



IMPACT OF THE DINING AMBASSADOR PROGRAM ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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Background

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

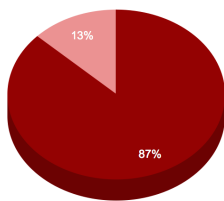
- Repeated sampling, 7 weeks apart; Some students contributed to both pre and post surveys
- Administered engagement assessment surveys to DA's
- Key informant interviews conducted

Data Analysis

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

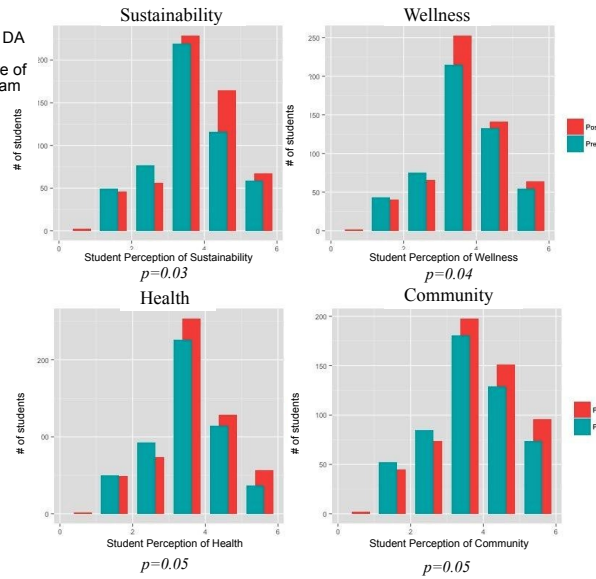
Results

% of undergraduates



■ Aware of DA program
■ Not Aware of DA program

Pre vs. Post Change	P-value
Students' Self-Reported: Pre, n= 653; post, n=696	
Awareness of DA Program	0.8
Recognition of Faces	0.0001
Number of DA's Known	0.5
Recollection of DA's Names	0.7
Attitude Toward DA Program	0.6
Interactions with DA's	0.5
Participation in Events	0.04
DA's Self-Reported: Pre, n=23; post, n=9	
Exciting	0.08
Fulfilling	0.6
Empowering	0.6
Meaningful	0.7
Engaging	0.3
Satisfying	0.1



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 open and 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

Implications

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.

Future Directions

- 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

"I think more people were excited about it [sustainability messages] than I thought would be. I think that's definitely a positive sign for doing more things like that in the future."

"I think that if in all the events that could be a goal for dining ambassadors. At every event, we have to stress something - some form of nutrition or some form of sustainability. That would be a cool initiative to have that; we can just implement in everything we do. Like a mission statement."



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