2026 University Summit

Navigating Institutional Changes.
Communicating the Value of Well-Being to Leaders.

Tuesday, October 20, 2026, from 9:00 am PDT/12:00 EDT to 1:00 PDT/4:00 EDT
Virtual Session

With support from:

MARSH

12:00 EDT **Welcome to University Summit and Opening Remarks**

12:05 EDT **The Dr. Robert Winfield Memorial Keynote Presentation:**
Why Science Alone Is Not Enough
Laura Putnam, Bestselling Author of *Workplace Wellness that Works*

12:30 EDT **Panel: Using Data to Drive Well-Being Strategy**
Kent Seckinger, BBA, CEBS, Interim Assistant Vice President for Benefits and Well-being Services, University of Michigan
Mary Imboden, PhD, Research Fellow, HERO
Sara Johnson, PhD, Senior Research Fellow, HERO

1:10 EDT BREAK

1:20 EDT **Panel 1: Making Well-Being Matter to Leadership**
The Art of Storytelling and Data-Driven Influence

Reframing Well-Being: From Initiatives to Institutional Systems Suzy Harrington, DPN, RN, MCHES
Leadership Growth and Thriving in an Executive MBA Ron Magnuson, MBA, College of Charleston
Participation Isn't Proof of Impact Evan Thoman, PhD, PMP, Emory Healthcare

2:00 EDT **Breakout groups: Discussion and Networking**

2:25 EDT BREAK

2:35 EDT **Panel 2: From Strategy to Sustainability**
Designing Well-Being Initiatives That Endure Change

The Future of Well-Being Communication: AI, Interpretation, and Institutional Trust Tiffiny Shockley, PhD, MBA, CPHIMS, CHES, Queens College
From Strategy to Sustainability: Building a Whole-Community Well-Being Infrastructure That Endures Change Anna Courie, RN, DPN, PHNA-BC, Clemson University
Partnering with Deans and Faculty to Advance Health & Well-being at USC Julie Chobdee, MPH, University of Southern California

3:15 EDT **Breakout groups - Discussion and Networking**

3:35 EDT **Wrapping Up: Sharing of lessons learned**

3:45 EDT **Closing Remarks and Prize Drawing**

4:00 EDT **Adjourn**

Title:
Navigating Institutional Changes. Communicating the Value of Well-Being to Leaders.

Summary:
The 2026 HERO University Summit brings together university well-being practitioners to focus on sustaining, advancing, and re-articulating the value of well-being during periods of change. As institutions welcome new presidents, provosts, chancellors, and senior leaders, well-being teams face both disruption and opportunity—needing to rebuild trust, reframe impact, and clearly communicate value in ways that resonate with new priorities and decision-makers.

This session will explore practical strategies for positioning well-being as a strategic institutional asset, not a discretionary program. Participants will examine how to use data and benchmarks, including the HERO Health and Well-being Best Practices Scorecard in Collaboration with Mercer(c), to establish clear goals and demonstrate progress; how to integrate AI thoughtfully into well-being strategies, programming, and assessment; and how to engage leadership support through compelling narratives, outcomes, and alignment with institutional missions.

Through peer learning and applied examples, the summit will also address how to rebuild after change, move forward with clarity, and strengthen the case for well-being using storytelling, personas, and evidence-based messaging that connects human impact to organizational performance.

Learning Objectives:

At the conclusion of this virtual summit, participants will be able implement strategies to successfully navigate institutional changes by:

1. **Communicate the Institutional Value of Well-Being**

   Translate well-being into executive-level value by connecting to institutional priorities such as retention, engagement, performance, risk mitigation, and culture—using data, benchmarks, and storytelling to inform the human impact of well-being strategies that drive decision-making.

2. **Measure, Align, and Demonstrate Impact**

   Apply the HERO Scorecard and other benchmarks to assess well-being maturity, set measurable goals, and align well-being metrics with broader university KPIs for evidence-based planning and leadership reporting.

3. **Sustain and Advance Well-Being Through Change**

   Design forward-looking, sustainable well-being strategies that adapt to institutional and leadership transitions, explore applications of AI, and secure long-term leadership buy-in.