

Residence Halls Association: CUTE Club November Sustainability Initiative

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Overview

The Clean Up The Environment (CUTE) Club is a sustainability initiative of the Residence Halls Association chaired by the RHA president, Nicholas Lamy. CUTE Club works alongside university administrators to progress the campus in the area of sustainability. CUTE Club achieves this through programs, campaigns, and general promotion of recycling with a focus on residence halls and on-campus dining facilities.

November Sustainability Initiative

The November Sustainability Initiative was a campaign spearheaded by the CUTE Club. The month-long goal was to encourage residents to reduce the amount of energy and water they consumed.

Throughout the month, each week focused on a different goal. Weekly goals consisted of: 1) increase awareness about recycling, 2) reduce water consumption by encouraging reduced shower times, 3) advocate for unplugging and turning off lights over thanksgiving break, and finally 4) encourage responsible clothes washing (i.e. not washing 1 shirt at a time).

Program Overview

CUTE Club members started planning in September 2011 by discussing what topics would be covered throughout the month. Mark McVay, Associate Director of Housing Facilities, provided specific numbers on energy and water consumption per hall over the past few Novembers. CUTE Club established a competition to encourage residents within each hall to do their part for the environment, but also to beat their friends in other halls.

Members of the CUTE club created a variety of signage and advertisements that promoted the entire month, and also each week's specific theme. Advertisements were hung in each hall lobby, in all residence hall restrooms, and in the dining center table tents. The CUTE Club also utilized RHA's social media accounts to promote energy reduction and made announcements at the weekly RHA meetings.

2011 Program Evaluation

Following the completion of the energy reduction competition, utility bills indicate that the month of November 2011 was the least expensive November for residence hall utilities since 2003. November, the month of the competition, was also \$24,645 or 7.42 % less expensive than the previous month, October 2011.

The Residence Halls Association, and CUTE Club, has received feedback from residents indicating that members were not only participating, but were also active in campaigning with their peers and neighbors to reduce energy consumption on campus. Residents commented that they were more intentional about turning off lights when leaving for class, about shortening the length of hot showers, and be more efficient with the use of electricity in their student organization offices.

