The Oasis Wellness Center was created to contribute to student success and retention, while enhancing the student life experience. It serves to complement the Student Recreation Center—also designed by the architect—in fulfilling the quality of fitness, health and wellness for the entire campus community. The design approach bridges the relationship between mind and body. The lounge in the facility is an open space that serves as the “living room” for the center, where students can casually lounge and decompress. The materials, lighting and furniture create a setting that is intended to be soothing and relaxing. The views and natural daylight from the garden provides a direct connection to nature and outdoor spaces. In addition, there are therapy rooms for one-on-one functions, meeting/group rooms for peer activities and guided meditation, and an outdoor garden with shaded lounge areas, sculpture garden, fireplace and labyrinth to support the tranquil atmosphere.
Institution: CSU Northridge
Location: Northridge, CA
Type: Public
Population: 36,000 students
Project: $4.5 million
Construction: $3.5 million
Site: 10,000sf
Center: 5,814sf

Scope of work + budget
school + community engagement

CSUN | oasis WELNESS CENTER
California State University is located in the heart of the San Fernando Valley. It’s a public school and primarily a commuter campus with students driving in from all over Los Angeles, CA. Community, student, and administration engagement took place in the forms of:

- needs assessment
- bench marking
- focus groups
- site visits
- surveys
- research
- national data

The Wellness Center is an interdisciplinary project that co-locates services between:

- USU | university student union
- SHC | student health center
- UCS | university counseling services
- H&HD | college of health and human development
- student body population
What physical features are important to you for a student wellness center facility? (Select 5)

- Place to purchase healthy snacks (TUC)
- Quiet areas or rooms for resting or meditation (USU)
- Lounge area with couches for relaxing (USU)
- Rooms for yoga, massage, etc. (SRC)
- Outside seating or garden area (USU)
- Kitchen for healthy snacks or cooking classes (HH&D)
- Relaxing atmosphere (USU)
What services and resources would be important to you for a student wellness center facility? (Select 10)

- Massage (SHC)
- CPR and first aid classes (SRC)
- Eating healthy on a student budget classes (HH&D and SHC)
- Healthy Cooking Classes (HH&D)
- Health and wellness assessments (UCS, SHC and SRC)
- Chiropractic (SHC)
- Place to sleep (USU)
- Birth Control/safer sex workshops (SHC)
- Relaxation area/massage chair (SHC)
- Yoga (SRC)
- Workshops (All)
**top (2) health related academic challenges at CSUN**

- **Stress**
  - National Average: 28%
  - CSUN 2011: 29%
  - CSUN 2013: 31.5%

- **Sleep Difficulties**
  - National Average: 19%
  - CSUN 2011: 20%
  - CSUN 2013: 21.3%

*National College Health Assessment (NCHA, 2013)*
student support
There was strong backing from the students themselves who participated in the programming process and whose inspiration pushed the project and design along in a unique direction.

University Student Union
The project was funded by the University Student Union, and resulted in a zero increase in student fees. The USU is a “student centered non-profit organization that works to expand the college experience through various programs, services, employment, and involvement opportunities.”

land and space
Space is one of the most valuable assets on a college campus. Recognizing an underutilized space and dedicating it to the health and well being of students was a gift.
The goal for the Wellness Center is to enhance and improve the health of CSUN students using an integrated and holistic approach:

Contribute to Student Success + Retention by:
• providing services to manage stress
• teaching techniques and providing facilities to mitigate the effects of sleep deprivation
• offering support services and educational tools that promote a lifelong commitment to health and well-being
• creating a learning laboratory for students in disciplines related to health sciences through faculty mentorships

Enhance the Student Life Experience on campus by:
• making use of underutilized space
• providing ADA accessibility for USU facilities
floor plan
1. reception
2. resource area
3. lounge
4. relaxation room
5. meeting room
6. administration
7. support
8. counseling & therapy
9. gender inclusive restrooms
counseling & therapy
Rooms are designed to be multi-functional and serve as both small group counseling rooms and massage/acupuncture therapy rooms. An adjacent storage space allows for easy swap of furniture depending on the need. Rooms offer indirect light for reduced glare and eye strain.

meeting rooms
Meeting Rooms provide space for students to work on peer-to-peer counseling, small workshops designed by the Student Health Center, group yoga classes, and campus seminars. Flexible furnishings offer a variety of possible room set-ups depending on the curriculum.

resource area + lounge
There is no real distinction between the resource area and lounge. A collection of resource material is currently being accumulated for students to browse in their off time. Cozy furnishings provide a comfortable place for students to relax and rejuvenate, or even grab some shut eye.

educational environment: the interior
1. arrival garden
2. elevator tower | ADA access
3. illumination patio
4. reflection patio
5. contemplation garden
6. oasis labyrinth
7. outdoor lounge | water wall
8. mindful garden
9. radiance garden | fireplace + amphitheater
**outdoor learning spaces**
The landscape was designed into various sized “outdoor rooms.” These rooms transformed an underutilized campus space. Students have taken ownership of the site and use it for quiet study, respite, and introspective rituals such as raking sand in the Zen Garden.

**fireplace + amphitheater**
The fireplace and amphitheater offer a place for students to gather, perform, and present. Whether an impromptu guitar jam session, or a planned class breakout space; this area is well used!

**yoga + meditation**
Flexible furnishings can be moved to the side and allow for outdoor yoga. The calming atmosphere of the landscape design aids in participant concentration and meditation.
inspiring and motivating students | quotes from Fall 2015 survey results

One student shared “I am so proud to be enrolled in a school that offers a center solely based on the wellbeing of its students. The Oasis center is absolutely amazing.”

Another student added after being asked if their involvement with the Oasis has helped them do better in their academic classes that “YES. It saves me from falling asleep in my night class.”

“Where has this been? We’ve needed this so much!”
indoor/outdoor connection, natural daylight, deep wood tones on ceiling and wall finishes

relaxation chairs + resource check-out

The entry water feature offers restful delight to sleep room as well as sound masking to entry/reception desk.

decorative lighting highlights biophilic patterned wall paper

The sleep room features water wall, nature-inspired finishes, indirect and programmable lighting to promote rest and sleep. Its entry sequence avoids door closure to minimize disruption as students travel in and out of room.
Native plants provide sustainable connection with nature.

Shade throughout offers comfort on hot days and filtered sun for variation in light and texture.

The labyrinth is the focus of the wellness center landscape, and was a program students requested. Lighting contributes to the gestalt of the space, creating and influencing the mood of the landscape.

An indoor/outdoor connection provides flow between spaces. Moveable furniture encourages student ownership that allows students to decompress.

The exterior water feature inspires delight for outdoor occupants.
results of process + project
by the numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>total # of individual student users</td>
<td>6,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total # of participations</td>
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<td>average Monday participations</td>
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<tr>
<td>average Tuesday participations</td>
<td>320</td>
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<tr>
<td>average Wednesday participations</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>average Thursday participations</td>
<td>324</td>
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<tr>
<td>average Friday participations</td>
<td>114</td>
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<tr>
<td>total nap pod reservations</td>
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<tr>
<td>total # of programs (classes, skill series, workshops)</td>
<td>167</td>
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<tr>
<td>total # of program participations</td>
<td>382</td>
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</table>
Since the Oasis opened in August of 2015, impact on the recreation program has been positive. The Oasis averages nearly 350 visitors on peak days during the week and typically logs over 2,500 nap pod reservations per semester. There have been numerous workshops offered from mindfulness, yoga, art therapy and meditation. Response from students has been extremely positive; their general consensus being, “Where has this been? We needed this so much!”

In short the mission of the University Student Union is to help students achieve their educational goals, the Oasis’ programs and services support this in every way. This mission aligns with one of the numerous priorities the President of the University has articulated; an unrelenting focus on student success.

[One major district goal] achieved was the first Gender Inclusive, multi-stall, restroom for the campus.

[the Oasis] bridged the gap and created opportunities for collaboration among several departments in various areas of the university, most notably the University Student Union, Klotz Student Health Center, the College of Health and Human Development, and University Counseling Services.

[Unexpectedly, the Oasis] established CSUN as a benchmark for creative health and wellness programing centered on sleep and stress challenges among students, in particular the nap pod program has been of interest to many campuses across the country.

The Oasis has [also] become a resource for departments around the campus to hold retreats in a tranquil, peaceful environment without the challenge of having to travel off campus.

Jimmy Francis
director, student recreation center CSUN