

Andrade's prescription for success: **Take care**

Being well and doing well in college are inescapably linked. Craig Andrade, the associate dean of health and wellness and director of student health services, focuses on this reality every day.

According to an American College Health Association survey that Andrade often uses to highlight the connection between health and academic success, students at Wheaton and across the nation indicated that the top three impediments to learning are stress, cold-like illnesses and sleep difficulties.

Surveys like this fuel his mission to make sure students stay healthy so they can live their best lives and fulfill their academic goals. The changes he has implemented since he began working at Wheaton two years ago and the new initiatives he has planned for this year go well beyond simply providing health care services. He's focusing holistically on prevention of illness as well as promotion of good health.

"It's balancing reacting with acting. It's all about knowing yourself, your environment and making smart decisions. We want to make sure we educate students on how to take care of themselves," said Andrade. "The top priority is to make sure students know that the resources are here and how to get them."

That's one reason Andrade annually offers chair massages, as he did during orientation this fall. Wheaton's self-proclaimed ambassador of health wants to call attention to the college's commitment to wellness. Counseling services, stress management sessions, healthy dining (no more trans fats),



fitness clinics and expanded on-campus flu clinics are just part of that commitment.

Dean of Students Sue Alexander noted that Andrade's "approach to student health and wellness has added an unprecedented dimension to student life at Wheaton."

Currently, Andrade is leading Healthy Wheaton: 2014, a comprehensive campaign to promote a healthier campus. As part of that campaign, the Office of Health and Wellness now has a full-time student health services coordinator to make sure students have a strong link between Wheaton and the Norton Medical Center, which provides health services. Also, a peer mentor program will be established so that trained students act as advocates to help their peers better navigate the health services system.

Andrade also works to improve the relationship with

Norton Medical and to ensure student familiarity with the available services.

This year, Wheaton will begin to track health issues to develop the best illness prevention initiatives. Andrade also plans to complete an assessment of impediments to learning every two years at Wheaton to track trends and evaluate progress. The next assessment is planned for fall 2009.


Also, Andrade wants to establish a wellness commission that would include parents, faculty, staff and alumnae/i who would offer ideas, advice and expertise.

"Alumnae/i are great allies because they understand Wheaton's health care history and so are a unique resource for positive change," said Andrade, who also is a nurse, personal trainer, athletic trainer and massage therapist.

Another initiative is the redesign of the wellness Web

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site, which he hopes will have an immediate impact by putting resources just a click away. Students are working to re-vamp the site that will include a parent's page to help parents empower their young adults.

"College is the perfect place for students to begin to navigate the health care system on their own," said Andrade. 

—Sandy Coleman