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REPORT

MAPP+D Community Wellbeing Survey

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SUMMARY

The MAPP+D Community Wellbeing Survey was launched in September 2022. The survey is part of the MAPP+D JEDI Collective Wellbeing Initiative, a multi-format program aiming to support our school's students, staff, and faculty to invest in their wellbeing, restore themselves, and reconnect with others in our community. This anonymous survey was designed to gain a preliminary insight about the status of wellbeing at our school. A total of 72 responses from students, staff, and faculty were collected within one week's time. While the survey's rate of response is not representative of MAPP+D's population, together with conversations we've had with community members, it calls attention to the fact that people are experiencing high levels of stress and burn out.

INTRODUCTION

Project Rationale & Overview

MAPP+D Community Wellbeing Survey was created to gauge the general level of wellbeing in our school. We asked questions about stress, coping strategies, what wellbeing looks like, and how people would like to be supported when going through difficult times. Our intention is to use the survey findings to inform the JEDI Wellbeing Initiative programming strategy. The survey was anonymous, modified to tailor it to three groups: students, staff, and faculty, and sent via Google Forms.

Key Findings

A total of 72 responses were received within the one week deadline. Across all three categories (students, staff, and faculty), respondents were overwhelmingly female. All categories cited lack of time as a barrier to wellbeing and a strong desire for genuine connection within the school community. There is a demand for mindfulness based practices like yoga and meditation, as well as creative outlets like art, music, and poetry workshops. A handful of sensitive anecdotes were also received, which led us to recognize that there is a need for personal stories and grievances to be shared and heard.

Community Profile

We provided options for respondents to share and self-describe aspects of their identities relating to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, employment type, care-taking responsibilities, and any others of their choosing. Across all students, staff, and faculty responses, a majority identified as female and white. Here are some other findings that stood out in each group:

STUDENTS

Responses were split evenly between undergraduate and graduate students. Around 13% of respondents have full-time jobs. International students, students who are caregivers and DACA recipients were also identified.

STAFF

All respondents were full time salaried employees and over 80% are caregivers.

FACULTY

Almost all faculty that responded are non-tenured/tenured track, and just over half are caregivers. Some identified as being neurodivergent.

STATE OF WELLBEING

Stress, Stressors & Coping Strategies

A number of people are experiencing high stress and burnout. This is not unexpected because we recognize the general culture of work and academia in the US are fast-paced and demanding. However, it is concerning that about half of all respondents are experiencing high stress and burn out this early in the semester. Money, school, work, family, and state of the world are cited as the biggest stressors. Other comments that stood out are people dealing with health issues, not having reliable transportation to campus, and caretaking responsibilities. Coping strategies were varied. Common ways shared were spending time with loved ones, exercise, seeking professional support, and practicing self-care. A small number shared that they felt their coping methods are unhealthy or they don't really have any or are still trying to figure it out.

Fig 1 - Stress level

What Wellbeing Looks Like

We wanted to understand what wellbeing looks like in practice so we asked respondents to provide a written description. Across all groups, having a healthy work-life balance, getting quality sleep, and being heard, seen and respected by others are common descriptors. Figure 2 shows a few responses and word-clouds of all the responses.

Fig 2 - Description of wellbeing

SUGGESTIONS FOR MAPP+D

What Support Looks Like

We asked respondents to describe what support looks like when they're going through difficult times and how MAPP+D could offer better support to their wellbeing. Common themes across all three groups are knowing there's support and empathy from professors and colleagues, having more opportunities for teleworking, redistributing shared workload, feeling valued and heard, getting proper compensation, and having more community gathering activities. Figure 3 shows a few responses and word-clouds of all the responses.

Fig 3 - Description of wellbeing support at MAPP+D

Programming Ideas

We also asked each group to rank the level of interest and potential program offerings and found that staff and faculty show more interest in mindfulness based activities, while students are more interested in creative offerings like art, music, and poetry workshops. All three groups expressed interest in a nature retreat.

Fig 4 - Level of interest for different type of programs offerings

CONCLUSION

The survey is not a comprehensive representation but it gave us a starting point to understand wellbeing at MAPP and how we can practice a culture of care. Here are a few key considerations moving forward:

- Future JEDI Wellbeing programming will need to address the different needs unique to each group and subgroups.
- The whole MAPP+D community should continue to normalize conversation about the intersection of JEDI and wellbeing in the classrooms, organizations, meetings, as well as within our interpersonal relationships.
- To build trust, the MAPP+D leadership team should also invest in creating consistent, reliable channels for dialogue and feedback between community members and school administration.
- Lastly, any school and university wide wellbeing and JEDI initiatives must seek to remove financial barriers that impedes individuals ability to access appropriate forms of self-care.

NOTES

1. For full access of survey questions, please visit go.umd.edu/wellbeingsurvey
2. For detail survey results, please visit go.umd.edu/wellbeingreport