



HEALTH & WELL-BEING LEADERS SECTION NEWSLETTER

OUR STRATEGY

Purpose: A multidisciplinary group of professionals across higher education who seek to advance the role of the executive wellness/well-being leader to ensure a whole community/whole person approach to the well-being of the institutions we serve.

Vision: To grow campus health leaders to advance the strategic integration of health and well-being for the institutions they serve.

Mission: To provide advocacy, education, and collaborative opportunities for higher education executive leaders in health and wellbeing to advance their knowledge, skills, and abilities in executive leadership.

MEET THE 2025-26 HWEL EXECUTIVE TEAM!

Chair: C. Oliver Tacto, *Maryville University*

Past Chair: Anna Fitch Courie, *Clemson University*

Chair-Elect: Michael LaFarr, *University of Denver*

Secretary: Anu Räisänen, *Elon University*

Planner: LaNika Wright, *East Carolina University*

Planner-Elect: Laurel Halsey, *Colorado State Univ.*

Member-at-Large: Kristin Traskie, *Michigan State University*

Additional Support:

◆ **ACHA Liaison:** Robyn Buchsbaum

◆ **Board Liaison:** Michele Richardson, *Bowie State University*



A Note from the Chair: Resolve!

Dear Colleagues,

*As we move into the final stretch of the year, I've found myself reflecting on the word **resolve**. It's a word that holds dual meaning: both the determination to act, and the outcome of thoughtful decision-making. For executive leaders in campus health and well-being, resolve is the cornerstone of our leadership.*

Whether we are navigating complex institutional priorities, supporting exhausted teams, or responding to urgent student needs, our work demands courage, clarity, and commitment. It also demands that we center the human experience, our own, and that of those we serve, with empathy and purpose.

*In this month's issue, you'll find updates that highlight that very resolve across our community: bold program innovations, cross-sector collaborations, and upcoming opportunities to expand our leadership toolkit, including our upcoming **HWEL Master Class Webinar on transformational leadership**. We also celebrate the launch of our **new LinkedIn page**, a space designed to strengthen our professional community, foster connections, and amplify the work of our members.*

As always, thank you for the strength and intentionality you bring to your campuses and to this section. We are better together because of your resolve.

In partnership,

C. Oliver Tacto, DSW, MSW, MPH, CHES
Dean of Student Wellness, Maryville University
Chair, Health and Well-Being Executive Section



Master Class Leadership Webinar Series:

Well-Being Leadership in Higher Education:

A Panel Presentation Exploring Transformational Leadership with Voices From the Field



THAD MANTARO, PHD
Dallas College



RYAN TRAVIA, EDD
Babson College



BILL FOX, EDD
Otterbein University



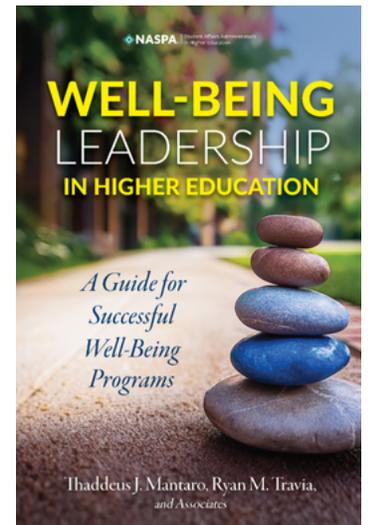
CARLOS CRUZ, EDD
Dallas College



MELINDA STOOPS,
PHD
Melinda Stoops PhD, LLC



RAPHAEL FLORESTAL-
KEVELIER, PHD, MPH
University of Illinois Chicago



Coming January 2026!
Pre-Order your copy [here](#)

Please join co-hosts and co-editors, **Thad Mantaro** and **Ryan Travia**, for a panel presentation that explores the role of well-being leadership in higher education. The facilitated presentation will feature several co-authors from the book, *“Well-being Leadership in Higher Education: A Guide for Successful Well-being Programs,”* published by NASPA, sharing their perspectives and experiences leading and guiding the development of well-being programs across a wide range of institutions. The discussion will explore how colleges and universities can center well-being as a strategic priority to enhance student success and institutional effectiveness. Blending theory, research and practice, the book and co-authors share powerful insights and actionable strategies for leading transformative well-being initiatives.

Learning Objectives:

- Identify key principles and frameworks of transformational well-being leadership in higher education.
- Describe strategies for building institutional buy-in and cross-functional partnerships to support campus-wide well-being initiatives.
- Analyze real-world case studies and apply lessons learned to their own institutional contexts.
- Develop actionable next steps for advancing or initiating well-being leadership efforts on their campus.

Format: Internet live

Date: November 20, 2025

Time: 3:30 pm–4:40 pm ET

Register: [ACHA Events](#)

Cost: FREE (ACHA members)





Member Spotlight:
Jessica Gold, M.D., M.S.

—
Chief Wellness Officer,
University of Tennessee
System
Associate Professor,
Department of Psychiatry,
University of Tennessee
Health Science Center

How long have you been in higher education?

If we count medical education, I've been involved in higher education since completing my residency in 2018. However, in a formal system-wide leadership capacity, I began this current role just this past year, so I'm both new and not-so-new to the space!

What is your favorite well-being habit or practice?

Three Good Things. This simple yet powerful reflection exercise encourages individuals to document three positive experiences each day. It has helped me—and many others—build resilience, reframe challenges, and increase gratitude. You can learn more about it here: [Duke Health Three Good Things Tool](#)

What is your leadership superpower?

Silo-Breaking and Connection. I thrive on bringing people together who wouldn't typically collaborate. I believe transformative change comes from intentional connection across departments, disciplines, and ideologies. My work as a wellness leader is about breaking barriers and creating ecosystems of care that are holistic, inclusive, and courageous.

WE'RE LIVE ON LinkedIn

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
EXECUTIVE LEADERS SECTION
AMERICAN COLLEGE HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Health & Well-Being Executive Leaders Section

Follow **ACHA Health & Well-Being Executive Leaders Section** on LinkedIn for updates, insights, and opportunities to connect with campus health and well-being leaders nationwide.

Follow US -

Follow Us on LinkedIn

Follow the official **ACHA Health & Well-Being Executive Leaders Section** LinkedIn page to stay up to date on upcoming webinars, spotlight stories, leadership insights, and national conversations shaping the future of college health and well-being. Let's build a stronger, more connected community—one post at a time.

[Follow us here](#)



HWEL-Sponsored Sessions at ACHA 2026

Courageous Conversations: Equipping Leaders for Difficult Dialogues in Health and Well-Being

- Learn practical frameworks for navigating sensitive campus issues with empathy, confidence, and clarity.

Connecting the Data Dots: Turning Mental Health Insights into Campus Action

- A dynamic session exploring how campuses can translate NCHA, CCAPS, and IPS data into strategy, advocacy, and measurable impact.

NextGen Well-Being Leaders: Pathways to Executive Leadership in College Health

- An inspiring "aspiring leaders" roundtable for those seeking to lead at the AVP/AVC level—featuring stories, mentorship, and lessons learned.

ACHA 2026

UPLIFTING RESILIENCE
Strategies in Campus Health and Well-Being

DENVER | MAY 26-30



NOVEMBER 2025

ACHA MENTAL HEALTH TECHNOLOGY SYMPOSIUM

Featured Event: ACHA Mental Health Technology Symposium



As colleges and universities grapple with rising mental health demands and limited resources, the role of third-party technology has come into sharper focus. But how do we evaluate these tools for impact, safety, and equity?

Join fellow campus leaders, peer institutions, and industry experts at the **ACHA Mental Health Technology Symposium**, a one-day, in-person event intentionally designed to demystify mental health technologies in a vendor-neutral, student-centered environment.

This Symposium is a must-attend for health and well-being leaders seeking to:

- Explore cutting-edge research & best practices
- Learn how to responsibly assess and compare available programs and platforms.
- Engage in candid peer conversations
- Hear real-world insights on what works, what doesn't, and why.
- Connect with solution-focused industry partners
- Attend curated sessions highlighting product design, outcomes, and institutional fit.
- Ask critical questions
- Gain clarity through open Q&A with both institutional leaders and industry partners.

Whether you're just beginning to evaluate tech-based supports or managing multiple platforms already in place, this symposium offers practical guidance and collaborative insight to help you make informed, ethical, and effective decisions in the service of student mental health.

 Space is limited — early registration is encouraged.

 [Click here to register and learn more](#)

MEMBER PUBLICATION SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Anna Fitch Courie and Dr. C. Oliver Tacto recently published a pivotal article in the *Journal of American College Health* titled: **“Essential Competencies of Chief Wellness Executives in Higher Education.”**

Based on a national needs assessment led by the ACHA Health and Well-being Executive Leaders Section (HWEL), the article outlines the critical competencies needed for emerging CWO/CWBO roles. Key themes include systems thinking, data literacy, and embedding well-being across institutional missions.

 [Read the full article here](#)



Wednesday, February 4, 2026

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel –

Downtown Nashville

9:00 AM – 7:00 PM EST

Registration: \$200