

#UCDFOOD: A sustainable university-wide healthy eating intervention

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The Healthy Ireland national framework for action calls for a whole-society approach to improve health and wellbeing in Ireland⁽¹⁾. As a university, the environment in University College Dublin (UCD) impacts the health and wellbeing of the faculty, staff and students. A recent survey of student's attitudes towards food on campus identified lack of healthy meal options and higher prices for healthy foods as two common themes. The UCDFOOD Healthy Eating Week was designed to promote healthy eating through a combination of on-campus activities and social media. The aim of this research is to evaluate participant engagement with the social media component of the UCDFOOD intervention.

The UCDFOOD project was a campus-wide healthy eating awareness initiative. During the UCDFOOD Healthy Eating Week a "healthy option" was included on the menu in 3 UCD restaurants; 2 restaurants on the main campus and 1 restaurant at another campus location, which acted as a control. Nutritional information was provided in the intervention restaurants along with on-site awareness activities including a nutrition information board, 'meet the nutritionist' stands and nutrition talks. Facebook, twitter, instagram and snapchat accounts were used to increase awareness and to provide incentives for student and staff engagement with the initiative. Social media metrics were recorded to monitor engagement and evaluate impact of the #UCDFOOD healthy eating initiative.

Table 1 outlines the metrics of the UCDFOOD social media accounts. Facebook was the most effective platform with a post reach of $n = 10743$ on the first day of the initiative which decreased over the week period to $n = 1902$ on the final day. 'Facebook live' videos were used to increase engagement and communication of the public health messages from the UCDFOOD sports nutrition and healthy eating talks, which received 1600 views and 985 views, respectively. Links to the videos were also shared on the twitter account, which received 1626 profile visits with #UCDFOOD mentioned 84 times.

Table 1. UCDFOOD Social Media Metrics

	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Snapchat
Followers (<i>n</i>)	744	249	76	85
Posts (<i>n</i>)	126	82	15	57
Monthly reach (<i>n</i>)	43921	36500	–	82

The UCDFOOD Healthy Eating Week was well received on campus, with positive feedback from students, staff, visitors and the participating restaurants and outlets. This inaugural initiative was successfully delivered in conjunction with the Healthy UCD Programme, the Hospitality Services Manager and the campus catering companies. As a result we aim to develop a sustainable annual UCD Healthy Eating Week. Further analysis includes assessing the impact of the availability of a "healthy option" from participating campus restaurants during the UCDFOOD project.

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1. Department of Health (2013) Healthy Ireland-A framework for improved health and wellbeing 2013–2025. Dublin, Ireland. (<http://health.gov.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/HealthyIrelandBrochureWA2.pdf>)