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Do You Know What You Are Eating In The Dining Hall? Alleviating Fear of the Freshman Fifteen

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Do You Know What You Are Eating In The Dining Hall? Alleviating Fear of the Freshman Fifteen

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Problem Statement

College freshmen at WPI enter into a place where they have no idea what they are truly eating, after living at home where ingredients and nutritional facts are almost always accessible. Being ill-informed about the nutritional facts of what they are eating on a daily basis can result in unhealthy eating habits causing problems even greater than weight gain.

Background

- Weight gain on college campuses is real, but the amount of weight gained varies.
- Living on campus, students generally eat most of their meals in the dining facilities on campus.
- At Worcester Polytechnic Institution, most of the students on the meal plan eat in the main dining hall which is run by Chartwell's and known as Morgan Commons Dining Hall.
- Studies have been done regarding the posting of nutritional facts, and overall consumers would like to be informed of the nutritional values of the food they are eating.



Project Goals

- Poll WPI students to understand feelings about posting nutritional facts.
- Inform WPI students about healthy choices in Morgan Commons dining area.
- Post nutritional facts of common foods in the dining area of Morgan Commons.

Methods

- Contact Chartwells and ask permission to proceed with the project
- Create student surveys to determine desire for nutritional information
- Collect rotational menus and list foods to use as an experimental group for posting nutritional information
- Research and collect nutritional facts from Morgan Commons pantry and the product websites
- Create an efficient nutritional card
- Fill out nutritional cards
- Post cards in dining hall

Feed the World Student Dining Poll

Gender: Male Female
 Year: 2009 2010 2011 2012
 Residence: On Off Commuter

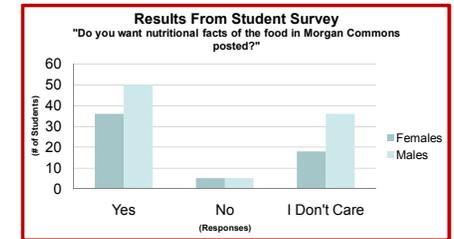
Do you want nutritional facts of the food served in Morgan Commons posted?
 Yes No I don't care.

Nutritional Facts:	
Serving Size	
Calories	Calories from Fat

_____	Percent Daily Value (%)
Total Fat	
Saturated Fat	
Cholesterol	
Sodium	
Carbohydrates	
Dietary Fiber	
Sugar	
Protein	
Vitamin A	Vitamin C
Iron	Calcium

Results

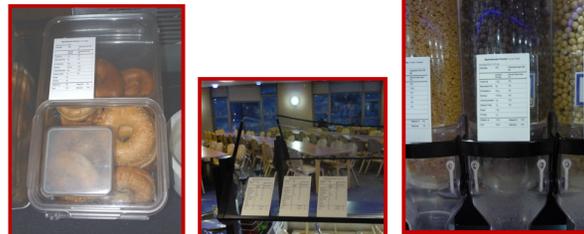
150 students living in dorms were polled, and 57.3% of students said they would like nutritional facts posted in the dining hall. Only 6.7% did not want the information posted.



Forty-three nutritional cards were made to post around Morgan Commons dining facility. Most food items were those of breakfast and the sandwich station.

Nutritional Facts: Individual Items			
Item	FA	Serving Size	Calories
Orange Juice	100%	8 oz	110
Apple	100%	1 medium	95
Banana	100%	1 medium	105
Whole Milk	100%	8 oz	120
Yogurt	100%	6 oz	100
Granola	100%	1/2 cup	150
Waffles	100%	1 waffle	110
Hot	100%	1 hot	120

Nutritional Facts: Common Foods			
Item	FA	Serving Size	Calories
Breakfast	100%	1 breakfast	250
Sandwich	100%	1 sandwich	300
Salad	100%	1 salad	150
Smoothie	100%	1 smoothie	150
Hot	100%	1 hot	120
Yogurt	100%	1 yogurt	100
Granola	100%	1 granola	150
Waffles	100%	1 waffle	110
Hot	100%	1 hot	120



Conclusions

It was concluded that a vast majority of WPI students wanted nutritional facts of the food served in Morgan Commons posted. A simple, easy to read nutritional card was devised and implemented for common foods served in the dining hall. If results from assessment of implementing the nutritional cards are positive, more nutritional information will be added to the Morgan Commons dining environment.

Acknowledgments

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