



"NAP MAN"

Helps Drowsy Students at the University of Colorado at Boulder

> BY LORI MORTIMER

M

ost college students will tell you that they don't get enough sleep. In fact, on the American College Health Association's (ACHA) annual National College Health Assessment (NCHA), college students consistently identify sleep as one of the top three impediments to their academic performance. (See "Five Ways to Persevere When Life Collides with Your Studies" on page 2.)

The University of Colorado at Boulder (UC-Boulder) participates in the NCHA every two years. In 2003, after seeing once again that their students' survey responses aligned with the responses nationwide—listing stress, sleep, and colds/flu as the top three academic impediments—UC-Boulder health administrators knew they needed to take action.

"We already had programs for stress management and how to treat a cold or the flu," said Anne Reinhart, Coordinator of Student Wellness Programs at UC-Boulder. "But we had a gap in our programming on what to do about sleep."

Enter Matthew Lambuth, a sophomore and a Student Wellness Coordinator at UC-Boulder, who grabbed the reins and designed and implemented a thorough sleep-education program for his peers.

The Colorado Sleep Campaign

Lambuth put together the Colorado Sleep Campaign, a multi-faceted educational program that helps students at UC-Boulder understand not only how important it is to get enough sleep on a regular basis, but also offers strategies for helping them get that sleep.

GRAB SOME POPCORN

A key component of the program is a

video Lambuth made, which takes a comedy-sketch approach to the topic. "The video is hilarious," Reinhart said, "and is well-received by students."

Lambuth agrees. "We were able to make it a lot more entertaining and appealing to the audience than a presentation," he said. One sketch spoofs The Karate Kid and shows a student "going through training and learning how to fight off sleep disorders," Lambuth said.

NAP MAN GIVES THE NAP FACTS

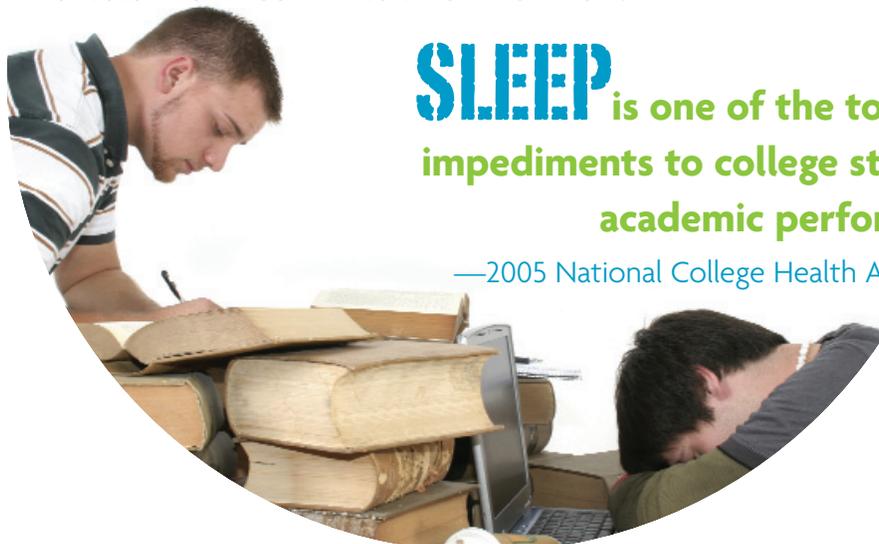
Another popular component of the program is the character Nap Man, who "hangs out and takes a nap

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before big lecture classes. Right before the class starts, he jumps up, yells a nap fact, and then runs out,” Lambuth said.

What does Nap Man know that students often don’t? That if you can’t get a full night’s sleep, you should try to take a 20-minute power nap during the day.

“Don’t go over 30 minutes, or that can interfere with nighttime sleep,” Reinhart said.



SLEEP is one of the top three impediments to college students’ academic performance.

—2005 National College Health Assessment

Some people can grab a power nap just about any place, while others just can’t doze off in public during the middle of the day. What about you? Are you a public power napper?

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Nap Man lets students know when it’s a good time to take a nap, as well as where it’s safe on the UC-Boulder campus to grab a nap.

Healthier Sleep Habits

“The quality of your sleep is more important than the quantity,” Reinhart said. So the Sleep Campaign tries to help students sleep well, not just sleep for a certain number of hours.

Getting uninterrupted sleep is important if you want your body to be well-rested. So the Colorado Sleep Campaign reminds smokers, for example, that nicotine dependence can interfere with their sleep. “It wakes you up with a craving,” Reinhart said.

It’s also important for stressed-out students to “give themselves permission to go to bed,” Reinhart said. If students have trouble falling asleep at night, the Sleep Campaign recommends that they write their worries in a journal and then turn out the lights. The journal writing can help students let go of those worries so they can settle down for a good night’s rest.

If you’re having trouble sleeping, the UC-Boulder Sleep Campaign also recommends that you:

- > Set a bedtime and wakeup schedule and stick to it, even on weekends
- > Exercise during the day, but no more than 2-3 hours before going to bed
- > Use your bed only for sleeping (and other things the bed was made for), not watching TV, studying, etc.
- > Listen to background noise or music

If you still have trouble sleeping after trying aids like these, talk to a health-care professional, who may be able to help you identify what’s keeping you

awake and what you can do about it. Most campus health centers have a lot of experience with students who are sleep deprived.

What helps you fall asleep at night?

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Lambuth and Reinhart hope to implement the Sleep Campaign as a semester-long program. “We want to pique people’s interest in sleep and build on that all semester,” Lambuth said. “Then we’ll build up to one final event called the Sleep Bash, which is a carnival-like event.”

“We’re trying to help people change their lifestyle,” Reinhart said, “so it will help them move toward a more holistic wellbeing.” 🧠

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Sleep Deprived STUDENTS

According to a February 2007 College Health Services, LLC survey, approximately 60% of students are probably not getting enough sleep.

> **15%** of students get less than six hours of sleep per night.

> **45%** of students get between six and seven hours of sleep per night.

Of those who are probably getting enough sleep, only 10% get eight or more hours of sleep per night.

Not surprisingly, sleep deprived

students—65% surveyed—say they've fallen asleep in class.

And as you might expect, students report having a harder time falling asleep during the school year than they do when school isn't in session. They attribute that difficulty to a variety of factors, with worries about personal issues topping the list and

affecting over one quarter of students. Other key impediments to sleep include:

- Staying up to complete school work**23.4%
- Worries about school work** ...18.8%
- Dorm/apartment/roommate noise**14.6%

Whatever the cause, sleep deprivation is a common problem on college campuses, and programs like the Colorado Sleep Campaign can help students figure out how to get enough sleep on a regular basis. 🛏



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5 WAYS TO PERSEVERE WHEN LIFE COLLIDES WITH YOUR STUDIES > CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

rape, and STDs. She also works part-time on campus as a caterer.

With Schaffer's busy schedule, it's no wonder that lists afford her peace of mind. "I love crossing things off the list," she added. "You're looking at everything you have to do, but you're also looking at everything you've already accomplished."



2. Don't Procrastinate

Twelve percent of students in the 2005 ACHA study reported that Internet use/computer games were getting in the way of their studies. Those are just modern tools of procrastination, a habit that's been causing student stress for years.

But you don't need a computer to be able to procrastinate. Nearly

two-thirds of students say they've procrastinated so much that it affected their performance on an exam, paper, or course grade, according to a February 2007 College Health Services, LLC survey.

"EVERYTHING comes to you at once, but you can't take it all at once."

—Heather Schaffer, SUNY College at Fredonia sophomore

When Stephen Dally, a freshman at Saint Lawrence University in Upstate New York, is in "procrastination mode," he's been known to clean his dorm room. "You have three papers due within a couple days of each other and you put it off," he said. "You know they have to be done, eventually, but you just don't want to do them."

The top 3 factors that affect academic performance are: STRESS, SLEEP, COLDS/FLU

—2005 National College Health Assessment

A member of the school's swim team, Dally has a full schedule. His tendency to procrastinate has caused him occasional stress. "I've gotten to the point where it's a few hours before a paper is due and I'm just wrapping up and I'm, like, 'Oh man, I still have to proof-read all this.' It's not a good thing to do to yourself."

How can you avoid procrastinating?

Making those lists can help, especially if you prioritize the items you write down. What has to be done? Give

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