Effect of a Student Exercise and Wellness Project on the Student Experience


1The Centre for Sport & Exercise Science, 2Public Health Hub 3Academy of Sport and Physical Activity.
Sponsored by Sheffield Hallam Student’s Union.

INTRODUCTION

Student health and wellbeing plays an important role on the student experience. In addition, employability of graduates is also high on the agenda within Higher Education. Therefore, a pilot student-led exercise and wellness project was developed. This venture was aligned with Sheffield Hallam Student Union’s strategic health and sustainability vision to:

“…develop positive futures and raise aspirations by supporting transferable skills development, inclusion initiatives and healthy lifestyle interventions.”

AIM

The aim of the project was to have a positive impact on the student experience including;
1) Student health and wellbeing
2) Student employability

METHOD

The project involved student-led health and fitness checks and a pedometer challenge for healthcare students studying at Sheffield Hallam University. Final year undergraduate students studying Physical Activity and Health related courses (n=6) delivered the sessions on a voluntary basis as part of a Student Wellness Internship.

The student-led health and fitness check included: Assessment of health outcomes including blood pressure, height, weight, body mass index, strength, flexibility and aerobic fitness; provision of individualised verbal and written feedback in a report; advice on physical activity; signposting to other local student wellbeing services.

RESULTS

Student participants health and wellbeing benefits: 80% of students made changes to their health and lifestyle as a result of the student wellness pilot. 87% of students agreed that the study had a positive impact on their motivation and confidence to make healthy lifestyle changes.

Student interns employability benefits: 83% of Student Exercise and Wellness Interns reported their main reason for volunteering to deliver health checks was to gain experience. 100% of Student Wellness interns reported their confidence increased to take physical measures, adopt a client centred approach and apply for jobs in exercise and health

Student Experience: 85% of students who participated agreed that taking part in a student led wellness project enriched their student experience.

SUMMARY

A student-led health and fitness check had a positive impact on the student experience including: improved healthy lifestyle behaviours and increased employability.

Recommendations: It is planned this project will be developed for 2013 to include a greater number of students.

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Student Exercise and Wellness Intern Testimonial

“The Exercise and Wellness Internship I volunteered for at Sheffield Hallam gave me great work experience, and has proven to be a key element in finding employment after completion of my undergraduate degree.” Alex Vamplew, Sheffield Hallam University Graduate.