

College of Education

What did you receive?

Through the Wellness Initiative Fund, the College of Education was able to purchase Verilux “Happy Lights” for offices that do not have windows. As is the case for many departments across campus, the College is housed in an older building where not all offices have windows or natural light. Research has shown that lighting conditions can affect workplace performance and job satisfaction, particularly through its effects on employees’ circadian rhythms.

Studies by Northwestern University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign found that employees who had exposure to natural light reported better sleep quality, higher levels of activity and reported health, and described themselves as happier than those who worked in spaces devoid of windows or other sources of light (Boubreki *et al*, 2014). Happier and healthier employees will be more productive (Sgroi 2015).

What space(s) did you transform and how is it used?

There are 12 offices/ workstations used by full-time faculty and staff that do not have windows. While the most direct impact has been upon those who are here for the entire workweek, the college does have adjunct instructors who use these spaces as well. In total, roughly 30 people have benefited directly from the lamps. And, it’s important to note that the entire College of Education faculty, staff, and students benefit indirectly by working with these healthier and happier 30 individuals.

Please share how this has positively impacted your employees/patients/students etc. both physically and mentally and provide any feedback you’ve received.

When asked about the lights, staff members felt that the small investment in their daily lives had an impact. Not only did they utilize the lights, but there is a strong appreciation for efforts by University Wellness. It may seem like a small thing, but (particularly during the darker months of winter in Wisconsin) increased exposure to light can enhance the mood of valuable workers. In the words of one recipient, “The happy light puts a little sunshine in my office on a gloomy day.”

