

WELLCATS ANNUAL REPORT
FY 2024

WELLCATS
Live. Work. Be Well.

Executive Summary

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WELLCATS FY 2024

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

(detailed Executive Summary following)

A. Goal 1: Increase enrollment and engagement

1. Total enrollment in *WellCats* programming grew 26%.
2. *WellCats* membership cards and welcome letters were distributed to all TXST employees.
3. 120 participants completed the annual survey to assess wellness behaviors and attitudes. 94% feel their environment and 84% feel their supervisors are supportive.
4. A nutrition-specific needs assessment survey was developed to inform a nutrition group education/counseling pilot program. IRB approval was obtained in summer 2024.
5. The *WellCats* Microsoft Teams channel grew to over 600 active members, adding 100 new members in FY24, representing a 20% increase.
6. Hosted an employee benefits fair in fall 2023 with Human Resources on both campuses. A total of 329 employees attended the fair.
7. 188 employees participated and 97 completed the Get Fit Texas Challenge, logging a total of 342,825 minutes of physical activity
8. A total of 272 employees participated in Walktober and logged 68,009,792 steps.
9. Launched the evidence-based Stand and Move at Work Program, engaging employees campus wide to be more active during their workdays.

B. Goal 2: Design and offer convenient relevant programming to help employees achieve balance across the 8 dimensions of wellness

1. Culture of Health Assessment was conducted by Blue Cross/Blue Shield. Texas State received a positive rating, indicating significant strengths and “minimal room for improvement”.
2. Afternoon Stretch Breaks and Healthy Snacks and Nutrition Hacks programming were added to engage employees in health promotion from the convenience of their desk.
3. Free hearing screenings and flu shots were coordinated on campus.

C. Goal 3: Incorporate wellness into the culture of Texas State University

1. Evaluation of health and wellness continues. *WellCats* has collected over 9 years of data on program impact.
2. Ongoing partnership with HR staff on the university-wide wellness blog and marketing plan has continued to support *WellCats* program visibility.
3. Successful campus-wide events and challenges including Pinktober (breast cancer awareness), Walktober, and Movember (men’s health) encourage all employees to take regular action for their health.

INTRODUCTION

WellCats Employee Wellness Program

The *WellCats* program is included in the University Master Plan, Goal 5: Developing Infrastructure and Resources, Objective 5.1 (Position Texas State University as an employer of choice).

Mission statement for WellCats

WellCats is Texas State University's comprehensive employee wellness program dedicated to building a university culture that makes 'the healthy choice the easy choice'.

Executive Summary: WellCats Strategic Plan Progress

A. Increase enrollment and engagement (Goal 1)

1. *Total Enrollment in Program Offerings Grew in FY2024* – Participation in *WellCats* programming grew 26% from FY23 (3,212) to FY24. A total of 4,052 participants attended *WellCats* offerings that included exercise classes, nutrition consultations (97), PAN Classes (152), afternoon stretch breaks (337), and RRC offerings (144).
2. *Human Resources automatically enrolls all employees into WellCats.* Beginning September 1st, 2022, all benefits-eligible employees of Texas State University were approved to participate in *WellCats* services. To increase awareness, membership cards and welcome letters were distributed during new employee orientation and made available to existing employees beginning in the fall of 2023 through spring 2024.
3. *Conduct annual survey to assess wellness behaviors and attitudes.* Survey was developed in the fall and administered in October 2023. A total of 120 participants completed the survey. Key findings included:
 - a. Participants feel their environment (94%) and supervisors (84%) are supportive
 - b. Participants most often engage with the newsletter (62%), Teams channel (48%), and physical activity classes (40%)
 - c. Participants on average rate their overall wellbeing as a 3.45 on a 5-point scale. Nutrition (3.19), financial (3.09), and physical wellbeing (3.01) were identified as target areas based on lower participant average scores
 - d. Most participants prepare their meals at home, eat vegetables with every meal, include whole grains at about half of meals, consume at least one sugar sweetened beverage per day, rarely drink alcohol, and eat out on average 1-2x/week
 - e. Strongest topics of participant future interest include exercise/physical activity, nutrition/healthy eating, mental health, relaxation/meditation, and work-life balance
 - f. Barriers to participation include lack of time, timing of classes not working with schedules, lack of marketing, and lack of supervisor support
4. *Conduct a nutrition survey to assess nutrition needs and collect information that will inform a nutrition group education/counseling pilot program.* Nutrition survey was developed over the spring and summer of 2024. IRB approval was obtained in summer 2024. Survey distribution planned for the October Bobcat Bene-Fest Employee Benefits Fair and through the *WellCats* monthly newsletter throughout the fall of 2024.

5. *Creating cohort engagement through Microsoft Teams channel.* *WellCats* team members have been actively involved in the creation and management of a *WellCats* Teams channel since fall 2020. Employees opt in to receive updates and reminders about programming and engage with a wellness-centered cohort. The channel currently has over 600 active members (added over 100 members this past fiscal year).
6. *Collaborated with Human Resources to host an employee benefits fair.* The interactive Bobcat Bene-Fest Employee Benefits Fair occurred on both the Round Rock and San Marcus campuses in the fall of 2023. A total of 329 employees attended. *WellCats* leadership hosted a table and coordinated activities to increase awareness and visibility of *WellCats* services and program offerings.
7. *Participating in the Get Fit Texas Challenge.* Since 2021, the university has participated in the Get Fit Texas Challenge through Employee Retirement Services of Texas. In FY 2024, over 188 registered and 97 completed the challenge, logging a total of 342,825 minutes of activity. Over 917 stars were awarded (each representing 150+ minutes/week).
8. *Walktober* – In FY24, *WellCats* utilized a new tracking app that included logging, individual and team participation, goal setting, and daily tips for health. A total of 272 users participated and 68,009,792 steps were taken.
9. *Stand and Move at Work Program* – launched in July 2024. Engaged Academic Affairs administrative staff and Advising Center staff campus wide to be more active during their workdays. *WellCats* leadership serve as champions for the program.

B. Design and offer convenient relevant programming to help employees achieve balance across the 8 dimensions of wellness (Goal 2)

1. *Partnered with Blue Cross/Blue Shield and Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS) to provide additional resources and programming.* This year, the ERS Annual Virtual Wellness Fair was strongly promoted by *WellCats* and occurred concurrently with the TXST Benefits Fair.
2. *Culture of Health Assessment by Blue Cross/Blue Shield.* Data were collected throughout 2023 and reports provided in the spring of 2024. *WellCats* had an overall score of 66.2%, indicating significant strengths and “minimal room for improvement”. Culture support and self-management of nutrition and tobacco control were identified as areas for improvement. Priorities for action included “inclusion of wellbeing focus in recruitment and orientation”, “unified culture of leadership support for wellbeing”, “greater opportunity for social interaction”, and “consider a re-launch of remote work policy”.
3. *Added new wellness programming: Afternoon Stretch Breaks and Healthy Snacks and Nutrition Hacks.* In response to employee feedback, Afternoon Stretch Breaks were piloted in summer 2023 and fully implemented in fall 2023 to provide opportunities for physical activity from the comfort of your office. Due to positive feedback received, *WellCats* expanded, adding Healthy Snacks and Nutrition Hacks, which provides nutrition education on a variety of topics. Development occurred over the summer of 2024 and full implementation began in fall 2024.
4. *Provide free wellness screenings to employees.* Hearing screenings and flu shots were coordinated on campus in FY2024.

C. Incorporate wellness into the culture of Texas State University (Goal 3)

5. *Ongoing evaluation of health and wellness* – we now have 9 years of data on employee participants and have analyzed these data to understand the impact of program participation on measures of health and wellness. We are currently in the process of writing a manuscript describing the impact of our program offerings.
6. *Culture of Health Assessment Review*. In an effort to continue evaluating the effectiveness of our programming, ERS wellness consultants were engaged in the spring of 2023 to conduct a review of wellness offerings on the Texas State campus and make recommendations for areas to improve. Recommendations were made and reviewed in spring 2024.
7. *Increasing WellCats visibility*. Beginning in the summer of 2021, *WellCats* partnered with HR staff to develop a university-wide wellness blog and marketing plan, which has continued to support increased visibility in FY 24. Newsletter and blog content is also shared through HR's listserv to reach a broader university audience. *WellCats* social media engagement via Instagram has also continued to thrive. Educational videos and reels have been viewed by thousands across the nation.
8. *Developing campus-wide events and challenges*. Educational and health screening awareness months including Pinktober (breast cancer awareness) and Movember (men's health) continue to be emphasized to encourage employees to take action for their health, be proactive, and support the well-being of others. Additionally, in the fall of 2023, Walktober was launched to provide an avenue for participants across campus to improve their physical fitness through a walking challenge.

OVERVIEW OF WELLCATS OFFERINGS - PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- A. Group Exercise: 30 to 60-minute classes offered on both campuses throughout the day at several sites designed to meet the different needs, interests and fitness levels of our members.
- B. Health Behavior Change Coaching: One-on-one sessions designed to support health behavior change for employees who desire to prioritize healthy behaviors.
- C. Nutrition Consultation: One-on-one sessions with a trained nutrition professional designed to provide support in identifying goals to improve nutrition, overall health, and well-being.
- D. ProActive Nutrition (PAN): Monthly hands-on cooking sessions focusing on whole foods, healthful options for popular dishes, and exploring new possibilities in the kitchen.
- E. Racquetball: Offered at Jowers Center, Monday through Friday, 12-1 PM for all faculty and staff.
- F. Subsidized Student Recreation Center membership: Provides a limited number of *WellCats* members a \$25/year or semester SRC membership subsidy.
- G. Wellness Education Series: One-hour sessions offered monthly through Organizational Development and Communications covering topics ranging across all eight dimensions of wellness.
- H. Afternoon Stretch Breaks: Weekly, 15-minute sessions designed to be done at a desk providing office-friendly stretches and time to ask wellness-related questions.
- I. Healthy Snacks and Nutrition Hacks – Biweekly, 15-minute nutrition educational sessions designed to be viewed at a desk with time to ask nutrition-related questions.



MEMBER DATA

- [see Appendix I](#)

MAJOR OBJECTIVES

- A. Increase *WellCats* participation and university-wide program engagement
- B. Administer annual employee health and wellness survey with a specific focus on barriers and facilitators to program participation
- C. Develop and conduct a survey for employees to gauge interest in a group nutrition education series
- D. Collaborate with Human Resources on an employee benefits fair
- E. Engage in a Culture of Health Assessment of Texas State University

MAJOR OBSTACLES

- A. Increasing participation and employee engagement in program offerings
- B. Supervisor support of employees using wellness time
- C. Promoting the use of wellness time for employees
- D. Improving well-being resources for employees
- E. Time, size of campus, and distance required to attend in-person classes

Appendix I | Member Data

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
# of <i>WellCats</i> members	543	492	364	534	3736	4006
# of group exercise classes attended (total)	7684	5089	2301	1969	2957	4754
# of WES* offered	11	9	12	11	11	10
Average attendance at WES	12.42	22	23.08	7.81	5.73	19
Total attendance at WES	145	198	277	86	63	178
# of one-on-one health coaching sessions (total)	101	97	73	85	37	14
# of members participating in one-on-one health coaching	10	10	6	8	4	1
# of one-on-one dietary consultations provided (total)	14	14	61	21	22	7
# of one-on-one dietary consultations provided (# of individuals served)	11	14	15	15	14	6
# Male/Female – SM	436 Females 91 Males 4 Others	362 Females 109 Males 8 Others	275 Females 63 Males 3 Others	399 Females 104 Males 8 Others		
# Male/Female – RRC	12 Female 0 Males 0 Others	12 Females 1 Males 0 Others	14 Females 9 Males 0 Others	18 Females 5 Males 0 Others		
# of members – SM	532	478	341	511	ALL	ALL
# of members – RRC	12	13	23	23	ALL	ALL
BMI@ (average)	27.98	27.35	27.78	27.40		
Sick Leave Taken – Members (n=total sick leave hours)	22,081.31	22,515.28	12,149.01			
Sick Leave – Non-Members (n=total sick leave hours)	164,932.03	140,272.46	140,422.81			
Wellness Leave Taken – Avg Hours/Week					0.61	.59
Percentage of employees who took Wellness Leave					11.1%	12.8%

*WES = *WellCats Education Session*

@BMI = *body mass index*