

**CHASS Creative Wellness Minor
Assessment Plan June 1, 2023
Dr. Karen Yescavage, Coordinator**

Identification of Program

- CHASS Interdisciplinary Creative Wellness Minor
- Primary contact for assessment: Karen Yescavage, coordinator

Mission, Goals, and Student Learning Outcomes

The mission of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences is to help students develop critical thinking skills, aesthetic awareness, and ethical perspectives, to provide them with the tools and expertise necessary to function as responsible citizens and professionals and to engage in intellectual and artistic pursuits.

The coordinator will be meeting with CW stakeholders June 6th, 2023 to discuss a Creative Wellness Mission Statement along with program achievements and growth trajectory. In its first year of implementation, the program has **5 declared minors**. However, four additional students who graduated in the past two years expressed interest before the minor became official.

Creative Wellness Program Goals

- Apply positive psychology to the arts and humanities; enable science to more fully understand, appreciate, and promote the positive power of the arts.
- Prepare helping professionals meet the wellness needs of an increasingly diverse and changing society.
- Encourage helping professionals to practice effectively in collaborative and integrated health environments.
- Become leaders in the community and advocates for wellness.
- Demonstrate ethical decision-making and cultural sensitivity when constructing wellness interventions and delivering direct and indirect services to others.

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Collaborate effectively and integrate learning across psychology and arts/humanities disciplines.
2. Comprehend and apply an understanding of positive psychology to promote wellness in culturally responsive and creative ways in the community.
3. Practice self-care through experiential learning creative wellness activities.

Curriculum

The Creative Wellness minor has 9 credit hours (3 course requirements):

1. Creative Wellness (CW 100)
2. Integrated Studies (ARC 110)
3. Positive Psychology (Psy 405)

Additionally, students choose 9 credit hours of electives (no more than 2 courses from any one discipline unless they are CW). Most of these are courses that are already established across various disciplines such as: Art, Chicano Studies, English, Health Sciences and Human Movement, Music, Psychology, Sociology, Recreation Studies, and Women's Studies.

New CW Special Topics Electives:

1. Music and Wellness (to be offered this Fall by a certified music therapist)
2. Indigenous Holistic Health (offered Spring only; cross-listed with Chicana/x Studies)
3. Mind-Body Connections (offered Fall & Spring)

Course Enrollments

- The introductory Creative Wellness course has had an enrollment of approximately 20 students (full capacity) each time it has been offered over the past 3 semesters.
- Positive Psychology, an upper division elective in the psychology department for the past decade, regularly reaches its maximum enrollment of 25 students.
- Two new special topics courses (Mind-Body Connections and Indigenous Holistic Health) have both been successful (enrollments around 10), generating interest in the minor as well. Further, they both provide culturally responsive educational programming.
 - Mind-Body Connections is taught by a curanderismo practitioner in the community.
 - Indigenous Holistic Health is taught by a Southern Cheyenne/Apache educator.

Potential Creative Wellness electives under development or discussion:

- Bonsai Tree Sculpting (under development by Dr. Zahari Metchkov)
 - Course would make connections among botany, various arts, and positive psychology by envisioning a desired future outcome and setting goals and a plan to achieve it, having patience, and determining what environmental factors are needed to flourish then creating that environment.
 - Proposed artistic/creative activities:
 - Tree sculpting
 - Drawing (envision a future, sculpted tree)
 - Photography (field trip out to the Pueblo reservoir to observe natural environment and take pictures of very old trees)
 - Ceramics (hand sculpt a pot for the bonsai tree)
- Eco Art/Physical Education (cross-disciplinary course under discussion with Dr. Christine Rochester (School of Health Sciences and Human Movement) and Helen Dunn (SoCAP artist in residence))
 - Course would look to make connections between physical activities like hiking, climbing and rappelling, and art using environmental elements as both medium (e.g., mud, water) and inspiration.
 - Both approaches demonstrate how nature promotes well-being.

- Senior Capstone course
 - Experiential service learning course to develop and implement a major creative wellness project, putting into practice what they've learned in the minor.

STEAM Possibilities

- Helen Dunn (new Artist in Residence) has proposed to have students in her Drawing classes collaborate with students in Kinesiology classes to learn human anatomy through drawing the skeleton and muscles.
- Another possibility is offering “Using the Arts to Flip Understanding” Workshops, programming created by the Alliance for the Arts in Research Universities (a2ru) which is “a partnership of colleges and universities committed to transforming higher education to ensure the greatest possible institutional support for arts-integrative research, curricula, programs and creative practice between the arts, sciences, and other disciplines.” According to a2ru, “one of the most frequently cited impacts of the arts in higher ed is the new perspective it affords. Using the Arts to Flip Understanding generates that new perspective, engaging art-making to help people working outside the arts to see and understand familiar content differently.” [Using the Arts to Flip Understanding Workshop - a2ru](#)

Beyond the Classroom: Developing & Assessing Creative Wellness Spaces

The Center for Integrated Health and Human Inquiry (CIHHI) has approved the expenditure of \$4000 to create a meditation room/research lab in one of psychology's small lab spaces in the CIHHI building. Drs. Bridgmon, Pluskota, and Yescavage are collaborating to develop the space and utilize it to conduct applied research, e.g., assessing which sensory combinations and methods (visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile) best promote psychological well-being. This meditation room will be made available to students, staff and faculty when not in use for data collection.

On Monday, June 5th, the CW coordinator will be meeting with Risley International Academy of Innovation stakeholders to discuss the possibility of collaborating to create a Creative Wellness space for students who need to down regulate and calm themselves before rejoining class. This would serve as a creative alternative to punitive reactions to disengaged learners and/or students who are acting out in the classroom. There is a great need in K12 schools to meet the psychological needs of youth. Should this collaboration come to fruition, this would be an ideal internship opportunity for CW minors; thus, a next step would be to look/apply for grant funding to create paid internships and to conduct efficacy research on the implementation of creative wellness programming in our local schools.

CHASS Creative Wellness Minor Program Assessment Plan Summary

Date Submitted: June 1, 2023

For Academic Year: 2022-2023

Student Learning Outcome	Measure description (direct or indirect?)	Timeline or cycle
<p><i>SLO1</i> Collaborate effectively and integrate learning across psychology and arts & humanities disciplines.</p>		Spring 2024
<p><i>SLO2</i> Comprehend and apply an understanding of positive psychology to promote wellness in culturally responsive and creative ways in the community.</p>	<p><i>Measure 1 (indirect)</i> <i>Observation</i></p>	Spring 2023
	<p>To apply positive psychological principles and promote wellness in the community in culturally responsive and creative ways, a major experiential service learning activity was offered in the Indigenous Holistic Health class, namely, an Earth Day Indigenous Music & Arts Festival. To maximize community attendance, the event was held at El Pueblo History Museum; over 800 people attended.</p> <p>The day was a celebration of Indigenous cultures and values, full of art, music, and education on how to care for Mother Earth (of which all people are indigenous). A Hopi band along with other local Indigenous musicians provided entertainment. Traditional Native American dances were performed, and over twenty booths, many offered by local Indigenous artists, showcased arts and crafts.</p> <p>Through their volunteerism, students from the Indigenous Holistic Health class (along with students from the campus radio station who provided the sound for the venue) experienced a great sense of accomplishment and meaningfulness from their volunteer efforts. They also experienced joy alongside hundreds of others, many of whom were also experiencing a positive connection to their culture. Thus, many people experienced three to four of the</p>	

	five facets of the PERMA model of human flourishing: positive emotion, positive relationships, meaningfulness, and achievement.	
SLO3 Practice self-care through experiential learning, creative wellness activities.	<i>Measure 2 (direct) Self-Reflection</i>	<i>Annually</i>
	<p>Students in the Introduction to Creative Wellness course (Spring 2023) engaged in a variety of experiential learning, creative wellness activities. To attest to the efficacy of this course, here is one student’s comment on the course overall: “<i>This class and book really have helped me in a huge way. I wanted to give up a few times and I am still dealing with my trauma but taking this class shows me I can rise above and I am not alone. It's made me want to be a better person who can live my life wholeheartedly. Thank you both for providing this class and opportunity.</i>”</p> <p>More detailed feedback on three experiential activities follows. First, the “Me Box” activity had students decorate a container of some sort on both the inside and out, asking them to think about how they present themselves to the outside world and how they see themselves (their inner self). Two students’ comments are quite telling of the power of this activity to promote a positive view of self:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “<i>What I found enjoyable was when I was doing the inside of my box I really had to think about the positives about myself which I don't do very often.</i>” 2. “<i>I found it to be a great experience as I found that I was able to reflect who I am back to myself as I have struggled with self-worth and this was a great tool.</i>” <p>In a follow-up activity, the “Spider Web of Connectivity, ” after students shared their Me Boxes in class, they tossed a ball of yarn around the room to classmates with whom they shared a connection. Here are comments that attest to the power of this activity to promote group cohesion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>It felt motivating, like to know we’re all connected in some way and we’re not so different after all.</i> 2. <i>It is so hard to make friends and talk to people. Seeing people as well as myself making those types of connections so freely, I got the feeling of "I get you".</i> 3. <i>I really enjoyed the spider web activity. It made me feel really connected to everyone in the class regardless if my string was connected to theirs or not. Just watching other</i> 	

	<p>people making meaningful connections made me feel more connected to them.</p> <p>In a third activity, the “Broken Pot”, which symbolizes grief and loss of some sort, students work in small groups to break a pot and then rebuild it as a team to ultimately plant seeds in it. A theme that emerged from this activity highlighted the need for (and value of) social connection (one of the facets of the PERMA model of human flourishing). One student reflects: “I think one of the most meaningful parts was seeing how we all worked together to fix the pot, which was symbolic within itself for me. It showed me the power of community, you don't have to go through grief and loss all on your own. People can come together and help fix the broken pieces faster than if you are alone. It was a good reminder for me.”</p> <p>Fortunately, no student reported this activity made feelings of perfectionism worse. Of those who struggle with perfectionism, about half found the activity actually helped them manage such feelings. In fact, almost a quarter (23%) reported the activity “totally” helped them practice managing feelings of perfectionism. Releasing perfectionism is fundamental to practicing self-care.</p>	
<p>Expected level of student proficiency (definition and percentage)</p>	<p><i>Expected level: 80% of students should demonstrate proficiency in SLOs 2 & 3</i></p> <p>Greater than 80% of students demonstrated proficiency in SLOs 2 & 3.</p> <p>All students in the Indigenous Holistic Health class demonstrated proficiency in both SLOs 2 and 3 from the described activity, along with several other activities they experienced in the course (e.g., attending the Denver March PowWow, creating a Sacred Hoop/Medicine Wheel, going horseback riding).</p> <p>An overwhelming majority of students in the Introduction to Creative Wellness class provided reflections on class activities that demonstrated proficiency in SLO 3.</p>	