



Western Washington University Faculty & Staff Wellness Program Media Backgrounder

Press Contact:

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OVERVIEW:

WWU's Faculty & Staff Wellness Program strives to support and educate WWU employees on their path to make wellness a daily habit. The program, in operation since 2009, serves more than 500 employees during their lunch and morning hours to engage in a variety of activities with their coworkers. Currently, 50 different classes are offered from Zumba to Tai Chi in Carver Gym and Wade King Student Recreation Center, both located on the university's campus.

Additionally, the program offers consultations and seminars to further promote mental, physical and emotional health. Individuals of varying skill levels are encouraged to participate, especially those seeking support and information on how to practice wellness.

- wp.wwu.edu/wellness/
- [facebook.com/Western-Washington-University-Faculty-Staff-Wellness-Program-110095325816596/](https://www.facebook.com/Western-Washington-University-Faculty-Staff-Wellness-Program-110095325816596/)

CURRENT ACTIVITIES:

The Faculty & Staff Wellness program has begun another quarter educating and practicing wellness on campus. Here are a few highlights of what's new:

Mindful Self-Compassion for LGBTQ+ People (January 24, 12am-1:30pm in VU462A)

An event that will encourage learning, reflection, and conversation on what it means to have self-compassion and how acts of self-compassion can contribute to the overall well-being of LGBTQ+ individuals. This session is the first of its kind for the

program and will be facilitated by Chris Edwards, a psychologist in the Counseling Center. This event is a partnership with [LGBTQ+ Western](#) and is open to all students, staff and faculty with a focus on queer identity and experience.

Additional morning classes (6:30am-7:30am)

Masters Swim

A class for more experienced swimmers to refine stroke techniques, offered Tuesdays and Thursdays. Taught by [Richelle Williams](#) and new instructor [Anna Smith](#).

Morning Yoga

A class for any skill level from beginner to advanced, beginning with breathing techniques and a warm-up to transition into a full-body workout. Taught by [Alicia Wang](#) on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Additional afternoon classes (12pm-1pm)

Tai Chi Ch'uan

A class centered on learning the Yang Style Tai Chi Ch'uan Form with two-person exercises to expand spiritual awareness, personal power, and flexibility. Taught by new instructor [Gene Golden](#).

Barbell Strong

This class for individuals of any skill level focuses on learning and mastering barbell movements to increase strength and muscle growth. Taught by [Justin Manipis](#).

FACTS:

A healthy lifestyle results in better overall health.

- Inactivity contributes to 1 in 10 premature deaths (Center for Disease Control 2020).
- Regular physical activity can reduce the risk of chronic conditions like heart disease and cancer (Center for Disease Control 2018).
- Regular physical activity can reduce anxiety, depression, and stress (Olsen et al. 2018).
- Regular physical activity can also improve sleep (Olsen et al. 2018).

Poor employee health is costly.

- Worldwide, employers spent about \$1.1 billion as a result of chronic disease, \$300 billion on work-related stress, and \$550 billion on disengagement at work (McGroarty 2016).
- Stress in the workplace is responsible for \$125 - \$190 billion in the U.S. (Blanding 2015).
- 16% of employees said their job was more difficult as a result of poor mental health (American Psychological Association 2016).
- 33% of employees said they felt stressed during the workday (American Psychological Association 2016).

Wellness programs benefit organizations and their employees.

- 89% of employees with organizational leaders that support wellness programs are more likely to recommend their job as a good place to work. (American Psychological Association 2016).
- By engaging in an active lifestyle, individuals can save 30-50% on health care costs (United States Chamber of Commerce 2016).
- 80% of U.S. companies that took action to address employee health saw an increase (Khullar et al. 2017).
- In 2017, 66% of U.S. employers said they saw increased morale after implementing a wellness program (Killian 2017).
- 61% of employees said they regularly participate in wellness programs (American Psychological Association 2016).

Wellness programs are becoming more common and accessible.

- In 2016, 54% of businesses offered a company-sponsored wellness program, up from 30% in 2012 (Aflac 2016).
- 63% of state and government workers had access to a company-sponsored wellness program in 2017 (United States Bureau of Labor Statistics 2017).

SHORT BIOS:

Darcie Hill

Faculty/staff wellness administrator

Hill, a Bellingham native, returned home after earning a master's in public health with an emphasis on health promotion and health behavior from the University of Oregon. She also played on the school's varsity soccer team and went on to play with The Thorns, a Women's Professional Soccer team. She has been a certified trainer for more than ten years and is also a registered dietitian nutritionist. Her work as a wellness administrator at WWU began in winter 2018.

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Ron Arnold

Fitness/Instructional Coordinator

Arnold has had a passion for health and fitness since 1994. He holds trainer/specialist certifications in seven different fitness fields, including Russian Kettlebell, spinning and TRX suspension. He has utilized his specialty in restoring movement via rehabilitative and corrective techniques at WWU for over 16 years.

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BOILERPLATE:

The Faculty & Staff Wellness Program at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington, has been dedicated to supporting and educating WWU employees on their path to make wellness a daily habit since 2009. The program currently offers 50 classes on campus in Carver Gym and Wade King Student Recreation Center. It also provides consultations and seminars, and functions as a center for outside resources. Faculty/staff wellness administrator Darcie Hill has directed the program since winter 2018. Offices for the program are located in the recreation center. information can be found on their website: wp.wwu.edu/wellness/.

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