



Student Well-being Strategy

Policy Area: Academic Governance

Approval: Executive Principal

Signature:

Date:

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Sheridan places a high value on student well-being. Sheridan is committed to an environment of support and care for each student as an individual. Sheridan's faculty and staff work together using a range of different strategies and activities to promote well-being and care for students.

The purpose of this document is to detail the strategy set out by Sheridan to make every reasonable effort to assist students in achieving and maintaining well-being. This strategy was created with input from the Academic Council and Leadership Team. It was also developed with reference to a comprehensive audit of current practices which support student well-being and retention. The audit took place in 2020. Sheridan's Strategic Plan 2021-2025 also has a clear connection to Sheridan's Mental Well-Being Strategy. Sheridan's Strategic Plan clearly identifies areas, including communities with diverse needs, where Sheridan plans to increase staffing and expertise. This final strategy is also firmly based on Sheridan's core values as seen below.

Orygen's 2017 report, "Under the Radar: The Mental Health of Australian University Students" and Orygen's Australian University Mental Health Framework form an important background to this strategy.

Sheridan's Retention Strategy was developed in 2019. In February 2021 a draft Sheridan Student Well-Being Policy was created based on information and advice gathered throughout the previous year. The draft continued to go through review and editing during 2021. The result is the Sheridan Student Well-Being Strategy.

During this time the procedures and strategies Sheridan undertakes to support student well-being were observed and reviewed. Student feedback and success as a result of those activities was recorded.

2. SHERIDAN'S CORE VALUES

1. ADDING VALUE TO SOCIETY:

The Board believes that Sheridan will improve the broader community through (1) innovative education, scholarship and research that enriches knowledge and produces graduates who will be faithful stewards of the world's resources, (2) a presentation of the Christian worldview which provides an opportunity for students to be reconciled with their Creator, and (3) modeling a community that images God's infinite, unconditional love.

2. PROTECTING FREEDOMS:

Reflecting its rich Baptist heritage of struggle for freedom, the Board promotes the political, economic, social, religious and academic freedoms enjoyed by both women and men in democratic societies. The Board understands the historical emergence of these freedoms and the quality of life that has resulted from them to be a work of common grace, and a precious, if incomplete, picture of the true reality of freedom that is found in Christ.

3. SERVING WITH INTEGRITY:

The Board promotes the principles of servant leadership at Sheridan, emphasising the importance of humility and personal integrity in all Sheridan's activities and interactions.

4. PRACTISING HOSPITALITY:

The Board practices and upholds the Christian virtue of hospitality. Sheridan will maintain low barriers to entry, including low tuition fees and open enrolment, and will provide a safe physical environment to hold personal convictions and to study, research and engage in robust debate without fear of personal abuse or discrimination.

3. ORYGEN AUSTRALIAN MENTAL HEALTH FRAMEWORK

The Orygen Australian Mental Health Framework informs Sheridan's Mental Health policy. The Orygen Framework includes the following six main principles:

1. The student experience is enhanced through mental health and wellbeing approaches that are informed by students' needs, perspectives and the reality of their experience.
2. All members of the university community contribute to learning environments that enhance student mental health and well-being.
3. Mentally healthy university communities encourage participation; foster a diverse, inclusive environment; promote connectedness; and support academic and personal achievement.
4. The response to mental health and wellbeing is strengthened through collaboration and coordinated actions.
5. Students are able to access appropriate, effective, timely services and supports to meet their mental health and wellbeing needs.
6. Continuous improvements and innovation is informed by evidence and helps build an understanding of what works for student mental health and wellbeing.

4. OBJECTIVES

4.1. Embed mental health and well-being across all aspects of student life

Current Activities

- Academic review of each unit outline with an eye to balanced workload and student well-being.
- Intervention strategies which integrate mental health and well-being support as part of every intervention meetings regardless of the initial issue stated.
- Regular attendance taken to alert lecturers, faculty and support staff of any possible need for intervention.
- Domestic Student Readiness Forms and International Genuine Student Forms which integrate questions regarding support networks and other key aspects of mental well-being to enrich the application process.
- Interviews with each potential student containing questions about regular issues which may cause stress for students. Also, engaging students in questions about past stress or mental health challenges which allows for early support and care.
- Mental well-being questions instilled into each conversation between student services staff and students.

Further Activities

- Instilling mental well-being questions and topics as part of every conversation between faculty and students.

- Increasingly equipping students using expert resources to assist and encourage other students with peer support.
- Increasing digital capability to allow students to give instant feedback concerning mental well-being as part of their experience on Sheridan's digital learning platform.

Measures of Success

- Survey of staff and students regarding use of mental health and well-being resources and familiarity of the available resources.
- Data reviewed regarding key contact points such as attendance taking and follow-up showing timely follow-up and appropriate care.
- Feedback sought from students specifically trained and equipped to offer peer support.

4.2. Increase awareness of and destigmatise mental health and well-being among students and staff

Current Activities

- Mental well-being underpinning every aspect of Sheridan Orientation. Several sessions which are focused on well-being and care as topics.
- Communication which includes information and resources regarding mental well-being using language approved by organisations with expertise and experience.
- Integrated mental well-being messaging across digital and print media.
- Events which educate and equip students and staff with regards to mental well-being using trusted resources.
- Equipping staff and students using registered and recognized resources to assist community in being aware of and educated about mental health and well-being.

Future Activities

- Establish events which include mental well-being ambassadors from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- Make available further video and print resources which promote an inclusive perspective regarding mental health and well-being
- Make available further education resources for faculty and staff online and in print across Sheridan.

Measures of Success

- Review of calendar and events which indicates successful promotion of and occurrence of mental health and well-being events with at least one of those events including a mental health ambassador from a diverse background.
- Survey of staff and students regarding mental well-being indicating a growing awareness of and education regarding mental health and well-being.
- Annual audit which shows a wide variety of materials available to staff and students regarding mental health and well-being located both in print and online in at least 5 languages.

4.3. Increase connectedness across our community

Current Activities

- Integrated exercises encouraging connection between new students at Orientation.
- Group exercises as a regular part of class time.

- Administrative offices, including Student Services, centrally located in high traffic areas.
- Common areas which are shared between staff and students.
- Access to support staff by mobile on a flexible basis to allow for students to engage with and seek support based on their needs.
- Student Services staff working with the Sheridan Student Governance Association to provide further events which encourage student connectedness
- Communication on a regular basis from Student Services which includes updates regarding achievements and information from students.
- Establishment of and participation in clubs and organisations encouraged at Sheridan.

Further Activities

- Increased offering of clubs and organisations.
- Regular outings and sporting activities provided for and by students
- Mentoring and study buddies more fully available to students.

Measures of Success

- An audit of events, clubs and organizations which indicates a minimum of 1 additional club annually, two sporting events and two outings provided for and by the student body.
- Review of in-class activities annually to evaluate in-class group activities indicating regular inclusive group activities as a part of each unit.
- Continued regular review of Orientation.
- Annual audit of communication which indicates a diverse range of news regarding students' achievements and activities.
- Survey bi-annually of students showing an increased percentage of students available for and participating in mentoring and study buddy partnerships.

4.4. Ensure early intervention for students

Current Activities

- Regular attendance taking as an early alert system for possible issues.
- Support staff available by mobile to students on a flexible basis.
- Intervention strategies which integrate counselling as part of possible care for each student seeking any kind of support.
- Counselling available free of charge to each student and a regular part of conversations between support staff and students.
- Information regarding support available in print, digitally and regularly included in student updates.
- Support staff located in high traffic areas to observe and take part in conversations allowing the identification of students who may need increased support.
- Information regarding support included in sessions which take place during Orientation.
- Communication as an integrated part of daily activities between the administrative team which allows for identification of students who need care and targeted support.
- A mental health action map provided to all faculty and staff.

Further Activities

- A mental health action map included in the student handbook and digitally available.

- Digital capability increased to allow for alerts to support staff where there are indicators that a student may need targeted support

Measures of Success

- Review undertaken in 2023 of digital capabilities and the ease of use indicates increase in ability to alert key staff to student needs.
- Student feedback loop showing positive outcomes as a result of counselling and support referrals.
- Audit of follow-up as a result of attendance taking shows timely response by faculty and staff.

4.5. Responsive crisis support for students

Current Activities

- Twenty-four-hour support for students experiencing a crisis.
- Mental health action map provided to all staff.
- Key staff equipped in Mental Health First Aid.
- Relationships established with key community support to detail safety plans for students.
- Strong communication enabled between administrative, academic and support staff to quickly put into place care for students which has been planned through thorough discussion and decision-making with the student.
- Emergency accommodation available through conveniently located private student accommodation. Accommodation recommended during crisis due to the availability of student amenities and because the close location allows for more intensive student support.
- Key mental health crisis numbers and websites available to all students and staff both digitally and in print.

Future Activities

- Seek further relationships with qualified psychologists to allow for more timely assessments of those students who require this type of assistance.
- Increase education of students and staff around overseas health cover and domestic health benefits with regards to mental health plans.
- Increase visibility of mental health crisis numbers throughout Sheridan both digitally and in print.

Measures of Success

- Audit of communication undertaken using Sheridan's mobile support indicating a clear and timely response given to students who require crisis care.
- Online and on-campus facilities reviewed, and report indicates minimum of two highly visible sources available to students and staff with clear information regarding crisis resources.
- Survey to seek information regarding awareness around mental health care plans and benefits with regards to insurance and Medicare.
- Crisis care reviewed and debriefed annually to ensure responsiveness to need and timely care.

4.6. Connect with community organisations and services to provide further resources and support to students

Current Activities

- Sheridan has established relationships with two counselling organisations to provide timely counselling for students free of charge.
- Student Services has collected a list of trusted organisations to support students who require either early intervention or crisis support
- Student Services has collected and is familiar with websites and apps to assist students with a wide variety mental-health support needs.
- A collection of printed mental-health resources and activities are kept in Student Services to be handed out to students where it may benefit them.
- Information, activities and links are available in the digital learning management system to allow for students to easily access tools which may assist them.
- Partnership established with Study Perth to provide further resources to support students with Study Perth also presenting at Sheridan Orientation starting in 2022.

Future Activities

- Partner with local diverse organisations to provide print, digital and event-based education with regards to support available to students.
- Establish a list of trusted and equipped individuals within culturally diverse organisations to assist students from a variety of backgrounds.
- Information regarding mental-well available in a minimum of 5 languages.

Measures of Success

- Student feedback loop established regarding availability of multilingual and diverse mental health resources and information which indicates diverse student needs are increasingly met through appropriate resources.
- Student feedback collected during follow-up intervention meetings reviewed and report shows positive mental health support established as a result of referrals and resources.
- A review of all organisations and resources undertaken annually evidencing individuals and organisations Sheridan has established relationships with are satisfactorily meeting student needs.

4.7. Provide a welcome and inclusive environment for students

Current activities

- Sheridan's Orientation specifically focuses on diversity and hospitality as a core value.
- Sheridan's diverse community is celebrated through print and digital promotion and advertising.
- Student updates and communication includes information and events regarding a culturally and linguistically diverse range of activities.
- Student experiences are shared and valued by faculty and staff as a part of classes and events.
- Student Services makes every effort to stay informed regarding current and past events globally in order to be aware of student needs.
- Academic staff work with students who have a diagnosed disability to established learning plans which assist students in resourcing expert support and in communicating with lecturers accurate information regarding required learning assistance.

Future Activities

- Increase visibility of disability learning support on the learning management system and website.
- Establish an annual event which celebrates and promotes diversity at Sheridan.
- Include in regular student updates an individual student highlight.

Measures of Success

- Continual review of Orientation which identifies key areas where diversity and hospitality is integrated and further areas where it may be encouraged and embedded.
- Faculty meetings which include one annual review a year regarding diversity in the classroom, summary to be submitted to Academic Council.
- Audit undertaken biannually regarding disability learning plans showing evidence of responsiveness and availability of care and support.
- Review undertaken regarding diversity in print and online advertising and promotion and summary submitted to Academic Council.
- Feedback loop established with students regarding diversity and inclusivity at Sheridan.

4.8. Continue mental health and well-being training and education for students and staff based on evidence and trusted resources

Current Activities

- Five staff and one current student are certified in Mental Health First Aid Training. The Director of Student Services is scheduled to become a registered Mental Health First Aid Training Instructor.
- Information and training is recommended to students and staff from a variety of trusted resources.
- The Director of Students Services has undergone several professional development activities and continues reading information from expert organisations regarding mental health in diverse communities.
- Sheridan is a member of HEPP-QN and WAPETIA and continues to take part in several studies and forums concerning student services and student well-being.
- R U OK? Day event takes place annually and receives enthusiastic promotion and participation.
- R U OK? Day resources promoted and used during exams to encourage students with regards to mental well-being and peer support.
- R U OK? Day conversation guides available in print on resource table at Sheridan.

Future Activities

- Offer Mental Health First Aid training to all students and staff.
- Establish a separate digital portal in the online learning management system for faculty and staff to access trusted information regarding student mental well-being.
- Purchase small R U OK? Day items to distribute to students with the aim of increasing visibility of mental well-being and encouraging students and staff to access trusted resources.

Measures of Success

- A minimum of two staff and two students become certified in Mental Health First Aid each year.

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- Sheridan's Director of Student Services becomes a certified Mental Health First Aid Instructor.
- Sheridan achieves recognition as a Mental Health First Aid Skilled Workplace.
- Students and staff are surveyed regarding the visibility of trusted mental well-being information, survey to indicate increased ease of access to resources and information.

5. RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Initial approval of policy and later amendments:	Board of Directors
Amendment of procedures consistent with the strategy:	Executive Principal
Distribution of strategy:	Executive Principal
Implementation of strategy:	Executive Principal, Academic Principal, Director of Student Services
Monitoring and compliance of policy:	Academic Council, Executive Principal, Academic Principal, Director of Student Services
Evaluation and recommendations for amendments:	Academic Council, Executive Principal, Academic Principal, Director of Student Services

6. APPENDIX: DOCUMENT HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL RECORD

Document Title:	Student Well-being Strategy
Source Documents:	Christian Heritage College Student Support Services for Overseas Students policy National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students (2018) Orygen 2017 report Under the Radar: The Mental Health of Australian University Students Orygen Australian University Mental Health Framework Edit Cowen University Mental Health Strategy
Associated Internal Documents:	<i>SC Student Support Services General Information</i>
Associated External Documents	
Authorised Officer:	Executive Principal
Approved by:	Executive Principal
Date of Approval:	

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Next Review Before: November 2023

Version Number	Version Date	Authorised Officer	Amendment Details