

## Announcing Student Well-being Task Force for 2021-2022

provost@slu.edu

Fri 9/10/2021 9:00 AM

Dear University community members,

I write today on a topic of great importance for every member of our community: student well-being. From undergraduates to graduate and professional students, well-being is an essential aspect of student success and is a manifestation of our Jesuit commitment to *cura personalis*.

Working with Dr. Sarah Cunningham, Vice President for Student Development, I have charged a Student Well-being Task Force that will spend this academic year assessing SLU's health and well-being ecosystem for students and developing recommendations to advance a culture of well-being for all students.

This important Task Force will be co-chaired by Dr. Ellen Barnidge (Associate Professor in the College for Public Health and Social Justice) and Eric Anderson (Interim Assistant Vice President for Student Well-being in the Division of Student Development). The Task Force will be comprised of students, faculty, and staff who bring a diverse set of views, experiences, and expertise to the effort. The membership is currently being finalized and will be published [here](#), along with other information about the Task Force's work.

During this academic year, the Task Force will engage our campus community in a variety of ways and will, next spring, present me with a set of recommendations that can inform a Strategic Roadmap for Student Well-being that will guide our continuing efforts going forward.

It is important to know that the creation of this Task Force does not mean the work of strengthening our student mental health and well-being ecosystem is just beginning. Over the last several years, the University has increasingly invested in clinical support for students, both on campus and off, and in Mental Health First Aid Training for staff and faculty. Working in partnership, leaders in the Student Government Association and in the Division of Student Development have worked collaboratively to get us to the place we are in today. (To learn more about those collaborative efforts, you can read the SGA Mental Health Task Force report from last spring [here](#) and read about new investments in student mental health resources [here](#).) Finally, Dr. Cunningham's recent announcement of the creation of a new position, Assistant Vice President for Student Well-being, clearly makes visible our institutional commitment and priority to student well-being.

Thanks to these earlier efforts, we have a solid foundation and can now turn our attention to building on it in a strategic and intentional way.

In closing, I want to thank the members of the Task Force for their willingness to serve and for the hard work ahead. And I want to acknowledge that we need similar efforts for staff and faculty. We all benefit and thrive when our campus culture prioritizes wellness and well-being. While this Task Force's work will be specifically focused on student well-being, there will surely be implications for future initiatives focused on faculty and staff, as well.

I look forward to the Task Force's final report and to the work ahead. It is important, and it requires all of us.

Be well,  
Mike Lewis, Ph.D.  
Provost