

## **Walk to Class Challenge Day**

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Transportation and Parking Services

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**Abstract:**

Global issues of environmental degradation such as GHG Emissions are heavily linked to people's personal choices to use auto-powered modes of transportation instead of human-powered. To counteract this global movement, college campuses are an essential hub to implement sustainable choices of transportation. Walk to Class Challenge Day was a project in which students chose an alternative mode of transportation, walking, to get around campus instead of driving or using transit vehicles. The goal of this project was to increase human-powered modes of transportation and decrease vehicle and transit usage which will lower overall campus greenhouse gas emissions and will be beneficial health-wise to each participant. The impact of this project involved students in a campus-wide holistic act of sustainability. Activities to implement Walk to Class Challenge Day involved marketing, obtaining funding, promoting the project, successfully running the challenge day, producing results from data collected, analysis of the results, amendments to the pilot project, and projection of the project into the future years through creating a guide for the next intern. The project intended to make students aware of sustainable transportation choices they could make daily and to show them how they impact the world just by making that small choice to walk rather than drive or take a bus. This promoted sustainability of the environment, a healthy outlook on one's personal choices, and an overall holistic approach to a campus-wide event.

**Problem Definition, Context, and Background:**

In recent years, transport has accounted for about a quarter of all carbon dioxide emissions (Woodcock et al, 2009). The way we transport ourselves is currently unsustainable and is currently rising (Woodcock et al, 2009). It is imperative that we choose to use different modes of

transportation that is more human powered in order to move to a state of sustainability. Reducing transport-related greenhouse gas emissions through a decrease in motor vehicles and an increase in human powered modes of transportation can produce many health benefits (Woodcock et al, 2009). These benefits could come in the form cleaner air from reduced motor transport or increased physical activity from walking or biking.

The daily recommended amount of walking per day is about 1.5 miles (Lachapelle et al, 2009). This can easily be met on our campus. People choosing to walk to class will be meeting this recommendation and making healthier choices for their life.

Promotion of human powered modes of transportation makes them accessible to all people (Dodman, 2009). This project will help to achieve this goal by encouraging people to challenge themselves. In addition to this, it will also aid in reaching the Campus Sustainability Plan goal for transportation to increase the amount of human powered modes of transportation when on campus (CSP, 2013-16). Walk to Class Challenge Day will take a holistic approach to not only educate the mind to make more sustainable choices but to also promote a healthy lifestyle by using alternative transportation that will lower the reliance on public transit and single occupancy vehicles.

The macro issues of the world and the micro issues of the campus were addressed and this project assisted in decreasing these issues while also promoting the aspects of personal well-being and sustainable transportation.

### **Project Description:**

The motivation behind this project aimed to increase walking awareness on campus, improve individual health choices, and aid in lowering the use of transit and vehicle usage while on campus. These issues were addressed initially by conducting a marketing and outreach plan to

get students informed, involved, and excited about the challenge of walking to class. The outreach came in the form of seminars, world cafes, emails, and tabling for the event. Participants who signed up for the challenge signed up through a website called walker tracker. Incentives such as T shirts, pedometers, and sports bars were used to encourage signing up for the challenge. Participants engaged in taking a survey to assess their behavior before the challenge which enabled them to receive incentives if they are one of the first 140 people. Upon completion of the project, students took another survey and were entered into a raffle to win a \$50 gift card.

My goal is to have this perpetuate into future years and to have it become an event that people look forward to as a day to change their habits and practices in a positive way. I would like to develop a way for people to do something positive for themselves and the environment and see that small changes are possible and will make a difference.

An objective in achieving this goal was to try and make the project as quantifiable as possible. I obtained data and tested behavior change and significance of the results that the walk to class challenge day had on the campus transit rider system and the health changes indicated in the post survey.

The beneficial impacts of the project included a campus-wide event that people will look forward to in the years to come. Everyone was affected positively. Greenhouse Gas emissions are a pollution not borne only by the producer, it is a cost borne to society. By reducing this, the project added to personal and environmental health. The choice to create a challenge day that encourages people to walk is quantifiable, measurable, and beneficial to the campus. The design of the overall project was very flexible and open to suggestions and input. It was modeled after

Cruzfit and other campus challenge days. Adjustments will be made on the proposed idea, it is replicable, and it will be incorporated as a once a quarter project in the years to come.

**Project Timeline:**

- November 13, 2013: Meet with Jim Meyer, Wellness Coordinator for Cruzfit
- End of November: Have a project proposal complete for the project that will measure out the intentions of the project and results hoping to be seen.
- January 31<sup>st</sup> : Finish contacting other schools about their efforts to promote walking; solidify a plan for UCSC's Walk to Class Challenge Day.
- February 28<sup>th</sup> : Develop a financial plan and apply for grants. Develop a pre-challenge and post-challenge survey to indicate possible lifestyle changes students may want to make in the future.
- March 1<sup>st</sup> : Begin marketing and outreach promotion to gain interest in the Challenge, put ads in City on a Hill, place ads in the bus advertising sections, table, seminars, and word-of-mouth marketing.
- March 3<sup>rd</sup>: Volunteer email due
- March 6<sup>th</sup>: Earth Summit Tabling
- March 7<sup>th</sup>: OPERS ad language due
- March 10<sup>th</sup>: Volunteers meeting at 5pm, Final OPERS ad due
- March 14<sup>th</sup>: Walker Tracker Language due, draft general email of event due, changes to T-shirt and logos due
- March 15<sup>th</sup>: SO News due
- March 16<sup>th</sup>: TAPS Language due
- March 18<sup>th</sup>: Order T-shirts due, Bus ads due

- March 31st: Class wraps due, contact every dining hall
- April 1st: CHP ad due, sign up email
- April 3rd: Bus ads up
- April 7th: -table tents due, dining hall tabling, class wraps this week, RA & SUA & sororities & frats email list
- April 8th: Last day to order T shirts, KZSC announcement due
- April 9th: dining hall tabling
- April 10th: CHP ad runs
- April 14th: -table tents reserved, dining hall tabling, class wraps this week, volunteer meeting (?), all student email
- April 15th: Reminder email to sign up, KIND bar deliveries due
- April 16th: dining hall tabling
- April 17th: CHP ad runs
- April 21st : Reminder email to all participants
- April 22nd : Challenge day will take place
- April 30th: Analysis of survey due
- May 7th : draft of post-event write up due
- May 14th: Post-event write up due
- June 1st : Project amendment and projection into the coming years

### **Project Stakeholders:**

Students, faculty and staff were involved in this challenge day. OPERS Wellness center, KIND bar, the Sustainability office, the print gallery, Walkertracker.org, and TAPS will be large stakeholders in this event. OPERS wellness center has provided a free ad in exchange for their

logo on the T shirt designed by Kayla Lopez, a UCSC art student. KIND bar sponsored the event in exchange for their logo on the T shirt as well. The sustainability office has helped in outreach, support, and funding through the UCSC Working Group Grant for the project. The print gallery printed T-shirts for the event. Walker Tracker is a service that has been provided for students to sign up for the event. This has been provided through grant money. Teresa Buika and the TAPS staff assisted me in outreach and marketing with an emphasis on aiding me in various financial tasks and purchasing orders. Larry Pageler helped obtain data about transit riders for the day and assisted me in quantifying my results and data in a graphical matter. All members of the campus were affected by this change, but in the most positive of ways.

### **Measurable Results:**

Outcomes generated by this project will be a decreased reliance on transit methods or vehicle uses while around campus. More specifically, I will post two surveys on walker tracker to assist in analyzing behavior change and transit usage. The pre survey will be very similar to the post survey in terms of recording usage on campus. The post survey will be a bit different because it will contain behavior change questions. I will use these answers to then provide evidence that people's behavior did or did not change in order to measure success of the project. In addition to these questions, there will be some demographic questions to assess on and off campus usage. My hope is to see a significant drop in the daily use of transit through a graph in relation to before the challenge day. The results will help me to produce a document that the next intern to take on so that Walk to Class Challenge Day will perpetuate into the future.

### **Results:**

In terms of success, the challenge day was a huge one. There were 418 participants who signed up. Of which, 130 completed both the pre and post survey. Results were assessed using the 130

participants who completed both surveys. Of these participants, 94 of them maintained or increased their walking trips on campus during the day. Personal Vehicle usage during the day declined from 21 trips to 10 trips. This is over a 50% decline in personal vehicle usage. In regards to transit, trips declined from 146 to 63 overall on the day of the challenge day. Biking stayed about the same. There were 59 trips before the challenge day and 58 on the day of the event. In regards to inhibitions that many students listed, the ambiguity of whether walking or taking a bus is fast (11%) and the weather (10%) inhibits students to walk. However, about 57% of students listed they have no inhibitions. As far as motivators to walk, the biggest response was for exercise purposes, which accounted for 89% of response. Close seconds were to appreciate our beautiful campus, and carbon footprint and stress reduction at around 50% each based on a multiple response question. Off campus participants amounted to 39, while on-campus participants amounted to 91. Delving deeper into the data and parsing out specifically where on-campus live, I was able to see that students who live in College 8/Oakes had the most inhibition and were the only college pair to note that safety was an inhibition for them. While Kresge/Porter indicated that there is too much stuff to carry to walk around campus. The other three college pairs were fairly consistent in indicating no inhibitions. These results indicate that the challenge was a success and that there may be certain areas in which the day can improve.

**Evaluation:**

With the help of stakeholder Larry Pageler, my evaluation came in the form of graphs and charts measuring the difference in use of the transit system. I will use a survey to better understand the wellness aspect and indicate if there are any significant changes in the way students will choose to transport daily. These results will be backed by information from the campus sustainability plan regarding transportation usage and GHG emissions. A section on the correlation between a

decline in transit use and a decline in emissions will be added to the results and evaluation as well. Using the three measurements I will then describe a percent decline in the use of transit and a percent behavior change increase in overall student satisfaction with self and with the challenge day. This will help me formulate a follow-up project amendment which I will assemble in hope that the project will be tweaked and carried out next year if the results prove to be significant enough and there is enough student involvement in the project. This will be done and completed, project and amendment project, by the beginning of June. This will enable Transportation and Parking Services to see the results and hope to keep the challenge day perpetuating into the future.

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Transit and Health: Mode of Transport, Employer-Sponsored Public Transit Pass Programs, and Physical Activity

Ugo Lachapelle and Lawrence D. Frank

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