Stanford Residential and Dining Enterprises (R&DE) created the Dining Ambassador (DA) program with the mission to build and facilitate community within the dining hall. In 2014, Stanford’s Health 4 America teamed up with R&DE to measure the impact of their program and assess whether introducing the DA’s to health and non-health (i.e. sustainability) messages would affect the students’ perceptions of the DA program. We also wanted to gauge whether it would change DA’s engagement in their role.

**Objectives**

1) To measure the impact of the DA program on Stanford undergraduates.
2) To assess whether health or non-health messages effect DA’s engagement and students’ perceptions about the program.

**Methods**

- Randomized DA’s into two groups: health and non-health
- Gave two one-hour introductory class sessions on topic
- Tasked DA’s with facilitating peer discussions around assigned topic
- DA’s recorded student level of interest, specific questions and comments that arose
- Both groups planned a creative initiative inspired by the information gathered in Stern and Wilbur, the two freshman-focused dining halls

**Data Collection**

- Convenience sampling in all dining halls, excluding Arrillaga
  - Repeated sampling, 7 weeks apart; Some students contributed to both pre and post surveys
- Administered engagement assessment surveys to DA’s
- Key informant interviews conducted

**Data Analysis**

- T-test using R-Studio, chi-test on binary responses
- Themes were identified from collected qualitative data

**Results**

- **% of undergraduates**
  - Aware of DA program
  - Not Aware of DA program

**Conclusions**

1) Most undergraduates are aware of the DA program.
2) Our intervention showed a significant change in the students’ perceptions of the DA role in the areas of sustainability, wellness, health, and community.
3) We were not able to detect an increase in the DA’s sense of engagement in the program by adding tailored messages.

**Strengths/Limitations**

**Strengths**

- Support from R&DE, Eric Montell, and Hanah Yendler
- Large sample size
- DA’s were opened willing to be educated on health and non-health messages

**Limitations**

- Low participation of DA’s; 23 out of 38
- High attrition rate of DA’s

We believe the DA program has the potential to expand their role to include health and non-health messages. The DA’s are in a unique position to communicate the values of Stanford dining and be a resource to their peers. Out of the five interviewed DA’s, all five showed enthusiasm for the implementation of a formal training program.

**Implications**

- A more comprehensive study looking at whether a difference exists between health and non-health themes in DA participation in program
- Test impacts of messages on the eating behavior and health of DA’s and/or undergraduates

**Future Directions**

- Implementing a formal training program for DA’s
- Further research into the effectiveness of health and non-health messages on student engagement and perceptions

**STANFORD HEALTH 4 AMERICA**

Applying research to practice, bringing health to communities

**STANFORD RESIDENTIAL AND DINE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS**

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