

Alberta Campus Mental Health Innovation Fund (ACMHI)

In 2012, Student leaders came together to set priorities, where mental health was identified as a critical action area that needed attention. After lobby efforts gained traction in conversations with government, ASEC was awarded \$1.5 million to support student-led initiatives across Alberta. Student initiatives are as diverse as ASEC's membership: a cornerstone of ASEC's strength as a student advocacy organization. Here we highlight projects happening across the province. It provides a glimpse into how ACMHI fund is making a difference for students on their campus in ways that are meaningful to their institution.

Below, is a table summarizing the various approaches students are using. Further along, the 14 ACMHI projects that rolled out in Year One of funding are briefly described. The programs highlight the varying approaches students are making on their campus, despite the varying levels of pre-existing campus services. Both large and small campuses have shaped a new arsenal of student supports that they are now able to offer their peers.

ACMHI Program Summary								
	Online Support	Workshops	Awareness Campaigns	Counseling	Peer Supports	Guest Speakers	External Partners	Other
ACADSA		✓	✓			✓		✓
SABVC	✓		✓					✓
LCSA			✓				✓	✓
NAITSA		✓	✓					✓
SAKC		✓	✓				✓	✓
SAITSA		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
CSA			✓		✓	✓		✓
SAGPRC				✓	✓		✓	✓
SAMHC			✓	✓	✓			✓
SAMU	✓		✓		✓			✓
SARDC	✓		✓					
SANC	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
SAOC	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
AUGSA	✓			✓			✓	✓

ALBERTA COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (ACADSA)

ACADSA Mental Health Awareness Program

To support students' to have a positive post-secondary experience, the ACADSA Mental Health Awareness Program is dedicated to offering new avenues for students to receive support and information about mental health, and to spread information about the current services available to students that were previously under utilized.

In order to foster student engagement and connectivity, ACADSA is organizing ongoing workshops and guest speakers to take place in student common spaces. Using information gathered in previous semesters, ACADSA events will focus on the most common areas of mental health concerns facing ACADA students. Some of these issues include coping with stress, anxiety, depression, relationship issues, and academic issues. By having information made available in common spaces, students will have the opportunity to gain knowledge and information through the wellness sessions in an informal and less stigmatizing way.

STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF BOW VALLEY COLLEGE (SABVC)

SABVC Campus Mental Health Initiative

The SABVC Campus Mental Health Initiative is blending the use of technology and traditional methods of spreading awareness and offering services to students through the Feeling Better Now program. Two avenues of growth are being supported. First, the program will educate students on resources and services available on-campus and in the community with ongoing campaigns to reduce stigma and promote information on mental health. Second, a survey and assessment tool is being offered to provide students with critical mental health feedback, and empowering students to take an active role in their mental health care. These tools will also be available through mobile devices, allowing students to access support at whatever time they need it.

LETHBRIDGE COLLEGE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (LCSA)

Student Wellness Program

With the new addition of a Student Wellness Coordinator starting this Fall, LCSA is able to go beyond the traditional counseling services by having an individual focused on being proactive with more preventative and maintenance approaches to students' mental health. Campus wide activities will be held to spread information on family violence, mental wellness, seasonal affective disorder and other issues faced by students. Additional winter activities will focus on eating disorders, suicide prevention, and mental wellness during exam time.

In partnership with the College, LCSA is offering a new mentorship program to unite students and staff to better equip staff and engage students. Mentors will have training and support throughout the semester, in order to provide the holistic, ongoing support to students. The unique student/staff mentorship program is a large effort to promote a collaborative and accepting campus community for the best interest of students and staff.

NORTHERN ALBERTA INSTITUTE FOR TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (NAITSA)

Stress-Free Zones

Throughout the semester, students face challenging and stressful times. To reduce the impact on students' mental health, NAITSA is hosting Stress-Free Zones during peak times of stress. These themed zones will showcase a variety of different therapies in a low commitment environment, which will expose students to diverse types of stress relief, such as:

- ◆ Cookie-zones
- ◆ Massage-zones
- ◆ Healing-zones

Each zone will have a variety of activities from bubble-wrap popping, animal therapy, massage, yoga, sound healing, and other comforting and relaxing activities.

Multiple Stress-Free Zones will be available on campus to enable all students to sample different methods of maintaining their mental health. To further promote the existing services on campus, each Zone will promote information on services available to them on campus. Programs will be running throughout December and April, during exams when students are experiencing high amounts of stress.

STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF KEYANO COLLEGE (SAKC)

Student Mental Health and Wellness at Northern Post-Secondary Institution

In partnership with the College and administration, SAKC is conducting a comprehensive survey. The survey will examine the nature and prevalence of student mental health concerns on their campus, and supply the college with institution-specific knowledge for future initiatives and decision-making.

SAKC is recruiting a mental health awareness committee to take the lead on monthly mental health campaigns focusing on depression, wellness, anxiety, addiction, eating disorder campaigns and more. The Mad Hatters Tea party is an event being held specifically to reduce stigma surrounding mental illness on campus through facilitating discussions amongst students, faculty and administration. In addition, faculty are being offered mental health first-aid courses to support them to become mental health leaders.

SOUTHERN ALBERTA INSTITUTE FOR TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (SAITSA)

SAITSA Student Support Centre (SSC)

The Student Support Centre (SSC) is a space dedicated to support student-led programming that can assist in preventing and responding to all mental health concerns. This has been made possible through the partnership between SAITSA, SAIT Student Development and Counseling Services, and SAIT Polytechnic.

Students will have the opportunity to join initiatives, gain knowledge and resources, access assessment tools, and other specialized events to de-stress, laugh (e.g. laughter yoga) and learn about hot topic issues. The Centre will have regular and ongoing events that spread awareness and provide information by external partners who specialize in areas such as alcoholism, narcotics, harm reduction, stress, self-care, and many other relevant issues. All activities will promote mental well-being while being free from stigma and discrimination, while empowering students to play a proactive role in the mental health.

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF ALBERTA STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (CSA)

Concordia Awareness & Support Team (CAST)

Mental wellness, harm reduction, and awareness are the targeted areas of growth that CSA will tackle with the help of the newly convened Concordia Awareness and Support Team. The team will consist of two provisional psychologists, student support group facilitators, and a student marketing campaign coordinator.

CAST will organize and deliver monthly events on campus; including, mental health experts as guest speakers, anti-stigma campaigns, and ongoing support groups for students facing mental health problems. These events will provide information and support on salient issues faced by students, such as transitioning to university, normal adjustment processes, coping with expectations of success, and the cultural and personal pressures adding to the challenges of post-secondary. CAST is geared to promote mental health, and to spread information and resources to students.

STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF GRAND PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE (SAGPRC)

Enhanced and Expanded Peer Counseling Program

By expanding the peer counseling, SAGPRC is growing capacity on campus through student training programs. In partnership with the campus psychologist, students will supervise and train peer counselors. Peer counselors will receive specialized training on specific student mental health issues and adjustment problems; including, identifying mental health problems and risks, suicide and related behaviours, cross culture awareness, trauma, grief, violence and other related issues.

The initiative is not only building student capacity through enriched unique training, but also expanding services to allow more students who require support to access mental health support.

STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF MEDICINE HAT COLLEGE (SAMHC)

Peer Support Co-ordination and Counseling Services

Medicine Hat College faces a unique challenge as they have experienced a 40% spike in counseling needs on campus. To meet the demand for counseling services, the college and SAMHC have partnered to revitalize and expand the Peer Support Centre. With the addition of a Peer Support Coordinator, the Counseling Services will give students more opportunities to connect with services on campus and provide a map of service available in the community.

Peer supporters will be offered comprehensive train packages to better meet the needs of students and to provide timely and responsive services. In addition, the peer supporter and coordinator will initiate awareness and stigma reduction campaigns will be organized throughout the semester to promote a more accepting and positive campus environment.

STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF MACEWAN UNIVERSITY (SAMU)

Students' Association of MacEwan University Wellness Team

MacEwan's Wellness Team is a student-led group that is tasked with spreading awareness and information on the resources available to students to help students address any mental health issues. Three wellness campaigns will be held and geared to reducing stigma and sharing information on available services.

An additional service is being offered to students. Peer support will be available online, at any time as a way for students to connect with their peers when they need it most, while maintaining anonymity. To better serve students, student coordinators will be receiving mental health first-aid training. The training will help equip peer supports with the tools needed to support their students who are dealing with panic attacks, mood disorders, substance abuse and other common issues facing students.

STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF RED DEER COLLEGE (SARDC)

SARDC Mental Health Initiative

The Mental Health Initiative at Red Deer College is organizing regular campaigns targeted to raise awareness of mental health illness to help reduce the stigma associated with mental illness. Campaigns will tackle issues such as responsible alcohol consumption, stress management, and also invite community agencies to present to students.

To supplement the existing services, the Feeling Better Now (FBN) assessment tool is now being offered to students to assist students in the maintenance of their positive and productive lifestyles. The FBN tool is SARDC's new tool to support students to become proactive for their mental health and wellness, which includes having continuous on-campus promotion and advertising. The program is geared to educate students on support services and networks available. The survey tool will enable students to shape and maintain their well-being.

STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF NORQUEST COLLEGE (SANC)

Mental Health Awareness Campaign & Survey Support

Student Health 101

In a multi-part program, SANC is launching ten events throughout the year, with each event exploring a different aspect of mental health. From keynote speakers, to health fairs, to mediation workshops, the Mental Health Awareness Campaign aims to shed light on important topics and engage students in meaningful dialogue about mental health. Through gathering ongoing data, also SANC hopes to learn more about other types of mental health services students are interested in.

In addition, SANC is beginning a Student Health 101 e-magazine. The magazine will showcase different salient topics each month, including self-esteem, relationships, alcoholism, and stress. This is also a new way for SANC to reach out to regional and distance students, and engage everyone with meaningful information on mental illness and mental health.

STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION OF OLDS COLLEGE (SAOC)

Together Making a Difference - Olds College Mental Health Initiative

SAOC, partnered with their institution, is taking a comprehensive approach in addressing mental health issues on their campus. Using data-driven decision making and integrating broad concepts of general concepts, SAOC is creating a campus culture that is supportive and aware of mental health needs. This includes educating faculty, staff, and students through awareness campaigns, social media, and actively working with community partners to address campus needs.

Staff education is being addressed through regular awareness seminars to the faculty association outlining student health services; while, an app is being created to emphasize the resources available online. Additionally, students are taking part in a speaker series designed to reduce stigma, discuss common health issues faced by students, and allow students to share experiences. Finally, mental health first aid training is being provided to students, staff, youth organizations, and other community partners.

ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY GRADUATE STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (AUGSA)

Student Life Line for AU Graduate Students

AUGSA is extending services to their students, who are primarily distance learners, through a wellness program that is designed to be entirely online. This resource offers short-term counseling services for students, many of whom are in remote areas and have limited access to any services. Another critical component of their project is the promotion of existing and new services being offered to students through campaigns. These campaigns are also targeted to promote the general importance of health and wellness, while raising students' level of comfort in accessing these services through this alternative and accessible form of mental health services.



**For further information on the ACMHI Programs and Initiatives, please contact
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