

CHASS Interdisciplinary Creative Wellness (CW) Minor
Assessment Plan June 24, 2024
Dr. Karen Yescavage, Coordinator

Identification of Program

- CHASS Interdisciplinary Creative Wellness Minor (“housed” in Psychology Department)
- Primary contact for assessment: Karen Yescavage, coordinator

Mission, Goals, and Student Learning Outcomes

The mission of the **College of Humanities, Arts, 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 mission of the **Creative Wellness** program is to promote well-being in individuals and communities through culturally responsive creative expression.

In its first official year of implementation (2022-2023), the program had 5 declared minors. In its second full year of implementation (2023-2024), the program has **30 declared minors** with its first two students graduating this spring. Of the 30 minors, 60% are psychology majors and 20% are art or music majors; the remaining majors are in Social work, Sociology, English & Secondary Education, and the CHASS Humanities and Social Sciences major.

We plan to expand outreach to majors in other disciplines, especially recruiting students interested in English/Creative Writing and Music, where we currently have 1 minor from each. We have been in communication with the Chair of Music to promote the CW program. Additionally, we invited Darci Schummer, a new faculty member who teaches Creative Writing to join the CW program.

On May 29th, we held our first CW program retreat. Six faculty (who teach in the program) and five students (four minors and one graduate) attended. We discussed the successes and challenges of the program as well as opportunities for program growth. These are detailed below.

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 (offered Fall & Spring)
2. Indigenous Holistic Health (offered Spring only; cross-listed with Chicanx Studies)
3. Mind-Body Connections (offered Fall & Spring)
4. Performance of Self (offered Spring)

Course Enrollments

- The **Introductory Creative Wellness** course has had an enrollment of approximately 20 students (full capacity) every spring it has been offered. It tends to have lower enrollment in the fall with around half that enrollment. This we attribute to the challenge of getting the word out about the CW program. It's presence on the University webpage is practically nonexistent.
- **Positive Psychology**, an upper division elective in the psychology department for the past decade, regularly reaches its maximum enrollment of 25 students.
- Two special topics courses have both been successful in generating interest in the minor. Both provide culturally responsive educational programming:
 - **Mind-Body Connections** is taught by a curanderismo practitioner in the community. Enrollments in this course have been between 7 and 10.
 - **Indigenous Holistic Health** is taught by a Southern Cheyenne/Apache educator from the community. Enrollments in this course have been between 8 and 11.
- **Music & Wellness**, taught by a board certified music therapist, has been instrumental in generating interest in the minor. In fact, some are considering a music therapy graduate program. This course had 5 students in the fall and 7 students in the spring.

- One of the challenges discussed with low enrollment has been a conflict with other music courses (e.g., choir).
- We've reached out to the Music department to coordinate scheduling and to promote the CW program and this course in particular to music majors.
- **Performance of Self** class was piloted in the Spring (taught by an Art professor). There were 7 students enrolled in this course. They described this class as truly *transformative*.

New and Developing Creative Wellness course offerings:

- We are excited to offer a one-credit (weekend) special topics course on **Bonsai Tree Sculpting** (to be taught by Dr. Zahari Metchkov, a master bonsai artist in the Music department) this fall 2024.
 - 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)
- **Creative Activism:** Coordinator of CW secured an Aztlan Research Center grant to create a new course (to be cross-listed with Chicano Studies and Psychology). This course, founded in liberation psychology, will be an experiential and community service-oriented course, rooted in artistic and creative pedagogy. Various modalities of activist art for social change, individual and community healing will be explored, such as: visual arts (e.g., documentary, mural); visual and musical performance, (e.g., performance art, el teatro, and theatre of the oppressed, activism songs); written and spoken word.
 - First class offering will be Spring 2025.
- **CW Senior Capstone** course. At the retreat, students and faculty shared an excitement and interest in the creation of an experiential, service-oriented senior capstone course. We discussed various ways to implement this new course where students can develop and implement a major creative wellness project in service to others, putting into practice what they have learned in the minor. Possibilities included offering activities in various social service agencies, nonprofit organizations, and the K16 school system.
 - First class offering will be Spring 2025

Three Proposed Curriculum Changes

1. At the program retreat, we discussed the need to boost enrollments for courses. I will be proposing Mind-Body Connections be offered in the fall only and Music & Wellness in the spring, rather than both offered every semester. Hopefully, this will boost

enrollments in both courses. (Both of these courses will need to be submitted for CAP board for approval to become permanent courses.)

2. Unfortunately, faculty advisors and students alike have found it difficult to schedule around the cross-disciplinary ARC 110 class taught by multiple instructors. The course takes up the space of two 3-credit courses in the schedule, serving as a barrier. Thus, another curriculum change I will be proposing this fall is to remove ARC 110 as a core requirement and making it an elective for the minor instead. (*Will require curriculum board approval).
3. A third proposed change will be to create a 300-level Senior Capstone CW course core requirement. (*Will require curriculum board approval).

Beyond the Classroom: Creative Wellness Meditation Space

The Center for Integrated Health and Human Inquiry (CIHHI) granted the coordinator of the CW program \$4000 to create a meditation space/research lab in one of psychology's small lab spaces in the CIHHI building. This meditation space is free for all students, staff and faculty.

- There is weekly guided meditation provided in the space.
- Additionally, a new CW student club (called Spirit Food) meets there to engage in sounding practices (singing bowls, humming together, and singing).

Drs. Bridgmon, Pluskota, and Yescavage plan to use the space to conduct applied research, e.g., assessing which sensory combinations and methods best promote psychological well-being.

Professional Development & Community Engagement

Last June, the CW coordinator met with Risley International Academy of Innovation stakeholders to discuss the possibility of collaborating to create a Creative Wellness space for students who need to regulate and calm themselves before rejoining class. 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.

In part because of this meeting, the coordinator of the Creative Wellness program developed a Colorado Educators conference titled HEART: Health-oriented, Equitable, Accessible, Culturally Responsive, and Trauma-Invested to promote well-being in both students and educators across the K20 spectrum. This conference was organized and funded in collaboration with (1) Center for Teaching, Learning, and Leadership, (2) the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force, and (3) the Center for Integrated Health and Human Inquiry. Superintendents of Pueblo's districts 60 and 70 approved the conference as professional development. It was scheduled for March 2024; however, a snowstorm closed the campus and so it has been rescheduled for October 2024. This will be a great opportunity to build community connections and promote the CW program within the community's K12 schools.

CHASS Creative Wellness Minor Program Assessment Plan Summary

Date Submitted: June 24, 2024

For Academic Year: 2023-2024

| Student Learning Outcome | Measure description (direct or indirect?) | Timeline or cycle |
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| <p><i>SLO1</i> Collaborate effectively and integrate learning across psychology and arts & humanities disciplines.</p> | <p><i>Measure 1 (direct)</i> <i>Student Self-Reflection</i></p> | <p><i>Fall 2023</i></p> |
| | <p>Two courses were assessed: CW 100 and Music and Wellness.</p> <p>The following student quotes provide evidence for SLO#1 in the CW 100 class. Comments demonstrate connecting positive psychological concepts (like how to experience positive emotions and positive self-concept) while engaging in artistic endeavors.</p> <p>The shift I experienced is feeling a little more comfortable working and sharing in groups. I have had high social anxiety all my life and generally avoid most social settings, but it got easier for me as we progressed through the semester. I even noticed myself thinking a few times how I was actually enjoying myself and not feeling my anxiety overwhelm me like it usually does.</p> <p>I used to feel self-conscious of how my art looked, but recently I am proud of the shell that I cracked.</p> <p>Creative Wellness courses are encouraged to engage in experiential learning activities. In CW 100, most of the activities are collaborative. One major experiential learning activity in the fall CW 100 course was to paint a 24' x 36' mural on the Pueblo levee. This activity promotes effective collaboration as there is an element of fear in creating art in a harness while on a 30 degree incline over a flowing river.</p> <p><u>Pueblo Levee Mural Project student feedback:</u> I appreciated that there was something to do for everyone that fit their comfort levels best. Additionally, when any of us stepped out of our comfort zone it was recognized and we were eager to support one another.</p> <p>I appreciated working together and creating art. Art is beautiful and fun, but can also be healing for the artist and the observer.</p> | |

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| | <p>I love how everyone was nervous at the start and slowly adjusted and enjoyed the project very much. We bonded a lot and helped one another with painting and with encouragement. This encouragement was on either if we were insecure about messing up the paint or scared to get on the wall.</p> <p><u>Instructor from Music & Wellness writes:</u></p> <p>Music is an innate, natural process that drives us on both biological and psychological levels. The integration of music and wellness in the Creative Wellness minor serves to further empower students to explore their relationship with music and how they can leverage music in their own disciplines. Backed by evidence based and supported practice, students learn about the meaning of music in their personal and professional lives.</p> <p>Students who take this course have indicated that they have gained academic experience and life experience that will be integrated into their respective disciplines now and in the future.</p> <p><u>Student Feedback:</u></p> <p>I felt like I was able to learn more about humanity and music. After this course, I feel like I can now better connect myself with this art form. I am more than a performer, I am now more one with music.</p> <p>The psychology of music has been fascinating to learn. The integration of a holistic approach with this course has changed my perception of how we can use music as a tool for healing.</p> <p>Music has helped me heal and I cannot wait to use the tools I've learned in this course to help others.</p> <p>You don't have to be a musician to get things out of this course. I can't sing or play anything, but through this course I felt like I harmonized with the natural and became more in tune with music.</p> | |
| SLO2 Comprehend and apply an understanding of positive | | |
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| psychology to promote wellness in culturally responsive and creative ways in the community. | | |
| SLO3 Practice self-care through experiential learning, creative wellness activities. | <p><i>Measure 2 (indirect & direct)</i> <i>Instructor Observation & Student Self-Reflection</i></p> <p><u>From the instructor of the Mind-Body Connections class:</u> Students are shown many different tools to process trauma, stuck emotion, or to shift from fight/flight/freeze responses. Upon learning the tools which are psychology, somatic, or culturally-based, students are asked to perform a taught tool at home, before the following class and note the responses:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Did I connect with the exercise? 2. Is this something I could bring into my own practice? 3. Am I comfortable teaching this to another? <p>They share the experience as a group so that they further learn from each other and that not all of us are the same, nor have the same experiences. If a student has missed, I have another student teach the tool, with my guidance so it is one more step toward learning and integration. (SLO#1 as well)</p> <p><u>Student feedback:</u> I used to feel hopeless whenever I felt negative emotions. But more recently I'm feeling like I have more tools at my disposal to work through tough times.</p> <p>Creative Wellness means putting my healing into my own hands and using a variety of tools/activities to assist in the process.</p> | Annually |
| Expected level of student proficiency (definition and percentage) | <p><i>Expected level: 80% of students should demonstrate proficiency in SLOs 1 & 3</i> Based upon student feedback and instructor observation, in the Fall 2023 CW 100 course, 7 of 8 students (87.5%) demonstrated proficiency of SLO#1 while 100% of students demonstrated proficiency of SLO#3.</p> <p>In Mind-Body Connections class, 100% of students demonstrated proficiency in SLO #1 and SLO #3.</p> | |