

Framework for the Development of a Successful Campus Nature Rx Program

NOTE: There is no right way or single approach to developing a campus Nature Rx program. The steps below are suggestions, and do not necessarily need to be followed in this order.

1. Organize a representative advisory committee: groups to engage include faculty members, health center professionals, representatives from the dean of students office, campus landscape managers, residential hall advisors, graduate and undergraduate students, and, if the school has a botanical garden or arboretum, a representative from that organization.
2. Secure the support of the administration: even if there is no commitment of campus funds, having members of the administration champion this effort will open doors to campus units that might otherwise be resistant.
3. Inventory green spaces on campus: while campuses differ greatly in their overall amount of green space, virtually all colleges and universities have some verdant spots to which students can escape. Develop an inventory of all natural, naturalistic, and landscaped spaces on campus, involving the campus landscape architect at schools where one is employed.
4. Engage the students: a student-led Nature Rx club can sponsor regular nature walks, natural area cleanups, trips to nearby natural wonders, or winter sports days. The biggest challenge with such groups is keeping student leaders committed as academic or social pressures increase.
5. Partner with the campus health center: health professionals at the clinic can be encouraged to speak with students about the benefits of spending time in nature, to initiate a nature prescription program and to display Nature Rx materials in their offices.
6. Develop an app or website: features might include descriptions and images of each of the green areas on campus, or maps to appeal to students with particular interests, such as athletes, bird watchers, plant lovers, or romantics.
7. Measure the program's impact: metrics could include a decline in the number of students seeking psychological assistance or an increase in participation in nature-promoting activities on campus.
8. Overcome the challenges: challenges can be many, from getting the attention of overworked students, to harsh winter weather, to lack of funding support. Try to

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identify these as the program is first being developed, and have strategies in mind for addressing each of them.