Developing a Model for Institutional Wellbeing and Resiliency: The Wellbeing Enhancement & Resiliency Committee (WERC) at the John A. Burns School of Medicine

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Context

Wellbeing initiatives provide a mechanism to align the external mission of promoting community health with the internal cultivation of wellbeing among faculty, staff, and learners. The John A. Burns School of Medicine (JABSOM) is committed to excellence and leadership, prioritizing wellbeing as fundamental to its mission of serving Hawai'i.

A JABSOM wide assessment in 2024, which included a "Talk Story" qualitative analysis, identified challenges to faculty, staff, and learner wellbeing and resiliency, necessitating a comprehensive, sustained institutional response.

Objective

1. Establish a formal advisory structure to operationalize the wellbeing recommendations from the 2024 JABSOM Report.
2. Model and promote wellbeing, guiding behaviors and competencies that support a culture of wellbeing.
3. Track wellbeing intervention effectiveness, information dissemination, and resource allocation across the organization.
4. Regularly assess wellbeing and burnout and their contributing factors across JABSOM.

Target Audience

Medical school administrators, faculty leaders, curriculum developers, student affairs, residency programs, and individuals involved in institutional wellbeing and GME/UME wellness program development.

Key Message

The WERC model is a **replicable**, **systematic** approach to translating **organizational wellbeing** assessment into actionable, measurable, positive **institutional change** within an academic setting. Genuine, sustainable wellbeing requires a data-informed, interdisciplinary, and organizationally represented leadership model that permeates all aspects of the institution, from curriculum to culture.

This initiative offers guidance and lessons learned for institutions or programs seeking to embed resiliency and wellbeing at the core of their operations.

Description of Innovation

The Wellbeing Enhancement & Resiliency Committee (WERC) was created as a multidisciplinary advisory board focused on representative of JABSOM to improve institutional wellbeing. Subcommittees meet monthly, while the full committee convenes annually.

WERC is composed of four subcommittees that target critical areas:

1. **Evaluation**: Measure institutional wellbeing. Develop metrics and collect and analyze data for continuous program assessment to improve initiatives.
2. **Emotional & Mental Health**: Promotion of mental health and psychological safety, advocating for positive change.
3. **Curriculum**: Develop educational content focused on wellbeing, deliver training programs that create inclusive and participatory environments, and utilize data and educational technology to inform curriculum improvements.
4. **Program and Events**: Organizes community-building activities to enhance the work and learning environment. This integrated structure is an innovation for medical schools, moving beyond siloed wellness activities toward a sustained, evidence-based instructional framework.

Program Evaluation

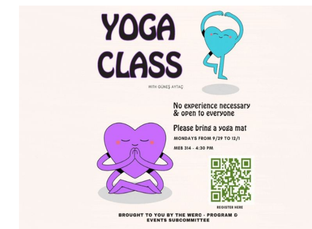
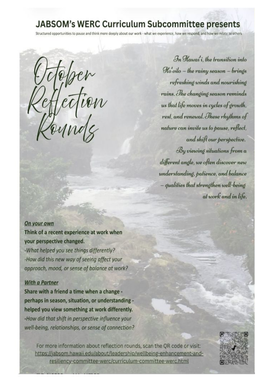
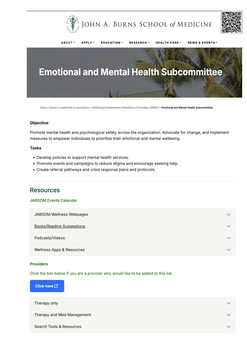
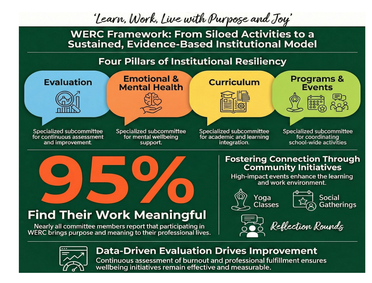
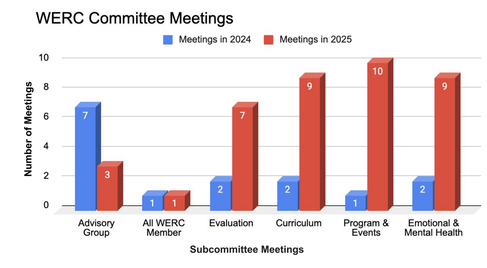
Initial evaluation focuses on the Establishment Phase through:

- **Process Metrics**: Tracking subcommittee meeting frequency and, completed goals using internal tracker document on Google Sheets, and cross-functional collaborations by an internal WERC survey (see Outcomes), questions developed by the Evaluation Subcommittee.
- **Qualitative Data**: Gather feedback from members on the effectiveness of the WERC structure and guiding principles.
- **Quantitative Data**: The Evaluation Subcommittee utilizes evaluation instruments to assess organizational wellbeing adapted from validated employee wellbeing instruments and our own scale; metrics include burnout, professional fulfillment, and work-life integration. The survey items have been validated.

Evaluation Data Collection	Instrument	Instrument Source	Participants	Purpose
Activities tracking	Activities tracker	Internal online tracking tool	WERC subcommittee chairs	Progress and milestones reached, number of activities implemented
Subcommittee functioning (See Outcomes)	Internal survey-subcommittee satisfaction survey	Self created survey- 7 scaled items , 5 point scale: strongly disagree-strongly agree	All WERC members	Extent subcommittees are satisfied with their work, extent each subcommittee as a whole is satisfied with their role & work in WERC
JABSOM Wellbeing - 12 Measures *professional fulfillment, burnout, meaningfulness/joy, attrition, community /belonging, autonomy, supportive leadership, organizational culture, workload/ stressor, appreciation, self compassion, work-life integration, access to mental health services, kindness*	Wellbeing survey	Various validated sources: eg Stanford	JABSOM clinical & research faculty, staff, learners	Assess wellbeing to plan future initiatives to promote JABSOM wellbeing

Outcomes

WERC fosters a high-engagement environment where **95% of subcommittee members** (*n*=20) reported that their participation brings a sense of purpose and meaning to their professional lives.

Between October 2024 and December 2025, the committees sustained rigorous momentum through **2 annual** group meetings and **54 committee meetings** resulting in a diverse portfolio of JABSOM initiatives ranging from **reflection rounds** and **online resource hubs** to **community yoga** and **seasonal themed events**.

Sample Initiatives