

Q AND A

The screenshot shows a video recording of a presentation. On the left, a man in a light blue shirt is speaking at a podium with an SFU logo. The background behind him is a light blue screen. On the right, a slide is displayed with the following text:

**Designing Healthy Campus Communities:
Enhancing Student Wellbeing and Academic Success**
August 15, 2013

Moderated Discussion Period

Questions? Comments?
Online Participants: Please submit your questions or comments in the text box below and be sure to include your name and organization

SFU SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

8/15/2013

Questions from the Audience

Q and A

QUESTIONS FROM THE AUDIENCE

- 1. Graduate Student at SFU:** Student's needs are constantly changing and are unique to each person. So, how would you design a healthy campus to suit those needs of people who are at different places in their lives and learning? Do you have a concrete or practical example to be applied?

Mark: There is a real tension between a settings approach taking a whole population perspective where you are looking at the entirety of the population within the university context and recognizing that there are a diverse range of people and sub populations within it. Listening to the presentation of what is happening at SFU, there are some really good examples of how you have begun to do that. Particularly, the use of photo voice project with students to get the perspective of what health means to them, what matters to them and in that sense what designing a healthy campus could look like. At the University here, we have tried to do that kind of bottom up assessment to see what's necessary from different perspectives and assimilate that into overarching initiatives. But at the same time we have looked at the needs of particular groups, such as international students. Culturally, there are some real differences in different groupings there so to actually get involved in the induction process when students are arriving, I think can be a really powerful way of them knowing that we are there and making sure that that aspect of being a supportive environment is real.

- 2. Participant from the University of Lethbridge:** How is SFU financially supporting all of the work described today?

Martin: Difficult to answer, but easy at the same time. One of the core elements of this work is trying to find systems and processes, trying to find successes, things that already exist on campus and trying to leverage them. Trying to take an assets approach. Trying to showcase things that are working well. It's hard to finance this sort of thing. The biggest financial bit of this that we're doing is ensuring we have a resource health promotion team and ensuring they are able to do this sort of health promotion work, opposed to being distracted with work that isn't as strategic.

- 3. Counsellor:** What role do counsellors play in this initiative and are there any concrete examples?

Martin: With this sort of work, what we're doing is trying to address systems across the university that might not be normally interacting with counselling. Part of the problem would be dedicating counselling time away from face time, from direct patient care and all the work that is related to direct patient care. If you're able to take that precious resource away from that work, then there is a role in working with a health promotion team in looking at the systemic work that is being done. Typically, we are talking about doing stuff that is hard to find the time to do. That was a big change that SFU, was taking this away from something being something on the side of someone's desk in health and counselling and thinking about it being the responsibility of the health promotion team. That means that health promotion team are the ones who are able to address the things happening in classrooms, or taking to people in finance or in research or facilities. Counselling continues to play a very important role in providing the context, and there is an urgency in this work. Especially when we get into things like mental well-being in the workplace and with faculty, I think counsellors will be able to do some very interesting work.

Shaylyn: I want to pick up on the experience stand point. We've seen counsellors take their learning and experience from working with students and really provide an additional voice and leadership, and some really great initiatives that their able to find resourcing in. From Healthy Ambassadors program, working with residences, looking at policies and strategies, etc.. They bring that wisdom and experience on day to day of helping support individual students and bringing that to light.

Stephen: When we are grappling with a whole campus initiative, that's going to include a lot of components. It will involve supporting individual students and individuals on campus as part of overall initiative instead of a singular focus. Counsellors have a huge role to play. The counselling team can act as champions for this type of work, they can contribute in terms of collaborative planning, offer important insight on how to access knowledge and opportunities in order to really build on the expertise they have in order to really design that kind of multi component, multi-faceted approach that is really going to attend to all the various factors that play into the health and welling of students, staff and faculty on the campus community. It's about adding counsellors to the team and acknowledging there is a real role to play.

Mark: Counsellors, both student and staff, have an important role to play. That can go beyond responding to individual problems. Although the information collected is confidential, it is possible to collate to identify the structural and organizational issues that are contributing these underlying problems so that other stakeholders at the university can begin to address these in a preventative way. There is something much bigger about challenging the stigma of mental illness that has to go beyond the role of counsellors.

Martin: At SFU, this is a component of our mental health strategy. This is a look at our highest level on campus. This being a component of it, looking at processes and systems. Developing very good intervention, prevention is also incredibly important work as well. Those are pieces that require leadership from counselling. On our campus, our counsellor is leading in an anti-stigma movement.

- 4. Academic Advisor at SFU:** In terms of the current initiatives for healthy campus communities, how are the initiatives being measured for effectiveness at SFU? What do you see as the end goals/ results at SFU? What are some specific examples or what the timeline looks like?

Mark: Evaluation has been enormously challenging, in part because of a lack of funding. There is a lack of leadership from government here to get funding. There are some general things to point to. The first is that it is easier to evaluate specific projects within a whole systems program, rather than evaluate the whole system itself;; however, it's very important because it has added value when you evaluate the whole system. We have less serious examples of people who have funded the systems on a whole here.

Alisa: It is a challenge to evaluate this kind of work because there are so many components to it, so we evaluate some of the components. So we have partnered with some of our faculty to look at what measures we should be looking at to see if programs are having an impact. From the broader perspective, we are still in the process of making our evaluation plan. Some of the process measures are around how have we engaged people? From an outcomes perspective, we are looking to embed a few questions in the undergraduate student survey that we would consider recognizing whether students feel part of the community.

Rosie: Retention rates are also part of the evaluation, to give us information about whether we are successful. We have 200-300 people virtually today, which is a measure of the impact we are having.

Shaylyn: I want to take a moment to talk about the word designing. There is both psychical design in the places that we are, but also an opportunity to invite creativity. In the face of complex problems and complex institutions, complex cities and governments and all the moving parts that really interact between the number of organizations, it can be overwhelming so the opportunity to step back and think about what are the ways, what are the small things that I can do to make a difference? In the video, we see the things around the words people speak and that's really important. The institutions that students attend and that we work with, policies, norms and culture are not set in stone, they are created by people. We have the ability to make changes and advance a vision of what we'd like our campuses to look like. From the words we speak to the policies and decisions that are made, to the organizational culture and systems that we make, to the learning environments and student experiences, they really do all connect. Students, staff, faculty, administrators you all do have an important role to play. At healthy minds/ healthy campuses, we are committed to be a link to connect ideas, resources and to be a community. We want to gather examples of campuses that are already doing great work.