

**BUDGET PROPOSAL CONTACT INFORMATION**

Department Name: Psychological & Wellness Services

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Department Head Approval:

Department Head: Ina Mohajerani

Requested Amount: **\$7,700**

**Departmental Information**

**STUDENT UTILIZATION**

Funds will be used to pay the annual contract fee for the SimpliChek Wellness Vending Machine. Student Health remains committed to providing convenient and affordable health care supplies for UW Tacoma students. In autumn 2024, Student Health received a grant from the Washington Student Achievement Council to provide emergency contraception, Narcan, and fentanyl test strips through an on-campus vending machine. The Wellness Vending Machine offers access to a wide range of low-cost health and medical supplies, and accepts debit or credit card, and Apple Pay as payment methods. Students have access to additional health supplies, such as eye drops and Benadryl, to support their well-being in a cost-effective and convenient manner. Many UWT students are non-traditional in that they have multiple demands outside of college; from being a single parent, to having a part-time or full-time job. One thing that is most valuable to a college student is their time. Sometimes they don't have time to pick up and find low-cost health supplies, so they don't miss class or an important exam. The Wellness Vending Machine gives more than just access to affordable and essential health supplies; it gives students their time back. Time to connect with others, time to focus on studying, and time to be successful in college.

**CORE VALUES/MISSION ALIGNMENT**

Implementing the Wellness Vending Machine aligns with the Strategic Plan in several ways. The number one value of the Strategic Plan is Access. Student Health understands that many students of higher education, especially UWT students, are low-resourced and have many competing responsibilities. By having the Wellness Vending Machine in a convenient area and offering low-cost health supplies on the UWT campus, it reduces the number of barriers that would normally prevent students from accessing essential health supplies. Compared to other stores in the Tacoma community and greater Pierce County area, such as Walgreens, the Wellness Vending Machine at UWT is by far the most convenient and affordable for our students. Fully accessible supplies keep students connected to campus and enable them to focus on their education.

The Wellness Vending Machine also directly aligns with the objective Students, Goal 2: enhance student well-being. Health is the foundation of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943, 1954), and Student Health also understands that there is a strong connection between well-being and student success. The Wellness Vending Machine aligns with a holistic approach to supporting student well-being by offering a variety of low-cost health supplies to support the whole person. The Wellness Vending Machine gives students at UWT more agency in managing their health and wellness through a multitude of offerings, from a toothpaste and toothbrush kit to cough drops.

Not only does the Wellness Vending Machine directly align with Students, Goal 2, but it also contributes to a more resilient and sticky campus. Offering inclusive, affordable, and accessible health supplies directly supports student retention. Students who have limited access and who are higher need, such as under/uninsured students, international students, and students with geographic barriers, now have access to health supplies that were otherwise unavailable to them. Having the Wellness Vending Machine on the UWT campus encourages students to think of UWT not only as their "third space" where they can access essential health supplies, but also to engage with other like-minded students to build community and connections.

## SAF-FUNDED PROGRAM OR SERVICES GOALS AND OUTCOMES

With the Wellness Vending Machine implementation in May 2025, our goal was to increase awareness and usage of the Wellness Vending Machine via ongoing comprehensive marketing campaigns and intentional campus partnerships to get as many students familiar with the Wellness Vending Machine as possible. Extensive and intentional marketing of the Wellness Vending Machine is ongoing, including information about what the Wellness Vending Machine is, how to use it, what health supplies are stocked, and where it is located. Information is disseminated using the following strategies: developing informative webpages and incorporating them into HuskiesCare and the Student Health website; flyers on all bulletin boards, tables, and TVs around campus; placing sandwich boards in high-traffic areas like the Dog House in the Mattress Factory (MAT) building. Strategies to engage community partners also include sending emails to all students and faculty via the UWTLIne; leveraging faculty connections by sharing marketing materials in PowerPoint format and speaking about the Wellness Vending Machine in classrooms; training RAs, Pack Advisors, and Campus Ambassadors how to promote the Wellness Vending Machine in their spaces with students. We also are continuing to improve our online presence by posting frequently to PAWS social media (@uwtpaws) as well as cross-posting to other Student Affairs social media accounts and the main UW Tacoma Instagram account as well as posting to the Grit List (maximum allowance). Some ways to promote the Wellness Vending Machine in-person are at New Student and Family Orientations (Fall, Winter, and Spring) and at international student orientations; partnering with ASUWT to develop new, exciting marketing materials such as Instagram reels; and at convocation.

We continue to prioritize collaboration with our Student Affairs partners to increase awareness and usage. The Health Promotion Specialist will continue to strengthen the Wellness Vending Machine presence on campus, particularly with faculty and academic advising, to solidify knowledge of campus resources when supporting a student's well-being. Additionally, the Wellness Vending Machine was placed near Psychological and Wellness Services (PAWS) as a strategy to increase student awareness of both PAWS and the Wellness Vending Machine.

## STUDENT UTILIZATION (COMPARISON OVER PAST 2 YEARS)

The Wellness Vending Machine began operations in May 2025 and has been in use on the UWT campus for approximately nine months. As a result, longitudinal data spanning a two-year period is not yet available. Reports from the Health Promotion Specialist monitoring the stock and the vendor responsible for maintaining the Wellness Vending Machine, SimpliChek, indicates that the Wellness Vending Machine has made it convenient for students to access low-cost and affordable health supplies on campus.

Since its formal introduction to the campus community in Fall Quarter 2025, there have been 81 transactions total. Some of the most utilized items from the Wellness Vending Machine are Degree (Shower Clean) deodorant (.5 oz) - 9 units, Cadence Morning After Pill - emergency contraception - 8 units, and Cadence Early Pregnancy Test (2 tests) - 8 units, as well as 28 boxes of free Narcan have been distributed through the Wellness Vending Machine.

Students and other patrons of the Wellness Vending Machine are not required to provide user feedback. That being said, user data provided by SimpliChek indicates that there is strong demand for reproductive and sexual health products. Some of the highest volume items are Cadence Early Pregnancy Test with 8 items sold, Cadence Morning After Pill (emergency contraception) with 8 items sold, and Opill (daily oral contraceptive) with 3 items sold. Together they account for 36% of all transactions (19 out of 53 items sold). Other user data suggests that there is a need for small convenience-sized essentials like the Degree (Shower Clean) deodorant with 9 items sold and Emergen-C (Vitamin C) tablets with 4 items sold.

Overall, utilization of the Wellness Vending Machine indicates having a convenience-driven and privacy focused purchasing environment is more conducive to improving access of essential health supplies, supporting the idea that UWT is a student's "third space" to connect and engage in campus resources.

## COLLECTION OF FEEDBACK & IMPROVEMENTS

The contract vendor for the Wellness Vending Machine, SimpliChek, provides monthly comprehensive reports regarding utilization, number of items being purchased, and which items are being purchased more frequently than others. In addition to SimpliChek providing monthly comprehensive reports, the Health Promotion Specialist consistently monitors the Wellness Vending Machine each month and keeps their own record of items being used.

From its installation in May 2025 to January 2026, the Wellness Vending Machine has been utilized more than 53 times based on user data provided by SimpliChek. This is an indication that those who know about the Wellness Vending Machine use it when they need to.

The Health Promotion Specialist uses these reports to inform marketing and awareness building efforts, with plans to continue to use Social Norming Theory and Social Marketing Theory to improve utilization and increase awareness of the Wellness Vending Machine. These two theories provide a framework for the Health Promotion Specialist to normalize a culture of positive decision making, e.g., utilizing the Wellness Vending Machine, while using evidence-based marketing methods designed to encourage healthy behaviors within a prevention lens.

## SERVICE BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

While UWT is in a unique area of downtown Tacoma, it is not close enough to an area where needs for basic health supplies can be met. The nearest store that has health supplies like the Wellness Vending Machine is Safeway, which is 1.6 miles away from UW Tacoma. Even then, Safeway prices are not nearly as competitive as the prices of items in the Wellness Vending Machine, especially for intimate and time-sensitive items like emergency contraception. The Wellness Vending Machine closes that gap by being located on UWT's campus. It gives UWT students the ability to take charge of their health and creates a safe space for them to do so. As stated in a previous section, the Wellness Vending Machine benefits students by giving their time back. Time to focus on school and work towards graduation.

The American College Health Association (ACHA) also recommends institutions of higher education provide low-cost and low-barrier health supplies for students. This is an evidence-supported recommendation and endorsed by the Masters-level Health Promotion Specialist. Healthcare supplies are in-line with holistic models for student support in higher education. The Wellness Vending Machine directly enhances student well-being by providing on-campus access to low-cost health supplies, which positively impacts academic performance, success, and retention. Items like covid-tests, pregnancy tests, and emergency contraception are not always easy to find nor affordable. Having the Wellness Vending Machine on campus allows students to access these items and in a discreet location.

Overall, the Wellness Vending Machine not only provides a convenient physical location on UWT campus to give students better access to essential low-cost health supplies, it also fulfills the greater need to engage in evidence-based health promotion practices to address the challenges that come with supporting students in an urban commuter-based college setting.

