

Alternative Wellness Bingo

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Recently, Wellness Resources [*sic*] circulated a “wellness bingo” activity, to encourage faculty and staff to “engage in activities that support a healthy mind, body, and life.” Many of the bingo squares contained patronizingly trite suggestions – as if yoga could possibly replace proper institutional support and respect for our work. Some squares were pseudoscientific nonsense, such as the now-deleted suggestion that we charge our cellphones at least three feet away from our beds “to limit exposure to radio frequency energy.” Yeah, USask has its own form of GOOP.

With your health in mind, I encourage you to complete the following alternative Wellness Bingo Card. There are no prizes, except for the satisfaction that comes from an appreciation for the work you do for the University.

I share credit for the content for some of these squares with colleagues who – unlike me – were able to go nameless for this VOX submission. Please blame them for any squares that offend you.

Editor’s Note: This issue will be the last VOX for the summer. We have all earned the break! VOX will resume at the end of August. There will surely be many developments between now and then, and much to share and discuss. In the meantime, let’s play BINGO!

B	I	N	G	O
Try to socialize with your colleagues occasionally so that you remember that you actually like them. Only interacting at meetings can make you forget this	Identify the institutional structures that make achieving work-life balance unachievable. Send a constructively worded email to an administrator letting them know. Remind them that you’ll follow-up.	Soul search about what matters to you professionally. What activities will help you get to where you want to be in 5 years? Burn the rest	Use the pandemic to reinvent yourself as someone who isn't beholden to societal standards regarding beauty, etc. Wear pyjamas to work forever if you want. And it's time to revisit bra burning	Schedule time off work and stick to your schedule
Take workshops that help you prioritize your work for things that matter	Sign-up for bystander intervention training and learn how to safely intervene when a colleague is being racist / sexist / homophobic / transphobic	Answer that neglected email that is making you feel guilty	Make your classroom / office / laboratory / studio a safe place for queer and trans students and colleagues	Post your 2nd vaccination selfie a few weeks late; it makes you seem much younger than you are
Recognize the support and contributions of university staff who lack the protections of tenure	Establish or strengthen support networks (of peers, mentors, friends...). Get support from them	FREE SQUARE Note: this will appear as a taxable benefit on your T4.	Challenge EDI strategies that privilege 'institutional ass covering' over actual change	Acknowledge your privilege and use it to make life better for others
Embrace television as a babysitter. Decide what parenting principles you really need to hold on to	Be kind to yourself	Model a good work-life balance for your colleagues and students	Create an Outlook rule that shunts administrative spam to your trash folder	Take a walk outside ... and recognize that this walk does not replace a workplace that supports you with more than trite aphorisms
Challenge structural barriers to your mental health	If you have a cat, enter the title “Feline Leader” on your email signature.	Gleefully eschew the workaholic martyr complex endemic to academia	Help a colleague by reviewing their P&T file - you'll feel proud of their accomplishments	Give the finger to an anti-masker
Jot down a list of synonyms to “pivot,” “agile,” and “flexibility” so you never have to use those words again.	Tell your research group you don’t expect emails on evenings or weekends.	If you must reply to emails on weekends and evenings, use Outlook’s ‘delayed delivery’ so you set the expectation of normal working hours	Review your payroll charitable deductions in PAWS. Update, add, delete to match your values (OutSaskatoon and Prairie Harm Reduction!)	Say no, even when you feel obligated to say yes.

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