

Food Values Campaign Case Study

Fall 2019 | By Mackenzie Bolas & Makayla Salas

Program Overview:

The UVM Eco-Reps program consists of 20 students that are divided up into five community teams, with each team assigned to a specified residential area on campus. Each semester, Eco-Reps work on two different campaigns. For the second half of Fall semester, Eco-Reps centered their efforts around food values. Efforts in this campaign included one campus wide event as well as smaller programming held in residential locations.

Background:

The UVM Eco-Reps program chose to focus on food-related issues for the second year in a row. The focus on dining came at an impactful time in the presence of food-centric events on campus. With Thanksgiving, many communities hosted food-related celebrations. Along with this, UVM Dining hosted an annual Weigh the Waste measuring food waste in a residential dining hall and a Giving Thanks Dinner.

Timeline:

10/28/2019-11/19/2019

Community Team Programming

10/28: Fair Trade Halloween Candy Tabling (3 Locations)

11/11-11/15: Food Drive

11/12: Cooking Local

11/14: Clif Bar Tasting

11/18: Rethink Food Tasting

Ongoing: 4 Interactive Bookmarks

Campus-Wide Programming

10/28-10/31: Weigh the Waste with UVM Dining

11/14: Giving Thanks Dinner with UVM Dining

11/19: Agricultural Literacy Tabling

Implementation:

Eco-Reps partnered with UVM Libraries and NoFA-VT (Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont) to host a celebration for Agricultural Literacy Week. The theme of NoFA-VT's agricultural literacy week was celebrating cultural traditions. This event in the library was centered around Vermont's traditional recipes and food sampling. Eco-Reps selected recipes from historic Vermont cookbooks and held a sampling event in the library. Posters about agricultural literacy were displayed with facts and interactive materials. Bookmarks with the recipes on them and stickers were given out.

A majority of our community team programs focused on different topics around food values. Food values are the decisions individuals make in regard to what they eat. Some strong food values in the UVM community are also aligned with the categories of the Real Food Challenge. This was a natural fit for our programming as we can share UVM Dining’s commitment to the Real Food Challenge and the values that matter strongly to our student body. Examples of these events were fair trade candy tabling for Halloween, cooking local meals, and food tastings. Community team events also served as a learning experience for change agents to handle responsibilities in event programming and communication.

Financing:

Spending	Amount
Stickers for Campaign	\$231.12
Bookmarks for Ag Literacy Week Celebration	\$122.76
Food Items for Events	\$282.96
Total	\$636.84

Goals:

The goals of this campaign were to increase awareness of individual decision making and the power of food values in informing decisions. This campaign revolved around supporting the existing programs on UVM campus, such as Real Food Challenge and Vermont First. Another goal of this campaign was to strengthen students' connection to the land and community surrounding food systems.

Results:

This campaign resulted in 4,069 participants with 643 being highly engaged. Highly engaged participants means that participants had productive meaningful conversations with Eco-Reps in their programming. Low engaged participants may quickly collect a sticker, vote in a tally, or glance at a table.

Lessons Learned:

As with many programs, we found our food campaign to be effective when we worked with different partners. In this campaign, we worked closely with UVM Dining to align messaging and efforts related to food values and existing programs. This was effective

as we were able to share ideas for programming and craft a more holistic vision of our campaign outside of just Eco-Reps. A new partnership we explored was with the UVM Libraries staff. This was important as they provided us with new resources, spaces, and ideas to share our messaging to a wider audience.

Another important lesson learned from this campaign was how to have effective conversations about food values and agricultural literacy. A main component of the UVM Eco-Reps program is to train sustainability leaders to teach others about sustainability topics. Most students in the program had not learned about these complex issues. It was meaningful for our program and for the student audience.