Assessing Impacts of Education on Food Waste Behaviors at UCLA Dining Halls

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Our Research Question

Can the implementation of educational outreach efforts help change excessive food waste behaviors in the UCLA Dining Restaurants?
Project Significance & Goals

Significance

- Increase in amount of food waste was not proportional to the number of students residing on the Hill
- Need to educate students and modify behaviors

Goals

- Decrease amount of food being wasted by students in the dining halls
- Curate innovative and informative educational methods (signs/outreach event/nutrition cards) that students can conveniently be exposed to.
## Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Winter Quarter Audits</th>
<th>Educational Campaign</th>
<th>Spring Quarter Audits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○ Collected 200 total survey responses from students</td>
<td>○ 2 audits at each location: Bruin Plate and De Neve</td>
<td>○ Based on responses from survey</td>
<td>○ Similar methodology to the audits conducted during Winter Quarter</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ De Neve and Bruin Plate</td>
<td>○ Food waste of every 3rd person rated on scale from 0-4</td>
<td>○ 3 different approaches:</td>
<td>○ Also gauged how many students noticed signage</td>
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<td>○ To gain a better understanding of student awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td>● Signage</td>
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<td>● Nutrition</td>
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<td>● Outreach</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
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Results

- Winter Audit & Survey Key Takeaways
  - ½ plate of food wasted per student per meal
  - Need to address lack of awareness and emphasize customization
- Spring Audit and Observations
  - Notable increase in zeros and twos & decrease in threes and fours
  - Graphs on next slide
- Visibility of Signs
  - 25% of students were aware of signage in De Neve Dining Hall
  - 34% of students were aware of signage in Bruin Plate

Additional Results to Note:
Qualitative Impacts Observed through Conversations with Students at Outreach Event
Results

Obscuring Factors to Consider

- Timing of signage implementation - spring quarter
- Signage implementation on only one in about four tables
- Short amount of time between project implementation and second audit
Challenges

- Scope of project
- Quantifying food waste
- Encouraging student participation
- Obtaining approval
Impact of our Project

- Implementation of Signage in the Dining Halls
- Incorporation of Nutrition and Mindful Eating to Help Reduce Food Wasting Habits
- Engagement With Students Outside the Dining Hall
- Widen Focus to Incorporating Education Regarding Food Waste Into RA Training, Orientation etc.
Moving Forward

- Implement an educational component during student orientation
- Continue to hold sustainable-food themed events in the dining restaurants/on the hill
- Quantifying food waste - revive Waste Watchers team (2009)
- Expand signage to the Residential Halls
- Create a public demonstration quantifying how much food students waste in a dining period
- to our AMAZING stakeholder Charles Wilcots, for all of his guidance throughout the past two quarters
- to all of the Staff at Bruin Plate and De Neve Dining Halls for allowing us to conduct our audits
- to the WONDERFUL SAR Co-Directors Manali McCarthy & Danna Creager, and to the SAR Communications Director Melissa Ikeda
  - We appreciate all of your hard work in making this class so fulfilling!
- to our dedicated Faculty Advisors, Professor Carl Maida & Professor Cully Nordby
- to Nurit Katz, for being such an inspiring Chief Sustainability Officer at UCLA