outside McDonald Hall, students would have access to an interactive outdoor space. An outdoor climbing structure incorporates biophilic design for stress reduction by providing a tree-climbing experience (Thomashow, 138). The structure would be a convenient and fun way for the residents and other students on campus to exercise, a proven stress reducer (Dasgupta, 115). Exercise equipment, similar designed to that of Burlington's waterfront, or [pergola swings](#) (Figure 5) are alternatives that could also check-off similar boxes. This structure would provide a conversation starter, a gathering space and an overall point of

interest for Champlain’s campus. Similar to Champlain’s art gallery, the sculpture of Samuel de Champlain, and the countless beautiful views, this is yet another opportunity to exemplify the culture of our community. Looking to local artists and artisans to design the equipment would build on Champlain’s strength of having a beautiful, innovative, and unique campus and community.



Figure 6: Pergola swing created by couple who is passionate about DIY.
(Source: Casidy, Remodelaholic, <https://www.remodelaholic.com/build-diy-pergola-outdoor-firepit-swings/>)

Sun Lamps

Vermont’s cold and dark winters can cause a strain on students' mental and physical health. Around 22% of adults living in the state of Vermont suffer from depression. According to nurse practitioner Patricia Towle from the Thomas Chittenden Health Center in Williston , Vermont “Probably close to 60 or 70% of the depression I treat seems to have a seasonal pattern”



Figure 7: Student utilizing sun lamp at Bay College.

(Source of photo: Bay College, <https://www.ironmountaindailynews.com/news/local-news/2019/03/bay-west-fights-winter-blues-with-sun-lamps/>)

(Johnson, 2018). Sun lamp therapy has been shown to help alleviate seasonal affective disorder (Klinkman, 2011). By putting sun lamps (Figure 6) in the common room, or putting one in each dorm room, residents can experience the therapeutic benefits of sunlight that they are missing during the winter.

Oil Diffuser

Aromatherapy can provide relief from stress, anxiety, depression, fatigue, insomnia and other conditions (Dasgupta, 144). Essential oils that are associated with positive mental health benefits include bergamont, cedarwood, geranium, jasmine, lavender, marjoram, orange, peppermint, rose, rosemary, sandalwood and ylang ylang (Dasgupta, 145). Essential oil diffusers would be a cheap and safe way for students in the hall to relax in the common room. A poster displayed in the common room listing the therapeutic benefits of different essential oils would peak residents' interest and maximize the benefits of aromatherapy.

Recreational Activities

Outdoor & Off-Campus

Students will be highly encouraged to take advantage of recreational opportunities available at Champlain. An emphasis will be made in particular to participating in outdoor and/or off-campus opportunities. Both outdoor recreation and off-campus programs can help alleviate the cabin fever that many students experience during the long winters, offering a break from life in the ‘city’, and allow students to experience the beautiful Vermont landscape. Outdoor program specifically is a pivotal experience as spending time outdoors reduces symptoms of depression, ADD, and even improves overall focus (Li, 2016). Walking or exercising in a natural environment has even been proven to be more effective for stress relief than exercising indoors (Dasgupta, 116). Along with increases in better mental and physical health, academic performance, and environmental sensitivities, outdoor programs create positive and developmental experiences for students. Outdoor programs can be on-campus recreation activities, but when put in an outdoor and off-campus setting, the effects have only been shown to improve (Shelman and Hill, 2017). In practice, this benefits the entire college as students will have an improved outlook and will seek opportunities to create a healthier community. In turn, implementing such programs has the potential to improve student recruitment, retention, and satisfaction.

Champlain has several team-sport clubs, rugby, soccer, and basketball, but there are no physical activity requirements through the school and options for those students who dislike or can not participate in team sports are limited. In past years, Ski and Ride and Climbing Club have

partially filled this gap, but due to the cost and intensity of the sports this does not appeal and is not feasible (financially and/or physically) for all students. This is problematic, because it is ignoring a part of the campus community who would both enjoy and benefit from recreation. Students within the program will be encouraged to join one or more of the following groups (some of these clubs already exist while others are theoretical but should be examined for the future).

Hiking Club

Champlain Hiking Club began in 2018. The club was created around the purpose of being “a way for students of all ages, majors, and hiking experience to get together and take advantage of the Vermont trails.” All chosen hiking spots are accessible to mixed-level hikers. For more relaxed activity, the group also holds nature walks throughout the semester.

Outing Club

Outing clubs are becoming increasingly more common, as colleges begin to see their use as a tool for addressing mental health. Bates College, Middlebury College, and Dartmouth College have all created wildly successful outing programs; proof that outing clubs can function and thrive in smaller-scale private colleges, rather than just large state universities.

The creation of a comparable program at Champlain would focus on getting students into the outdoors to leverage these same mental and physical effects in the campus community.

Access to both green space and outdoor recreation in Burlington is quite limited, especially in walkable proximity to Champlain College and winter months making the campus feel like a

prison for many students. This is particularly relevant for students who are experiencing their first Vermont winter.

An outing club would give students who typically do not have access to the outdoors or opportunities beyond Burlington a new and exciting exposure. Outing club would be a student run group. Larger colleges, like UVM, have college-sanctioned outing programs that are run more like sports programs. However, Champlain is a smaller school, so the greatest success for an outing club at Champlain, would most likely be with a student run club with heavy oversight from a faculty member or faculty board to create an unique year-to-year experience. The club's management would be separated into a group of trip leaders, each of whom would be certified in Wilderness First Aid at the very least (Wilderness First Responder being ideal). Those individuals would either lead groups of students on hikes, ski trips, etc, or the group would hire a professional guide. The perks of hiring a guide include students being covered under the guide service's insurance (rather than the college's), the guide being likely more highly-certified in first aid than the student leaders, and a more intimate knowledge of Vermont's landscape and the experience. Monthly trips would be optimal as the team would have time to properly plan and maximize the budget. Bi-weekly meetings could foster community connections with discussions centering on budget/fundraising, direction of events, and sustainable education. Educational content could inform members on the events environment, how industries are impacting the field, and what their role is to improve scenarios or preserve the environment's safety as Vermont community members.

Gardening Club

Gardening Club would be created around the purpose of connecting students to their environment. Gardening is an extremely rewarding experience that would also give students a physical outlet to get outside. Programming could include learning to grow seedlings indoors for the winter months that could be transplanted into Champlain's community garden (located behind Rowell) or grown fully indoors, going to talk with local farmers and horticulturalists, and designing greenery for campus such as raised beds, flower boxes, and indoor planters.

Hall Activities

Activities implemented along with the physical design of the residence hall would serve the purpose of building community, mitigating stress, and helping students stay grounded, healthy and stable. At least one of the following components should be incorporated into each hall activity or event. Any combination of these components could be utilized.

Yoga and Meditation

Yoga and meditation are very effective tools for reducing stress, anxiety and depression (Dasgupta, 116). People who regularly meditate or do yoga experience reduced cortisol levels which indicates that they are less stressed overall (Dasgupta, 131). Residents will be encouraged to attend the regular yoga classes at the Champlain Fitness Center as well as yoga and meditation events in the residence hall. The Community Builder and occasionally guest professionals would lead the hall in yoga and meditation practices on a semi-regular basis. Educational materials on yoga and meditation will be readily available to residents and they will be encouraged to take control of their own wellbeing through these practices.

Journaling

At the start of the year, all McDonald residents would be given a journal and encouraged to document their first-year experience. Journaling is a great tool for gaining control of one's emotions and improving mental health as it allows people to freely express themselves.

Expressing yourself through journaling helps prioritize problems, fears, and concerns, track behaviors to recognize triggers and learn ways to better control them or recognize healthy habits and how to further implement them, and provides an opportunity for positive self-talk and identifying negative thoughts and behaviors. (Watson, Fraser, Ballas, 2020) Not only can the tool be used to support individual mental health, but it can be used as a reflective experiential tool. As a learning community, the group will have many experiences and information to waid through and connect. Using guided reflective journaling activities can capture students' changing perceptions, track growth, and give them the ability to connect experiences, opinions, and information. (Dunlap, 2006) Reflections on experiences may also lead to suggested improvements to the program, guidance if a member hopes to become the Community Builder, and recall of programming and development if the member wished to discuss the experience in a job interview.

Aromatherapy

Aromatherapy can provide relief from stress, anxiety, depression, fatigue, insomnia and other conditions (Dasgupta, 144). Essential oils that are associated with positive mental health benefits include bergamont, cedarwood, geranium, jasmine, lavender, marjoram, orange,peppermint, rose, rosemary, sandalwood and ylang ylang (Dasgupta, 145).



Figure 8: A chart explaining the benefits of different essential oils.
(Source: Dr. Jockers, <https://drjockers.com/6-ways-use-essential-oils/>)

Sustainability Education

Teaching residents about sustainability will give them a sense of importance and meaning, a key to psychological well being (Thomashow, 130). In the same vein, community service indicates community wellness (Thomashow, 139). A priority goal of the program is sparking an enthusiasm in students to work for positive change both on campus and in the world. At the beginning of and continuing throughout the year, community dialogue about environmental issues, how to be an engaged citizen, and the students' role on campus would be incorporated into all programming and hall meetings. These discussions would allow students to gain insight in how they want to shape their college experience and what their life-long impact will look like. Residents would have easy access to educational material regarding the environment and sustainability. Students looking for engagement outside of the hall will be encouraged to

participate in Roots Activism, an on campus non-profit organization whose goal is “working to make activism more accessible by empowering communities and individuals through connection to resources, people, and opportunities.”

Organizational Structure

Sophomore Mentorship Program

The Sophomore Mentorship Program is designed to pair a sophomore student who has previously lived in the wellness community with an incoming first-year student, preferably on a one-to-one match. The program provides an opportunity to help first-year students with their transition from high school into college, a position the mentors were recently in, while creating new connections. The mentor will offer peer support to new students navigating all aspects of college life--the academic, the emotional, and the social.

What's requested:

- Attend all social sessions hosted by the Community Builder (approximately 5 hours per semester)
- Commit to quality check-ins with first year students either in-person, or via email, text, video chat etc. (4-5 per month)
- Commit to meet face-to-face bi-weekly

Class Requirement

First-year students will partake in two courses, DIY: Create Economy (fall semester) and Place-Based Research (spring semester). The goal of these courses is to educate students on individual and home based wellness and how to transcend this into strengthening their community.

Fall Sem. : ENP-260 DIY: Creative Economy (1 Credits)

Class Summary:

The Do-It-Yourself movement has increased opportunities for people to be part of the creative economy and participate in an alternative economic system. In this one-credit course students will examine the environmental impacts of consumerism and investigate how an ecological economic approach can contribute to developing an alternative system. Students will develop skills that contribute to reducing consumption and highlight different choices to purchasing new items. Students will teach each other to broaden proficiencies. Interests can range widely, including but not limited to canning and preserving food, setting up a community bartering system, making skin care products, creating/repurposing clothes, and building furniture.

Reason for picking this course:

DIY is more significant to wellbeing than just saving yourself a few bucks. Allowing ourselves time to indulge in our interests and desires through projects lends a practical outlet that is good for the brain and inspires new ideas. Not only is there the satisfaction of being self-reliant, but it also regains control of power that typically feeds our high consumption economy. This power

gives the people the ability to make more clear decisions of what goes into their products while encouraging recycling, upcycling, and a new found pride in our things.

Spring Sem. : ENP-300 Place-Based Environ. Study (3 Credits)

Class Summary:

Students will engage in a place-based approach to understanding our relationship with the environment. Applied examples of innovative sustainability initiatives and policies will be investigated through field trips, readings and guest speakers. Students will gain a deeper understanding of local issues and solutions and how they fit into national and global contexts and how they can be implemented to work for change.

Reason for picking this course:

After the fall semester of learning the power of DIY, the pros and cons that come with buyer power, and the need for change within our communities to become more sustainable, first-year students will be taking part in a community project. This class will serve as a tool to understand shareholders of their project and an opportunity to talk with field experts. Understanding a variety of perspectives provides personal insights and helps paint the big picture more clearly. This is imperative as community-based problems and solutions should not be made on an assumed need.

Community Project

Through tools developed in DIY: Creative Economy, engaging events, and general interests, McDonald Hall residents will pick an identified community based project at the end of the fall semester to work on as a collaborative team. A project proposal will be curated by the hall with the guidance of the Community Builder and faculty board. Information in the proposal should include the identified problem or opportunities for growth, a variety of solutions, the selected solution, and planned strategy for meeting the goal. Stories are an essential part of understanding perspective. Place-Based Research will create opportunities to connect with field experts and stakeholders that are being directly affected by the project. The Community Builder works with faculty and helps guide the students through the project, without taking control, through supportive collaboration, prompting, and mentorship. At the project proposal and completion of the project, the hall will hold a community celebration open to all students and faculty to present their work and celebrate community and building stronger connections.

Brainstorming Event

Each student deserves a fair opportunity in which project is selected. The Community Builder will collaborate with faculty to select three themes after analysing the interests of the members based on what they say in their housing selection application. The themes will be introduced at the begin of the semester and be incorporated in some form into the curriculum. Towards the end of the semester the Community Builder will hold two brainstorming events in one of Champlain's whiteboard-walled classrooms.

Part I: Idea Generation

Part one will involve students being randomly broken up into teams of ten. Teams will then be presented with one of the themes and students will highlight community relevant problems and/or areas of necessary growth for 15 minutes. All ideas will be written down whether students view them as being good or bad. Each team will then be given five minutes to select five topics from the list for further discussion. The teams will then be again randomly arranged and will repeat the same process for the second theme and then the third theme. Part two of the first brainstorming event will then involve the residents being broken up into ten randomly selected groups of five. Each group will be given five ideas from the previous groups and the team will select one of concepts to expand upon through creating a concept map. After twenty-five minutes the lists will be again switched and this process will repeat three times. Part three, students will come back as a group. Either the students or community builder will take a photo of each concept map and it will be uploaded into a presentation where it can be blown up on a bigger screen and presented. The group will then go through the problems and areas of necessary growth and will be asked to rank the idea based on criteria created by the Community Builder. After considering their assessment and personal interests, each person will vote for their top three topics. Once the final results are released, students will pick which of the three they are most interested in. Concluding brainstorm meeting one.

Part II: Project Selection

After the conclusion of the first brainstorming session, students will have each selected a problem that they are interested in pursuing. Groups will then be formed around selected ideas and be given a week to form a solution(s) and an argument for why it should be the selected

project. The Community Builder will then facilitate a debate where all ideas, arguments, and counter arguments can be heard. A secret ballot will then be held for the final project selection.

Part III: Project Proposal

With the final selection of the project, it is vital to connect the dots and decide how the group will reach their goals. The community builder will again act as a facilitator to make sure the first years have a complete and thought out proposal based on their expertise in leadership and/or guiding policy implementation. This may include defining who is a stakeholder, what disciplines should be applied, procedure, and necessary roles for each member based on need and individual strengths.

Project's Organizational Structure

Residents

Residents would be broken up into smaller groups based on roles to tackle the big picture more efficiently. Each group would have a voted-in or volunteer group representative that would act on a hall board. Members of the hall board would keep group members accountable and give progress reports to the Community Builder on a regular basis during weekly meetings. If problems arise amongst members within groups or if groups feel as though the representative is not doing a proper job students can appeal to be switched to another group or elect a new group representative.

Who else can get involved?

After a few years of the community being in place, past residents may want to get involved. The project proposal will be released at the beginning of each new year (the end of the fall semester).

McDonald Hall residents may propose a 'HELP WANTED' appeal for certain areas such as field expertise in education, management, and environmental policy, special skills, or just extra hands for more laborious activities. Juniors and seniors who took part in the program their first year, seniors from any major, or faculty members can originally send in applications to join in the project, but if spots remain open the application will open up to the full student population.

Community Builder

Who is the Community Builder?

The Community Builder is ideally a senior Environmental Policy or Leadership major (a major currently in development) or a minor in either field, who would serve as a leader and peer educator who would live within the learning community. The member would collaborate with faculty to foster a healthy and strong community based environment through educational and supportive lifestyle programming. This position would be controlled by both Residential Life and Center for Service & Sustainability Learning. They would meet with RAs' Areas and Eco-Reps bi-weekly (transitioning between both each week). Potential candidates would be interviewed by a panel that would include a representative from Residential Life, Center for Service & Sustainability, the current Community Builder, and professors involved in the required classes. The position would double as an on-campus job, receiving the same benefits as an RA, and capstone project. This is the perfect position for someone passionate about the wellness, community, and the environment and looking to grow their programming and leadership skills.

Goals for the Community Builder

The primary goal of the Community Builder is very fluid as wellness is a complicated and personal area. The Community Builder is allowed to take these general guidelines and really run with what this could look like- potentially dramatically changing the program each year.

● **Fall Semester**

- Educating and encouraging students to be engaged in individual wellness.
 - Programming may include topics:
 - Yoga & Meditation
 - Nutrition
 - Journaling
 - Exercise

● **Winter Break**

- After students have gone through the project selection, the Community Builder will collaborate with the professor facilitating Place-Based Research in reaching out and connecting to different groups and organizations for the class to meet with in relevance to the project.

● **Spring Semester**

- Educating and encouraging students to be engaged in community wellness.
 - Programming may include:
 - Volunteering
 - Food Systems Education
 - Community Celebration

Job Requirements

Approximately 20 hours of work per week

- **Community Project: Project Manager**

- Investigate and propose themes based on the community's interests.
- Brainstorming Event
- Collaborate with professors to connect with organizations, stakeholders, and field experts for Place-Based Research.
- Attend Place-Based Research field trips.
- Gain van certification to transport students.
- Manage the project proposal.
- Guide students in developing project procedure and timeline.
- Hold community members accountable for project responsibilities.
- Bi-weekly meetings with faculty project mentors and group representatives rotating with hall meetings.

- **Attend Eco-Reps & RA Area meetings on a bi-weekly rotating schedule.**

- **Programming**

- Due to the fluidity and scopes of wellness programming will fluctuate depending on the proposed wellness goals of the Community Builder and the educational goals of faculty mentors, but should include physical, mindfulness, and educational factors. A programming proposal will be submitted as a part of the interview process.

- **Sophomore Mentorship Program**

- Pair mentors and mentees.
- Host social sessions to bring together all mentors and mentees.

- **Proposing reflective journaling prompts**

- As an experiential learning community, reflecting on community experiences will be a big part of individual development. By proposing weekly themes, daily

writing prompts, or event focused questioning, students may find nuisance self and community depth while diminishing writing burnout (Dunlap, 2006).

- **Curating Educational Material**

- Similar to how RAs decorate and create informative bulletin boards, the Community Builder is responsible for making educational material regarding wellness, the environment, and sustainability easily accessible to students. This may include:
 - Books (bookshelf or list of recommended books in the library)
 - Posters created in the Generator Space
 - Weekly newspaper with informative links

Resident Assistant & Community Builder: What is the difference?

Similar to every other first-year hall, two resident assistants (RAs) will be assigned to McDonald Hall along with the Community Builder with the job description remaining the same. The only difference will be that RAs who are also Eco-Reps will be given priority and encouraged to be assigned to this building. They will use their expertise as an Eco-Rep to shift their programming so that the educational events will be approached through an environmentalist lens. Events therefore will be submitted to both the Area Coordinator and the Director of the Center for Service and Sustainability for approval.

The Community Builder is not responsible for upholding Champlain College's community standards and crisis response and will be effectively held to the same standards as any other member. If the Community Builder is concerned for a resident beyond the scope of the project

they will be accountable to report to the RAs who will then follow Res. Life's guidelines in procedural solutions.

How to Apply?

After committing to Champlain College, a section of the housing selection platform will be devoted to the overview of the program. If there is an identified interest students will be asked to fill out a separate application. Answers to these questions will also be used by Community Builder and faculty to develop themes for DIY: Creative Economy. After students are accepted to the program, they will be asked to sign an agreement to commit to upholding community standards in fostering a supportive, collaborative, and healthy environment.

Potential Questions:

- Why do you think you are a good candidate for the Champlain's Health and Mindfulness Program?
- What is something you feel passionate about?
- Why are you interested in joining the community?
- If accepted, what would you like to take away from the community at the end of the year?
- What are some of your hobbies and interests?
- Do you enjoy team projects? If so, give an example of a project that highlights your work.

Conclusion

Wellness and education go hand in hand, but all too often students are faced to compromise and put one before the other. The campus mental health crisis is complicated, but can be alleviated through implementation of programs such as the Champlain Health and Mindfulness Program. However, in order for it to be successful, dedication and participation on the schools part is necessary. Supporting Champlain students' mental health is the most important thing the administration can do to support students' education. Our proposed initiative will help first-year students develop skills to live a healthier lifestyle and give them the ability to be productive, engaged, and mindful Champlain citizens. The hall would give students who don't currently have their own niche the sense of place and community that they're lacking, but can also be utilized to give vulnerable students a safe space to grow and learn coping mechanisms to deal with the stresses and hurdles of the college experience. All students should be mindful of their mental, physical, and emotional well-being for the sake of themselves and their education, and the Champlain Health and Mindfulness Program would provide a way for students to gain these skills.

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