

Quality Initiative Initial Proposal

The purpose of the initial proposal is to identify a problem or opportunity as it relates to one of the strategic framework priorities. It is not intended to outline a specific plan or solution.

Title (*Brief working title that captures the essence of the problem or opportunity.*)

Thriving Together: An Interprofessional Collaboration Enhancing Community Mental Health Awareness

Problem/Opportunity Statement (*One or two sentence description of the problem or opportunity. Should focus on specific, observable indicators. Should not infer cause and should not include solutions.*)

Despite ongoing recognition of mental health as a critical component of overall well-being, Shawnee County and Washburn University currently face a significant gap in mental health resources and awareness. Observable indicators of this problem include an increasing number of students with unmet mental health needs on campus, a lack of faculty resources to meet these needs in the classroom, and fragmented community based pathways to care.

Proposal Themes (*Select one quality initiative theme for the proposal*)

- Expand Learner Success Opportunities and Pathways
- Enhance our Environment to Learn, Work, and Thrive
- Accelerate Collaborative Partnerships to Grow the Community

(For more on Washburn's Strategic Framework, see the [Strategic Framework](#))

Description of how the problem or opportunity relates to the identified theme

The increasing recognition of mental health as a vital component of overall well-being presents both a challenge and an opportunity for our campus community. Currently, there is a significant gap in mental health resources and awareness, which is reflected in the rising number of reported mental health issues among students. Additionally, many students lack an understanding of the community resources available to them, hindering their ability to seek help when needed both as a student, and as they enter the workforce within our community.

This problem not only affects individual students but also impacts the broader campus environment, leading to decreased academic performance, lower retention rates, and an overall decline in community well-being. Addressing these issues requires a proactive approach that prioritizes the development of collaborative partnerships within the community.

Though numerous mental health organizations exist within Shawnee County, there is currently a fragmented community based pathway to care, meaning that many organizations provide mental health resources in a siloed approach. By focusing on accelerating collaborative partnerships, established organizations may serve as a bridge to connect those in need with timely mental health resource support.

Benefits (*Description of desired outcomes, both tangible, such as decreased costs or increased revenue, and intangible, that is those improvements that are important to control, protect or enhance but are difficult to quantify. Benefits should be realistic and measurable.*)

The foundation of the strategic framework for Washburn is to thrive together. Creating an on-campus presence focused on mental health awareness and resources available can yield numerous tangible and intangible benefits.

Tangible benefits:

- Increased resource awareness
- Collaborative partnerships
- Data-driven improvements
- Reduction in crisis incidents

Intangible Benefits

- Cultural shift
- Empowerment and advocacy
- Enhanced academic performance
- Holistic development
- Community partnerships

Thriving Together Framework

- Collective impact: By emphasizing collaboration, the initiative can harness the strengths of various sectors (educational institutions, mental health organizations, local government) to create a collective impact that goes beyond individual efforts.
- Sustainable change: Creating sustainable partnerships ensures that mental health initiatives are not just temporary fixes but embedded into the culture of the campus and community, promoting long-term mental wellness.
- Inclusivity: Focusing on connections among diverse groups fosters inclusivity, ensuring that all students feel valued and supported, regardless of their backgrounds or challenges.

Desired Outcomes

- Heightened awareness of community mental health resources
- Enhanced training for educators
- Creation of a community based coalition
- Community Impact to sustain initiatives to meet mental health needs

By fostering a thriving environment through mental health awareness, the campus and community can become a beacon of support and resilience, enhancing the well-being of those struggling with mental health.

Scope (Description of the scope or impact on the institution as a whole. Specify if the scope is focused on specific areas, units or departments.)

- * Objectives:
- Increase Awareness: Elevate awareness of mental health issues and available resources among students, faculty, and within the community.
 - Enhance Accessibility: Improve access to mental health services and support on campus and within the community.
 - Train Educators: Provide training for faculty and staff to recognize and support students facing mental health challenges.
 - Foster Collaboration: Build strong partnerships with local mental health organizations, schools, and community groups.
 - Promote Student Led Initiatives: Assist with the development of sustainable peer to peer support initiatives which foster the health and well-being of students.

Target Audience

- Students
- Faculty and Staff
- Community Partners

Expected Outcomes

- Increased Awareness: Higher levels of awareness regarding mental health issues and resources among students and faculty.
- Improved Resource Utilization: More students accessing mental health services and supports.
- Trained Faculty: Educators better equipped to recognize and support students facing mental health challenges.
- Strengthened Community Ties: Established and effective partnerships with local mental health organizations.

Stake Holders (Identify all persons/groups that have an interest or position in the issue – both internal and external to the University.)

- * Internal:
- WU Counseling
 - School of Nursing
 - IPEC Committee (WU)
 - Mobile School of Nursing Unit with outreach to WU Tech
 - Student Health
 - Vice President for Student Life
 - Residential Living
- External:
- Annie Buckland - Shawnee County Suicide Prevention Coalition
 - Pam Evans - Family Service & Guidance
 - Dr. Sidlinger - Valeo
 - HEARTS
 - SENT, Topeka
 - PARS
 - Shelly Schneider – KDHE
 - NAMI Topeka / NAMI On Campus
- *External partnerships would be continually evolving as the project progressed

Team Members (Individuals who will work on development of full proposal and/or may work towards project implementation.)

* Dr. Stacy Umscheid & Dr. Michele Reisinger

Submitter Name: *

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Name and contact information of others involved in submission:

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Submitter Signature

Date

After signing, click Submit Form below. Submitters will be contacted after committee review in late November 2024.