WellTrack Personalizes High-Tech Help

The Ball State Counseling Center is seeing an enthusiastic and positive response to WellTrack, its newest online and mobile service to assist students expressing concerns such as stress or anxiety.

"Anxiety is now the number one student mental health issue on campus," said Dr. Allen Lucas, a licensed psychologist and the center's associate director of outreach consulting psychology. "And this type of service is ideal for anxiety sufferers. Anxiety is uncomfortable, and students experiencing it want to do something about it."

WellTrack is among multiple measures the Counseling Center implemented last fall to more effectively provide students with mental health support. Other initiatives include providing students a screening appointment with a therapist to collaboratively identify treatment goals and appropriate resources, and expanded opportunities for group therapy and skills workshops.

Lucas says college students' comfort with technology makes WellTrack a particularly good self-help resource in a university setting. WellTrack is free and available to all students, even if they're not clients of the center. Lucas said its online and mobile platform makes it effective because of its flexibility.

"We know the stigma of coming to the Counseling Center for help has decreased," Lucas says. "WellTrack is ideal because it provides immediate response in the comfort of the student's own room. It matches up with the technology students use today."

Even a positive experience like going to college can bring about anxiety, Lucas says. Parents might listen for their student to express ideas along the lines of "I'm too stressed," "I'm overwhelmed," or "I'm feeling keyed up all of the time."

For some students, engaging with WellTrack might offer all the help they need in the form of coping strategies, skills, and resources. For others students, Lucas says, WellTrack could be used as a bridge source of help until their first appointment, or it could be used in conjunction with regular therapy appointments.

When students create a WellTrack account, they complete a health assessment. From there, the program offers one or more recommended helpful and informational modules.

"We tried out several online services of this type before selecting WellTrack," Lucas says. In a quick overview in her office, Lucas pointed out its many features, including a mood diary where students can record personal notes, a mood check-in app that can be downloaded to the student's phone, and a Zen room offering a guided relaxation experience.

Lucas says the mood tracker is a particularly helpful feature both for her as a student's therapist and for the students themselves. She said the mood tracker might reveal that a student becomes most anxious in certain circumstances or at particular times of the day or certain days of the week. Both the student and the therapist can see the ups and downs of mood plotted on a chart over time. Lucas says she can send her clients a message to check in when she sees a concerning trend in the mood tracker.

Analysis of these same patterns in mood among large numbers of users helps the Counseling Center track student well-being overall on campus. In the fall semester, WellTrack had 442 student accounts open, and these students had logged 3,000 mood check-ins.

"Seventy percent of the student users are routinely checking in," Lucas said. "More than 60 percent are return users, and 67 percent scored high on stress, so people need this."

"The check-in feature conveys a sense of care that they want and need. Anything that makes students aware of their feelings and thoughts is good. They have a concrete way to acknowledge that for themselves. More important, they can take steps necessary to address what they are feeling."

Students will find information on the Counseling Center's website, bsu.edu/students/cpsc

Ball State Welcomes Geoffrey S. Mearns

The Board of Trustees selected Geoffrey S. Mearns to be the 17th president of Ball State University. He brings with him extensive experience in higher education and will lead the university as it enters its next 100 years.

On May 15, 2017, he will officially join a welcoming community of students, faculty, staff, alumni, supporters, and friends; a campus whose degrees deliver a high return on investment for students, families, and Indiana citizens; and a university whose graduates are real-world ready.
Updates on Campus Construction

Johnson Residence Halls/Schmidt-Wilson: Schmidt-Wilson, the larger of the two residence halls that make up the Johnson Complex, will reopen for students to move in next fall. Designed for 505 students, residents will live in rectangular-shaped double rooms with semiprivate restrooms and stackable furniture. The building will also feature two-story lounges, a black box theater, dance studio, music practice rooms, design/craft room, seminar space, advanced laundry room, technology center, and an exercise room.

Three living-learning communities (LLCs) will be associated with the hall: Theatre and Dance, Music, and Design. Through their LLC, students engage with alumni and other professionals in the fields they intend to pursue upon graduation. Field trips are among the offerings. Research within Housing and Residence Life has demonstrated that two key measures of student success—earning credit hours on time and overall grade point average—are better for students who reside in living-learning communities associated with their degree plan.

Emens Auditorium: The campus and surrounding communities look forward to the completion of a $5 million renovation of Emens Auditorium. When complete, the renovation will add about 12,000 square feet to the venue for entertainment and educational events in the heart of campus. Improvements include an expanded first-floor lobby topped by a second-story hospitality space for receptions. The first floor will also have restrooms and the box office.

"It's gratifying that after all these years of laying the groundwork, we'll be able to offer the community a venue that's much more contemporary and up-to-date," says Robert Myers, director of the auditorium and Pruis Hall.

The John R. Emens College-Community Auditorium was built in the 1960s with half of the original construction cost paid by donations from the community. The renovation was supported by university revenues and another successful community campaign.

Emens is still open during construction. Your student might want to know they are entitled to one free ticket to each of the Art Series events and one free ticket to each of the Muncie Symphony Orchestra concerts at Emens. To claim free tickets, students must bring a valid student ID to the Emens ticket office (temporarily in Sursa Hall) during business hours to have it scanned. Free tickets are available two weeks prior to each performance and are available only until 6 p.m. the night of the event. After that they will be $12. Admission to many other events throughout the season is just $5.

Health Professions Building: A $62.5 million health professions building will consolidate most health-related programs at the university into a complex at the southeast corner of Riverside Avenue and Martin Street. The building will be used by programs that are part of the College of Health, Ball State's newest academic college. Students in the college learn about, from, and with one another in an inter-professional environment, integrating expertise and discovery across health-related disciplines. In education and clinical practice, collaborative teams represent the future of health care, resulting in a more unified, less fragmented system—and better patient care.

"Every day, there are near-constant reminders of the importance of health and life sciences to our state and nation, and the importance of STEM education to our students and their future careers," said Interim President Terry King. "The creation of our new College of Health, and the continued movement on the health professions building, reinforces Ball State's leadership in this vital field, while setting our students apart in the marketplace."

Plans are to break ground by the fall of 2017 and open in 2019.
Beware of B (Meningitis B)

Dear Cardinal Parents,

We want to alert you to important health information concerning meningitis. This past semester, three University of Wisconsin-Madison students were hospitalized with meningitis B, a very serious and potentially fatal strain of meningococcal disease. Even though there have been no cases at Ball State University, these hospitalizations are a grim reminder of the importance for college students to get vaccinated against the disease.

Most students have been vaccinated against other strains of meningitis, but a different strain—meningitis B—has become more prevalent on college campuses. Two FDA-approved vaccines (Bexsero and Trumenba) can guard against contracting the B strain. These vaccines require a series of two shots to provide immunity.

While the meningococcal disease is rare, it is extremely contagious, making a university residence hall an example of an environment friendly to the disease.

Ball State University has linked with the Beware of B campaign—a statewide effort to educate parents and students about the meningitis B vaccination—and to make it easy to obtain the important protection needed. Please urge your student to get vaccinated against meningitis B at your local pharmacy or with your family doctor.

For more information on the Beware of B campaign, please visit: vaccinateindiana.org/beware-of-b/

Sincerely,

D. Dorman, MD
Medical Director
Student Health Center
Ball State University

FAFSA Filing Made Easier

The timing to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) used to mean parents scrambled to complete their annual tax returns ahead of the usual April 15 tax deadline so they could meet the FAFSA’s March deadline.

Starting with the FAFSA for aid in the 2017-18 academic year, the U.S. Department of Education announced the following changes:

- **Students can submit their FAFSAs as early as October 1.** The earlier submission date is a permanent change. The deadline remains March 10.
- **Students now report income information from an earlier tax year.** For example, on the 2017-18 FAFSA, students (and parents, as appropriate) must report their 2015 income information, rather than their 2016 income information. This is sometimes referred to as prior-prior year.

“Prior-prior year tax data is already in the IRS system. Students applying online can now import income information directly into the FAFSA,” says John McPherson, assistant vice president of enrollment services. “This means there isn’t a holdup in processing the student aid.”

But what if family financial circumstances have changed a great deal since the prior income tax year because of a job change, divorce, or loss of income?

“Come and see us,” McPherson says. “We will help students in these situations fill out the paperwork for a change in income or family situation. With documentation, we can adjust the FAFSA to reflect the current situation.”

The office of Financial Aid and Scholarships is in Lucina Hall, room 245. For more information, visit bu.edu/finaid.
Stay Connected
We welcome your questions and comments as we partner with you to ensure your student enjoys a fulfilling and successful experience at Ball State and beyond. Email Katie Slabaugh, associate dean of students/Title IX coordinator, at kslabaugh@bsu.edu. call 765-285-1545, or write to her at the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, Bracken Administration Building, room 238, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306-0830.

Ball State University Telephone Directory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate Dean of Students/Title IX Coordinator</td>
<td>765-285-1545</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bursar</td>
<td>765-285-1643</td>
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<td>Campus Information</td>
<td>765-285-5000</td>
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<td>Career Center</td>
<td>765-285-1522</td>
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<td>Counseling Center</td>
<td>765-285-1736</td>
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<td>Dining</td>
<td>765-285-1967</td>
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<td>Disability Services</td>
<td>765-285-5293</td>
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<td>Financial Aid and Scholarships</td>
<td>765-285-5600</td>
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<td>Health Center</td>
<td>765-285-8431</td>
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<td>Housing and Residence Life</td>
<td>765-285-8000</td>
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<td>Learning Center</td>
<td>765-285-1006</td>
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<td>Multicultural Center</td>
<td>765-285-1344</td>
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<td>Parking Services</td>
<td>765-285-1208</td>
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<td>Police</td>
<td>765-285-1111</td>
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<td>Registrar</td>
<td>765-285-1722</td>
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<td>Retention and Graduation Specialists</td>
<td>765-285-3312</td>
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<td>Student Legal Services</td>
<td>765-285-1888</td>
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<td>Student Life</td>
<td>765-285-2621</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Rights and Community Standards</td>
<td>765-285-5036</td>
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Many of these offices can be reached using the university's toll-free number, 800-382-8540. Campus information is always available at bsu.edu.