**Mindful University Project – 2023-2024 Year in Review**

**Mindfulness Classes**

**Calming U:** Unleash the potential of mindfulness, emotional intelligence, and self-compassion in this empowering 4-week course tailored to University of Rochester students. By blending guided meditation practices, introspective exercises, and meaningful discussions, participants will foster heightened self-awareness, emotional resilience, and thoughtful responses to obstacles. Embracing a calmer, more focused, and growth-oriented mindset, students will be equipped with invaluable tools to conquer academic challenges and flourish both personally and academically throughout their college journey.

* **7 Class Series held**
* **Total # Registrants:** 267 attendees
* **Total # of Participants:** 162 attendees ~ 61% of registrants
* **Full Completion Rate:** 57 attendees ~ 35% of attendees
* **Breakdown of Attendees:**
  + Students: 65%
  + Staff: 29%
  + Faculty: 4.39%
  + Alumni: 1.2%
  + Spouse: .41%
* **Evaluation Results:** 
  + **As a result of this class…**
    - **94.8%** report somewhat or strongly agreeing that they can identify the myths and facts of mindfulness
    - **97.4%** report somewhat or strongly agreeing that they are more motivated to practice mindfulness
    - **71.7%** report somewhat or strongly agreeing they are better able to manage life’s demands
    - **97.5%** report somewhat or strongly agreeing that they intend to continue their meditation practice over the next 6 months
  + **What part of the class was most meaningful to you and why?**
    - “I think the moments we took to meditate and dive into an exercise were some of my favorite moments. It really allowed me to tune into my body and consciousness a lot more and helped me through some tough situations. I missed the last class because of a family emergency and in the past grief is something that was very difficult for me. But being in this class, it almost felt like fate, just how much it prepared me to deal with this specific grief and how to process my emotions and be more present with them and mindful of them.”
    - “I really appreciated how we explored different avenues of mindful practice to see what worked for each individual person. Really empowering to see how each of our experienced emotions differently and how we approached mindfulness through different perspectives.”
    - “It's hard to pick out a specific part of the class, the whole class was meaningful to me because it was so great to be provided with all of these resources for anxiety and emotional regulation and I also really liked that we actually DID these meditations and brought them into practice, it definitely motivated me to do more outside of class. I also liked learning about the vagus nerve and the anatomy behind everything.”
    - “Learning different meditations styles. I liked the different variations. Previously meditation felt like a ‘one size fits all’ practice, but that's far from the truth, so I appreciated experiencing different meditation techniques.”
    - “Learning about different meditation techniques and sharing our experience together. It was nice to know that wherever I felt during the practice, I was not alone in feeling a certain way.”
    - “I am very grateful to this experience as it is totally transformative for me. I have gained more control over my emotions and hardships. I would recommend this course to my friends.”

**OUTBreath:** Following the practices in “A Queer Dharma: Yoga and Meditations for Liberation” by Jacoby Ballard, Kyle Trenshaw will facilitate a queer-centered space of shared experience and support in which participants can develop mindfulness skills for stress-reduction and relaxation.

* **3 Class Series** **held**
* **Total # of Registrants:** 86 attendees
* **Total # of Attendees:** 26 attendees ~ 30% of registrants
* **Full Completion Rate:** 11 attendees ~ 42.3% of attendees

**Meditative Guide for Us:** Join our inclusive meditation class tailored for the U of R black community, fostering self-discovery and self-care through deep breathing, visualization, and guided meditation. Our experienced instructor, Deontae McLachlan, addresses unique challenges, drawing from personal experiences as a Black individual who has personally benefitted from the practice of mindfulness. Mindfulness has encouraged him to cultivate self-awareness, navigate racial stress, build emotional resilience, and foster connection within my community.

* **1 Series Held**
* **Total # of Registrants:** 8 registrants
* **Total # of Attendees**: 3 attendees
* **Full Completion Rate:** 3 attendees ~ 100%

**Perform Present with Peak Flow**: Led by Lucinda Snyder, owner of Peak Flow, this course delves into mindfulness, body awareness, managing the inner critic, and overcoming setbacks/mistakes using her renowned four pillars approach. Through mindfulness practices, discussions, and skill-building activities, athletes will learn to enhance their presence both on and off the field. Join us to elevate your performance outcomes by mastering the art of playing in the present moment.

* **1 Series Held**
* **Total # of Registrants:** 7 registrants
* **Total # of Attendees**: 3 attendees
* **Retention Rate**: 0 attendees ~ 0%

**Retreats**

Fall Relax & Renew Retreat – Held at the Spurrier Dance Studio. **35 attendees.**

Evaluation:

* Average Stress Level during the past month: **10%** no to little stress; **70%** moderate psychological distress; **20%** high psychological distress
* Stress level after the retreat: **60%** no to little stress; **40%** moderate psychological distress; **0%** high psychological distress
* **80%** of attendees experienced a sense of community with others at the retreat
* **100%** reported attending the retreat decreased feelings of stress
* **100%** reported that attending the retreat increased their motivation to focus more on stress reduction
* **100%** learned four mindfulness practices that they can use in their day to day
* **95%** are likely or extremely likely to commit to a regular mindfulness practice after the retreat
* Most meaningful experiences:
  + “The opportunity to practice with other people was very meaningful. It is so nice to come together with others who are seeking a similar path.”
  + “It's a toss-up between the walking meditation and the self-compassion meditation. The walking meditation was so helpful because I never slow down and just feel my body in motion. I am always in a rush for the next task and to help the next person who needs me. Not only did I gain an awareness about what areas of my body need care, but I also felt calm knowing that there was no destination, no expectation; just walking to walk and feel in the moment. The self-compassion meditation helped me appreciate my body and all that it is capable of. Often, I get bogged down by how my body has failed me, but in that moment, I felt appreciate for all it has overcome.”
  + “The walking and eating meditations. They are very easy to incorporate into my life and allow me to spice up activities that I normally glaze over. Its a perfect way to practice mindfulness that feels apart of my life rather than a part from it.”
  + “I found the sound bath very useful because I often struggle to meditate in silence, but don't always enjoy guided meditation and the sound bath really allowed me to get into a different headspace and feel at ease.”

Spring Relax & Renew Retreat– Held at Spurrier Dance Studio. **26 attendees.**

Evaluation:

* Average Stress Level during the past month: **25%** no to little stress; **75%** moderate psychological distress; **0%** high psychological distress
* Stress level after the retreat: **63%** no to little stress; **38%** moderate psychological distress; **0%** high psychological distress
* **87.5%** of attendees experienced a sense of community with others at the retreat
* **87.5%** reported attending the retreat decreased feelings of stress
* **87.5%** reported that attending the retreat increased their motivation to focus more on stress reduction
* **87.5%** learned four mindfulness practices that they can use in their day to day
* **100%** are likely or extremely likely to commit to a regular mindfulness practice after the retreat
* Most meaningful experiences:
  + “Eating and walking meditations because it reminded me the importance of slowing down and appreciating each moment, even when I’m actively doing something”
  + “The mantra about being human, the sense of communion”
  + “The community tree pose and walking meditation. both required balance and tuning into my body in a very basic way that was completely mentally consuming, no room for other thoughts”
  + “The self-compassion meditation and the themes of community, the community tree pose, and noticing all the life (people, animals, nature) around us”

**Mindful Movement Classes**

**Yoga**

Fall Semester: Partnership with Shine Bright

* Approximately **467 participants** who attended during the semester
* End of Semester Survey Results
  + **100%**of students were satisfied or very satisfied with the variety of yoga offerings
  + **93.3%** of students were satisfied or very satisfied with theyoga mats and props
  + **100%**of students were satisfied or very satisfied with the yoga teachers
  + **80%**of students were satisfied or very satisfied with the diversity of yoga teachers
  + **91.1%** of students were satisfied or very satisfied with the inclusive practices
  + **84.4%** of students were satisfied or very satisfied with the music
  + As a result of the class,
    - **97.7%**are motivated to practice yoga and mindfulness
    - **100%**intend to continue their yoga practice in the next 6 weeks
    - **90.9%**of students have developed skills to manage their stress
    - **81.8%**are better able to manage life's demands
    - **84.1%**of students are better able to regulate their emotions
  + Personal Anecdotes:
    - “I really enjoyed the collective space to reset and recharge. I found it to be a great way to take a break from classes and studying while being able to be active, move my body, and feel refreshed.”
    - “Plenty of yoga tools and kindness of yoga instructors”
    - “I liked how the teachers were giving us live feedback and giving us tips on how to feel more comfortable doing a pose”
    - “I appreciated the teacher's emphasis on doing what works for you and understanding that not all bodies are the same or can do the same things.”
    - “The instructors are so amazing, this is the best thing to ever happen.”
    - “They just bring me a beautiful feeling of peace and light.”
    - “The fact that the university hosts these classes makes me feel more integrated with the community and valued by the university.”
    - “The sense of community and improvement I've noted to my mental health. I have been deeply struggling lately and this gave me a healthy way to cope.”

Spring Semester: Partnership with Yoga Vibe

* Total of **1,183 participants** who attended during the semester
* End of Semester Survey Results
  + **100%**of students were satisfied or very satisfied with:
    - the variety of yoga offerings
    - yoga mats and props
  + **95%**of students were satisfied or very satisfied with the yoga teachers
  + **80%**of students were satisfied or very satisfied with:
    - diversity of yoga teachers
    - inclusive practices
    - music
  + As a result of the class,
    - **90%**are motivated to practice yoga and mindfulness
    - **85%**intend to continue their yoga practice in the next 6 weeks
    - **80%**of students have developed skills to manage their stress
    - **70%**are better able to manage life's demands
    - **60%**of students are better able to regulate their emotions
  + Personal Anecdotes:
    - “I liked the diversity of teachers and their different styles and the teachers themselves.”
    - “I liked having an excuse to move and practice mindfulness every week. Additionally I value being able to practice in a community setting.”
    - “I really liked how the teachers cued different poses and helped me understand what muscles I should be engaging throughout different movements”
    - “I really like when the teacher thanks us for coming to class and says namaste and makes us feel appreciated, this makes me feel more valued even if she doesn't really know me personally and more likely to come back and feel motivated to show up for all of my responsibilities and events in general.”
    - “How the instructors cared about our well being”
    - “Kind compassionate teachers!”

**Qigong**

* Total of **67** participants who attended during the semester

**Mindful Professor Training Program**

* In the Fall 2023, we completed our second cohort of the Mindful Professor Training Program as a part of our wait-list control trial with 8 graduates. A total of **19 graduated during the research study period.**
  + Study results will be submitted to be published in an academic journal this year.
* In the Spring 2024, we launched our new, revised version of the Mindful Professor Training Program. We had **15 graduates** complete the program!
  + Baseline, Post-Program, and 3-month Post-Program Evaluations will be analyzed during Summer & Fall 2024.

**Educational Presentations**

* Educational presentations on various topics related to mindful living. A total of **10 workshops** were offered with approximately **198 participants** total.
  + Provided education to multiple departments and student groups across campus including the WRT 105 program, Active Minds, Graduate Off-Campus Housing, Office of Financial Planning and Analysis, Department of Earth and Environmental Science, nursing students, and the UR Women’s Network.

**National Conference Presentations**

* Mindful Professor Training Program was presented at two conferences this year
  + NYSCHA / NECHA Fall 2023 Annual Meeting in Albany, NY
  + Science ImmersEd: Virtual Professional Development for Higher Education Conference hosted by Labster May 2024

**Programs**

**Flourish Festival**

* Each Spring, the Health Promotion holds their Flourish Festival in partnership with the Mindful University Project and various offices on and off campus. At this day-long event, students are offered with various opportunities to engage in wellness activities from taking a yoga class, engaging in mindfulness meditation practices (such as mindful eating and walking!), getting a mental health screening, petting some therapy dogs, meeting various wellness-related resources on campus, and more!
* This year we had a total of **417 attendees**!

**Student-Led Meditations**

* **16 Student Mindfulness Facilitators** were trained.
* **In-person mindfulness sessions** were offered weekly throughout the academic year, led by Student Mindfulness Facilitators, in collaboration with various student groups on campus.

**Partnerships**

**Rush Rhees Library**

* Partnered with Rush Rhee’s librarians to update our [**“Wellness & Mental Health” Collection Highlight**](https://libguides.lib.rochester.edu/wellness)during the Flourish Festival, Spring 2024.

**Goergen Athletic Center**

* Partnered with the Goergen Athletic Center and local yoga studios to use their space to offer daily yoga classes, weekly qigong classes, and offer yoga mats and props for free to make these practices accessible to our students.

**Hatha Yoga Club**

* We partnered with the Hatha Yoga Club in Spring 2024 to financially support the club, helping to waive all club fees for members.

**Medallion Program**

* Collaborated with the Medallion team to offer our Student Mindfulness Facilitator training as a Medallion Program.

**Social Media Presence**

Grew a **social media** presence via Instagram to **2,311 followers from 2,290 followers**, a 9.2% increase since May of 2023. (@URMindfulUniversityProject)

* 40.7% of our followers are in the 18 – 24 year old demographic
* 29.9% are in the 25-34 year old demographic
* 73.1% of our followers are female and 26.8% are male

**Other Notable Accomplishments**

* **Launched four new mindfulness classes**, of which Calming U and OUTBreath, are very popular offerings and have higher attrition rates than classes in the past.
* Completed our **Mindful Professor Training wait-list control study**.
* Received **additional funding** from our donor to continue as well as expand our offerings.