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The review committee will read applications as anonymous submissions. Please do not put your name anywhere in the text of your project description. You may include other details, such as your department and course titles.

Project Title: Mindfulness Matters

I. Project Nature & Goals

Address the following questions as you describe the nature and goals of your project

How will your project produce better teaching and deeper student learning? What scholarship about teaching and learning does your project engage with? What service learning opportunities may be possible through your project? How might your project align with the THINK BIG strategic plan or departmental goals?

The last decade has experienced a growing interest in the benefits of mindfulness activities in higher education pedagogy. Considerable research has addressed the personal benefits of mindfulness practices on individuals' sense of well-being including a reduction in anxiety and an increased ability to focus (Bush 2011; Calma-Biring and Garung 2017; Van der Reit et al. (2015). At the same time, research documents how a lack of well-being (anxiety, depression, attention disorders, etc.) impacts classroom performance. Yet, although leading universities such as UCLA, Brown University, and Georgetown have established centers for the study of mindfulness in education, a literature review of research on the benefits of mindfulness practices on college-age students and their relationship to the higher education classroom experience is still relatively sparse.

Using Jon Kabat-Zinn's definition of mindfulness ("Mindfulness is the awareness that arises by paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally"), our project aims to explore whether starting a class with a short mindfulness practice (less than five minutes) such as guided imagery or a short meditation can have a positive impact on a student's sense of well-being in the classroom and on the class dynamics as a whole. At the same time, we aim to expand the cadre of faculty with the expertise and motivation to implement mindfulness activities in their teaching. Although we conceived of this project before the onset of the COVID 19 pandemic, our group believes this exploration of the impact of mindfulness in the classroom may be even more significant given the challenges students and faculty face as they adjust to dual delivery instruction.

The four components of the project include:

- (a) training CWRU faculty in using mindfulness techniques in their teaching;
- (b) assessing the impact of classroom mindfulness activities on undergraduate and graduate students using standardized measurement tools;
- (c) creating opportunities for CWRU faculty to continue to use and develop mindfulness opportunities with support for the same;
- (d) furthering the research of, and professional discussion about, mindfulness in the classroom.

Overall, our project aligns well with Pathway #4 of the University's Think Big strategic plan: "the agora calls us to embrace our cultures, refine how we engage with each other, and concentrate on well-being or healthy growth."

References

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Purser, Ronald (2015). McMindfulness: how mindfulness became the new capitalist conspiracy (n.p.).

Van der Riet et al. (2015), Piloting a stress management and mindfulness program of undergraduate nursing students. *Nursing Education Today*, 35:44-49.

II. Professional Impact

What is the relationship between your project and your teaching and/or research responsibilities at CWRU? Will your project have short-term or long-term impact on teaching and learning? How do you plan to maximize the number of students that may benefit from involvement in this project?

As of January 2020, 100 CWRU faculty members had participated in the mindfulness or meditation classes organized by the CWRU Wellness program, including some members of this project team. In addition, some members of our team have experience teaching mindfulness courses or have integrated mindfulness into their own courses. Our plan is to build on the knowledge and experience we and other faculty have gained in mindfulness practice and apply it to the classroom setting. We all see opportunities to integrate mindfulness into our classrooms in order to create a more positive learning environment for our students. In the short term this project may improve student mindfulness and well-being, faculty confidence in integrating mindfulness into their classes, and the classroom experience for both faculty and students.

In addition to short-term impacts, our project has potential long-term impacts for teaching and research. Training faculty to use mindfulness in the classroom will enable them to continue using the techniques they learned in future courses. The findings from this research project will provide data to guide future research on campus around mindfulness in the academic setting. Faculty experience can help to inform future projects and the data can help the project team think about what to study next. We also intend to publish the results of our project, helping to build the body of knowledge around mindfulness in higher education settings.

Finally, raising awareness about mindfulness while teaching faculty and students how to engage in it may contribute to a campus culture that embraces mindfulness and well-being. In order to maximize the number of students, we plan to recruit and train faculty from across the University to expand the reach of mindfulness to students, both undergraduate and graduate, in a variety of programs and schools at CWRU. One pool of faculty that we will target for recruitment will be those who participated in the mindfulness and meditations classes on campus, however, recruitment will not be limited to that group. In addition, the members of our project team work in four different schools at CWRU, so we will use our own networks within schools to recruit faculty from a variety of disciplines and professions. Our hope is to make this experience available to as many students as possible across the university.

III. Evidence of Project Goals & Student Learning

What evidence will you seek to collect and analyze to determine how well or to what extent project goals were achieved? How will you measure evidence of student learning and/or teacher change?

This project is working with evidence-informed practice and builds on previous research in the area of using mindfulness in academic settings. This project will gather evidence about the impact of mindfulness initiatives in the classroom on three different levels:

- 1) Student impact –the primary goal related to students is whether we see an improvement in student emotional regulation, stress management, and attitudes that will promote success in their academic and life experiences when they participate in brief classroom mindfulness activities. We also see an opportunity to explore how brief classroom mindfulness activities ground students and connect them to the classroom in remote learning situations. We are considering the use of several standardized measures related to these outcomes (mindfulness and well-being).^{*} Working in consultation with a research design consultant and a mindfulness training professional, we plan to gather pre-and post-course data using these measures to look for statistically significant changes in the students' self-reported emotional regulation/stress management/well-being from the start of the semester to the end of the semester. We also plan to gather qualitative information about student experiences to further refine future implementation of brief classroom mindfulness activities.
- 2) Faculty impact –the primary goals related to faculty are 1) exploring what the experience is like for faculty to implement brief classroom mindfulness activities, and 2) what the impact of the activities are on faculty perceptions of their own well-being. We plan to gather qualitative data related to the first goal through the use of focus groups with faculty who participate in the program. These focus groups would be facilitated by a research design consultant who has focus group expertise, using questions developed by this group in consultation with them. We would gather quantitative data from the faculty participants at the start and end of the semester using a standardized measure of well-being,^{*} and look for statistically significant changes over time. Again, the final choice of the standardized measure(s) will be made in conjunction with the research design consultant and the mindfulness training professional.
- 3) Academic community impact –the project also seeks to impact the academic community both locally and nationally. First, we aim to increase the level of interest at the university related to implementing mindfulness activities, hoping to facilitate cultural change and improved well-being across the university. This would be measured by people asking to participate in training to implement the brief classroom mindfulness activities, and additionally the number of faculty participating in the related University Wellness programs about mindfulness. Second, we aim to increase knowledge in the larger national academic community by publishing the results of the research project.

***Possible Standardized Measures:**

All the scales under consideration to measure change have been used extensively in previous research. As stated previously, the final decision regarding the 2-3 scales that will be used will be made in conjunction with consultants.

One of the two following scales to measure mindfulness:

The Five Factor Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) is a self-report measure of trait mindfulness, reflecting five facets of mindfulness: observing, describing, acting, awareness, nonreactivity, and nonjudging (Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006). The scale has 39 items, measured with a 5-point Likert-scale options: never/very rarely true, rarely true, sometimes true, often true, very true/always true. The FFMQ has five subscales, one related to each facet of mindfulness. The internal consistencies for the subscales are all acceptable to good, ranging from an alpha .75 to .91 (Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006). The FFMQ is

considered reliable and valid (Baer, 2019). It has sensitivity to change (Baer, Carmody & Hunsinger, 2012), and strong construct validity (Baer, 2019). It is in the public domain and usable without charge. A copy of the scale can be found here: https://goamra.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/FFMQ_full.pdf.

The Cognitive and Affective Mindfulness Scale - Revised (CAMS-R) is a brief, multifaceted self-report measure of mindfulness (Feldman, Hayes, Kumar, Greeson, & Laurenceau, 2007). It includes 10 items that measure all four aspects of mindfulness: "1) the ability to regulate attention, 2) an orientation to present or immediate experience, 3) awareness of experience, and 4) an attitude of acceptance or non-judgment towards experience" (Feldman, Hayes, Kumar, et al., 2007); the scale provides a single overall mindfulness score. The Likert-scale response options are 4 points: rarely, sometimes, often, almost always. The internal consistency for the overall scale is acceptable, with studies reporting an alpha of .76 (Feldman, Hayes, Kumar, et al., 2007) and .81 (Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006). It has strong construct validity (Baer, 2019). It has not been studied for test-retest reliability, but has been normed with college undergraduate students. It is in the public domain and usable without charge. A copy of the scale can be found here: <https://ogg.osu.edu/media/documents/MB%20Stream/CAMS-R.pdf/>

One of the three following scales to measure well-being:

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) is a self-report measure of overall life satisfaction. It has five items. It uses a 7-point Likert scale: strongly disagree to strongly agree with higher scores indicating higher satisfaction with life. The internal consistency is adequate with an alpha of .87, as is the test-retest validity (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). It has been translated and used with a wide variety of populations (Pavot & Diener, 2008). It is usable without charge. A copy of this scale can be found here: <http://labs.psychology.illinois.edu/~ediener/SWLS.html>.

The Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) is a self-report questionnaire developed to assess an individual's overall happiness. It is a four-item scale, with 7-point Likert response options (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). Studies have indicated that the SHS has high internal consistency, alpha ranging from .79 to .94 (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). Test-retest suggests the scale has good to excellent reliability ($r=.55-.90$), and it has strong construct validity (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999). A copy of this scale can be found here: <https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/sites/default/files/subjectivehappinessscale.pdf>.

The WHO-5 Well-Being Index (WHO-5) is a brief self-report measure of current mental well-being (reflecting the previous two weeks). It is a 5-item scale that uses 6-point Likert response options, 0=at no time, 5=all of the time. The internal consistency of the WHO-5 is adequate, with alphas ranging from .82 to .95 (McDowell, 2010). The WHO-5 has been translated into multiple languages and can be used with children as well as adults (Winther Topp, Østergaard, Søndergaard & Bech, 2014). The WHO-5 is free of charge and does not require permission to use. A copy of the scale can be found here: <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/library/materials/who-five-well-being-index-who-5>.

Additionally, we will consider whether to add a scale related to anxiety and stress, or whether this will be too great a burden for the participants. If we do add an anxiety or stress scale, we will use 1 of the following 2 scales:

The Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale-21 (DASS-21) measures depression, anxiety, and stress with 21 self-report items. The alpha for the overall scale is .96 (Crawford & Henry, 2003). A copy of the scale can be found here: <http://www2.psy.unsw.edu.au/Groups/Dass/Download%20files/Dass21.pdf>.

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) measures perceived stress with 10 self-report items. The alpha for the overall scale is .89 (Roberti, Harrington & Storch, 2006). A copy of the scale can be found here: <https://www.northottawawellnessfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/PerceivedStressScale.pdf>.

References

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IVa. Budget Narrative & Timeline

How will Nord Grant funds be used to support the project – for materials/equipment, for student stipends, or for something else? What support, if any, will the project receive from other sources, including on-campus (e.g. department funds) or beyond-campus (e.g. discipline-specific awards) funds? What is the proposed timeline for the project? Is this a new project or is the work already underway?

This is a new project with a proposed timeline of one academic year, July 2020 through June 2021, although the project could continue beyond the proposed timeline as something akin to the Office of the Provost's Seed Sprint, or if results yield a need for further study. Our proposed research and education aligns well with the core concepts of Agora Academics. Indeed, our project started with a group from multiple disciplines whose aim is to understand and improve the human condition by fostering well-being through mindfulness.

The timeline for the project is as follows:

1. After obtaining IRB approval, we anticipate offering a ten (10) week mindfulness training program for interested faculty during the Fall 2020 semester to prepare faculty for Spring 2021 mindfulness implementation within classes.
2. During that time, we will also offer a half-day conference on mindfulness featuring a keynote expert who is nationally recognized in the field (such as Ellen Langer, PhD, of Harvard University). While we would prefer to offer this session in person, we recognize that it will likely need to be offered remotely and are prepared to offer the conference in such format.
3. Mindfulness activity implementation by faculty, and with students, will occur during the Spring 2021 semester. Support sessions will be offered by the mindfulness trainer throughout the Spring 2021 semester to facilitate the best possible experience for faculty and students.
4. Data collection, including focus groups, will occur at the beginning and end of that semester.
5. A draft article for publication will be prepared in the summer of 2021.

The project will not receive outside support. It will be supported exclusively by Nord Grant funds in accordance with the budget below.

IVb. Budget Details

(round to the nearest dollar amount).

Mindfulness training for faculty	\$ 2,225 which amount includes: \$1,600 (10 x 1-hour group session/week @ \$160/hr) \$625 (5 x 1 support session/month @ \$125/hr)
Mindfulness Conference/Workshop	\$ 5,000 which amount includes: Keynote Speaker – expert in field Materials Light Snacks/Beverages (if in person) Room Reservation (if in person)
Statistical analysis by Statistician	\$1,000
Focus group participant incentive	\$3,500
Total Nord Grant Expenses	\$ 11,725
Cost Sharing	
Total Cost Sharing	\$ 0
TOTAL PROJECT COST	
	\$ 11,725