

Wellness Assessment: Trends from 2015 to 2017

Center for the Study of Student Life

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INTRODUCTION

Student wellness is an essential component of academic success in higher education and subsequent opportunities in the labor market. Yet wellness itself has many facets. The Ohio State University Office of Student Life's Student Wellness Center uses a model that includes nine key dimensions of wellness: career, creative, emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, physical, social and spiritual.

The Wellness Assessment was designed to measure these nine dimensions of wellness in order to give students a better understanding of their own wellness and to provide them with resources that they can utilize at Ohio State to improve their wellness. The Wellness Assessment survey is open year-round to all students. Additionally, in October 2015 and October 2017, an invitation to participate in the assessment was emailed to random samples of approximately 5,000 undergraduate, graduate and professional students. These random samples contribute to our understanding of trends and differences in wellness among students at Ohio State. In 2015, 5,000 students were recruited and 761 responded for a 15.2% response rate. In 2017, 4,989 students were recruited and 631 responded for a 12.6% response rate. This report documents trends in students' overall wellness from 2015 to 2017 using data from the random samples.

METHODOLOGY

Each wellness dimension contains items to assess a range of attitudes and behaviors. Scores were calculated by adding the values of each component within a given dimension, then dividing by the total number of components, which produced an average wellness score for each dimension. The scores for respondents who did not answer all of the components of a dimension were calculated by summing the scores for the answered items and dividing by the total number of items answered. Students who failed to provide several responses for a dimension were excluded from the analysis, since creating wellness scores based on too few elements would not be an accurate representation of the overall dimension. Demographic items were optional. Therefore, not all students answered all demographic items.

Attitudes and beliefs were measured using Likert scales; respondents indicated their level of agreement with various statements on 5-point scale. When asked about behaviors, students reported the frequency of the occurrence, also on a 5-point scales. Wellness scores range from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes and behaviors. Negative items were reverse coded so that unhealthy responses were associated with a lower score.

KEY FINDINGS

- Respondents in 2017 had significantly lower scores compared to respondents in 2015 on emotional wellness (3.45 vs. 3.54), physical wellness (3.68 vs. 3.74) and social wellness (3.85 vs. 3.91). Environmental wellness scores significantly increased from 2015 (4.01) to 2017 (4.07).
- Undergraduate students had significantly higher environmental wellness scores in 2017 than in 2015 (4.07 vs. 3.99), and have significantly lower emotional and spiritual wellness scores in 2017 than 2015 (3.42 vs. 3.52 for emotional wellness; 3.52 vs. 3.65) for spiritual wellness).
- No statistically significant trends were detected between the graduate/professional student respondents from 2015 to 2017 on any of the nine dimensions of wellness.
- Wellness scores for undergraduate students based on type of residence (i.e., lives on-campus; lives off-campus but within walking distance; lives off-campus, commutes) had statistically significant differences.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$



DIMENSIONS OF THE WELLNESS ASSESSMENT

EMOTIONAL

- I use alcohol/nicotine/other substances to manage stress.
- I am able to appropriately manage my feelings.
- I use relaxation techniques to manage stress.
- I am able to appropriately express my feelings.
- I would be willing to seek help from others when I am having a difficult time.
- I feel that I am able to cope with my daily stress.
- I have a positive image of my body.

CAREER

- I am confident about my career decisions.
- I envision my future career as a means to contribute to society.
- I feel that my current studies will be helpful to my future career.
- I feel that my major/career decision is an appropriate expression of my abilities and personal strengths.
- I feel that I work in a positive environment.
- I feel that I work in a stressful environment.
- I feel that my current job interferes with other aspects of my life.
- I am able to balance my current job with the rest of my life.

FINANCIAL

- I am comfortable leaving a balance on my credit card(s).
- I think it is important to spend less than I earn.
- I am confident that I can plan a financial budget.
- I pay off the entire balance of my credit card(s) each month.
- I have enough money saved to handle financial emergencies.
- I track my spending to stay within my budget.
- I feel stressed by the amount of money I owe (credit cards, student loans, etc.).
- I stress about my finances.

CREATIVE

- I express myself through creative activities.
- I attend arts-related events or programs.
- I think of myself as a creative person.
- I value multiple perspectives when thinking about complex topics.
- The arts help me appreciate other perspectives and cultures.

PHYSICAL

- I am confident that I can exercise regularly.
- I am confident that I can maintain a nutritious diet.
- I use illicit drugs (e.g. marijuana, cocaine, ecstasy).
- I use tobacco products.
- I use prescription medication that is not prescribed to me (e.g. Adderall, Xanax, Valium).
- I eat a nutritious diet.
- I engage in cardiovascular exercise 3-5 times per week for at least 30 minutes.
- I engage in flexibility exercise/stretching.
- I engage in strength training/resistance exercise 2-3 times per week.
- I get at least 8 hours of sleep per night.
- Do you get an annual flu vaccine?
- Do you maintain annual physical exams(s)?
- How often do you binge drink? (Males: 5+ drinks in about 2 hours, Females: 4+ drinks in about 2 hours)
- How often, in general, do you consume alcohol?

ENVIRONMENTAL

- I engage in environmentally friendly behaviors (turn off lights/faucets, walk or bike).
- I feel safe in my living environment.
- I feel that I live in a stressful environment.
- I often feel that I have little control over my safety.
- I take time to appreciate my surroundings.
- I take time to appreciate nature.
- I think it is important to conserve natural resources.
- If given the opportunity, I recycle.

SPIRITUAL

- I consider myself to be a spiritual person.
- I engage in self-reflection.
- I engage in spiritual practices.
- I feel a connection to something larger than myself.
- I seek out meaning in my life.

INTELLECTUAL

- I am able to resolve conflicts peacefully.
- I am confident about my academic major decisions.
- I am confident in my ability to find solutions to my problems.
- I am confident that I can learn new skills.
- I am interested in learning new things.
- I engage in intellectually engaging activities.
- I feel that my education is a priority.
- I felt challenged by my academics during my most recent academic term.
- I was able to manage my academic workload during my most recent academic term.

SOCIAL

- I feel a sense of belonging in a community.
- I feel supported by my family.
- I feel that I am a person who other people like to be around.
- I have a strong social network.
- I have at least one close friend whom I trust and can confide in.
- I feel comfortable communicating face-to-face with others.
- I rarely feel lonely.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$



DEMOGRAPHICS OF RANDOM SAMPLES

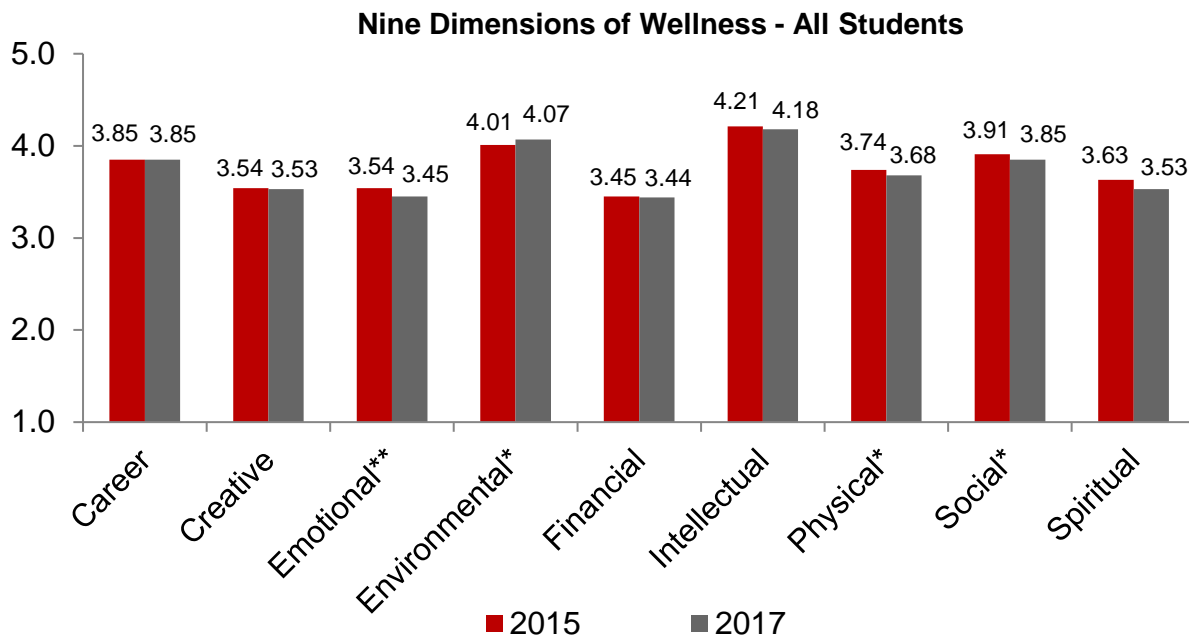
		2015 (n = 761)	2017 (n = 631)
Gender	Male	42.5%	36.5%
	Female	57.5%	63.5%
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	90.9%	86.3%
	Bisexual, Gay/Lesbian, Questioning	9.1%	13.7%
First Generation	First generation student	19.6%	23.3%
	Non-first generation student	80.4%	76.7%
International Student	International student	9.2%	10.6%
	Domestic student	90.8%	89.4%
Race/ Ethnicity	White/Caucasian	72.1%	71.2%
	African American/Black	4.0%	3.9%
	Asian American	12.8%	13.7%
	Latinx	2.6%	2.3%
	Other Race/Ethnicity	0.8%	3.2%
Varsity Athletes	Athlete	3.2%	2.8%
	Non-athlete	96.8%	97.2%
Military Status	Ever been in US military	2.2%	2.5%
	Never been in US military	97.8%	97.5%
Self-Reported Class Rank	First-year undergraduate	20.6%	18.4%
	Second-year undergraduate	17.6%	17.1%
	Third-year undergraduate	17.3%	15.3%
	Fourth-year undergraduate	15.1%	14.0%
	Fifth-year+ undergraduate	5.9%	6.7%
	Graduate- Master's	8.2%	11.4%
	Graduate- Professional	5.4%	5.9%
Age	Graduate- Doctoral	10.0%	11.2%
	Traditional age (under 24)	84.5%	80.3%
	Nontraditional age (24 or older)	15.5%	19.7%
Employment Status	Not employed	24.8%	22.8%
	Currently employed	75.2%	77.2%
Employment Hours	Work less than 20 hours a week	64.7%	61.2%
	Work more than 20 hours a week	35.3%	38.8%
Residence	Lives on-campus	34.3%	30.0%
	Lives off-campus, within walking distance	38.4%	31.4%
	Lives off-campus, commutes	27.3%	38.7%
Greek Status	Affiliated with fraternity or sorority	7.6%	10.7%
	Not affiliated with fraternity or sorority	92.4%	89.3%

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FINDINGS

TRENDS IN AVERAGE WELLNESS SCORES ACROSS DIMENSIONS

The following chart compares the scores for the nine dimensions of wellness for both the 2015 and 2017 random samples of students. T-tests were conducted to investigate whether the differences between these two groups of students were statistically significant. Asterisks denote statistically significant differences between the two groups' average scores. Overall, statistically significant differences were detected across years for the emotional, environmental, physical and social dimensions of wellness.



FOCUS ON CLASS RANK

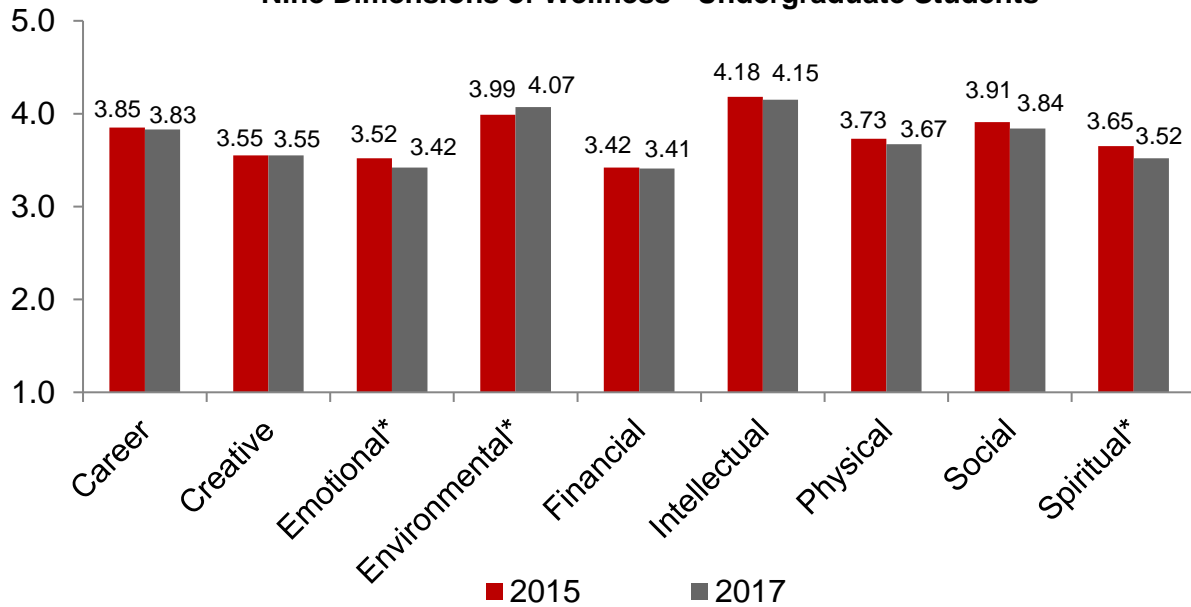
In an effort to investigate differences between the student respondents in 2015 and 2017, the following sections examine each dimension of wellness for both undergraduate students and graduate/professional students within each random sample.

Undergraduate Students

The following chart compares average wellness scores, by dimension, for both the 2015 and 2017 undergraduate student random samples. Statistically significant differences were detected over time between the undergraduate student random samples for the emotional, environmental and spiritual dimensions of wellness.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

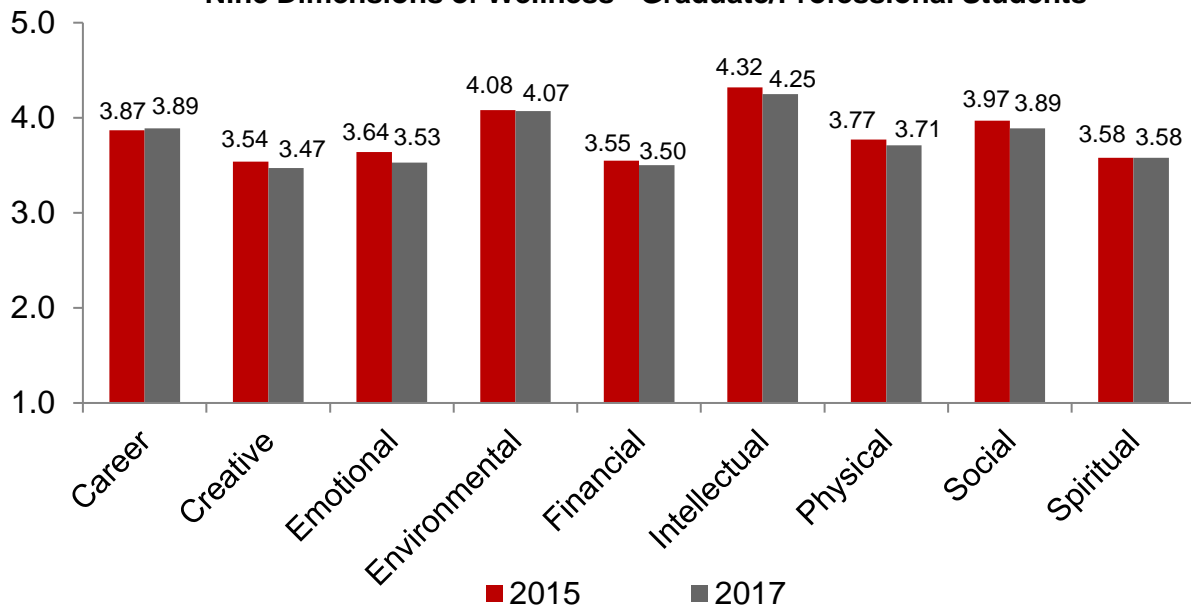
Nine Dimensions of Wellness - Undergraduate Students



Graduate/Professional Students

The following chart compares average wellness scores, by dimension, for both the 2015 and 2017 graduate/professional student random samples. No statistically significant differences were detected between the graduate/professional students over time on any of the nine dimensions of wellness.

Nine Dimensions of Wellness - Graduate/Professional Students



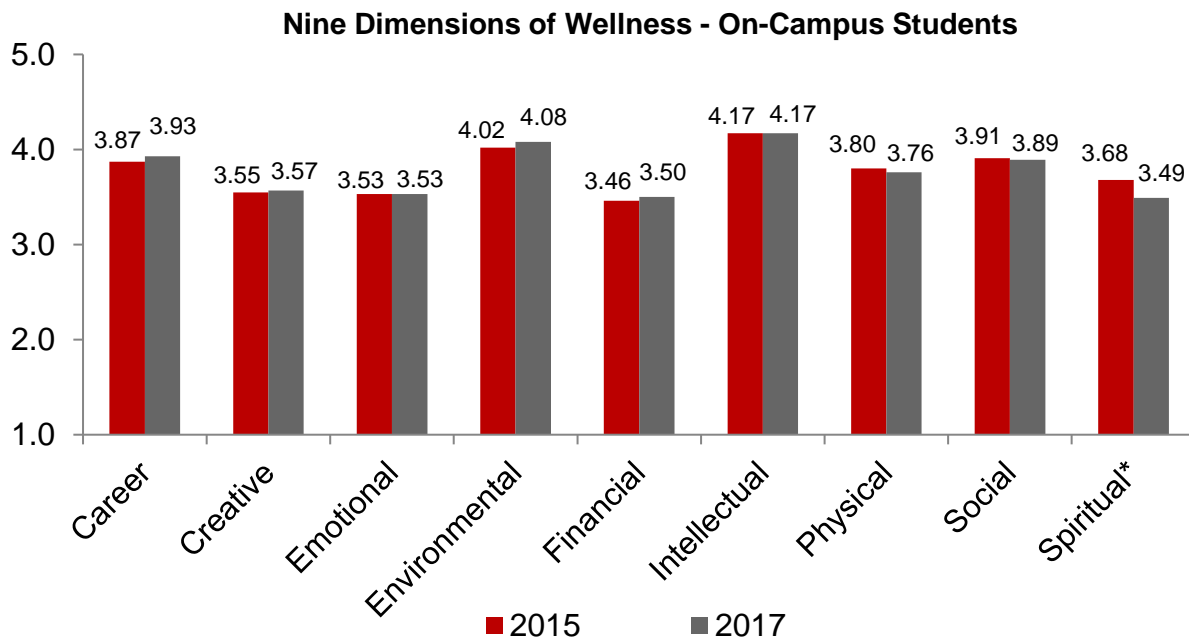
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FOCUS ON TYPE OF RESIDENCE

The following sections examine each dimension of wellness between the random samples for undergraduate students who reported living on-campus, living off-campus but within walking distance as well as living off-campus within driving distance. T-tests were conducted to investigate whether the differences between the 2015 and 2017 respondents were significantly different. Asterisks denote statistically significant differences between the two groups' average scores.

On-Campus Undergraduate Students

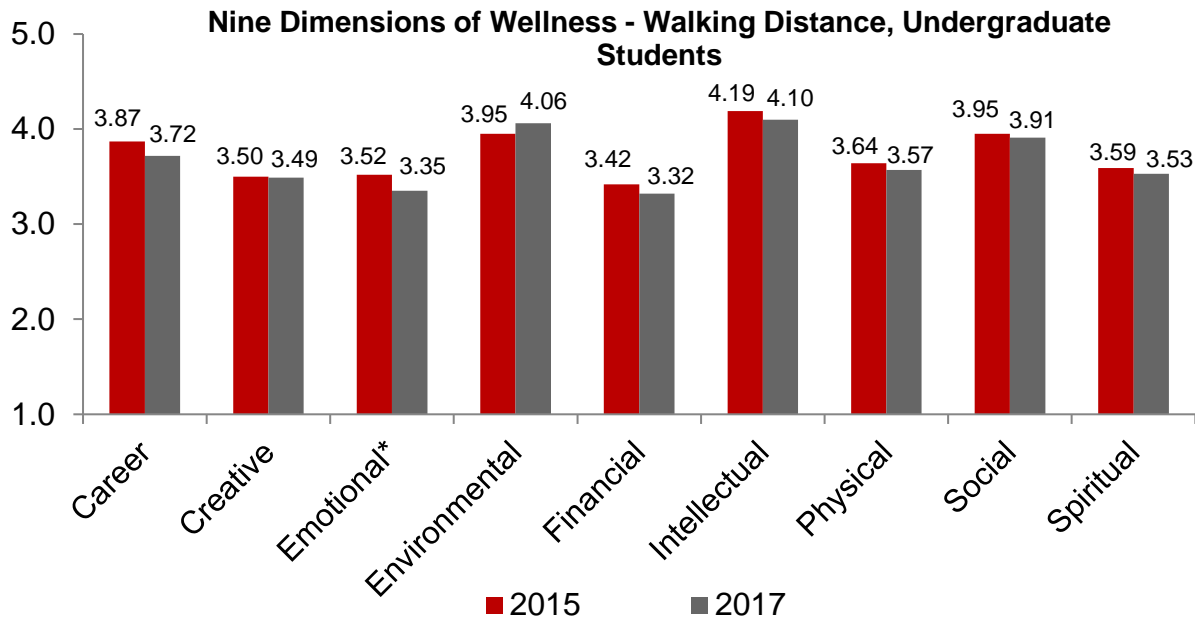
The chart below compares average wellness scores, by dimension, for both the 2015 and 2017 undergraduate student random samples who reported living on-campus. Statistically significant differences were detected over time between the undergraduate student random samples for the spiritual dimension of wellness.



Off-Campus Undergraduate Students within Walking Distance

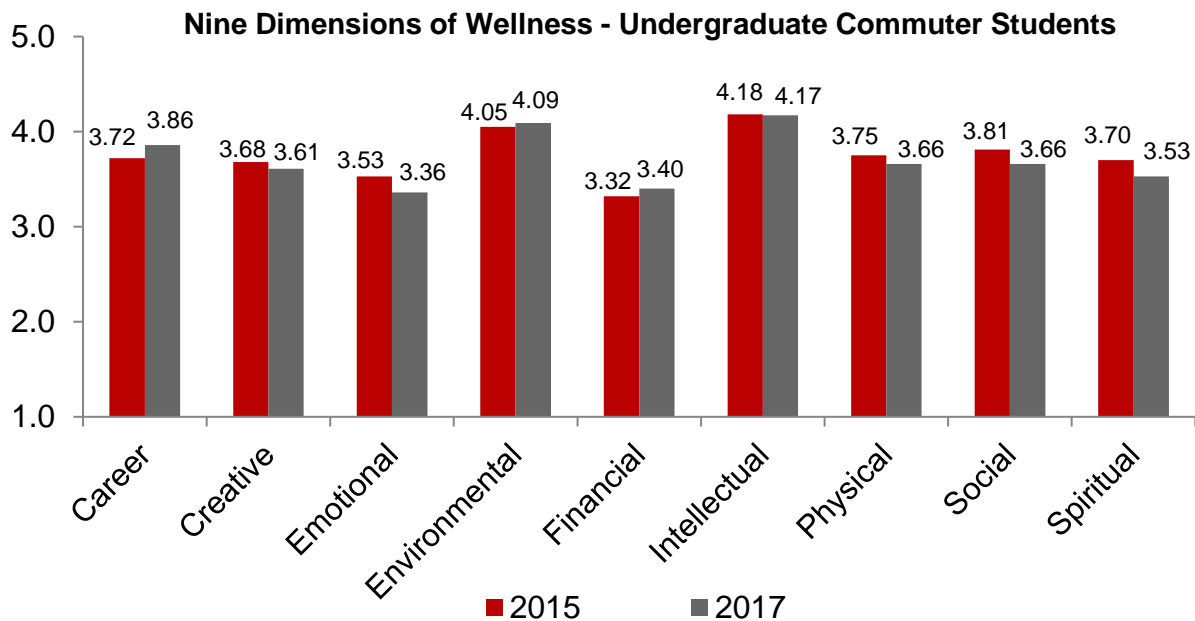
The following chart compares average wellness scores, by dimension, for both the 2015 and 2017 undergraduate student random samples living off-campus but within walking distance. Statistically significant differences were detected between the random undergraduate student samples for the emotional dimension of wellness.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$



Off-Campus Undergraduate Commuter Students

The following chart compares average wellness scores, by dimension, for both the 2015 and 2017 undergraduate student random samples living off-campus but within driving distance of campus. No statistically significant differences were detected over time on any of the nine dimensions of wellness.



* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

CONCLUSION

The Wellness Assessment offers insights into wellness trends over time by using random samples of undergraduates and graduate/professional students on Ohio State's campus in 2015 and 2017. This report shows statistically significant changes over time on the emotional, environmental, physical and social dimensions of wellness. More specifically, respondents in 2017 had lower scores as compared to respondents in 2015 in emotional wellness (3.45 vs. 3.54**), physical wellness (3.68 vs. 3.74*) and social wellness (3.85 vs. 3.91*). Environmental wellness scores significantly increased from 2015 (4.01) to 2017 (4.07*). Additionally, undergraduate student respondents had statistically significant differences on the emotional, environmental and spiritual dimensions of wellness across the two years, while the graduate/professional student samples did not significantly differ on any of the nine dimensions of wellness over time. Emotional wellness scores were lower for undergraduate student in 2017 (3.42*) as compared to the 2015 (3.52). Similarly, spiritual wellness scores were lower in 2017 (3.52*) as compared to the 2015 (3.65). However, environmental wellness scores significantly increased from 3.99 to 4.07* for undergraduates from 2015 to 2017. Spiritual wellness also differed significantly between undergraduate student respondents who reported living on-campus, while emotional wellness differed significantly between the undergraduate student respondents who reported living off-campus but within walking distance of campus. No statistically significant differences over time were detected on any of the nine dimensions of wellness between the undergraduate students who reported living off-campus, within driving distance. These results contribute to our understanding of trends and differences in wellness among students at Ohio State.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$