

“Get the (Boba) Tea on HIV” Program Report

Background: Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) continues to be an epidemic, with nearly 1.2 million cases in the United States, and over 30,000 new cases last year alone. Many college-age students are unaware of the prevalence of HIV, yet they remain at high risk for contracting the virus. To combat this perception, Chavez Hall Council developed the sexual health program “Get the (Boba) Tea on HIV.”

Objective 1: Create an environment where students feel comfortable discussing their sexual health.

Objective 2: Help those students reduce their risky sexual behaviors by providing educational brochures, condoms, and locations of nearby testing sites.

Process:

- 1) Rather than asking students to come to a centralized location, we decided to bring the event to the students in spaces in which they felt more comfortable. To achieve this, we used a two-tier rolling utility cart (paid for through RHA’s Grant Fund) and a compact, cordless tea maker.
- 2) On each floor, we visited the study spaces, lounges, and residential suites. After introducing our program, we offered boba tea from a selection of flavors, along with condoms and HIV educational brochures.
- 3) When students had further questions or wanted more information, a member of Chavez Hall Council would remain with them while the rest of us continued so as not to lose time. After ensuring the student’s question had been met, that Hall council member caught up with us.
- 4) As the program was mobile, clean-up was expedited: we wiped down the utility cart and returned the remaining supplies to the Chavel Hall Council supply closet.

Areas for Improvement:

- **Better Advertising:** We had assumed that the mobile nature of the program would help us reach most students in the residential buildings, but a number of suites and study spaces were empty. With a more thorough promotion effort, we may have seen greater numbers of students expecting us.
- **Single Tea-Brewing Location:** We realized during the course of the program that making tea as we traveled around the buildings was messy and inefficient. Instead, we should have brewed and mixed the tea in a kitchen before pouring it into cups to distribute.
- **Frequency:** Our program was a one-time event, while sexual health is not. By repeating the program with regularity, it would provide students consistent access to HIV information, as well as a safe place for them to ask questions and learn how to better protect themselves.

Conclusion: Overall, the program was a success. We used almost all of our tea supply and visited every study space, lounge, and residential suite in both Chavez and Tubman. Most students we talked to reacted positively and more than a quarter had additional questions. If the areas for improvement are addressed, this program could be even better next year.