Wellness Grant Feature of the Month: Institute of Transportation Studies

Wellness Ambassador: Erinne Boyd

Wellness Ambassador Erinne Boyd used her department’s Mini-Grant funds to purchase a department bicycle and U-lock that would encourage colleagues to engage in a more active work-day and provide an environmentally friendly mode of transportation. When reflecting on why she thought a department bicycle would be a widely beneficial use of funds, Erinne wrote, “being a part of the Institute of Transportation Studies, many employees are mindful of riding their bikes to work, however, a large portion of department members do not own bicycles – coincidentally, those are the employees who often attend meetings on main campus.”

The average distance from the Institute of Transportation Studies (located in West Village) to campus meetings is roughly one mile – slightly too far to comfortably walk, but close enough for employees to now enjoy a brief bike ride. Since purchasing the department bicycle, many employees have taken advantage of the new mode of transportation for getting to their meetings. Erinne has received positive feedback from department members across the board, saying they enjoy indulging in brief physical exercise during the work-day and not having to worry about parking fees. Aside from the physical health benefits, Erinne reported mental health benefits, as well. Some employees have shared that enjoying a leisurely bike ride has helped them relax and return to a feel-good mentality.

There have been minimal challenges related to the biking initiative. The first challenge Erinne faced was spreading the word to all department employees that the bike was available to them. This was difficult at times, especially when considering that the Institute of Transportation Studies office is split up across 4 different units, only one of which the bike is housed within. Erinne found that the best way to overcome this challenge was to make an effort to regularly check in with her colleagues and remind them that the bike is available for them whenever they may need it. Additionally, the summertime Davis heatwaves often deterred employees from wanting to bike, but when the weather was permitting, employees were appreciative of the biking option.

In the future, Erinne plans to continue promoting health and well-being by continuing to encourage use of the bicycle, and perhaps making some improvements. Some employees have provided suggestions, including a request of adding a basket onto the bicycle so employees can ride to and from meetings without having to hold onto a backpack or purse. Furthermore, Erinne sees this department bike as a way to continue integrating planet-friendly practices within the work place, writing, “our unit strives for positive environmental impacts and choosing a bicycle over a vehicle is a perfect example.”