

Healthy Retrievers
Student Sleep Priority Action Group
Priority Action Plan

According to the Centers for Disease Control, insufficient sleep is a public health epidemic. Unintentionally falling asleep, nodding off while driving, and having difficulty performing daily tasks because of sleepiness all may contribute to potentially hazardous outcomes. Persons experiencing sleep insufficiency are more likely to suffer from chronic diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, depression, and obesity, as well as are at higher risks for cancer, increased mortality, and reduced quality of life and productivity. Sleep insufficiency may be caused by broad scale societal factors such as round-the-clock access to technology and work/school schedules, but sleep disorders also play an important role.¹

College students may not fully understand the consequences of insufficient sleep on their health, safety, academic performance, and overall lifestyle. According to Harvard Medical School's Division of Sleep Medicine, "Our bodies regulate sleep in much the same way that they regulate eating, drinking, and breathing. This suggests that sleep serves a similar critical role in our health and well-being."² Similarly, in *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*, sleep is considered a physiological or biological need required for human survival, along with air, food and water. "If these requirements are not met, the human body cannot function properly and will ultimately fail. Physiological needs are thought to be the most important; they should be met first."³

The 2013 National College Health Assessment conducted at UMBC showed approximately 20% of UMBC students reported sleep difficulties as a factor affecting their academic performance. This means 1 in 5 students at UMBC has received a lower grade on an exam or project, received a lower grade in a course, received an incomplete or dropped a course, and/or experienced a significant disruption in their work due to issues with sleep. In fact, sleep difficulties is listed as the second most reported factor affecting individual academic performance, with stress being the top factor. In addition, 25% of UMBC students reported sleep difficulties as being very traumatic or very difficult to handle, and 42% of UMBC students reported feeling tired, dragged out, or sleepy during the day for 3-5 of the past 7 days.

Research has shown that the most effective solutions to address insufficient sleep include education, school policies, individual interventions and naps.⁵ The "Get Your Sleep On" Initiative at UMBC will focus on three guiding principles and priority areas for healthy sleep. These include education and awareness, behavior change, and cultural/environmental influences. The following report outlines goals, objectives and strategies to be implemented as part of Healthy Retrievers for students at UMBC through 2020.

Goals, Objectives and Strategies

Guiding Principle: Education & Awareness

Goal: Enhance student awareness of the effects of sleep on their health.

Objective:

- 1) Increase the percentage of students who report they received information from UMBC about “sleep difficulties” from 23.9% to 50% by 2019, as evidenced by data from the National College Health Assessment. Strategies include:
 - Distribute information via a mass marketing campaign (online media, posters, etc.)
 - Enhance programming and outreach provided by the Peer Health Educators about sleep health.
 - Include a resource page about sleep health on the Healthy Retrievers website.
 - Create an educational campaign about the health effects and cost of energy drinks and other highly caffeinated food/beverage items, and over the counter sleep aids, alcohol and other depressants.
 - Distribute sleep kits during Welcome Week and Graduate School Orientation dates to students that include eye masks, ear plugs, a resource sheet and tips for creating sleep friendly environments.

Goal: Enhance student awareness on strategies to improve their quality of sleep.

Objective:

- 1) By 2020, 25% of students surveyed will be able to identify three to five personal strategies to enhance their quality of sleep and sleep routine to increase physical and mental health as measured by a customized campus sleep survey. Strategies include:
 - Train Residential Life staff on ways to “sleepify” students’ rooms (i.e. lighting, furniture and electronics placement, etc.)
 - Develop a “Wind Down Wednesday” monthly program to occur in residential communities to promote relaxation and de-stressing before bedtime. The program would include free decaf tea, guided discussion topics with Peer Health Educators, campus resources and sleep health information, and opportunities for students to connect and share ideas.
 - Work with IHU instructors to promote healthy time management strategies, that cover a 24-hour period and time set aside for ADLs (activities of daily living).
 - Help support the promotion of The Counseling Center’s Skills for Success workshops on procrastination, time management and stress management, to demonstrate the connection between these three topics and sleep health.

Goal: Enhance student awareness of the effects of sleep on their safety.

Objective:

- 1) Students will be able to identify the dangers of drowsy driving and implement strategies to reduce their risk of crashes as measured by qualitative data gathered through focus groups. Strategies include:

- Host a UMBC Sleep Week on a biannual basis with a fall semester focus on Drowsy Driving Prevention Week and a spring semester focus on National Sleep Awareness Week.
- Provide education and resources on drowsy driving for commuter students through the OCSS website, Commuter Lounge, Good Morning Commuters Breakfast, UMBC Transit advertisements, Retriever Learning Center, UMBC Police website and other areas where commuters frequently gather.

Guiding Principle: Behavior Change

Goal: Promote healthy sleep behaviors among students to improve academic performance.

Objectives:

- 1) Reduce the percentage of students who report “sleep difficulties” as an impediment to academic performance from 20.3% to 15% by 2019 as evidenced by data from the National College Health Assessment.

- 2) Reduce the number of students who report that they feel “tired, dragged out or sleepy during the day” on 6+ days from 16.8% to 12% by 2019 as evidenced by data from the National College Health Assessment. Strategies for Objectives 1 and 2 include:
 - In collaboration with The Counseling Center, provide a monthly healthy sleep workshop and include referrals and treatment for students who have sleep difficulties, sleep disorders, and other concerns.
 - Work with UHS medical providers to encourage discussion about sleep behaviors and/or difficulties during health history, and make appropriate referrals when necessary.
 - Implement a campus wide sleep challenge that encourages and promotes a healthy sleep culture.
 - Use social media and new technological trends to increase visibility of sleep challenge.
 - Create a social norms campaign to change student perceptions regarding unhealthy sleep habits and education on how sleep affects the brain, memory and essential functions.
 - Offer online assessments for students to measure their quality of sleep and recognize signs of possible sleep disorders.

- 3) Increase the average number of hours of sleep students report getting per night as evidenced by data from the National College Health Assessment. Strategies include:
 - Add an additional institution-specific question asking students about their average sleep hours per night into the spring 2015 NCHA survey and each survey thereafter.
 - Implement a campus wide sleep challenge that encourages and promotes a healthy sleep culture.

- Use social media and hashtags (if/when relevant) to increase visibility of sleep challenge (#umbc #getyoursleepon.)
- 4) UMBC faculty and staff will be able to implement at least one best practice in their department or classroom for healthy sleep to enhance student’s academic performance, as measured by a customized campus sleep survey. Strategies include:
- Work with campus stakeholders to develop messages and recommendations for faculty and staff on how to promote, encourage and support sleep health among their students. (i.e. assignment due dates/times, spreading out large projects, hosting earlier study hours, student employee work schedules, etc.)
 - Train academic advisers to recommend appropriate workloads with class credits, work/internship hours, and extra-curricular activities, and to recognize and refer students in distress.

Guiding Principle: Environmental & Cultural Influences

Goal: Foster an environment that values healthy sleep behaviors by providing tools, resources and opportunities to influence campus culture.

Objectives:

- 1) Students will be able to list three campus locations where they can safely relax, meditate, nap and/or take a break as evidenced by feedback gathered through a customized campus sleep survey. Strategies include:
 - Create a UMBC “Nap Map” that identifies different locations on campus that are ideal for safe resting and relaxation. This map will be available online and via a UMBC specific mobile app.
 - Promote the “UMBC Mind Spa” in the Counseling Center and provide sleep resources in the space.
 - Provide a safe space for students to rest/nap in between classes, before late-night driving, and/or prior to evening activities (“Retriever Rest Stop.”)

- 2) By 2020, 50% of students surveyed will be able to list three benefits of having a nap space on campus as it relates to their health and safety as reported through a customized campus sleep survey. Strategies include:
 - By 2019, open a community space on campus that encourages safe, healthy and appropriate resting/napping behaviors (“Retriever Rest Stop.”)

- 3) Campus community members will be able to describe at least three strategies the university has implemented to support and promote a healthier sleep environment, evidenced by a customized campus sleep survey and annual focus groups. Strategies include:
 - Work with shared governance to propose a policy change for later start times to morning classes and earlier end-times for evening classes.

- Work with OIT to change all computer screen's "sleep mode" to a consistent message (i.e. "I'm Sleeping, Why Aren't You?" with logo.)
- Collaborate with Chartwells and SGA to evaluate food and drink offerings and hours of operation for late-night dining.
- Meet with Commons staff to conduct an inventory of energy drinks and nutritional supplements sold in the Yum Shoppe and Bookstore to assess changes that could be implemented.
- Host an annual focus group luncheon with campus stakeholders and students to assess effectiveness and use of "Get Your Sleep On" initiatives.

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**Healthy Retrievers
Student Sleep Priority Action Group
Campus Inventory**

University Health Services

The medical providers at University Health Services discuss information regarding sleep health with their patients during clinical visits when appropriate. Recently UHS added “Sleep Difficulties” to the Health History section of the patient’s medical record. This assists UHS clinicians in providing patient education, as well as the ability to assess the need of sleep resources, referrals, treatment, etc.

<http://www.umbc.edu/uhs>

Health Education Program at University Health Services

The Health Education program at University Health Services provides health and wellness education for the UMBC community through programs and outreach events. Health Education staff customize and distribute a monthly issue of Student Health 101 to all undergraduate students, which includes articles, tips and videos about healthy sleep. Assessment concerning UMBC students’ sleep behaviors and sleep difficulties is gathered through the National College Health Assessment on a biennial basis. The Health Education program offers assistance with health behavior change strategies and referrals for sleep difficulties. Health Education Coordinator posts messages and resources about sleep health on social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter, as well as the Health and Wellness Pinterest board shared with the UMBC Counseling Center.

<http://www.umbc.edu/uhs/healthedu>

<http://www.pinterest.com/healthyumbc/sweet-dreams-the-importance-of-sleep>

University Health Services Peer Health Educators

The Peer Health Educators are a group of approximately 20 undergraduate students who are trained in the Health Education program to provide educational health and wellness programs and outreach events to their UMBC peers. The Peers offer a popular program called “Making the Connection” to residence halls, classrooms and student organizations. This program educates students on healthy sleep behaviors, as well as sleep difficulties, and how these relate to their health, academics and overall well-being. The Peer Health Educators are also instrumental in planning, marketing and implementing various events throughout the year related to sleep health.

<http://www.umbc.edu/uhs/healthedu/peer>

UMBC Counseling Center

The Counseling Center offers free and confidential counseling to all current UMBC students in the form of individual, couples, or group counseling as well as workshops, campus presentations, and self-help resources. The Counseling Center initial questionnaire has questions regarding sleep and counselors assess students’ sleep habits in all initial counseling appointments. Sleep is also addressed with students throughout the course of counseling. The Counseling Center has a section in their mental health resources app, “Just In Case” on sleep

hygiene and ways to improve sleep quality. The Counseling Center also has a “Mindspa” where students can access information on sleep. In the Mindspa, they can learn or practice relaxation, meditation and biofeedback that can help them with sleep. Counselors can also provide individual consultation around sleep difficulties.

<http://www.umbc.edu/counseling>

Office of Residential Life

The Office of Residential Life outlines specific Rights and Responsibilities for students living on campus. For example, residential students must sign written living agreements with their roommates, which includes information about times for sleep, studying, etc. Residential students must also observe “Quiet Hours” at certain times to promote a quiet environment in which others can more easily sleep and study. The Residential Education staff facilitates programs and activities intended to enhance the academic mission of UMBC. Resident Assistants are highly trained and provided with content material on sleep health for passive programming or bulletin boards within their halls. A poster campaign about sleep health was created in 2011 with the Health Education program and distributed to each floor in all of the residence halls. All students involved with the Study@Home Program also receive sleep hygiene information and resources.

<http://www.umbc.edu/reslife>

Off Campus Student Services

Off Campus Student Services offers support and resources to commuters, transfers and student veterans at UMBC. They offer various programs throughout the year to educate students about health topics including sleep, and also support students in developing healthy habits. Some of those programs include a free weekly breakfast on Tuesdays from 8-10:30am called “Good Morning Commuters,” hosting carpool socials for students to meet other commuters and possibly find people to carpool with, and offering healthy living workshops for their Transfer Student Network.

<http://www.umbc.edu/ocss>

UMBC Wellness Initiative

The purpose of the UMBC Wellness Initiative is to raise awareness, provide information and learning opportunities, as well as encourage and connect UMBC faculty and staff to resources and support. Information about sleep health may be integrated into programs and services offered through the collaboration team, as well as on the Wellness Initiative website. There are links to resources, tips and articles, as well as descriptions and contact information for campus programs and services on the website.

<http://www.umbc.edu/wellness>