Western Kentucky University
2020 RecycleMania Case Study

1. Contact info (name, department, school, email, phone)

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2. Focus of Case study

Greeks Go Green experimented with and utilized various techniques to raise awareness for sustainability and incentivize sustainable behaviors among the campus's Greek community.

3. Detailed description of campaign component:

Greeks Go Green was a new competition on campus seeking to address this issue, by harnessing the power of the Greek competitive spirit and pitting organizations against each other to have the most sustainable chapter. Its goal was to not only have a tangible impact as a community, but to also show members of the Greek community how easy it is to make a difference and thereby change the culture surrounding sustainability. Greeks Go Green sought to encourage concrete, long-lasting change, and in many ways it accomplished this goal by helping students save single-use disposable items, lower their personal greenhouse gas emissions, and reflect on their own effects on the environment. One large component of the competition included educating students on sustainability issues. For example, chapters could earn points in Greeks Go Green through raising awareness on social media, allowing presentations on sustainability at their weekly meetings, and taking the carbon footprint quiz. Furthermore, the fact that the competition even existed and encouraged behavioral changes was a form of education in and of itself. While there are certainly areas for improvement, the competition was quite successful for its first year in operation.

4. Planning steps & timeline to implement:
- Build a leadership team, then brainstorm and plan the year together
- Meet with key stakeholders on campus, such as the head of Greek affairs, the head of the Office of Sustainability, the head of Resource Conservation, etc.
- Seek funding from grants on campus for the grand prize of a $300 donation to the winning chapter's philanthropy and for smaller monthly prizes
- Create a list of points opportunities and their values

- Reach out to Greek organizations to ask them to participate and appoint a chapter representative (this can be done through Google forms)
- Promote the competition through word of mouth, interviews at the school newspaper and magazine, and social media
- Schedule regular meetings with the leadership team and chapter representatives
- Plan the activities for a Greeks Go Green week
- Create and send out a survey to learn how to improve in the future

5. Resources and stakeholders involved

Greeks Go Green was carried out with only $371 - $300 for the grand prize, and $71 for the small monthly prizes – which came from the Honors College. The Marketing Department also gave school spirit items to be used as a monthly prize. The office of Greek Affairs, office of Sustainability, and office of Resource Conservation were all very supportive in helping get Greeks Go Green off the ground.

6. Describe the Results of this campaign component

a. General results *(ex: attracted attention of campus president, campus paper did a news story on the event, etc.)*

The campus paper did a news story on the event, and there was widespread awareness throughout the Greek community about the existence of the competition.

b. Specific measurable impact figures, if applicable *(Ex: Reduced contamination rate 13%, Gathered 316 pledges to recycle more, etc., 250 people engaged, etc.)*

Twenty-three Greeks tagged our Instagram accounts in posts aimed at raising awareness for more sustainable living, and twenty-five Greeks chose to further educate themselves on the issue by taking the carbon footprint calculator quiz and writing about their results. Chapters reported members walking to class 182 times throughout the length of the competition. Additionally, sixty-four participants registered to vote, and eighteen sorority women reported shopping at Goodwill instead of supporting the fast-fashion industry.

By our estimates, the WKU Greek community saved 5,256 straws, 15,132 plastic bottles, 1,155 Starbucks cups, 2,763 plastic shopping bags, 3,600 makeup wipes, 3,780 sandwich bags, and 122 pieces of cutlery throughout the year. In addition to reducing waste, this competition helped save 53,300 gallons of water by encouraging participants to eat plant-based meals, and through these plant-based meals, planting gardens, composting food waste, and changing light bulbs to LED lights, participants were able to save 36.632 tons of CO_2 from entering the atmosphere.

In one section of the feedback survey, participants (n = 50) rated several statements on a scale from 1 (not true at all) to 5 (completely true). The highest average out of these statements was a 4.24, representing the statement "I will continue these positive changes in my habits after this year's competition finishes." Additionally, those surveyed expressed a belief that they were more environmentally conscious now, both as an individual (average score 3.82) and within their organization as a whole (average score 3.89). Therefore, the data indicate that the competition succeeded in its goal of education and awareness, and these positive impacts and lifestyle changes are likely to continue even after the competition concludes.

7. What would you do differently in the future?

This past year for the points submission process, participants simply sent pictures of them completing environmentally-friendly actions to our email or Instagram account. However, to further simplify this process,

future leaders should use a Google form, the link to which can be turned into a QR code. Not only would this allow for even easier access, but it would also greatly improve the efficiency of the points counting and updating process as well, since Google form responses can be conveniently routed to Google spreadsheets immediately after a form is completed. Additionally, another respondent suggested posting fliers with these QR codes all over campus and in chapter houses as reminders. Moreover, another QR code could be created for the handbook and also posted on the fliers to increase education and awareness about the competition and its points opportunities.

A shift of focus away from social media and towards a weekly or monthly newsletter highlighting point updates, future prizes, chapter shoutouts, point opportunities, or sustainability tips would also be extremely beneficial because it would directly educate every individual in the Greek community instead of simply the general public and already interested followers.

8. What advice would you give to another college that wanted to do a similar effort?

Be clear with chapters from the get-go about what the expectations of a chapter representative will be throughout the year and how important a good representative is to their success in the competition. Ensuring the representative has extensive communication skills and a dedication to sustainability are vital to making sure individual chapter members stay informed about opportunities, incentives, and events concerning the competition. Expectations of these representatives can include monthly meetings, speaking at their own chapter meetings every week, and making information about Greeks Go Green accessible to their chapter at all times.

Chapter representatives can also be put in charge of further engagement and awareness projects. For instance, representatives could be required or encouraged to provide in-chapter prizes, where the individual who submits the most points within an organization receives a prize. Similarly, representatives could be paired up with each other to plan weekly Greeks Go Green activities for their chapters and the entire Greek community, such as clothing drives, campus clean-ups, and eco-DIY projects.

9. Photos and Graphics

The full report on WKU Greeks Go Green can be found at this link:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Esd4TDF3Vc4JyCcOGWEGIF_7rVq3Km-FIt0lopAc5GE/edit?usp=sharing