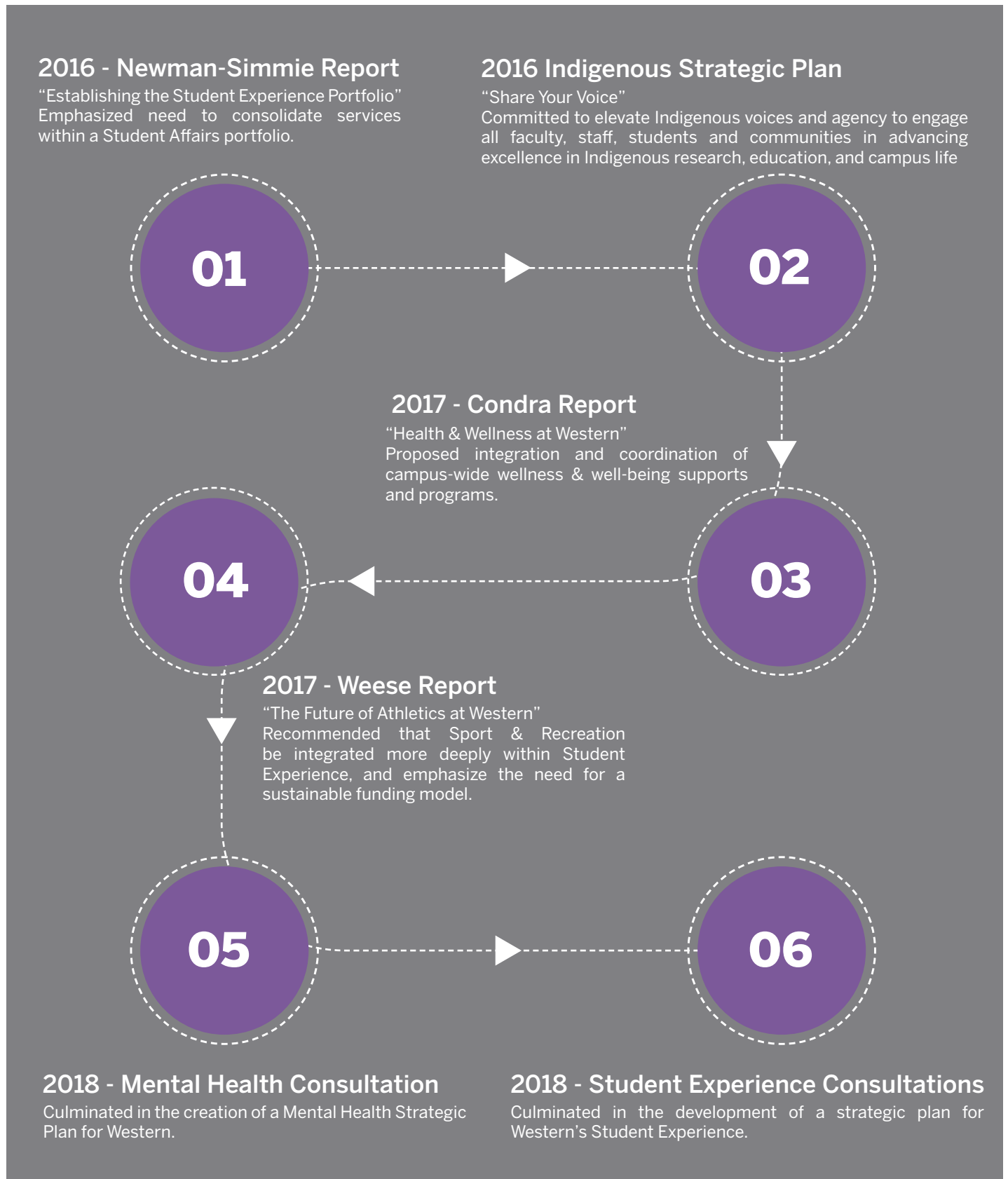




# **STUDENT EXPERIENCE:** A VISION OF **THRIVING**

# Laying the Foundation

The evolution of Student Experience at Western has been ongoing for the last 4 years, and was informed by a significant number of expert reviews and consultations. The pace of progress in 2018-2019 was, in many ways, due to this foundational work that paved the way forward.



# A Thriving Campus

**Discover. Engage. Thrive at Western University.**

## Our Story

The student experience at Western University is a complex ecosystem of individual stories that shape what we believe about the university's purpose and impact. Western Student Experience's mission to foster equitable learning environments in which all students can thrive to their full potential, represents an important motivation, but its intentions cannot outweigh the importance of understanding our place in broader student culture. Each interaction with Student Experience becomes part of the community culture. These stories become what defines us. To make the Student Experience story one about leading an institutional ecosystem of people, places, and spaces that empower student thriving, we must also demonstrate our commitment to integrating research, theory and practice relating to those priorities across all of the programs, resources, supports we provide. We must make the story we want to have told about us true in every action, communication, and relationship.



## Culture & Vision

Culture is built from shared stories, and while we can control our inputs into the existing culture, we cannot control the outputs. The subjective nature of storytelling means that each individual lens that adopts our story also irrevocably changes it. Since stories are not static, we can show that culture is likewise fluid. If ongoing and consistent assessments are not applied to understand the culture around us, we will always fail to intentionally support positive change within it.

Our vision is for all Mustangs to discover their personalized pathway through Western's rich, wholistic learning environment; engage in brave conversations with our diverse community on and off campus and develop the courage to be uncomfortable without fear of failure in order to thrive throughout their degree and after graduation.

The Student Experience vision for the future is achievable through strong relationships with students, staff, faculty, and community members that can actively shape the stories told within the institutional culture.

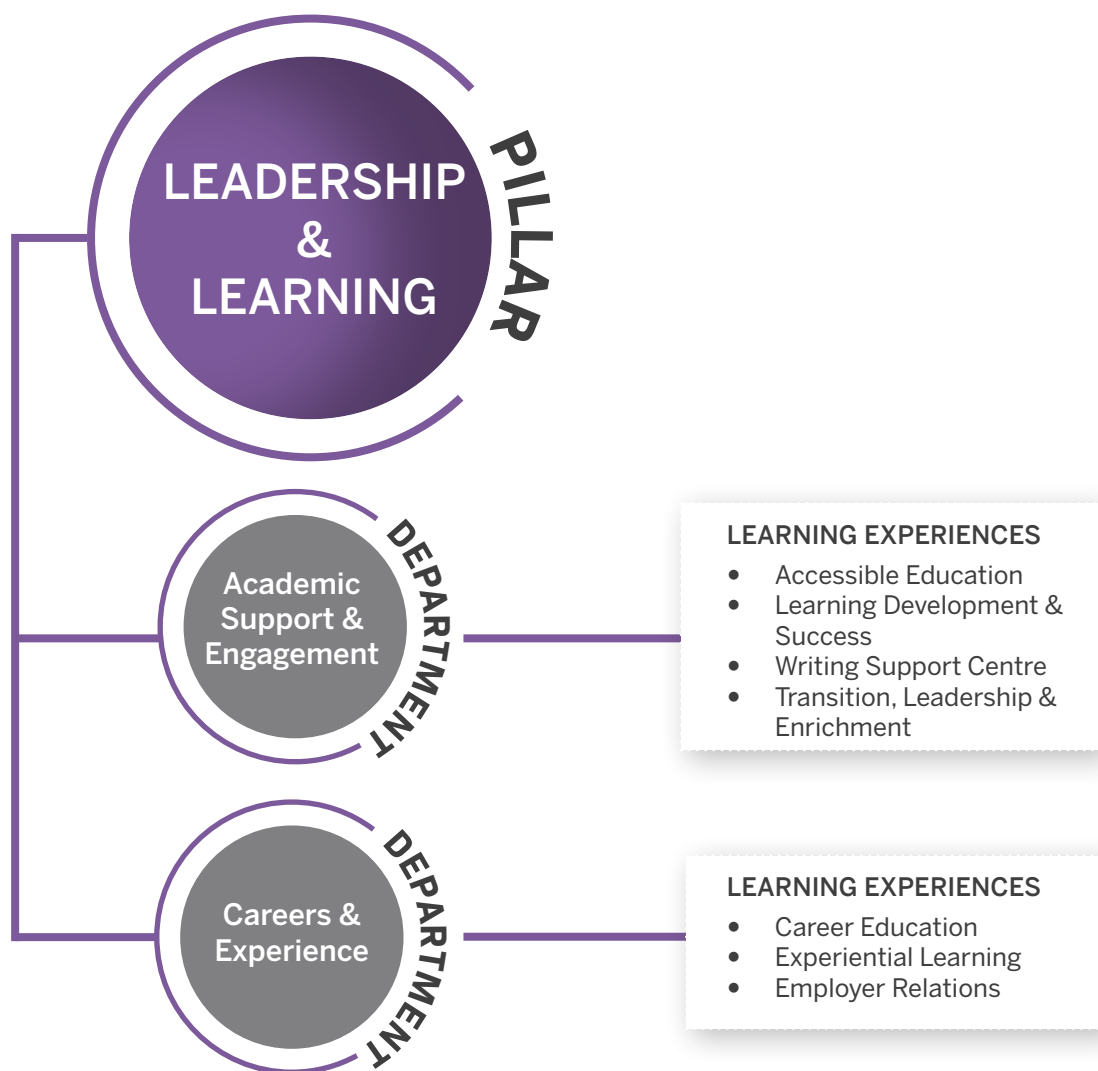
## Our Shared Values

**Joy. Courage. Curiosity. Empathy. Equity.  
Decolonization. Hope. Humility. Integrity.**

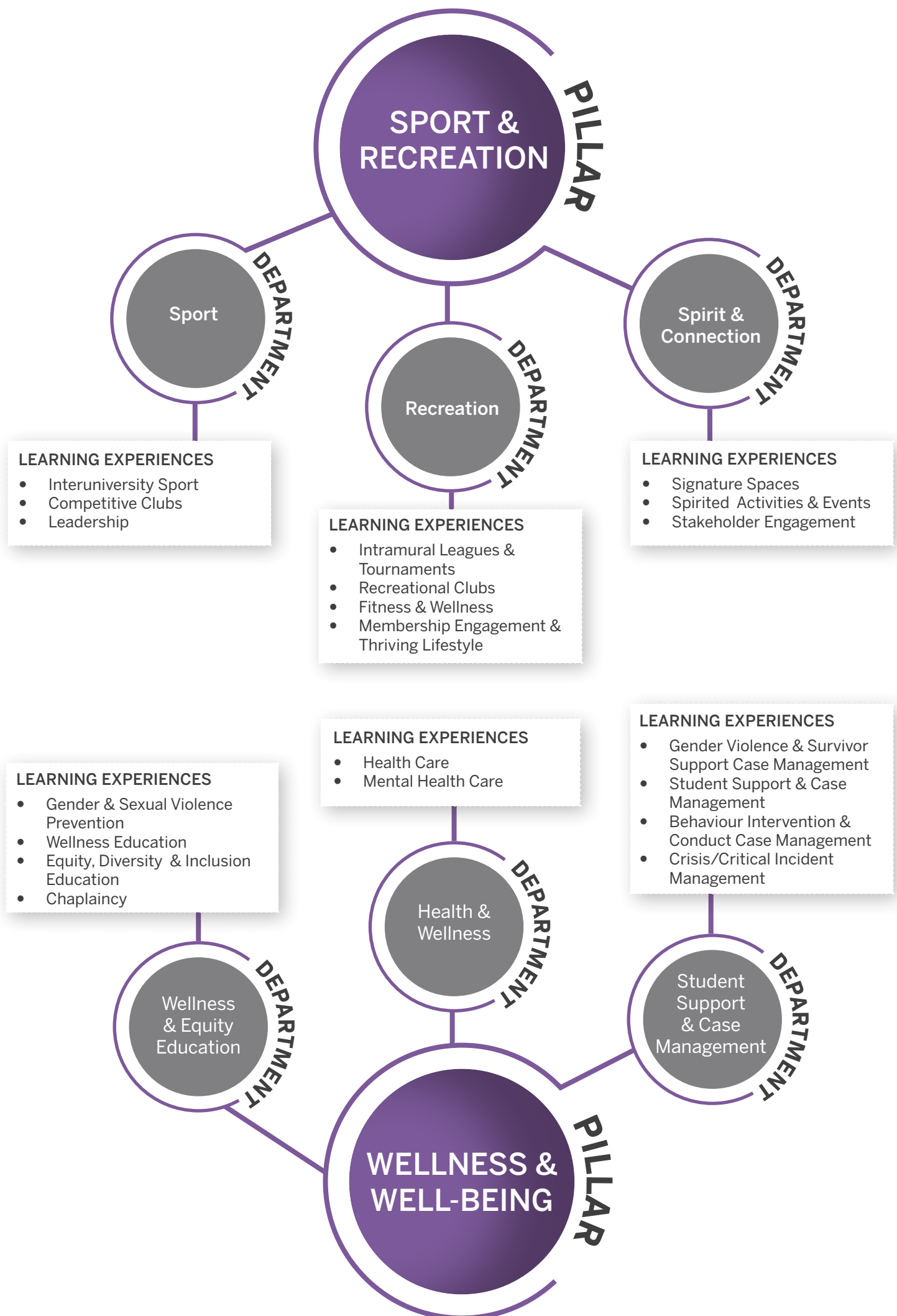
# Student Experience Structure

Student Experience is organized into three inter-dependent pillars which are: Leadership & Learning, Sport & Recreation, and Wellness & Wellbeing.

Professional and student staff work across these three pillars collaborating with student organizations, academic, and administrative leaders to maximize the potential of each student.

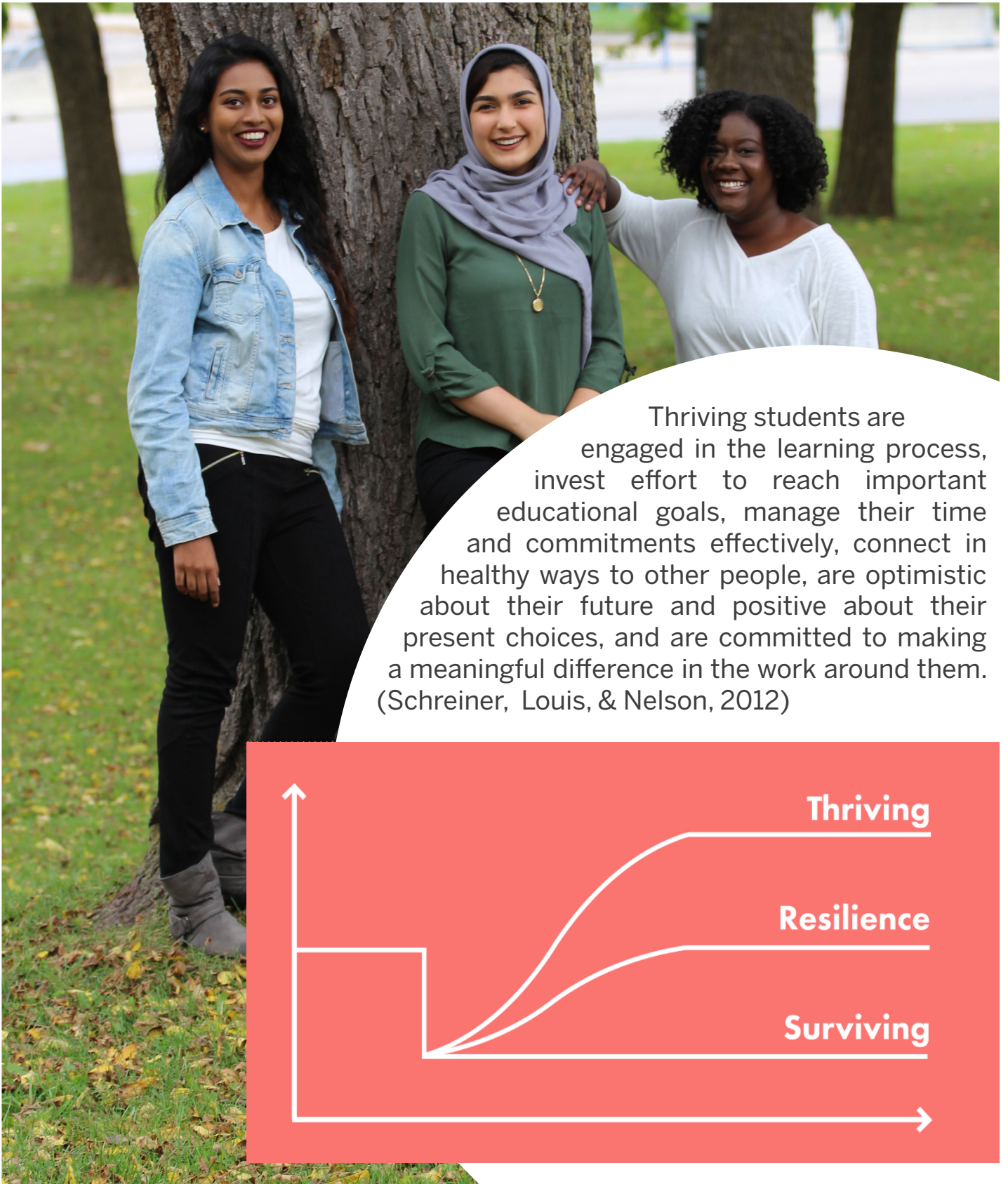




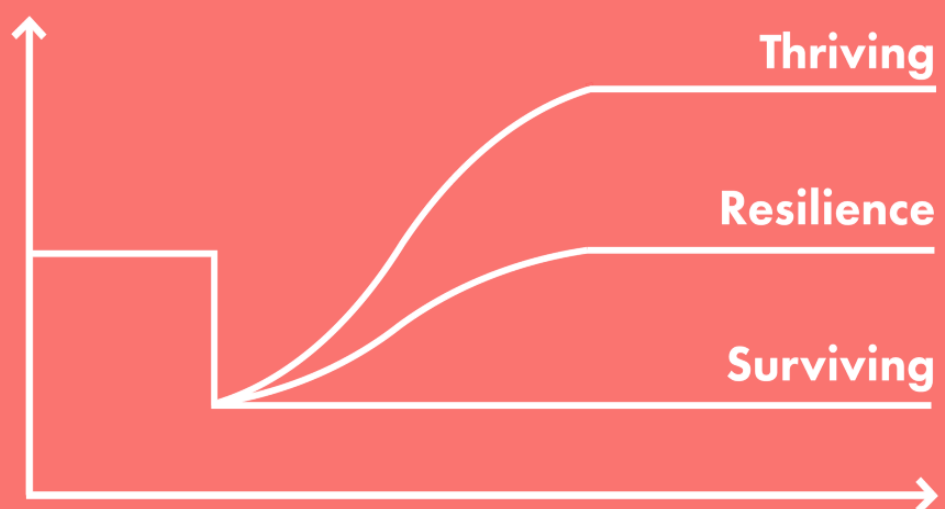


# What is “Thriving”?

Thriving is a researched framework that raises the bar on how we approach well-being.



Thriving students are engaged in the learning process, invest effort to reach important educational goals, manage their time and commitments effectively, connect in healthy ways to other people, are optimistic about their future and positive about their present choices, and are committed to making a meaningful difference in the work around them. (Schreiner, Louis, & Nelson, 2012)



# The Research

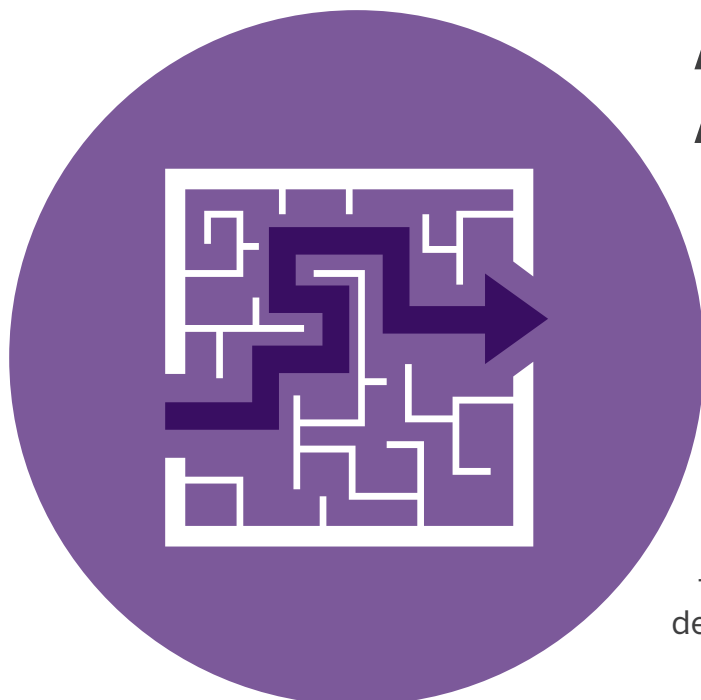


## From Flourishing to Thriving

The concept of thriving expands upon research on flourishing, particularly the work of Corey Keyes and Jon Haidt (2003), to offer a new vision for wholistic student success and a framework through which to achieve it (Schreiner, 2010a). Keyes and Haidt's work highlighted emotional, psychological, and social well-being as foundational to living a healthy, productive, joyful, and flourishing life.

A flourishing framework for mental health and wellness seeks to address this issue by highlighting the contexts and environment that optimize wellness. This work situates hope, curiosity, gratitude, appreciation, and a growth mindset as essential for overall well-being.

Rather than approaching well-being with a deficit lens, how can we help students leverage their strengths?



## A Strengths-based Approach to Well-being

This frame for understanding factors that support and sustain mental health and wellbeing emphasizes people's strengths rather than focusing on their weaknesses.

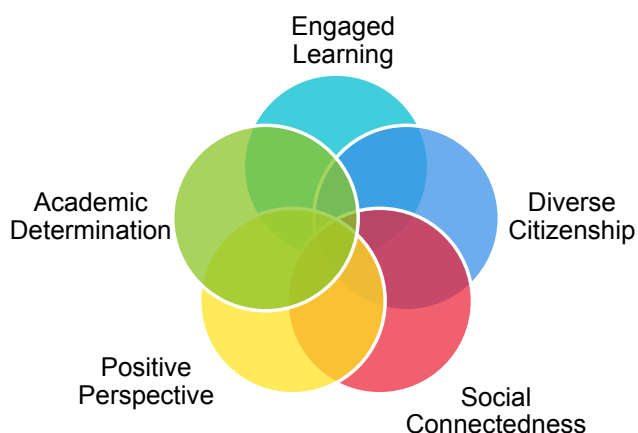
Research on thriving translates and applies the work on flourishing to the university student experience (Schreiner, 2013). It identifies five key factors educators can foster to maximize the academic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal development of each student.

# Learning Goals

The Student Experience Learning Goals are based on the 5 factors of thriving.

Positive Perspective — **Adaptable Problem-solver**  
Social Connectedness — **Community Builder**  
Diverse Citizenship — **Global Learner**  
Engaged Learning — **Critical Thinker**  
Academic Determination — **Future-focused Learner**

Accomplishing development along these goals is what creates **Innovative Leaders**.



## Adaptable Problem-solver

Students who are hopeful, self-confident, resourceful, and creative.



## Community Builder

Students who are authentic, empathetic, collaborative and self-aware.



## Global Learner

Students who are equitable, globally aware, and socially responsible.

## How does this model help? How is it different?

**Student Experience is taking a unique approach by implementing Thriving-based programming across ALL units within its structure and is working with faculties and affiliates to integrate and elevate the work they are doing to support a Thriving Campus.**

Thriving re-examines traditional approaches to student success that focus on remedial support to “at risk” students. It challenges student affairs to develop new approaches that inspire students to achieve their best, engage students in transformational learning opportunities, and enrich the entire student experience (Schreiner, Louis, & Nelson, 2012). These learning goals will be applied throughout all of Western Student Experience. It should be equally as important to help students develop in these ways whether it be through involvement in intramurals, as it is in making an appointment at the Writing Centre, or attending an educational program.



# A Thriving Campus Ecosystem Based on Research & Relationships



**A true thriving approach must be co-created across department and institutional lines. This means an integrating Student Experience programmes and learning experiences with faculties & affiliates as equal partners and contributors. Exciting work is already taking place at the faculty level, as well as at Brescia, Huron, and King's University Colleges.**

**A shared effort to integrate will best serve Western students by creating a cohesive network of options that can help them back to a state of thriving.**



## Critical Thinker

Students who are curious, engaged and reflexive.



## Future-focused Planner

Students who are goal-oriented, motivated, organized and self-directed.



## Innovative Leader

Students who exhibit integrity, judgement, and intercultural communication.

“Decades of mental illness research have made it possible to better treat more broken down people, but it has not made it possible to prevent more people from breaking down.”  
(Keyes & Lopez, 2002)

# Priorities

Ultimately, the goal of our portfolio is **for more students to be thriving more often**. We understand that to achieve this goal, we need to broaden and coordinate efforts across our portfolio. The following priorities identify ways that we will work together to create a thriving campus, where we intentionally create learning environments that inspire, engage and enrich the whole student as they embark on their educational journey.

## 1

### Create an Integrated Learning Ecosystem.

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- Develop a comprehensive learning framework.
- Focus on the New Student Experience.
- Focus on Graduate Student Life.

## 2

### Integrate Research and Practice.

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- Develop a three-year assessment cycle to inform the continuous assessment of all programs, resources, and supports provided by Western Student Experience.
- Implement a six-year external review cycle for all departments in Student Experience using national/international standards.
- Utilize national/international benchmarking studies on a regular reporting cycle.

## 3

### Foster a Sense of Community.

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- Foster a positive campus climate for all students.
- Enhance relationships between students and the broader London community.
- Develop a digital Student Experience strategy.

# Meaning and Impact

## Using Design Thinking Assessment

Understanding and evaluating impact is most successful when using many ways of knowing. For this reason, Student Experience has chosen to adopt a design-thinking model to ensure that our innovations are consistently focused on the lived experiences of students.



## Citations

Keyes, C. L. M., & Lopez, S. J. (2002). Toward a science of mental health: Positive directions in diagnosis and interventions. In C.R. Snyder & S. J. Lopez (Eds.), Handbook of positive psychology (pp. 45-59). New York: Oxford University Press

Schreiner, L. A., Louis, M. C., & Nelson, D. D. (2012). Thriving in Transitions: A Research-Based Approach to College Student Success. National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. University of South Carolina, 1728 College Street, Columbia, SC 29208



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