

STUDENT WELLNESS

2024-2025

ANNUAL REPORT

We pay respect to the Algonquin people, who are the traditional guardians of this land. We acknowledge their longstanding relationship with this territory, which remains. We pay respect to all Indigenous people in this region, from all nations across Canada, who call Ottawa home. We acknowledge the traditional knowledge keepers, both young and old, and we honour their courageous leaders: past, present and future.



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A LETTER FROM THE SENIOR DIRECTOR

I am honoured to present the annual report for the Student Wellness sector. This year's report reflects our continued growth and commitment to student well-being. It also highlights key advancements that address increasing demand and evolving student needs.

Over the past year, we have made important strides in academic accommodation services in response to notable growth in this area. Our team has increased efforts to promote Universal Design for Learning, which creates more inclusive educational environments for all students.

At the Student Health and Wellness Centre, we expanded our clinical team so that we can serve even more students and reduce wait times. We also welcomed a new Pharmacy Care Clinic through an exciting partnership with Shoppers Drug Mart. Pharmacists can assess and treat minor ailments, and so this collaboration significantly enhances accessibility to care options on campus.

Progress continues on our AI-driven chatbot, developed in collaboration with the Faculty of Engineering and IT. In the coming months, we will be launching a pilot chatbot that will interact with students as we explore new ways to support them while ensuring that human connection remains at the core of our services. Along with the Pharmacy Care Clinic, the development of the AI-driven chatbot is part of a sector-wide strategy that aims to streamline student access to wellness services. In 2023, staff felt this strategy was ambitious, but today, they feel optimistic about it. In cooperation with our partners, who have accompanied us on this journey, we look forward to launching our new model of Student Wellness, which will improve student access to wellness services by centralizing wellness supports for students.

As we look to the future, financial sustainability remains a critical focus. To align with broader industry practices and ensure the sustainability of our high-quality services, we are now billing private insurance providers for eligible mental health services. We remain focused on evaluating mechanisms by which we can support sustainable growth and continuous improvement to meet the evolving needs of our diverse student body. In parallel, we continue to advocate to the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security and the Ministry of Health to highlight the essential role that post-secondary institutional health services play in supporting community health.

This report reflects the unwavering dedication of our team and our shared commitment to creating a caring and supportive campus where every student has the opportunity to thrive.

Rachelle Clark
Senior Director



OUR COMMITMENT TO STUDENT WELLNESS

The University's [Transformation 2030](#) plan focuses on building the university of tomorrow with confidence, ambition and leadership by being more agile, more connected, more impactful and more sustainable, which partly involves a focus on campus wellness.

At Student Wellness, our decisions and actions are guided by our core values and several key frameworks and initiatives to ensure a comprehensive, forward-thinking approach to campus wellness. The initiatives we champion support compassion, knowledge, prevention, potential and resilience. As a signatory to the [Okanagan Charter](#), we are committed to leading health promotion and embedding wellness in all aspects of campus culture.

In this regard, the [National Standard of Canada for Mental Health and Well-Being for Post-Secondary Students](#) and our [Strategic Framework for Mental Health and Wellness](#) are integral to our efforts. Furthermore, in January 2025, the University adopted [Policy 134 – Student Mental Health](#), which sets out the University's guiding principles and commitments to student mental health and to providing information about student mental health programs, services and supports. We are dedicated to nurturing a sustainable campus culture that promotes overall wellness, embraces diversity and fuels engagement through education, resources, health care and community.

In March 2025, we launched the [Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey \(CCWS\)](#). The results show that student wellbeing at uOttawa has improved in several important areas since 2021, but significant challenges remain. Psychological distress has declined overall, with 55% of students now reporting moderate or severe distress, down from 61% in 2021. Severe distress also decreased (31% vs. 36%), and fewer students are reporting low mental wellbeing (27% vs. 37%). A greater share of students feel they belong at uOttawa (62%, up from 46%), and more students agree that wellbeing is a University priority (41%, up from 28%). Awareness of how to access mental health resources on campus also rose (40% in 2025 vs. 32% in 2021).

At the same time, the survey highlights persistent and pressing concerns. More than half of students still experience moderate or severe distress, and only 7% report high levels of wellbeing. Distress and low mental wellbeing are not evenly distributed, with higher rates among undergraduates, students identifying as women, and students with self-reported disabilities and ongoing medical conditions. Food insecurity has substantially worsened, with rates of low or very low food security rising from 16% in 2021 to 26% in 2025. These findings indicate that there is a continued need for targeted action to address student mental health, belonging, and basic needs. We will continue to analyze the survey results and present faculty-specific information to all faculties in 2025–2026. These results will inform our mental health and wellness initiatives so that we can best respond to student needs while supporting faculties.



THE YEAR IN REVIEW: HIGHLIGHTS



Education

On-campus health promotion and education

32K+ peer-to-peer interactions

26K+ Wellness Lounge visits

20+ wellness workshops



Resources

Academic Accommodations Services, Adapted Exam Centre and Student Support Services

5K+ students with academic accommodations
(12.5% increase over the previous year)

41K+ adapted exams
(17.2% increase over the previous year)

700+ students made use of Student Support Services



Health care

Student Health and Wellness Centre

94% of students were satisfied with service received

38K+ appointments



Community

Residence Life and Campus Events

75 events

8.9K+ community chats in residence





OUR TEAM

Our care team is made up of dedicated, motivated individuals who help students deal with academic or personal issues throughout their time at uOttawa.

- 12 psychotherapists
- 2 psychologists
- 1 psychiatrist
- 3 mental health intake officers
- 11 physicians
- 6 wellness assistants
- 2 medical office assistants
- 8 Adapted Exam Centre coordinators
- 1 registered dietitian
- 4 registered practical nurses
- 1 nurse practitioner
- 3 health promotion staff members
- 9 learning specialists
- 4 case managers
- 3 Campus Events staff members
- 13 Residence Life staff members
- 300+ student staff members and volunteers





A word cloud featuring various terms related to student health and wellness. The most prominent words are 'MIEUX-ÊTRE', 'HEALTH', 'SANTÉ', and 'WELLNESS'. Other visible words include 'AIDE', 'SUPPORT', 'SAFETY', 'HELP', 'SANTÉ MENTALE', 'SLEEP', 'ACCEPTANCE', 'OPTIONS', 'HABITUDES', 'MIND', 'CONSCIENCE', 'SOMMEIL', 'MINDFULNESS', 'RÉSILIENCE', 'SÉCURITÉ', 'ÉMOTIONS', 'CHOIX', 'AWARENESS', 'APPRENTISSAGE', 'HABITS', 'PLEINE CONSCIENCE', 'SOUTIEN', 'RESILIENCE', 'LEARNING', 'EMOTIONS', 'MENTAL HEALTH', and 'ACCEPTATION'.

ONE DOOR SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

The **One Door Service Delivery Model project** aims to streamline intake, reception and referral functions across all Student Wellness services by integrating resources, technologies and procedures to create one unified, cohesive point of access. The goal is to improve access to services, increase our capacity to serve students, and reduce duplication.

In 2024–2025, we made significant progress, most notably with the opening of the Shoppers Drug Mart Pharmacy Care Clinic in February 2025. Located next to the Student Health and Wellness Centre, the Pharmacy Care Clinic serves both students and the general public by offering health and wellness consultations for minor ailments, which has increased our campus's overall capacity to deliver timely and appropriate care.

We begin this academic year with an integrated intake process for mental health and case management services ensuring timely access to critical services as well as a team of wellness assistants providing streamlined supports across multiple locations. A key feature of this transformation is the upcoming launch of an AI-driven chatbot, which will help students navigate services and access appropriate resources more efficiently.

Taken in combination, these initiatives build a more accessible, efficient, student-centric service model. While we are not physically located behind “one Door”, students can now access us with one phone number (613-562-5777) and one e-mail (student-wellness@uottawa.ca), making accessing services much easier for students, and those referring them.



EDUCATION

Health promotion

Empowering students to make informed decisions

As a Canadian health-promoting campus guided by the Okanagan Charter, we empower students to make informed health and wellness decisions that support their academic and personal success through education. We develop an evidence-based wellness curriculum that addresses key topics, such as sexual health, mental health, harm reduction, population health and nutrition/physical health.

Meeting students in their spaces

There are many ways in which we help connect students to the information promoted by our team of experts. Students can connect with a health promotion specialist through a personalized health education session to receive individualized health education and support. We also make such information widely available through a peer-to-peer model on our uoWellness App, where students can explore daily tips and stay on top of campus wellness events, or in our Wellness Lounges, where students can engage with our team of 80+ student volunteers and staff. Our Wellness Lounges host activities such as our therapy dog program and a series of wellness workshops. Our outreach team is also present in classrooms and at campus-wide events.

32K peer-to-peer health education interactions

26K Wellness Lounge visits

269 personal health education sessions

1,819 uoWellness App users

812 peer wellness chats

20+ wellness workshops





RESOURCES

Ensuring equitable opportunities

Academic Accommodations Service, the Adapted Exam Centre, and Student Support Services work collaboratively to ensure equitable access to learning for all students. They provide tailored resources and support that address the individual needs of students with disabilities and/or complex needs.

Academic Accommodations Service and Adapted Exam Centre

This year, over 5,000 students registered with Academic Accommodations Service, representing a 12.5% increase over last year. Our Adapted Exam Centre processed 41,000 adapted exams, representing an increase of 17.2% over the previous year.

Last year, to improve access to services and better support to our students, our teams underwent significant changes: they welcomed three operations supervisors who report into one senior manager. These changes have allowed us to eliminate our waiting list, thus ensuring that students get the support they need in a timely fashion.

Optimizing academic accommodations services

Following the completion of the 2022–2023 Academic Accommodations Optimization project, the team shifted its focus to implementing the recommendations outlined in the final report (February 2024), namely:

1. Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

This involves reducing the need for accommodations by providing flexible, inclusive instructional design, strategies, materials and assessment methods for faculty and teaching staff, and ensuring compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*.

2. Technology and digitization

This facet involves digitizing operations, reducing dependence on manual processes, and driving cost efficiency while enhancing the experiences of students, faculty members and teaching staff.

3. Streamlining operations

We are streamlining processes and eliminating duplication through partnerships, collaborations and improved communication while enhancing the student, faculty and teaching staff experience.



Figure 1. Academic Accommodations

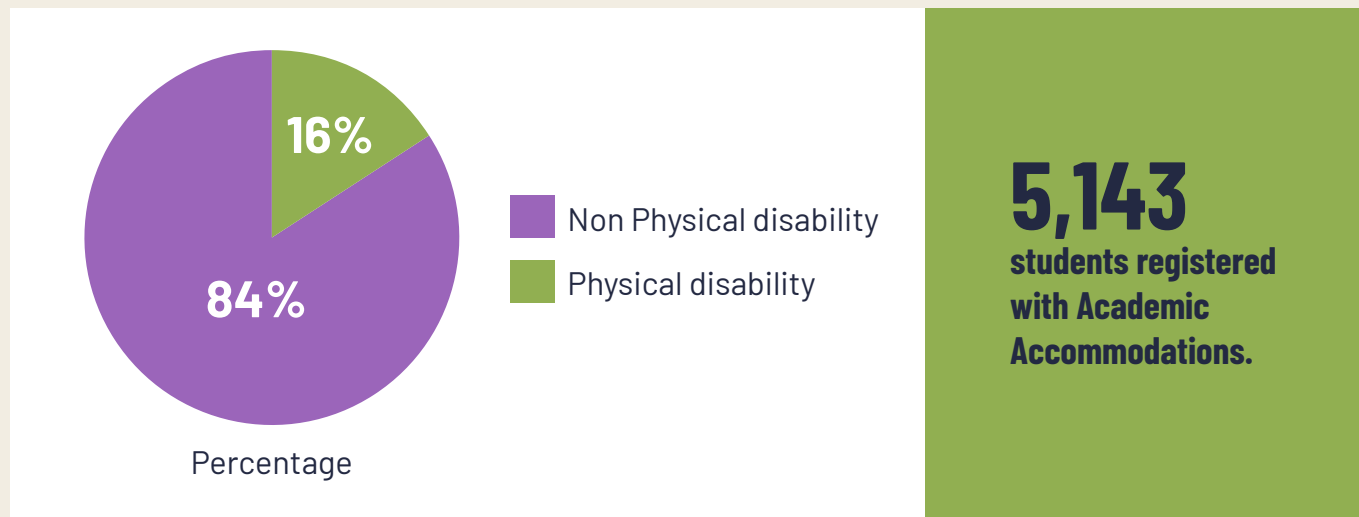
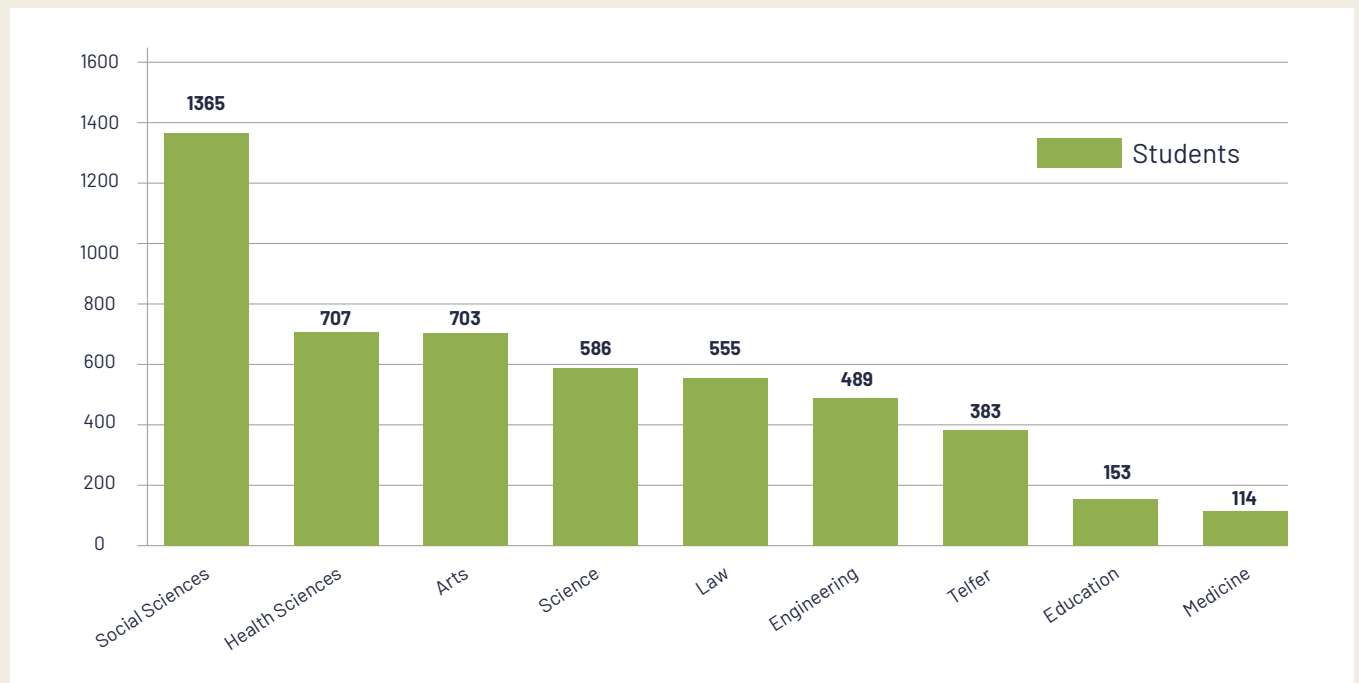


Figure 2. Students receiving academic accommodations by Faculty





“Being able to work with my learning specialist has had a very positive impact on my learning because it really helps me know that I have someone I can talk to if I am ever having a serious problem. When I was working with my learning specialist on the first day, she was very easy to talk to, very welcoming, very friendly and we were just able to have a nice conversation about what I needed to do to be able to succeed.”

STUDENT REGISTERED WITH ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS SERVICES



“I just wanted to email you to thank you for your time and kind words. My professor has since regraded my exams and I will be receiving a [passing mark], so I can graduate this summer. I really appreciate all the hard work you do to make students feel more comfortable and supported.

Hope you have a fantastic day,”

STUDENT EMAIL FOLLOWING ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS SUPPORT



Promoting accessible learning environments

We developed a bilingual Guide to Inclusive Classrooms to support professors and teaching assistants in fostering accessible learning environments. To help manage the increased volume of adapted exams, we opened a satellite exam centre at Marie Curie (MCE) with support from Facilities. We also streamlined the note-taking service model to reduce costs and enhance service delivery.

Facilitating the adoption of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Over the past year, we laid the foundation for a broader adoption of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). This includes engagement with faculties and the Teaching and Learning Support Service (TLSS), as well as delivering multiple training sessions aimed at building capacity for inclusive teaching practices. We are also working on establishing a comprehensive framework for the implementation of UDL across the institution. This will be supported by additional UDL pilot projects in 2025–2026 in courses with a high concentration of students requiring accommodations, enabling evidence-based practices that can be scaled more broadly over time.



Student Support Services

Setting ourselves up to address individual needs

In certain cases, students have complex needs that require more than one service. In this situation, our team of trained case managers act as the liaison between these students and our larger care team to integrate all services offered by Student Wellness.

In addition, our peer-support approach to service delivery makes it easier for students to access services and provides us with a better understanding of the challenges our students face. This past year, we extended our peer mentoring services at the Assistive Technologies Mentoring Centre to all students (as opposed to only students registered with Academic Accommodations Service), in support of our goal of increasing access to our services.

700+ students made use of Student Support Services

316 cases involving Student Support specialists
(primary issues were mental health, academic problems and financial insecurity)

346
referrals to Student
Support Services

120
sessions with peer
support assistants

85
appointments at the Assistive
Technology Mentoring Centre



HEALTH CARE

Student Health and Wellness Centre

Medical care

The Student Health and Wellness Centre plays a key role in supporting the health and wellness of our campus community. Our team delivers a wide range of services with a focus on accessible, inclusive and trauma-informed care to support our students' physical and mental health. As an active member of the Health Promoting Campus Network, we are committed to advancing prevention and literacy on campus by providing students with the tools and support they need to make informed decisions about their own health and wellness.

94% satisfaction rate

22.8K+ medical appointments

96% of students felt included

98% of students felt safe



"The doctor I saw was very helpful. She explained my options in detail and clearly listened and responded attentively to my needs. She was very friendly and confident in ensuring that I felt cared for."

STUDENT PATIENT AT THE STUDENT HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTRE



“I always felt that I could talk about pretty much anything with my therapist. She made sure the environment of our appointments felt safe and comfortable.”

STUDENT RECEIVING CARE FROM THE PSYCHOTHERAPY AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES TEAM

Psychotherapy and Mental Health Services

Building a caring and compassionate community

The Psychotherapy and Mental Health Services team helps to embed wellness into all uOttawa activities by delivering training, workshops and presentations, both in classrooms and to professors and staff members. They focus on helping students and other members of the uOttawa community to recognize when mental health services are required and on helping them develop the skills required to support themselves or others and to prevent situations from escalating, such as compassionate communication, self-compassion, emotional regulation and non-violent communication.

Increasing capacity in response to growing needs

Because we serve a campus of 48,000 students, we have developed a variety of support groups to address the needs of more students at the same time and to encourage students to connect with peers who are in similar situations. Such support groups give students the tools to progress in their journey within a community while helping them to overcome the loneliness and stigma that can be associated with mental health issues. Our latest support groups include ADHD Therapeutic Group, Coping with Eating Challenges, Emotional Regulation Therapeutic Group, 2SLGBTQIA+ Therapeutic Group and KORSA Therapeutic Group.

2,812 individuals participated in training, workshops, or presentations

710 Group support appointments

15.3K+ mental health sessions



COMMUNITY

Residence Life and Campus Events

Cultivating a vibrant, engaging and inclusive community

Residence Life and Campus Events aims to cultivate a vibrant, inclusive community where students can engage and connect with one another and thrive outside the classroom. Through dynamic and thoughtful collaboration, both teams coordinate every step, from initial planning to successful event delivery, to enhance student life for those living in residence and for the entire campus community. By organizing interactive and supportive events that promote personal growth, connection and a sense of community, our teams strive to encourage student engagement and increase our students' sense of belonging.

Communities within the larger Residence Life community

The Residence Life team offers Ten Living Learning Communities (LLC), each of which groups together students who study in the same program and one themed community, *Vivre en français*.

The ten Living Learning Communities are: Telfer School of Management, Science, Engineering, Computer Science and Computer Engineering, Nidjinawendàganag – All my relations, Arts (2), Criminology, Psychology, and Health Sciences.



Residence Life

8,959 Community chats

287 reported conduct cases

10 Living Learning Communities | **1** Themed community



Campus Events

28K+ participants

75 events for students

60K sponsorship dollars raised

STUDENT WELLNESS STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

2025–2028

Building on our past successes and learning from the challenges we have faced, Student Wellness has planned initiatives that will be implemented over the next three years in support of the following strategic priorities.

1. Embed wellness into core business

We aim to enhance our collaboration with faculties and services in order to embed mental health into policy and decision-making, and to implement federal and provincial priorities through a wellness lens and data-driven decision-making.

2. Strengthen communications

We aim to enhance Sector-wide internal communications, increase awareness of the Sector's services, and develop a University-wide mental health and wellness communication strategy, with particular focus on first-year students and residence-specific outreach.

3. Ensure continuous improvement and assessment

We aim to implement WellMetrics for ongoing assessment, create a transparent reporting plan, and use data and feedback to guide program development, while supporting operational efficiency and improvement by optimizing information systems and setting up strong feedback loops.

4. Facilitate skill building and training

We aim to establish a standardized onboarding and offboarding strategy, develop and implement student mental health training, foster a culture of hospitality, and optimize training and presentation requests.

5. Advance funding and sustainability

We aim to develop an oversight plan to fund mental health and wellness, identify funding priorities and new sources of funding, implement private insurance billing for eligible mental health services, review the current funding model and optimize revenue generation opportunities at campus events.

6. Launch the One Door Service Delivery Model

We aim to transform the student experience by implementing an AI-driven chatbot, centralizing front-end access, and developing an integrated intake system for mental health and case management services. These efforts are grounded in the stepped care model and a strong culture of hospitality to ensure that every student feels supported from their first point of contact with Student Wellness. Additional initiatives include aligning residence and wellness curricula, integrating pharma care (Shoppers Drug Mart), and advancing academic accommodations through technology and Universal Design for Learning (UDL), all in support of a seamless, accessible, student-centric approach.



