

Physical Activity, Park, Nature Trail Usage among Students, Faculty and Staff at a Mid-sized University

SAMUEL R. SIMS, BAKEYAH NELSON, KRISTEN LANZA, JOSEPH LOZANO, TOM KARTRUDE and WILLIAM E. AMONETTE

Department of Clinical, Health, and Applied Sciences; University of Houston-Clear Lake; Houston, TX; Armand Bayou Nature Center; Pasadena, TX

Category: Masters

Advisor/Mentor: Amonette, William E. (amonette@uhcl.edu)

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Physical activity (PA) is a vital component of a healthy lifestyle. There is strong evidence demonstrating an association between PA and reduced risk of many chronic diseases, increasing in prevalence and incidence in the United States. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of the study was to determine the PA levels of the students, faculty, and staff members of a mid-sized state university and how usage of a nature center and community park facilitated PA. **METHODS:** An observational, cross-sectional survey design was used to complete the study objectives. The 20-minute survey was distributed online using Survey Monkey to all faculty, staff and students at the host university. It consisted of basic demographic questions, questions concerning respondents' physical activity behaviors and their use of two community parks to engage in physical activity. The two park spaces included in the survey, Bay Area Park (BAP) and Armand Bayou Nature Center (ABNC), are located approximately 3.5 Km from the university. Survey respondents were incentivized by being entered into a raffle to win a small gift card and students could receive course credit for completing the survey. **RESULTS:** The survey was completed by 952 students, 94 faculty, and 250 staff members. Students reported the least PA, with an average of 2.8 PA days per week, 26.9% reporting no PA days per week, and only 5.3% reporting daily PA. Staff reported 3.0 average PA days per week, 20.2% reported no PA days per week, and 5.9% reported daily PA. Faculty reported 3.4 average PA days per week, 21.4% reported no PA days per week, and 14.3% reported daily PA. Participants less than 20y reported the least amount of inactivity (15.7%); 9.8% reported daily PA and on average exercised 3.3 days per week. Participants 50-60y reported the highest amount of inactivity (28.6%) and >60y reported the lowest average number PA days per week (2.7 days). Students, faculty, and staff report not using parks (including BAP and ABNC) as a main place for PA; 69.5% report not visiting a park in the last week, 59% have not visited BAP in the last 3 months and 84% have not visited ABNC in the past 3 months. **CONCLUSIONS:** Students, faculty, and staff surveyed are not meeting the recommended daily PA. Neighborhood outdoor space is the main space used for PA (38.1%). The majority of students, faculty and staff surveyed had not visited any parks in the week leading up to this survey and most have not visited the parks utilized in this survey during the past 3-months.