In the first few weeks of classes students streamed into an unseasonably warm campus and it felt truly remarkable. I walked by a student who was speaking on the phone, “It’s hoppin’ out here.” For sure, the large number of students has boosted energy and morale on this campus and I am reminded this month of how much wellness has become important for this new generation of students. It has also become top of mind for colleges across the nation. Vice President of Student Affairs at Virginia Tech Frank Shushok argues that colleges must lead the wellness revolution since one indication of a flourishing society is a healthy workforce and institutions of higher education remain the “most prolific workforce generators.” Students who felt emotionally supported – those who had found a mentor or faculty member on campus who cared about them and made them excited to learn – are three times as likely to have emotional well-being even after graduation. Today, Americans are more solitary and depressed than ever before and Generation Z, those born after 1997, scored the highest for loneliness. Mental Health America reported that while white youth are most likely to receive mental health treatment, BIPOC youth are most likely to receive non-specialty mental health treatment in educational settings. Thus, here on this campus where the overwhelming majority are BIPOC, all of us must participate in providing well-being for our students.

Of course, it’s not just students who deserve well-being on a university campus. So too do staff and faculty. While our tendency is to expect our supervisors to provide us with well-being, keep in mind that for a campus well-being revolution to take place, it will require all of us to pitch in. What will you do this month to promote well-being in your area?

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