

# WELLNESS CONNECTION

LIVE WELL. WORK WELL.

OCTOBER 2021

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT - Wellness Lessons Learned During the Pandemic Survey Report



*This month the employee spotlight is a report on the Wellness Lessons Learned During the Pandemic survey we conducted in July. We are excited to be able to share this information with you and continue this conversation in the weeks and months to come. We want to thank everyone who participated in the survey and look forward to using your feedback as we make future decisions on staff wellness initiatives.*

**By Seth Yoder**

Over the summer the System Office Wellness Committee conducted “lessons learned during the pandemic” survey in an effort to develop a better understanding around the potential impact the pandemic may have had on the overall wellness of System Office staff. The survey was designed to collect information on two topics: work/life balance and overall wellness. The questions primarily focused on comparing and contrasting these topics pre- and post-pandemic. In this report the survey team would like to share some key findings and how the System Office Wellness Committee intends to act upon this information.

## System Office Wellness Survey Team

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### Methodology

After developing a draft of the survey, it was reviewed by the entire System Office Wellness Committee and members of System HR. Upon approval, the survey was distributed to all System Office staff via email. The survey was open for two weeks from July 7<sup>th</sup> through July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021 and received 215 responses out of 909 potential participants for a response rate of 23.6%. With the breakdown of survey participants predominantly working from home, the results focus on the remote work environment. Below is a list of the key findings from the survey results.

### Key Findings

- 202 of 215 survey respondents (93.9%), indicated their workplace during the pandemic was “home”.
- 159 of 215 survey respondents (73.9%), indicated that their work/life balance either improved or significantly improved during the pandemic, with “enjoying no commute” most frequently indicated (30) as the primary factor contributing to the improvement of work/life balance.
- 126 of 215 survey respondents (58.6%), indicated that their overall wellness either improved or significantly improved during the pandemic. “Increased physical activity”(18) and “improved mental wellness/mindfulness” (13) were the primary factors indicated as contributing to the improvement of overall wellness. Conversely, while 40 respondents indicated no change, 49 (22.7%) reported overall wellness either reduced or significantly reduced. “Decreased physical activity” (14) and “poor mental health/anxiety/depression/stress/overwhelmed” (10) were the primary factors indicated in the reduction of overall wellness.
- The top three benefits related to health and wellness experienced during the pandemic were:
  - Better health choices: eating, meditation, exercise, sleep (143)
  - More time for things that matter: friends, family, pets, other (112)
  - Improved mental health: reduced stress/anxiety (77)
- The top three challenges related to health and wellness experienced during the pandemic were:
  - Finding balance; working more and not knowing when to turn work off (88)
  - Decreased social interaction/isolation (83)
  - Poor health choices (79)

## Next Steps

The System Office Wellness Committee recognizes that while University of Illinois System Office staff either work remote, hybrid, or in-person, it is important to acknowledge the feedback provided in this survey. One way the Wellness Committee can deliver on that mission is to provide education, resources, and support around how to make better health choices regardless of work environment. This will be accomplished by drawing upon the positive experiences and successes reported in order to address the identified challenges. The Wellness Committee will continue to offer wellness campaigns that strive to get more staff physically active and in tune with their mental wellbeing, while offering online and on-demand resources. The Wellness Committee values all of the feedback from this survey and will use it to plan for health and wellness activities in the coming year.

