

Summary of Wellness Survey Results 4/22/07 Preliminary Report

In an attempt to gain a better understanding of employee interests and needs with regard to wellness, the Grinnell Wellness Committee designed and administered The Grinnell College Employee Wellness Needs and Interest Survey 2007. The intent is to have an instrument that may be the first of many used on a regular basis to provide information to the Grinnell Wellness Committee and the many providers of wellness services, facilities, and programs across campus. We hope that such information will guide decisions concerning future plans, programs and services in the wellness area.

For the purposes of this survey, the concept of wellness was very broad. Items on the questionnaire addressed needs and interests in the areas of mental health, physical health and fitness, spirituality, work and career development, environment, and recreation.

242 of 650 employees completed the questionnaire, producing a return rate of 37%. Approximately half of the respondents were participants of the Grinnell College Blood Screen in February of this year.

Demographic Information

The first section of the survey collected demographic information. Results showed that a cross section of employees, fairly representative of the employee pool as a whole, participated. Respondents represented every age group as expected with the majority between 40 and 60 years of age. 94% were full time, regular (not term or temporary,) employees representing all employment groups, i.e. faculty, support staff, and administrative staff; although, support staff were overrepresented by 76%. Most live within five miles of the City of Grinnell. The female to male ratio was 70/30 compared to 56/44 for the entire employee pool.

Health and Wellness Information

The second section collected information on general health and wellness activity. Approximately 87% of employees consider themselves in good to excellent health. When broken down by employment group, it was apparent that more support staff versus faculty or administrative staff considered their health to be fair to poor, 20.4% versus 6.6 and 8.5% respectively. This difference prompted additional analysis by employment group.

Approximately 70% of the respondents reported having a physical examination on a yearly or every other year basis. 80% of females versus 53% of male respondents reported having a physical that frequently. The frequency of having physical exams tended to rise with age.

Approximately 88% of the respondents reported participating in a blood screen on a yearly or every two years basis, not surprising since half of the questionnaires were completed by participants of the Grinnell College Blood Screen. Approximately 97% of respondents age 50 and over have their blood tested at least that often. The number of

respondents who indicated having their blood screened jumped from 32% for “every year” to 56% for “every two years,” suggesting that the on campus Blood Screen offered by Grinnell College every two years might be increasing the number of participants significantly.

Health and Wellness Interests

With regard to educational *topics and issues*, participants wanted to know more about physical fitness and what wellness resources are available to them; they wanted to learn more about nutrition, healthy cooking, diet, heart health, additional screenings, weight management, stress management, and places to walk, bike, and hike. (The top ten topics of interest are listed in the tables provided.) The top 10 topics garnered interest from over 70% of respondents.

With regard to *programs and services*, participants would most likely use the Blood Screen (no surprise there,) massage, and a personal fitness trainer, if made available. Over 50% of all respondents would most likely use a personal fitness trainer and over 40% said they would most likely use a personal wellness coach. (The top ten programs and services most likely to be used are listed in the tables provided.)

The Fitness Center, walking/jogging paths, cardio machines, weight lifting equipment, and the pool were consistently in the top five *facilities/equipment* most likely to be used by 44% or more. There was no difference when broken down by employment group. (The top ten facilities and equipment most likely to be used are listed in the tables provided.)

Awareness and Use of Wellness Resources and Benefits

The great majority of employees responded that they would use a number of wellness programs, services, facilities and equipment, if made available to them. Naturally, the question arises, what keeps them from using those resources that are currently available to them? Two open-ended response questions and two questions about currently offered wellness resources offer insight into the answer to this question.

Approximately 20-40% of respondents are using or have used each of the wellness resources listed, with the one exception, the Blood Screen, which was used by over 80% of respondents. The numbers show that faculty fall below the average on use of all resources except the Blood Screen. Other than the blood screen, fee reimbursement, Hope Health newsletter, and Hope Health calendar were the most used resources by faculty. The Blood Screen, Hope Health Calendar, and Benefits Fair were the most used resources by administrative staff. The Blood Screen, release time, and reimbursement for off campus wellness fees were used the most by support staff.

Since use is limited by awareness of the existence of such resources, this survey asked which resources respondents were aware of before taking the survey. If Blood Screen numbers are taken out of the picture, it appears that approximately 60% of the respondents reported being aware of most wellness benefits and resources. Of the people responding that they knew about these resources, about 50% say they use them. With the

exception of Blood Screen and release time numbers, (because faculty do not have the release time benefit,) fewer faculty members know about wellness resources (an average of 57%) than support staff (averaging 64%) or administrative staff (averaging 68%); and, a smaller percentage of those who are aware they exist, actually have used them, 38% for faculty versus 58% for support staff, and 60% for administrative staff.

The responses to the open-ended questions may shed some light on the reasons for a lack of awareness and use of existing wellness benefits and resources. In total, there were 175 suggestions made in response to two open-ended questions, both of which asked the respondent to identify ways that Grinnell College could improve the likelihood they would participate in wellness activities or lead a healthier and happier lifestyle.

Responses were categorized by their common themes. These themes include: more programs and services, increased facility hours or more convenient hours, improve the privacy, cleanliness and convenience of locker rooms, improve communication regarding such resources and opportunities, decrease workload or convince supervisor to allow respondent to spend time on wellness, more personal attention in the wellness/fitness area, and improve upon a campus culture that does not embrace wellness. (The categories of responses and examples from each category are included.)

Summary & Conclusions

The majority of Grinnell College employees participating in this survey perceive their health as good or excellent. Their needs and interests are varied, but appear to cluster around the physical health and fitness aspect of wellness. There's a desire for more personal attention in that area, facilities with better locker room accommodations and more hours, especially on weekends and breaks. They view the non wellness-oriented culture on campus as an obstacle and would like better communication about wellness offerings and resources. One statistic of concern was that, as a group, support staff perceived their health as fair or poor far more often than administrative staff or faculty, yet their needs might be overlooked if the groups were combined in any way. Due to a potentially higher risk for health-related issues, it is suggested that wellness service providers look into serving the special needs of this group of employees.

More detailed analysis will be forthcoming. For example, respondents identified what days and times of the day they prefer to participate in specific wellness activities and what days and times are not possible for any wellness activity. These items will take considerably more time to analyze, but will offer even more detailed information as to how wellness programs and services can better serve employees of Grinnell College.

It is the Committee's hope that the results of this survey are also in some way informative with regard to student wellness. Even though there are many differences between employee and student needs and interests, there is undoubtedly overlap as well.