

To: Dr. Erika Patterson

From: Evan Ruiz

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Subject: Proposal to study how intermittent physical activity, in the midst of remote learning, can be applied to improve the overall health and mental wellbeing of members at the Kappa Sigma Fraternity.

Introduction

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic students and teachers, across the globe, have made the transition to engage in remote learning. However, those who are fortunate enough to continue their studies are also facing new challenges.

With projects, group meetings, all other work being conducted from the computer, students are sitting for longer, with fewer reasons and opportunities to move around.

Educational institutes are finding remote learning to be, somewhat, effective and productive; undoubtedly, altering the future of home-schooling and remote learning.

Statement of Problem

The Kappa Sigma Fraternity (Kappa Sigma) is a Greek organization located on The University of British Columbia's Vancouver Campus. This organization acts as a platform for like minded students to connect and bond through shared experience and values; revolving around that of the fraternal headquarters.

As all members of Kappa Sigma are students, at the University of British Columbia, they share a common challenge with remote learning. Firstly, these students are, on a daily basis, in a seated position; secondly, members of Kappa Sigma are spending a majority of their day inside (as they have few reasons to leave). Consequently, physical and mental health are being negatively impacted, and must be addressed.

Proposed Solution

I propose a three-pronged solution to help students at Kappa Sigma increase their overall physical and mental wellbeing.

First, I suggest that all members, across the board, create an organized schedule that lists class times, assignment due- dates, etc. Hopefully, this will allow members to feel comfortable and

confident when stepping away from their computers to take a break. This can be done in four, half-hour, blocks throughout the day. All members would share a common “step-away, stretch out, and walk” routine. With more than 20 members living within the shared house, there is a strong likelihood that their “breaks” can and will coincide; prompting the members to enjoy in-person conversation and “computer-free” time. The scheduling of these breaks will, ultimately, allow members to feel confident when taking advantage of them; knowing that they wouldn't be falling behind or missing out on anything school related.

Secondly, I suggest “morning-exercise” and “evening-exercise” groups to be created. These groups may act as a platform to encourage members to leave their house, stay physically healthy, and bond with other members.

Lastly, I suggest that study groups are made. The fact of the matter is that many of these members, while studying remotely, are spending most of their time alone in their rooms. As a result, the amount of time they are interacting with and or socializing with others might be limited. These structured socialization times might encourage member bonding and improve the mental well-being of those who are feeling isolated.

Scope

To assess the feasibility of improving general physical and mental wellbeing for members at Kappa Sigma, I will inquire about the following areas:

1. How are other students handling work from home environment?
2. Are their products available, like a standing desk, that can increase physical wellbeing?
3. What are the consequences of consistent and frequent sitting throughout the day?
4. What is the degree of benefit to simple, intermittent, physical activity?
5. How often should this intermittent physical activity take place?
6. In general, how is mental health being affected by a remote learning environment?
7. How does extended exposure to a computer affect mental wellbeing?

Methods

Primarily, I will conduct a self-report survey of the members of Kappa Sigma to obtain a baseline measurement of general well-being and physical wellness. Following this baseline report, I will implement and share my strategies for improvement in these areas. In a short term study, I will conduct two more self-report surveys to determine the overall improvements this might make in the members physical and mental well-being.

Moreover, I will use secondary research from scholarly articles that address the consequences of consistent and frequent sitting. More specifically, how these negative effects can be combated through brief, and systematic, breaks throughout the day.

Qualifications

For the last three months, in the midst of the COVID- 19 pandemic, I have been working and studying remotely. I understand the challenges associated with remote education, and believe I have valuable insight into the effects, positive and negative, that it may have.

As psychology is my primary field of study, I believe that I can draw from the field, and implement some of the skills I have learned to obtain a well throughout and researched answer/ solution.

Conclusion

For all remote students and educators, physical health and mental wellbeing needs to be an important topic of discussion. I look forward to investigating what strategies and techniques might be implemented to best help myself, and the members at Kappa Sigma.