2024 Institute of World Languages Faculty Retreat

Reality Check and Wake-up Calls:
Addressing Mental Health and Wellness for Students and Faculty

May 3rd, 2024 | Boar's Head Inn
Organization Committee: Ran Zhao, Paula Sprague, and Zvi Gilboa

Registration: https://forms.office.com/r/dLrPdBVdbf | Deadline: 4/26

9:15am-9:55am	Check in and breakfast
9:55am-10:00am	Opening remarks by the Associate Dean for Arts & Humanities, Sarah Betzer
10:00am-12:00pm	Morning Session on Student Mental Health

The Double Bind: Understanding Students with Mental Health Concerns

Dr. Joseph E. Davis is Research Professor of Sociology and Director of the Picturing the Human Project of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia. His presentation will explore reasons for the soaring mental health struggles of college students. What, we ask, is going on? Dr. Davis identifies a type of double bind that students find themselves caught in. On one hand, they need to be "Good at everything," while at the same time they feel uncertain how to achieve that, and they say they can't find any limits or endpoints. In addition, social pressures leave them chronically comparing themselves to others and their idealized profiles, which generate feelings of emptiness, inadequacy, and exhaustion. The talk will help us understand the complexity behind what we as faculty see and feel in our classrooms.

Supporting Students with Mental Health Concerns

Dr. Nicole Ruzek is the Director of Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS). In this presentation she will provide practical strategies for assisting students with mental health concerns in the academic context. Given dramatically increased number of students attending college with pre-existing mental health conditions or taking medication for psychiatric reasons, faculty are often confronted with student requests for extensions, excused absences, and other accommodations because of emotional distress, and sometimes it is difficult to know how far to extend support or challenge students to meet expectations. Students often turn to faculty for advice and at times may disclose concerning information or display unusual behaviors that need further intervention. Dr. Ruzek will discuss the best ways to approach students with mental health concerns, how to open a supportive conversation with a student who may need help, and how to best direct students to the appropriate resources. In addition, strategies will be presented to help faculty know how to set clear and supportive boundaries and while attending to their own self-care when assisting students with mental health challenges.

12:00pm-1:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm-3:00pm	Afternoon Session on Faculty Wellness

Faculty Wellness Guidance and Resources

Mary Sherman, LCSW, CEAP is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Virginia and a Certified Employee Assistance Professional. Ms. Sherman is an engaging and experienced presenter who has a specialized role in Prevention and Mental Health Awareness with FEAP at UVA (since 1996).

Matthew Fritts, MPH, PMP, E-RYT 500, supports the mental and emotional well-being of UVA faculty and staff as a Well-Being Specialist with Hoos Well. He has 25+ years of experience teaching contemplative practices and implementing and evaluating large-scale programs for wellness promotion, health education, disease prevention, and public health.

During this engaging presentation, Retreat attendees will learn from Matt Fritts, a Well-Being Specialist and yoga/ meditation teacher, and Ms. Sherman, a Positive Psychology practitioner, about how stress and burnout impact us, as well as physical and mental strategies to sustain well-being, and available resources for support. Participants will 1) identify the symptoms of stress and burnout and how they impact the brain; 2) learn physical strategies and positive psychology practices that can be used to manage stress and enhance well-being; and 3) define the concept of sustainable well-being and identify resources that are available to support its cultivation.

3:00pm-3:30pm	Closing and reflection