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# THE CLASSROOM WELLBEING PROJECT

Insights from the Golden Apple Award  
Winners of UBCO 2018

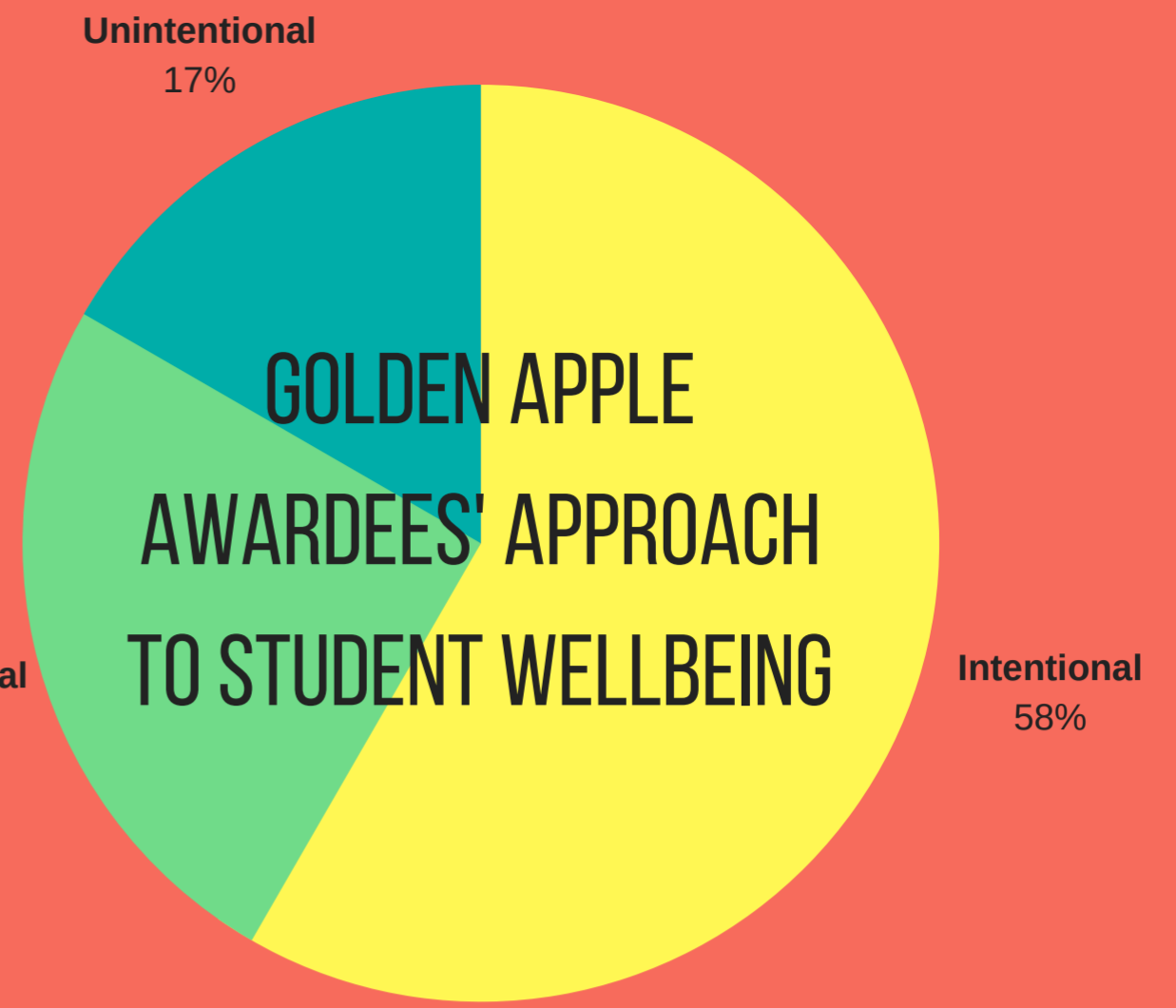
**UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA - OKANAGAN CAMPUS**

**3333 UNIVERSITY WAY, KELOWNA, AUGUST 7, 2018**

**Nursing 432: Capstone Community Project**

# INTRODUCTION

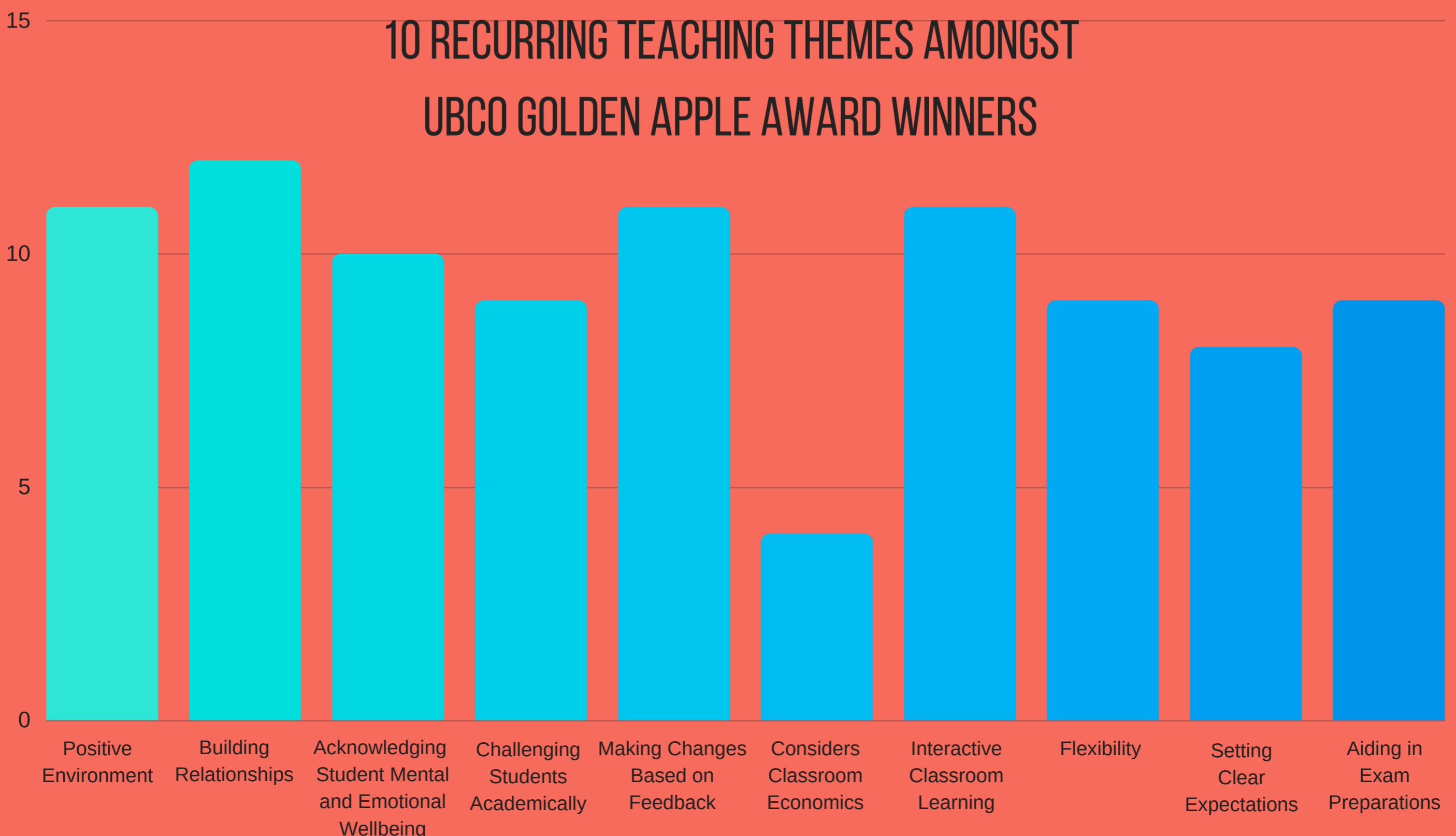
The University of British Columbia (UBCO) has been recognized as a leader in promoting campus health, however, there can be a disconnect between various professors' teaching approaches. In the past, students on campus have brought forth concerns about various faculties' course loads, exam schedules, welfare, and teaching styles and voiced a desire for improvement. All of which factors can largely contribute to the perceived health of students and add stress to the learning environment. Our aim is to reduce the issues mentioned previously and identify positive teaching styles that students recognize as being conducive to a healthy classroom environment. Our project is going to focus on the recipients of the Golden Apple Award during the previous semester, in order to gather applicable data. The recipients of this award were professors who students nominated as excelling in promoting a healthy and positive classroom environment. Our hope is to take the methods and means they use within their classes and apply them to other members in their faculty.



# BACKGROUND

The VOICE 4 (2018) Project at UBCO aimed to identify areas of campus culture that impeded or supported students mental wellbeing. The results of students' surveys showed that three environments, the social, academic, and economic environment had the greatest impact to mental being. In order to commemorate and support positive change on campus, the VOICE 4 hosted the 2nd Annual Golden Apple Awards. Students on campus were asked to identify and recognize professors that excelled at promoting classroom wellbeing, and those with a large positive and personalized response from students were awarded.

## 10 RECURRING TEACHING THEMES AMONGST UBCO GOLDEN APPLE AWARD WINNERS



# WHAT CAN YOU DO?

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## CREATE A POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT

**What does this mean?** The space in which students are in, described as being both the physical environment, as well as the attitudes, verbal exchanges of praise, and hypothetical space professors create for their class to engage in.

**Examples:** (1) Giving specific praise often (2) Welcoming late students and asking other to catch them up, instead of patronizing or shaming (3) Answering every question with enthusiasm and reiterating information if anyone missed it

## BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

**Definition:** The activity professors engage in to better get to know their students and establish rapport.

**Examples:** (1) Shaking students hands while they file into class (2) Trying to learn students names and calling them by name (3) Recognizing students outside of the classroom on campus (4) Giving background on yourself to make yourself more personable (5) Sharing stories and personal anecdotes in relation to course material

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## ACKNOWLEDGE STUDENT MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING

**What does this mean?** The consideration professors use to take care of both their own personal wellbeing, as well as the discussions and policies they have in regards to discussing mental health, emotional health, and stress management with their students.

**Examples:** (1) Discussing mental health, emotional health, and stress management with their students (2) Being aware that students have other classes and assignments can pile up quickly

## CHALLENGE STUDENTS ACADEMICALLY

**What does this mean?** The quality of course material and the professors ability to engage with students in a difficult but fair manner.

**Examples:** (1) Clear expectations are given to students at the beginning of the course (2) Give proper time and support to all students to facilitate a respectful relationship (3) Address issues as they happen and provide constructive feedback

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# THERE'S MORE!

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## MAKE CHANGES BASED ON FEEDBACK

**What does this mean?** The willingness of the professor to incorporate changes based on student feedback

**Examples:** (1) Having a feedback box for student suggestions (2) Using TEQs to guide teaching approach in the classroom (3) Creating anonymous online surveys at the end of class, so that changes can be made throughout the semester and students feel comfortable providing feedback

## CONSIDER CLASSROOM ECONOMICS

**What does this mean?** When a professor takes into account the financial burden put on students through tuition and attempts to compensate for that by providing free alternatives to expensive textbooks

**Examples:** (1) PowerPoints created referencing a textbook that the students do not have to purchase but the professor uses (2) Provide articles that reflects course content for students to read as an alternate textbook. (3) Use an open access textbook online that is free for students. (4) Use the library for resources that students have free access to

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## INTERACTIVE CLASSROOM LEARNING

**What does this mean?** When a professor uses different tools and activities to make learning the class material engaging and fit different learner's needs.

**Examples:** (1) Using multiple different types of media to engage the students for example, PowerPoints and videos (2) Creating interaction in the classroom by asking questions (3) Have students interact with each other with case studies and class discussion (4) Asking short closed ended questions to get students comfortable speaking in front of the class and promote future answering of open ended questions

## BE FLEXIBLE

**What does this mean?** Being adaptable to unexpected events, working through challenges, creating alternative means to consolidate/represent student learning

**Examples:** (1) Allowing students to feel comfortable talking about extensions when unexpected circumstances arise, and giving rationale for decisions made regarding extensions (2) Allowing students to contribute to creation of syllabus and distribution of marks (3) Allowing students to pitch assignments if they feel as though the one assigned will not accurately reflect their knowledge of the topic, and ensuring that pitched assignments still challenge and engaged course content

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# AND LASTLY...

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## SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

**What does this mean?** When a professor outlines the course concisely and is transparent about their expectations of their students

**Examples:** (1) During the first class answer these questions for the students: Who am I? What is this class? What to expect? (2) In depth, explain the policies you have for your class and how these can be met by your students (3) Make deadlines clear to all students ahead of time and answer any questions surrounding deadlines (4) When marking assignments, provide detailed feedback and future expectations for the student

## AID IN EXAM PREPARATION

**What does this mean?** The quality of course material and the professors ability to engage with students in a difficult but fair manner.

**Examples:** (1) Creating and facilitating an exam jam (2) Creating and sharing a study guide (3) Dedicating a class for course content review and questions (4) Pause practice before exams begin, positive, upbeat energy

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YOU CAN MAKE  
A DIFFERENCE

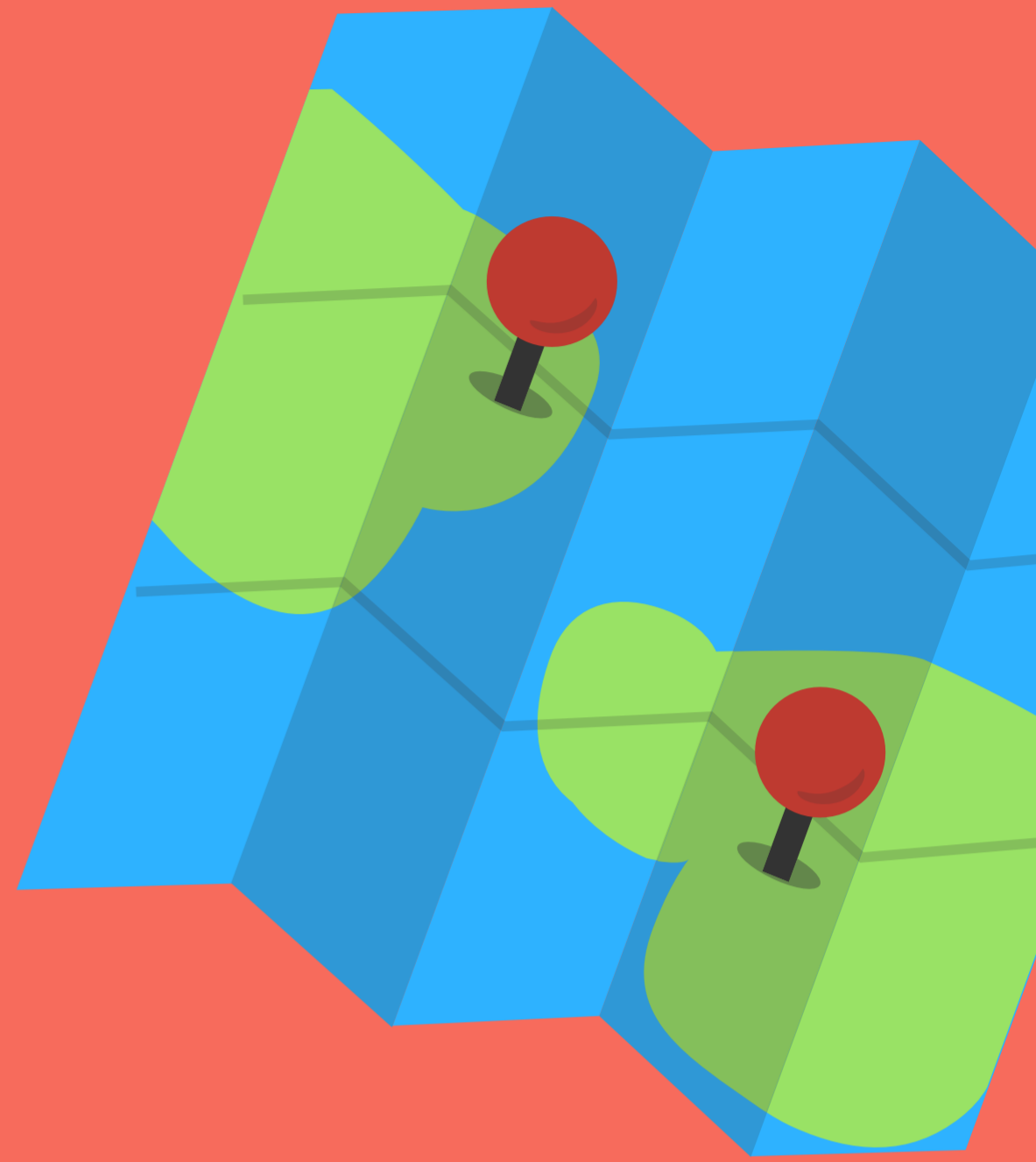


TO GET INVOLVED, SEE  
[HTTP://CAMPUSHEALTH.OK.UBC.CA/VOICE/VOICE-4-RESEARCH-EDUCATION-ACTION/](http://campushealth.ok.ubc.ca/voice/voice-4-research-education-action/)  
OR  
VISIT THE HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTRE, UNC 337



## WHAT COMES NEXT?

Regarding this work moving forward, our recommendations focus mainly on the training and resources available to professors. We would like to have professors on campus engage in a variety of resources such as educational videos on what can be done in the classroom, workshops for teaching training, and creating a specific “Classroom Wellness Month” on campus that focuses on these improvements. All of which using the Golden Apple Award data for a basis, and continuing to collect data from future award winners to integrate into this body of knowledge. Our hope would be to better prepare professors and equip them with the knowledge they need to convey their course topics appropriately to their students.



## CONCLUSION

In summary, we are pleased to see the positive light the Golden Apple Award winners have shone on the campus at UBCO. There is a clear passion for student and professor wellbeing and with proper resources all professors would have the ability to enhance their classrooms through the integration of our findings. The Golden Apple Award winners are an invaluable resource on campus and the utilization of their practices has the ability to boost overall well being on campus. By following these recommendations we could create an environment where all students are able to grow and learn, with all professors comfortable and confident in their teaching practices.