



The StudyWell Initiative:

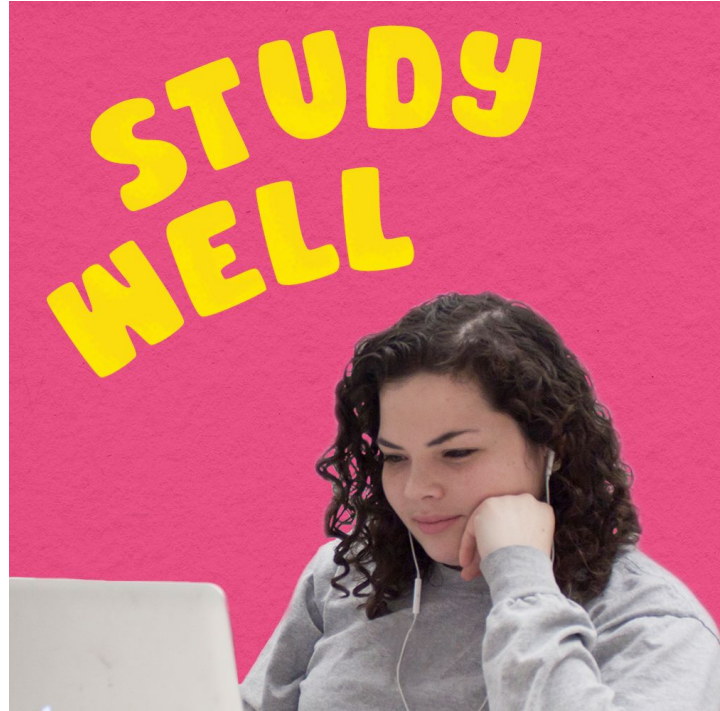
A Campus Partnership

Promoting Student Wellness, Engagement, and Belonging

Laura W. Gariepy | Emily J. Hurst | Sue Robinson | Ryan Pander
Virginia Commonwealth University Libraries
LOEX Conference | May 12, 2023

StudyWell is a series
of events and
programming
supporting student
wellness and
well-being

go.vcu.edu/studywell





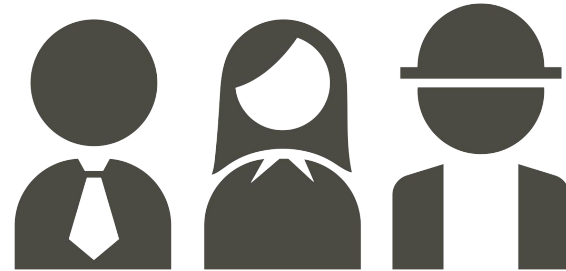
**In a world of the common, we are the uncommon.
Because we do things others can't. Or won't.**

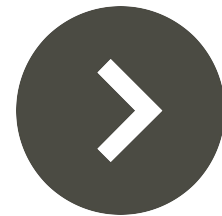


VCU / VCU Libraries

- Approx 29,000 students
- Minority Serving Institution (MSI)
- $\frac{1}{3}$ of undergrads Pell-eligible
- $\frac{1}{3}$ of undergrads first gen
- Two libraries: general and health sciences

**Before we
dive in, let's
learn a little
about you.**





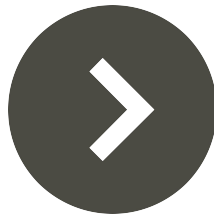
Outline of session

- Overview of StudyWell initiative
- Specifics about events and programming
- Measures of success
- Broader effects of StudyWell at VCU Libraries



Summer 2021

StudyWell idea is born

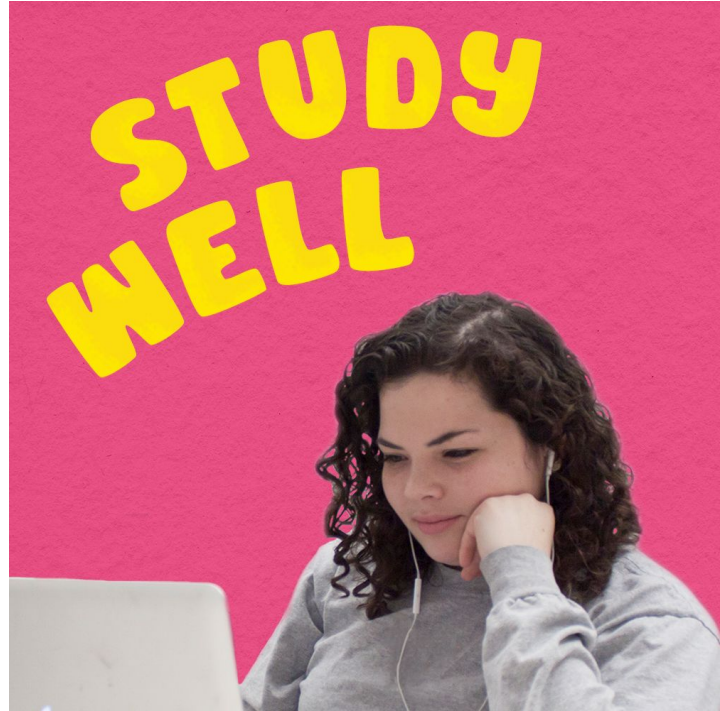


Students return to campus

- Mid-pandemic
- Awareness of disproportionate impacts
- Mental health and well-being (Copeland et al., 2021; Pandya & Lodha, 2022)
- Creating a “caring, supportive, and welcoming environment” (O’Keeffe, 2013)
- Our role in wellness (Ramsey & Aagard, 2018)

Initial goals:

- Support wellness and well-being
- Mental, physical, social, financial
- Prerequisites to academic success





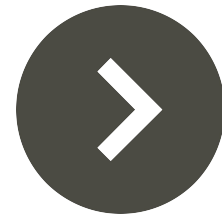
**Real talk:
scrambling
since day one to
pull this off**





The StudyWell Core Team

- Associate Dean for Research and Learning
- Director, Communications & Public Relations
- Events Coordinator****
- Undergrad Student Engagement Coordinator
- Deputy Director, Health Sciences Library
- Research & Education Coordinator, Health Sciences



Recurring StudyWell Partners

- RecWell
 - Peer Health Educators
 - Counseling Center
- Student Success
 - Campus Learning Center
 - Writing Center
 - YouFirst (First Gen student support)

Summer 2021

StudyWell
conceptualized

Spring 2022

StudyWell full
campaign and
events - \$5K budget

Fall 2021

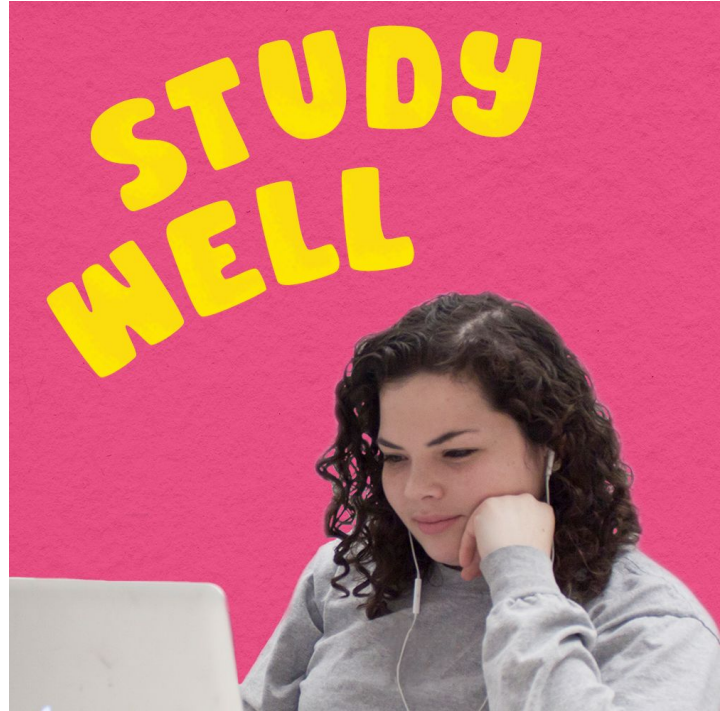
StudyWell pilot
events - \$1K budget

2022 - 2023

The show goes on!
\$7500K budget

Evolving goals:

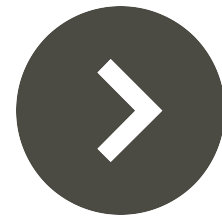
- Support wellness and well-being
- Prerequisites to academic success
- **Joy, delight, belonging**





StudyWell events

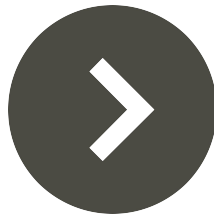
The details



Extant events

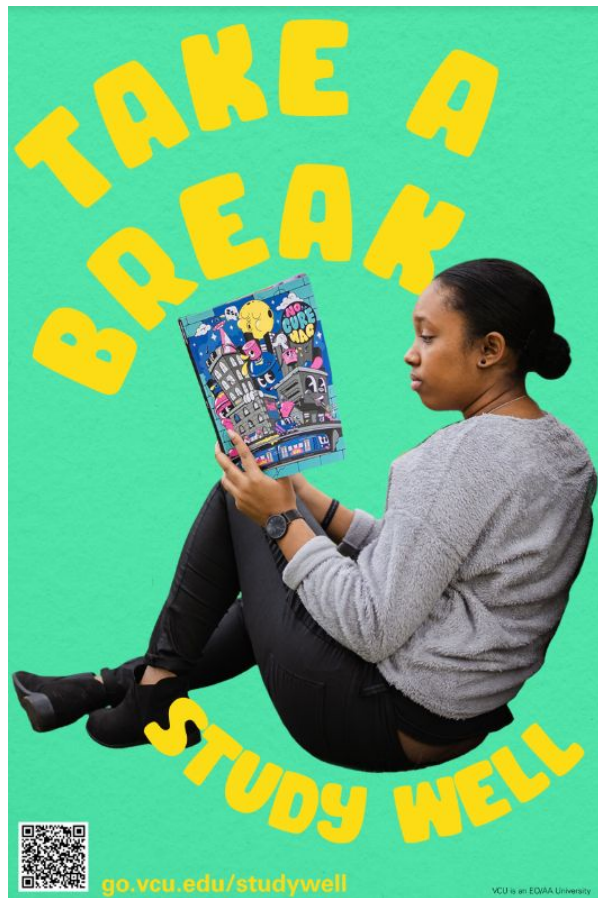
New Events

Umbrella image courtesy of Rockicon, via the Noun Project



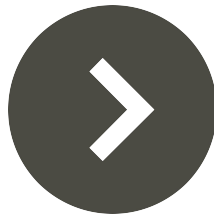
General info about events

- Mostly in-person
- One-off events work well as “drop-in” or “stop by” in high traffic areas
- Some staffed, some not
- Several series of events
- Scale: 100 - 200+ (?) events per year





**Questions
so far?**



“Categories” of events

- Health-focused events
- Take-a-break events
- Building connections
- Well wishes / good vibes tables

Health-focused events





Peer Health Educators

- Sleep
- Sexual health and relationships
- Cannabis
- Alcohol
- Physical health
- Menstrual Health
- Mental health
- Meal planning



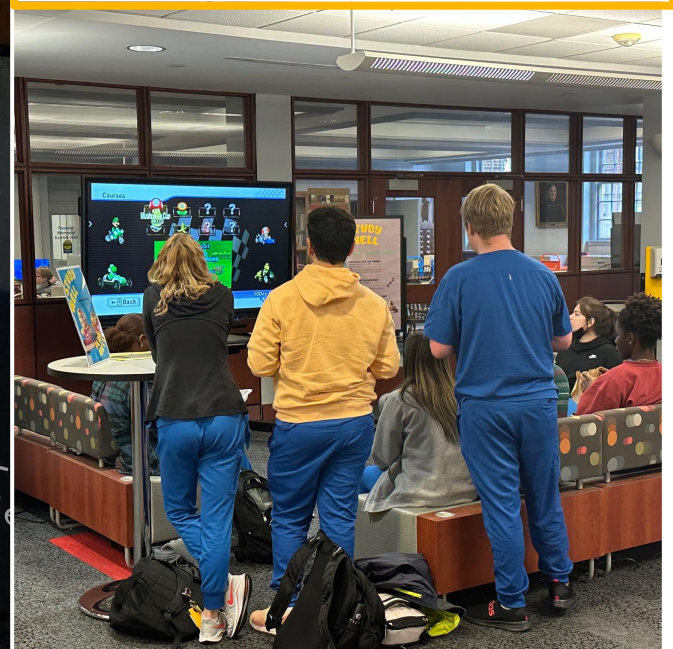
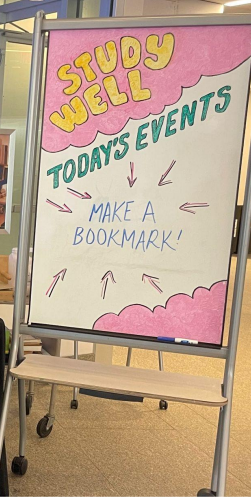
Other health-focused events

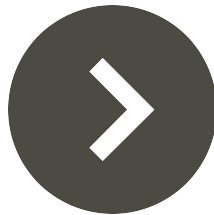
- Food for Fines
- Massage chairs
- Blood pressure screening



Take a Break







Take a break events

- Legos
- Puzzles
- Chess
- Leisure reading and free books
- Zine making
- Coming soon: collective sticker art

Building Connections



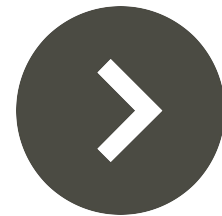
Science Hub Drop-in Hours for STEM Students

Description

Faculty members from math, chemistry, biology and physics offer joint "open hours" in the Cabell Library Multipurpose Room (250). STEM students in introductory courses may drop in for answers to questions, problem solving, tutoring and mentoring and getting to know their teachers.

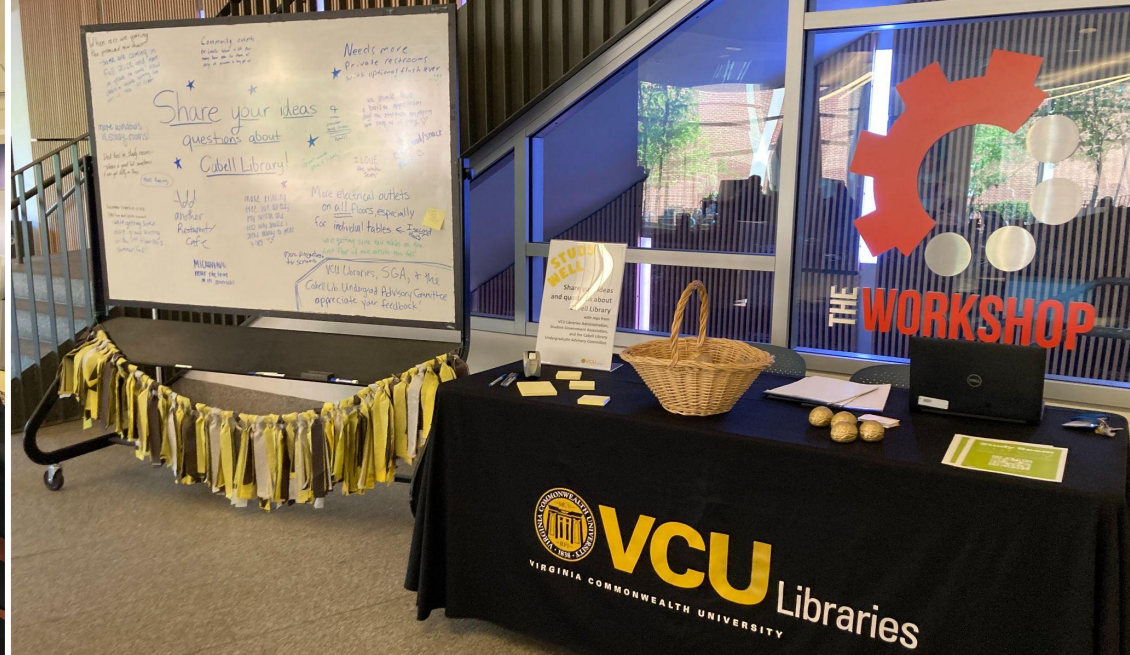
These drop-in hours are a part of the Science Hub a major component of a [significant grant-funded program designed to support STEM students](#), particularly those just beginning their academic work at VCU.



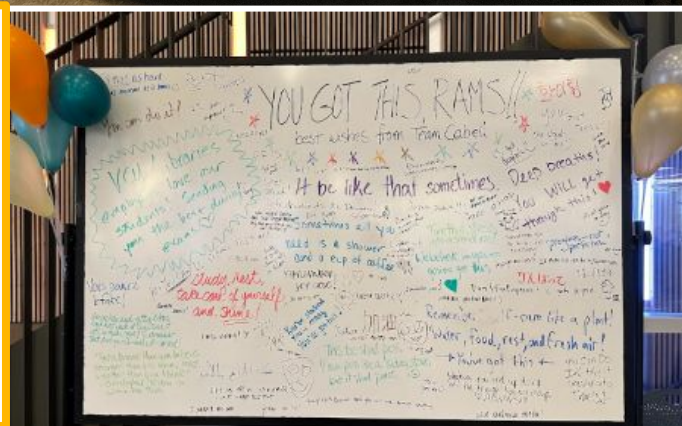


Building connection events

- Writing Center
 - Book Club / Reading Group
 - Writing Group



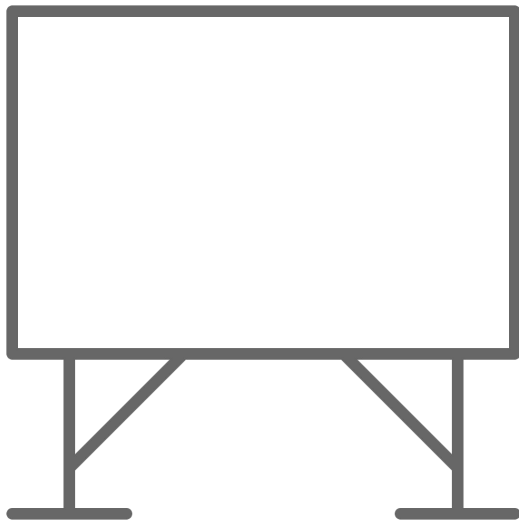
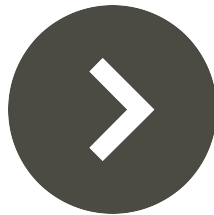
Well wishes / Good vibes





Well wishes / good vibes

- Exams tables wishing students good luck
- Spring flower / seed packet giveaway
- Gratitude cards and joy journals (from the Peer Health Educators)
- Rodney the Ram (VCU's mascot)



Whiteboard Wednesdays

Always a hit

[illegible]

Nx How are YOU preparing for finals?

doing my best and/or failing miserably etc.

Stimulants (and reviewing)

prazi



Stocking up on tea and hot chocolate for the late nights ahead

Sigma grindset
LOBS OF OVID
taking things day by day

Time management and more sure everything is done

im not

Finals? What's that?

participating in ritual stress relief activities (crying)

Survivor - 2022 November

Good luck

re-reading notes

3D modeling is hard

Finishing homework early so I have more time to study

MOTIVATIONAL CRYING
GARGF

Draw a heart for Garg

Drink water

Eating?

Shots (to be prepared)

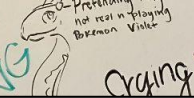
Crying so my professor gives me a pity grade

Hoping for multiple choice

Crying

sleeping

Not Eating



Crying

praying

Starting essays EARLY

DYING

I do a little studying or work each day, even

Stocking up on Red Bull

If I can't see them they aren't there, sleep and take it easy

Crying brain

How are you prepping for finals?

hoping and praying

sleeping

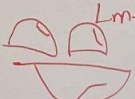
Same

Sigma Grindset

I'm not

stay here till 3am

Shake some ass for serotonin



moving in to Cabell


LOL PREPARING???

true

ACADEMIC WEAPON

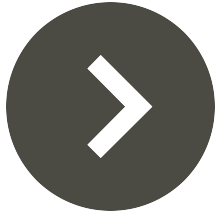
(and naps)

study study STUDY!

A photograph of two young women standing in front of a large whiteboard. The woman on the left, with long brown hair and a black shirt, is smiling and drawing a bug on the board with a white marker. The woman on the right, with shoulder-length brown hair and a black shirt, is also smiling and looking towards the camera. The whiteboard is covered in various hand-drawn illustrations of insects, including butterflies, beetles, ladybugs, and a spider. Some drawings are colored in blue, pink, and yellow. There are also some handwritten notes and phrases on the board, such as "THE RASH ME + MY ROOM THROOM", "Johnce", "My Sister", and "STIDER". A yellow and black wavy banner is hanging at the top of the whiteboard.

Draw your best bug

Whiteboard prompts



<https://tinyurl.com/VCULwhiteboards>



Your successes and...
not successes

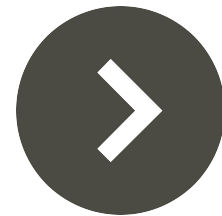


**Questions
so far?**



Measuring success

Engagement and assessment

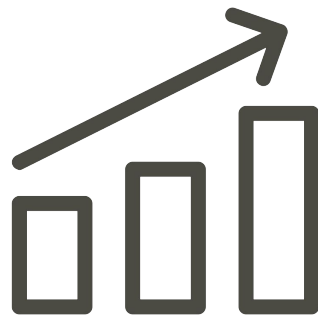


The numbers

	Total 2021-2022	In progress 2022-2023
Events	182	101
Attendees	2664	3947
Avg attendees per event	15	39



Assessment can be... awkward



“Thank you for dropping by, want to answer
a survey about your 3 min interaction?”

**STUDY
WELL**

GIVE US



YOUR FEEDBACK



VCU Libraries

capture

StudyWell @ VCU Libraries Feedback

Thank you for attending today's StudyWell @ VCU Libraries event, and for taking the time to tell us about your experience! Your feedback will help VCU Libraries improve future StudyWell programming.

lwgariepy@vcu.edu [Switch account](#)



 Not shared

How would you rate the event/program you participated in today at Cabell Library?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Poor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Excellent

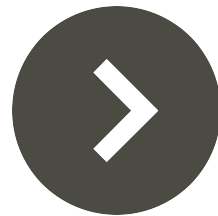
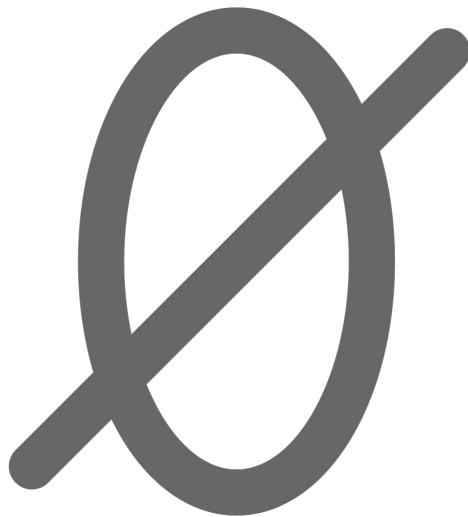


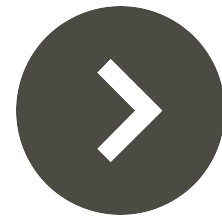
**We started
this in April
and had 15+
events since**

responses?

**We started
this in April
and have had
15+ events.**

responses?

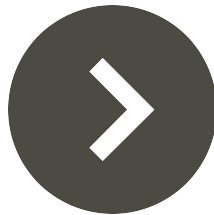




So, is it working?

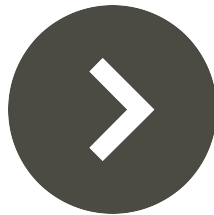
- Wellness and well-being
- Joy, Delight, Belonging
- Engagement

Is StudyWell contributing to these things?



Assessment next steps (for now)

- Largely focused on engagement of students (i.e., numbers) to measure success
- Aiming for 10-15 engagements per event (formally stated as an objective starting in 2023-2024)



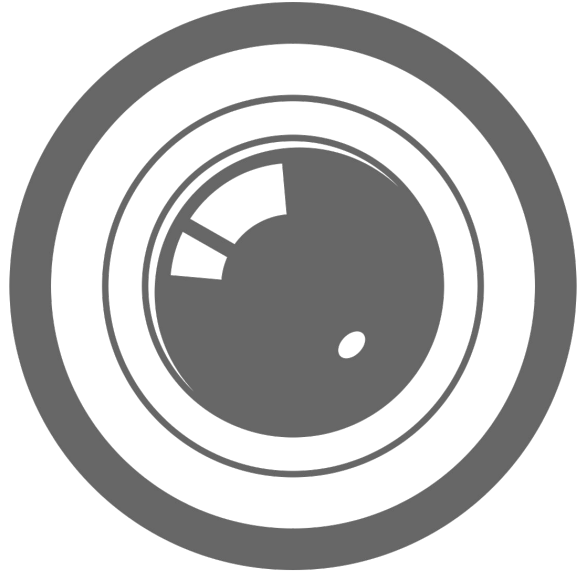
StudyWell Challenges

- Scope creep
 - “Want to table in the libraries? How can we make that part of StudyWell...”
- Perma-frazzled: limited time
 - Executing the events, but difficult to find time to be reflective and understand impact



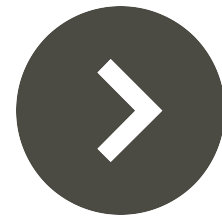
A larger influence

StudyWell's influence on other initiatives



StudyWell as a wider lens for VCU Libraries





Strategic Action Plan, 2023-2028

Advance Students' Holistic Well-being

Support VCU students' physical, emotional, social, and financial wellness to position them for academic success. This outcome is inclusive of all students--undergraduate, graduate, and professional students.



StudyWell
Hours
Fines and fees
Spaces
Teaching/services



References

- Copeland, W. E., McGinnis, E., Bai, Y., Adams, Z., Nardone, H., Devadanam, V., ... & Hudziak, J. J. (2021). Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on college student mental health and wellness. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 60(1), 134-141.
- O'Keeffe, P. (2013). A sense of belonging: Improving student retention. *College Student Journal*, 47(4), 605-613.
- Pandya, A., & Lodha, P. (2022). Mental health consequences of COVID-19 pandemic among college students and coping approaches adapted by higher education institutions: A scoping review. *SSM. Mental health*, 2, 100122.
- Ramsey, E., & Aagard, M. C. (2018). Academic libraries as active contributors to student wellness. *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, 25(4), 328-334.



Credits

Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:

- Presentation template by [SlidesCarnival](#)
- Graphics by [The Noun Project](#) and [SlidesCarnival](#)



Thank you!

Questions?

See next slide for comments and questions that were shared.

Questions or comments?

11

Answers

Start a capture

Big success with 'study with a plant'. We grew little succulents and the students check them out.

PLANTS ARE SUCH EXCELLENT SOURCES OF JOY AND DELIGHT. we've had great success with plant-based events

Book speed dating: failBook fair (scholastic style): win

Did you have to deal with campus security issues or concerns with therapy dogs being in the library building?

To assess, we use touch screen emoji scales (frowny face to smiley face). Increased rates of response.

I'm currently banned from dancing in the library (in fun) after our dance break at midterms completely flopped. You cannot conga to Taylor Swift.

Have you faced pushback from Admin? How do you demonstrate ROI, or is that something given the active engagement/visibility you've been able to justify? We often hit walls when we try to innovate!

Our Ux librarian empowered all our student colleagues to use 5 minutes of their shift to "inspire moments of delight". They come up with the coolest things.

Our podcast booths are also promoted as zoom therapy spaces

Cat cafe event!! For the cat people

We have an origami table