

Interprofessional Student Engagement Across UCSF Healthcare Programs

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University of California Carbon Neutrality Initiative Fellowship

Introduction

UCSF is unique to other UC campuses in that it has no undergraduate population. UCSF is comprised of six graduate programs: School of Medicine, School of Dentistry, School of Pharmacy, School of Nursing, and the Graduate Division (which includes Masters, PhD, Doctor of Physical Therapy, Doctor of Nursing Practice, and certificate training programs). These programs all function separately, each with their own scheduling, coursework, and registrar calendar. Concern for sustainability and planetary health exists across all student bodies, however bringing these students together during their time-intensive professional graduate training is challenging. This was our mission as engagement fellows.

Our strategy centered around first identifying and then supporting a community of passionate individuals who could each effect change in their area of expertise, whether that be teaching, research, activism, or clinical. The previously established Human Health and Climate Change organization, and the UCSF Office of Sustainability, were natural partners in our mission. As engagement fellows we sought to increase sustainability and climate-health awareness through lunchtime talks and expert panels, by supporting elective courses and increasing levels of climate activism, and finally by connecting faculty researchers and clinicians with students interested in health care sustainability and the bidirectional impacts of the environment and our health.



Project Goals

- Identify and engage students across all professional schools that are interested in climate-health through early outreach on every student listserv, social networking pages, and organized events.
- Facilitate student engagement with the UCSF Office of Sustainability, the Carbon Neutrality Initiative, and the recently formed Human Health and Climate Change UCSF student organization.
- Plan and carry out quarterly lunchtime speaker events at the Parnassus campus to promote awareness and generate community around climate change and the health sciences.
- Connect students across all professional schools who have interest in the intersection between climate and human health, as well as climate related research and curriculum.
- Incorporate and promote waste sorting practices at the Simulation Lab at the School of Dentistry.

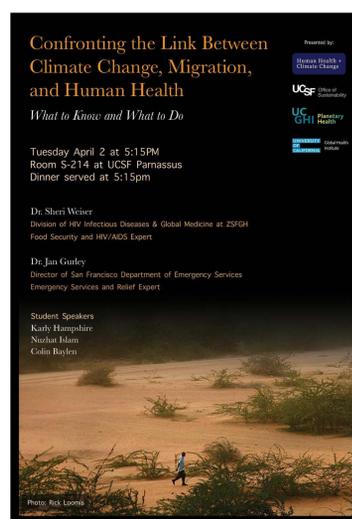
Methods

- Collaboration with HHCC to promote panel discussions among all the professional schools at UCSF
- Held position on Orientation Committee for the SOD to work with Office of Student Affairs.
- Incorporated waste stream presentation and interactive game into the schedule of orientation to introduce and reinforce proper trash sorting of dental specific materials.
- Followed-up with presentations to remind, encourage, and reinforce trash sorting practice throughout the school year.



Results and Outcomes

- Organized and led UCSF students and health professionals at the Global Climate Strikes on September 20th-27th.
- Held lunchtime recruitment meetings with first year medical, nursing, pharmacy, and dental students.
- Collaborated on and promoted three expert panels with over 40 attendees at each event:
 - *Severe Wildfires: A Climate Health Emergency*
 - *Confronting the Link between Climate Change, Migration, and Human Health*
 - *The Disproportionate Health Impacts of the Climate Crisis and Under Resourced Communities*
- Conducted interdisciplinary focus group meetings throughout the year to support and collaborate on sustainability projects, electives, and engagement strategies.
- Introduced the CNI program and its goals to 22 students from SOM, SOD, SOP.



Conclusions

By first creating community around our interests of sustainability and climate-health we were better able to support projects and specific goals. Educational events like expert panels are critical to increasing awareness, sharing the work of others, and creating a space for people to bond around mutual interests. Advocacy events like the Global Climate March are particularly powerful events because they act as emotional high points and opportunities for everyone to be heard. Lastly, faculty and administrators are very receptive to student engagement and priorities. Involving them was crucial for our work and it allowed for larger system wide changes to take place.

Future Goals

Our hope is that UCSF will prioritize sustainability and climate conscious health care across all professional schools, clinics, and laboratories. Students play a large role in pushing for these changes, so our goal is to empower them by continuing to hold educational, activist, and social events, and by attending the offerings of others, in order to strengthen our community and amplify our voices.

For the School of Dentistry, we hope to establish a bin specific to the disposal of special materials -- first in the Simulation Lab space, and eventually in the predoctoral clinic lab spaces. Specific campus wide waste stream promotional material to be posted around the Dental School around the start and end of each quarter when students are cleaning out old cases and assignments.

Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, we were unable to carry out the largest event we had planned for the year. We hoped to hold a campus wide ice cream social which would aim to bring together all students, especially those who may be less aware of sustainability and climate-health issues but may find new interest and community in and around these topics. Although this event could not take place in April as planned, we hope to host it in the fall, if and when Shelter in Place restrictions are lifted later. Our intention is recruit the newly matriculating cohort of students from all of UCSF health science graduate programs.

Finally, we believe the next CNI engagement fellows can build upon this work to further strengthen the community of faculty and students at UCSF that are motivated to reduce our carbon footprint and contribute to a future of environmentally sensitive health care. We will remain involved and available on a campus level to support their future efforts.

Literature Cited

<https://interprofessional.ucsf.edu/>
Skach, C., Liu, J., *Implementation of Environmentally Sustainable Practices at the UCSF School of Dentistry*. CNI (2019).

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Gail Lee and the rest of the team at UCSF's Office of Sustainability.
Thank you to Dr. Katherine Gundling for her mentorship, guidance and support.
Thank you to Human Health and Climate Change and its incredible board members.



In partnership with
UCSF Office of Sustainability