

Wellness as a Component of the Curriculum and Co-Curriculum at the University of New England

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Abstract

The educational literature is replete with data suggesting the positive impact of wellness behaviors on student success in the 21st century. Pharmacy graduates with a background in wellness and integrative/complimentary medicine will become increasingly important as we expand our understanding of the role social determinants, such as emotional and cognitive influences, have on health. The University of New England College of Pharmacy has adopted both a curricular and co-curricular approach to wellness. We have established a specialty track in Wellness and Integrative Medicine [SS1] that will prepare students, through both didactic and experiential coursework, to employ evidence-based treatments that enhance a patient's whole well-being. In addition, the college has established a Wellness Task Force [SS2] with the goal of enhancing the mental and physical health of all members of the college community, which includes stress management and preventing burnout. We believe that an essential component of transforming contemporary pharmacy practice is to ensure graduates are prepared to provide optimal patient care through an understanding and validation of alternative medical treatments that emphasize patient well-being. Moreover, in order for students and faculty to successfully navigate the challenges associated with learning and teaching in today's environment, an appreciation for the value of embracing behaviors that enhance personal and professional well-being is essential.

Wellness Task Force

The Wellness task force is a theoretical model created to determine internal and external factors that contribute to student, faculty, and staff burnout. The task force utilized the reading, Taking Action Against Clinician Burnout: A Systems Approach to Professional Well-Being (Chapter 8: Student and Trainee Burnout and Professional Well-Being) in order to get everyone involved on the same page.

The task force consisted of faculty, staff, P1, P2, and rotating P4 students.

Activities & Findings

Workload assessment to determine time spent on all assignments, studying, and college of pharmacy related material.

Findings: Students have an unbalanced class & exam schedule.

Student Surveys of perceived issues and time spent outside of school were collected and anonymized.

Findings: Students have limited time available outside of pharmacy (school, work, organizations, etc.) for self care and hobbies. Burnout factors are both internal and external to the College of Pharmacy.

Independent study students completed **literature reviews** on models of burnout in health professional schools.

Findings: Many ideas for alleviating burnout and many of them would be easy to implement

Wellness and Integrative Medicine Track

Students in the Wellness and Integrative Medicine Track take 3 out of 5 elective choices in order to learn about emotional, cognitive, and physical influences on health such as stress, resilience, and positive thinking, sleep, physical activity, and nutrition. Students learn behavioral lifestyle modifications as part of prevention and treatment of disease and how these modifications contribute to overall health.

Complementary and alternative therapies, as well as dietary supplements and nutraceuticals are covered for diseases where evidence has shown benefit alongside traditional therapy. Nutrition, including macro and micro nutrient needs, as well as dietary management of common diseases is a component of this track. Finally, students learn how to educate patients on incorporating these concepts into their own self-care for a sustainable model of health.

This track provides pharmacy graduates with skills and knowledge in an emerging field of pharmacy within community and ambulatory care practice sites. Graduates are uniquely prepared for coaching patients on proper utilization of nutrition and nutraceutical products available within the community pharmacy setting, as well as establishment of strong patient relationships which build trust and promote positive, healthy lifestyles within our patients.



Lifestyle Medicine Elective Class - Yoga Nidra

Wellness and Integrative Medicine Electives **(any 3 may be chosen):**

- Lifestyle Medicine (2 cr.)
- Phytotherapy (2 cr.)
- Nutraceuticals (2 cr.)
- Nutrition Education and Health Behavior Change (3 cr.)
- Nutrition Across the Lifespan (3 cr.)

Rotation experiences

Students will have a unique opportunity to complete one of their rotations with a designated faculty member who is practicing many or all of the components of this track. The student will have at least one, and up to several projects and patient interactions where they will utilize what they have learned in the classroom in practice. Practical considerations encountered with patients will be explored and discovery of patient centered plans of care utilizing all aspects of holistic care as part of the plan for treatment. This may include food choices, movement, mind body approaches and stress management, referral to other providers, or exploration of available supplements and botanicals which may be integrated with traditional methods of treatment. Focus in this rotation will be on careful consideration of evidence based risk versus benefit on a case by case basis and in careful consultation with other health care providers.