

Supporting Wellbeing for Learners & Faculty

Designing for Wellbeing in Higher Education

A Preview

Student wellbeing and faculty burnout are reshaping the higher education experience. While institutions continue to invest in wellbeing services and support programs, research suggests that wellbeing is influenced by far more than dedicated destinations alone.

Steelcase Learning researchers explored how spaces, interactions and daily experiences shape wellbeing across campus. The findings reveal opportunities to better support cognitive, social and physical wellbeing throughout the day.

Key Findings

Steelcase utilizes a human-centered design research process to better understand the relationship between people, place and experience. Through interviews, workshops, observational research, environmental audits and literature reviews, we examined how students and faculty experience wellbeing across campus.

We learned that:

- Wellbeing remains a destination rather than embedded into daily environments.
- Classrooms prioritize efficiency over the human experience.
- Study spaces lack the privacy and comfort needed for performance and recovery.
- Social spaces limit how students choose to connect and interact with others.
- Restoration spaces inadequately support the different ways students recover.
- Faculty lack spaces to connect and recharge.



Design Principles

To better support wellbeing across the campus experience, environments should:

Create Everyday Moments of Wellbeing

Support wellbeing through a network of accessible spaces.

Support Comfort, Privacy and Choice

Provide settings that support different needs for focus, comfort and engagement.

Design for Multi-Modal Experiences

Create flexible spaces that support learning, collaboration, socializing and events.

Design for Inclusion and Belonging

Create environments that support a wide range of abilities, identities and preferences.

Support Diverse Sensory Needs

Reduce overstimulation through thoughtful lighting, acoustics and visual conditions.

Support Faculty Recovery and Renewal

Provide spaces that support focus, connection, restoration and wellbeing.



Connect with us to explore additional insights and design thought starters.

Email education@steelcase.com