

# Charting the Path to Collective Wellbeing: Key Findings from Laurier's Task Force Survey

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Date: November 20, 2024



# Presentation Outline

1. Background information
2. Findings summary
  - Correlations and predictive trends
3. Review of the data
  - Theme 1 – Key concerns
  - Theme 2 – Root causes
  - Theme 3 – Participant suggestions
  - Theme 4 – Other

# Survey Purpose and Design

Research Purpose: To explore the root causes of challenges and points of stress being experienced by the Laurier campus community to address them in collective ways that create a positive impact on wellbeing for faculty, staff, students and leadership.

## Survey Design:

- We obtained Administrative Approval through Laurier's Research Ethics Board
- Fifteen survey items, a mix of single response, multiple response, and text-based questions
- For the purposes of this presentation, unanswered questions or questions where a response was not selected were removed from this analysis

# Key Definitions & Conceptualizations

## What is Collective Wellbeing?

Collective wellbeing draws from and amplifies aligned movements including racial equity, social and visual arts, new economy, democracy, the environment, and health. While wellbeing is often interpreted as individual wellness, collective wellbeing speaks to interconnection and our shared capacity to flourish together. For us, collective wellbeing is a paradigm for an emerging future. It is activated in groups that heal a sense of separation, encourage authenticity, and embrace a sense of possibility amid uncertainty.

## Why Collective Wellbeing?

By reframing our work around collective wellbeing, we begin to change systems, cultures, and mindsets toward possibility rather than inevitability. When we see the purpose of organizations as spaces to co-create wellbeing for employees and those they serve, we shift how we see each other, what is valued, what is measured, and how decisions are made. When we agree that the purpose of our cities, states, and countries is to co-create wellbeing for all residents, we reimagine how to be in community with one another in a way that feels generative.

Source: <https://www.instituteforcollectivewellbeing.org>

# Demographic Information

**Total Responses / Cases (*n*) = 876**

Students = 452

Faculty = 128

Staff = 261

Leadership = 35

To help better understand different viewpoints on collective well-being, the task force initiated two events to generate dialogues among community members and solicited survey information. Of these responses, 64 participants attended the event in Waterloo and 12 attended in Brantford. Most of the responses were received from individuals who did not attend an event indicating there is widespread interest and importance surrounding these topics.

This is significant because it shows that many people are at a stage where they retain the readiness, capacity, and desire to begin evolving through preparing for upcoming change or taking immediate action.



# Key Findings

- The Laurier community is engaged, if not thriving
  - There is a strong desire to actively shape and improve campus culture
- Different groups are interested in events
  - Lack of time and differing priorities between the groups are deterring participation
  - Faculty and staff groups appear most affected by these conditions based on this survey
- People are interested in initiatives that can simultaneously enhance academic performance and wellbeing
  1. There is a recognition that different aspects of a person's identity require nourishment in order to optimize academic fulfillment and performance
  2. There is also a confirmed desire to improve campus wellbeing through practicing and working in ways which are collective and inclusive of all groups
  3. All groups want action taken and initiatives implemented to uplift our campus culture

# Correlations & Predictions

- Level of connections, event participation, and feelings of connectedness are all positively correlated
- Where is the opportunity?

## Key predictors of future event participation:

- Aggregate:
  - Past participation + Feelings of Common Goals + Feelings of Connectedness
- Student: Common goals + Past participation
- Faculty and Leadership: Common goals
- Staff: Past participation + Feelings of connectedness + Psychological safety



*Theme 1 -*  
Key Concerns

# Connections Made on Campus

Question: In the past year, how many new connections have you made within the campus community?

Response	Total (768 responses)	Breakdown			
		Student	Faculty	Staff	Leadership
0 Connections	71 (9%)	45	11	15	0
1-5 Connections	362 (47%)	181	62	110	9
6-10 Connections	105 (14%)	105	33	64	9
11-15 Connections	83 (11%)	44	10	25	4
16+ Connections	147 (19%)	77	11	46	13

Overall, it appears the majority of individuals are actively working to building more connections on campus. This demonstrates that there is an active interest, desire, or a need for building bonds to establish a social network on campus.

# Participation in Activities with Community Members

Question: How often do you participate in campus events or activities that involve other community members?

Response	Total (875 responses)	Breakdown			
		Student	Faculty	Staff	Leadership
Always	29 (3%)	24	3	0	2
Often	170 (19%)	96	19	48	7
Sometimes	280 (32%)	143	43	83	11
Rarely	284 (33%)	123	55	93	13
Never	112 (13%)	65	8	37	2

The majority of the responses (84%) fell between the Rarely, Sometimes, and Often categories which may suggest there are barriers preventing engagement in campus events or activities. Further exploration may be warranted in this area.

# Platform Engagement

Question: Which of the following platforms do you primarily use to engage with the campus community?

Response (Multiple Response Option)	Total (1,845 responses)	Breakdown			
		Student	Faculty	Staff	Leadership
Social Media	523 (29%)	373	36	99	15
University Website	338 (18%)	119	53	141	25
E-mail Newsletters	498 (27%)	228	73	171	26
In-Person Events	426 (23%)	211	66	128	21
Other	60 (3%)	21	10	28	1

Social media, e-mail newsletters, and in-person events scored the highest numbers based on the data. It is interesting that the university website was being used more as a launch page, from which individuals link into other communication sources. The marketing funnel appears to be working.

In the Other category, individuals noted they obtain information from: clubs, posters on campus, friends, social media platforms including Discord, Messenger, MS Teams, and WhatsApp, word of mouth referrals, Academic Advisors, field classes, display screens, MYLS, Connect, and informal lunches.

*Theme 2 -*  
Root Causes

# Overall Connection to the University

Question: How connected do you feel to the university community as a whole?

Response	Total (873 responses)	Breakdown			
		Student	Faculty	Staff	Leadership
Extremely connected	28 (3%)	16	2	7	3
Very connected	144 (17%)	71	17	45	12
Moderately connected	395 (45%)	200	52	126	16
Slightly connected	226 (26%)	112	45	66	3
Not all connected	80 (9%)	51	12	16	1

This finding was reassuring as respondents (65%) reported feeling Moderately, Very Connected, Extremely to the university.

# Relationality or Community-Building Skills

Question: To what extent do you agree with the statement:  
“I feel comfortable reaching out to other community members for support or collaboration?”

Response	Total (873 responses)	Breakdown			
		Student	Faculty	Staff	Leadership
Strongly agree	181 (21%)	70	23	69	19
Somewhat agree	384 (44% )	188	59	126	11
Neither agree nor disagree	183 (21%)	119	17	44	3
Disagree	86 (10%)	54	17	14	1
Strongly disagree	39 (4%)	19	12	7	1

There is a strong base of relationality already existing within the groups with the majority of individuals reporting that they feel comfortable reaching out to members of the Laurier community for support or collaboration. These core community-building skills are an incredible strength of our campus community.

# Current Effectiveness of University Initiatives

Question: How effective do you think current university initiatives are in promoting a caring community?

Response	Total (828 responses)	Breakdown			
		Student	Faculty	Staff	Leadership
Extremely effective	27 (3%)	25	0	2	0
Very effective	127 (15%)	87	11	25	4
Moderately effective	372 (45%)	196	39	121	16
Slightly effective	225 (27%)	97	41	78	9
Not effective at all	77 (10%)	17	35	21	4

The trends of this question require further investigation. While most individuals expressed thinking that current university initiatives are moderately effective, we did not get a strong response in either a positive or negative direction, even though we've obtained other data sources which express that the groups are dissatisfied with current offerings, this finding did not reinforce those data sources.



# Sense of Purpose

Question: To what extent do you agree with the statement:  
"There is a strong sense of common purpose among faculty, staff, and students at this university?"

Response	Total (831 responses)	Breakdown			
		Student	Faculty	Staff	Leadership
Strongly agree	83 (10%)	61	3	17	2
Somewhat agree	312 (38%)	174	34	88	16
Neither agree nor disagree	203 (24%)	112	25	59	7
Somewhat disagree	154 (19%)	53	35	61	5
Strongly disagree	79 (9%)	22	30	23	4

A large number of participants agreed that there is a strong sense of common purpose amongst different groups. At the very least, we know where we are going, even if we have not achieved full alignment yet.

# Differing Priorities

Question: How often do you think differing priorities among faculty, staff, and students hinder achieving common goals?

Response	Total (823 responses)	Breakdown			
		Student	Faculty	Staff	Leadership
Always	52 (6%)	22	13	16	1
Most of the time	217 (26%)	88	39	76	14
About half the time	214 (26%)	106	25	75	8
Sometimes	306 (38%)	174	47	76	9
Never	34 (4%)	22	13	16	1

It does appear that individuals perceive differing priorities to be a root cause of declining wellbeing. The majority of participants did express having experiences where they encountered differing priorities. This could be a cause for concern because these same individuals reported feeling a strong connection to the university, purpose, and ability to communicate with others. There seems to be a conflict of core operating values within the community.

# Barriers to Achieving Collective Wellbeing

Question: What do you perceive as the most significant barrier achieving collective wellbeing on campus?

Response	Total (825 responses)	Breakdown			
		Student	Faculty	Staff	Leadership
Communication issues	82 (10%)	55	3	22	2
Lack of time	292 (35%)	168	42	69	13
Differing priorities	227 (28%)	124	29	66	8
Organizational structure	121 (15%)	55	21	42	3
Other	100 (12%)	(Breakdown offered in the next slide)			

Lack of time and differing priorities were highlighted as the main barriers to achieving collective wellbeing. This finding was further reinforced at the in-person events where we heard that lack of time, workload issues, and disagreements amongst colleagues (i.e. emotional injuries) were expressed as major barriers to establishing a health work-life balance.

# Continued – Barriers (Other)

## Students (18 responses)

- Individual resources (finances)
- Social pressures
- Living off campus / commuting
- Racism and discrimination
- Inaccessible academic and auxiliary services

## Faculty (32 responses)

- Lack of resources
- Extended leaves of faculty and staff
- Favouritism and preferential treatment
- Increasingly unpleasant and unprofessional behaviour
  - Discrimination and racial microaggressions

## Staff (45 responses)

- High workload
  - Understaffing
- Siloing of different departments
- Parking
- Support from upper management
- Too many staff working from home --> Mandate is to support students

## Leadership (8 responses)

- Differing priorities and organizational structure
- Insufficient funding for staff resources
  - Austerity conditions
  - "Laurier is a place - staff, faculty, etc., need to be here more."

*Theme 3 -*  
Participant  
Suggestions

# Activities Enhancing Campus Connection

Question: What types of activities do you believe would enhance your sense of connection with the campus community?

Response (Multiple Response Option)	Total (1,623)	Breakdown			
		Student	Faculty	Staff	Leadership
Social events	565 (35%)	349	59	144	13
Workshops	380 (23%)	181	28	145	16
Student groups	215 (13%)	194	11	11	0
Volunteering opportunities	353 (22%)	210	109	109	12
Other	110 (7%)	(Breakdown offered in the next slide)			

Based on this question, participants are most interested in Social Events, Workshops, and Volunteering Opportunities.

This is good feedback for our committee in determining which future events will be offered.

# Continued – Campus Activities (Other)

Students (19 responses)	Faculty (43 responses)	Staff (42 responses)	Leadership (6 responses)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Networking and presentations</li><li>• Mentoring programs</li><li>• More leadership opportunities</li><li>• Online events<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Different workshops</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive outreach i.e. Heidi's emails</li><li>• Culture of appreciation</li><li>• Fewer but better promoted arts/culture events</li><li>• Common space for departments</li><li>• Slack Program – To better connect faculty together (decrease isolation)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Management support or collaboration groups.</li><li>• Educational days, similar to PD days in high schools</li><li>• Social events during work hours</li><li>• Staff networking events</li><li>• Events at Kitchener and Brantford</li><li>• More affinity groups i.e. book clubs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hiring processes – Ask questions about communication skills and involvement, put more emphasis on service or community engagement contributions</li><li>• Enforce the "remote work policy"</li><li>• Tours of different departments</li></ul>

# Areas for Prioritization

Question: Which of the following areas do you think should be prioritized to foster a more vibrant community?

Response (Multiple Response Option)	Total (1,636 responses)	Breakdown			
		Student	Faculty	Staff	Leadership
Mental health support	432 (25%)	259	44	119	10
Social events	413 (25%)	253	42	106	8
Academic collaboration	275 (16%)	165	39	60	11
Volunteer opportunities	189 (12%)	114	17	50	8
Diversity and inclusion	238 (15%)	135	33	63	7
Other	105 (6%)	(Breakdown offered in the next slide)			

In terms of prioritization, Mental Health Support was ranked first, with Social Events and Academic Collaboration following. Individuals also convey job security, staff development, and adequate payment for co-op placements as crucial.



# Continued – Prioritization (Other)

## Students (12 responses)

- Co-op with adequate pay
- Mandatory Disability training for faculty beyond basic AODA
- More places to do schoolwork
- Sports game viewing in lecture halls

## Faculty (41 responses)

- Job security
- Reduced burnout
- Being able to contact and access campus services
- More support for contract faculty
- Institutional modelling of constructive disagreement

## Staff (46 responses)

- Staff development
- Interdepartmental connection
- Structure of work
- Reduced gym membership somewhere
- Ensure managers/faculty are treating staff appropriately

## Leadership (6 responses)

- Hiring individuals that represent the values of the university
- More hiring at the staff level
- Informal social events, coffee hours, hot chocolate ,etc.

# Suggestions for Future Policies, Practices & Initiatives

## Students (142 responses)

- Mental health – childhood trauma, anxiety, depression, stress
- Study groups
- More free events and prizes
- Peer support programs
- Different cultural events
- Collaborate with professors to give credit for attending events
- Free psychiatrist service
- Drop-in events for lower- and upper-year students
- Community garden
- Mindfulness and relaxation zones
- Art and expression workshops
- Better inclusion of part-time students
- Volunteer or community service opportunities
- More promotion of the Student Life Levy funding program
- Care packages during exam periods

## Faculty (69 responses)

- Addressing demoralization
- Inclusion of all departments
- Better services and infrastructure for faculty
  - Accessibility
- Cross-faculty social events
- Better working conditions for Contract Faculty
- Volunteering together
- Interventions which can dim radicalism and its expressions towards others
- Practices that focalize equal treatment

## Staff (105 responses)

- Real action on decreasing workload, stress, and burnout
- More volunteer opportunities
- More investment in community building and investment in professional development
- Release time to volunteer
- Art workshops
- A welcome package
- Events offered to the whole community
- Shadowing opportunities
- Holiday or end of year banquet
- “Collective Coffee”
- Pickleball tournament
- Cultural food fair
- Outdoor events, on the land
- General wellness fund
- Smaller gatherings for introverted people
- Learning more about Hawks

## Leadership (12 responses)

- A commitment by faculty/librarians to be onsite serving our student community and staff in a positive way
- Reduction of unnecessary administrative processes
- A community breakfast (or similar) at the start of each academic year
- More short informal social events
- More in-person social/team building events
- A general health and wellness fund - direct benefits spending to the most appropriate area

*Theme 4 -*  
Other

# Future Participation in Related Events

Question: How likely are you to participate in initiatives aimed at creating a more caring and supportive campus community?

Response	Total (809 responses)	Breakdown			
		Students	Faculty	Staff	Leadership
Strongly agree	98 (12%)	56	4	33	4
Somewhat agree	363 (46%)	187	36	127	13
Neither agree nor disagree	196 (24%)	94	48	50	4
Disagree	100 (12%)	51	22	22	5
Strongly disagree	52 (6%)	25	14	9	4

There is strong allyship within groups to continue supporting activities aimed at promoting campus wellbeing. Based on the responses received, 82% of individuals reported interest in attending future gatherings or supporting initiatives. This means there is significant buy-in being expressed from all the groups for further work to be conducted in these areas.