

# STAIRWELL PROJECT

## PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION AT UC DAVIS

### PARTNERS

UC Davis Campus Recreation provided essential support by allowing the Stairwell Project to install counters and signage in the Memorial Union. In addition to helping ensure installations and data collection ran smoothly, the Director of the Memorial Union purchased an additional counter for supplemental data collection in a nearby stairwell. Student Disability Services helped provide insight on maintaining inclusivity in the campaign. The Director of IT Services for Divisional Resources, Campus Planner, and Operations & Divisional Resources staff were also engaged.



### OVERVIEW

The Stairwell Project, also known as “Take the Stairs!” is part of the Physical Activity Subcommittee of Healthy UC Davis, and was a focus project for all UC campuses. Choosing to take the stairs rather than the elevator is a simple way for those who are able to integrate healthy movement into their day.

### PROJECT DETAILS

The Stairwell Project, implemented in the 2017-18 academic year, aimed to initiate a positive culture shift toward a healthier routine by increasing the proportion of people taking the stairs. Project coordinators and two HCN student research assistants (SRAs) worked to develop the Stairwell Project at UC Davis. The Stairwell team selected a stairwell for study, managed installation of Omni Counters used to track stairwell traffic, created and installed signage around the stairwell, and held a kick-off event to introduce the project to the campus community. SRAs distributed promotional buttons and info sheets. On the Davis campus, it was decided that the main staircase in the Memorial Union (MU) was optimal for Take the Stairs! as the MU is a centralized hub for staff, faculty and students. It is also a location where people often tend to choose the elevator over the stairs due to its greater visibility. Campaign signage, which included “point of decision” prompts at strategic elevator banks, were installed in close proximity to the stairs.

For placement, Student Disability Services recommended that educational wellness materials be provided on topics such as a mental health exercise and inclusive movement.

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## DATA SNAPSHOT

Prior to signage installation, 3 weeks of data was collected to serve as a baseline. There was an average of 113 people counted coming in and 149 people going out, as well as 70,237 counted coming in and 2,600 people going out of the second and third floors, respectively. In addition to numerical data, the SRAs gathered user feedback. SRAs asked people around campus if they'd seen or heard of the campaign and received a mixture of positive reactions and lack of awareness. Notable quotes include:

*"One time I walked downstairs and needed to turn right, but I just followed the arrow without thinking."*

*"I took the elevator at that time, but I still thought about [the signage] later in the day and did actually take the stairs then. I was thinking, 'Hmm, I need my cardio.'"*

*"Seeing the button on my bag reminds me to take the stairs."*

The MU has continued to keep the signage up rather than taking it down after the end of the project.

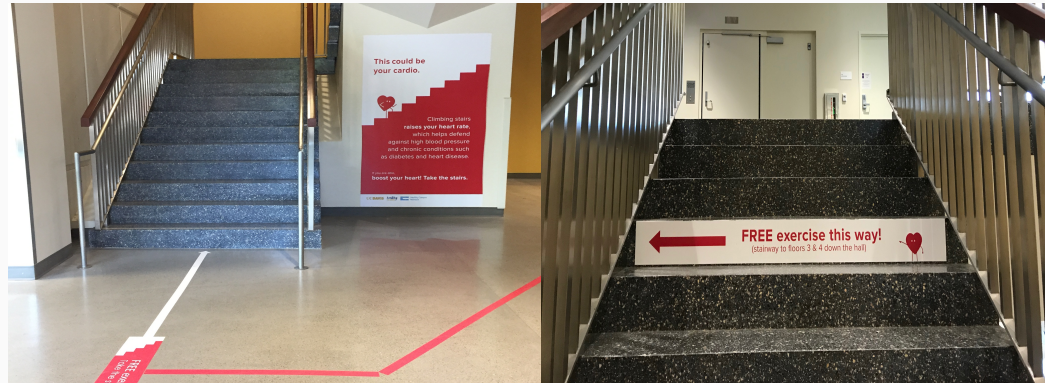
## RESOURCES

Healthy UC Davis:

<https://healthy.ucdavis.edu/articles/physical-activity/take-the-stairs>

## PROJECT DETAILS CONTINUED

In terms of design, Student Disability Services recommended use of contrasting colors and shades, clean imaging and using the active wheelchair symbol. With these suggestions in mind, the catch phrase, "If you are able, boost your heart! Take the stairs!" was chosen as the verbiage on signage. Physical directions leading up to the stairs were also included.



## PROCESS CHALLENGES

- Equipment integrity is an ongoing issue. Two out of three counters were received in a damaged state.
- There was initial confusion about the counter specifications, specifically related to remote access of counts. There was a lot of communication needed to resolve this confusion.
- Installation of the counter equipment necessitated the participation of UC Davis staff who were unfamiliar with the programs. Briefing the relevant parties to gain necessary permissions took some time and coordination. This process created setbacks in the project timeline.
- Upon analysis, it appears that there were issues with data accuracy. There appears to be inconsistencies in numbers reported by the different devices.

## PROCESS INSIGHT

- It was valuable for project coordinators to meet with the director of Student Disability Services to gain insight on maintaining inclusivity in our messaging. The key takeaways included recommendations for language, placement, and design. Student Disability Services advised using positive empowering language that could be readily understood.
- Two student research assistants were responsible for most project development tasks and working with them was rewarding. Students also helped install equipment and signage and helped navigate campus approvals.
- It was rewarding to coordinate efforts of all University of California (UC) campuses.
- We have been pleased with the successful reception of the project. The program has received positive feedback from students, staff and faculty about the signage installed.
- Some of the inherent inefficiencies could have been avoided with better collaboration with other UC campuses.