

SWOSU Employees are DawgTrottin'

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Over 140 administrators, faculty and staff at Southwestern Oklahoma State University campuses in Sayre and Weatherford are currently "DawgTrottin'."

The SWOSU group is participating in a six-week WalkingWorks campaign, which is sponsored by BlueCross BlueShield, that kicked off January 25.

Teams consist of five participants who will track their activities including biking, rowing, pilates, yoga and more. Each activity will automatically be converted into steps and then steps will be converted to miles. The team with the highest average miles will win.

The campaign is being sponsored by SWOSU's Bulldog Wellness Committee. This is the first year for the committee, and members have been hard at work trying to encourage healthy lifestyle choices across the campuses.

Jamie Collins said incentives include massages, Subway gift cards, fitness tracking devices and trophies.

Teams are displaying their creativity with team names such as The Blister Sisters, Ambitious Dawgs, The Holy Walkamolies and The Burning Lipids.

"I'm so proud of all of the participants who are showing great dedication to a healthy lifestyle by walking, swimming and rock climbing," said Debra P. Holmes, chair of the committee. "There's also some fierce, but friendly, competition going on. I hope everyone keeps up the good work!"

The committee has been active in reaching out to snack providers to offer healthier options in vending machines. In November, the committee was visited by a company (Catapult Health) to provide worksite preventive checkups to employees and their benefited dependents. Future events include a "Biggest Loser" like contest and a smoking cessation initiative.

Bulldog Wellness has partnered with Western Oklahoma Wellness Initiative (WOWI) to update the university's wellness policies. WOWI works with local businesses, schools, cities, and communities in Custer, Washita, Roger Mills and Beckham counties on lowering the prevalence of obesity and tobacco use in Oklahoma.

"The focus of our work is to change the current social norms and make the healthy choice the easy choice," says Christopher Morgan, program coordinator for Custer and Washita County. "We are very impressed with SWOSU for taking the initiative to create a healthier environment for their staff and community."

WOWI has generously donated 150 pedometers for the SWOSU Dawg Trottin' Spring 2016 campaign. WOWI's services are free and focus on creating a healthier Oklahoma.