Balancing Wellness and Academic Success in College Settings

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The Leadership Scholars Certificate Program is a two-year selective, interdisciplinary certificate program that prepares Rutgers undergraduate women to be informed, innovative, and socially responsible leaders.

Leadership Scholars design and implement social action projects to expand their understanding of issues and problems and to develop leadership skills.

This project gives Scholars the opportunity to apply the theoretical knowledge they have gained about leadership, advocacy, and social change with the practical and experiential knowledge they have developed about a particular policy issue or problem through the field site placement. It also further develops leadership skills by giving undergraduates the opportunity to practice leadership through action.

To find out more please visit the Institute for Women’s Leadership’s website at http://iwl.rutgers.edu.
What is Wellness?
The 9 Dimensions of Wellness

★ Combination of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being
★ A process that takes conscious effort
52% of students experience high levels of stress during a typical semester.

Hudd, et al., 2000
High levels of stress lead to...

- Dismissal of the need to eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, and avoid smoking and drinking (Hudd, et al., 2000)
- Anxiety, mood changes, and conflict in relationships (Britz & Pappas, 2010)

These behaviors increases risk for developing additional serious health issues, including heart disease and lung problems
So what can we do?

★ Educate—workshops and health fairs are effective methods of health education (Kloss, et al., 2016; Dillon & Sternas, 1997)
  ○ Students consider peer educators to be credible sources for health-related information (Zullig, et al., 2012)

★ Recognize and address barriers to access

★ Target at-risk students
  ○ Women are more likely to experience stress, and these stressors are gender-specific
Promoting Wellness in the Honors College—a first-year residence hall
Building on last year’s framework

★ Incorporating Rutgers resources
  ○ HOPE programs
  ○ Rutgers Recreation—Wellness on the Go

★ Intentional activities

★ Targeting each dimension of wellness
Moving Forward – Next Semester

- Implement programs in first-year residence halls on College Ave Campus
  - Specific to the needs of each community
  - Reach those without prior interest in wellness

- Create a resource sheet summarizing Rutgers health resources and their potential costs
Feminist Leadership
Lessons Learned

★ Your first idea isn’t always the best idea
★ Not everyone will share your vision
★ People will steal your spotlight
★ Backup plans are vital
★ Personally connecting people to resources is incredibly effective
★ Starting a conversation will create momentum
★ People around you want to see you succeed
★ Promoting wellness to others forced me to prioritize it for myself as well
Sustainability

- Planting the seed now means it will bloom after I have left
- HC Student Wellness Committee will continue to build upon the Wellness Fair
  - They can use my mistakes and successes to improve it even more
- In the future— spreading the message to more communities at Rutgers
Bibliography


Gaultney, J. (2015). Risk for sleep disorder measured during students’ first college semester may predict institutional retention and grade point average over a 3-year period, with indirect effects through self-efficacy. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 18*(3).


