

Campus green spaces enhance quality of life

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The next time you see students playing an energized game of touch football or studying in the sunshine on a college quadrangle, consider this: campus green spaces can help students feel better about life and improve learning.

Trying to determine the relationship between availability and access to green spaces and students' quality of life, researchers at Texas State University recently surveyed 373 undergraduates at the San Marcos campus. Results of the survey were published in the April 2008 issue of the American Society for Horticultural Science's journal, *HortTechnology*.

Depending on their answers to survey questions, respondents were ranked as "low users", "medium users", or "high users" of campus green spaces. More than 90 percent of respondents were ranked as either high or medium users of green space. Students were also asked to rate their perception of quality of life. A mean score of more than four (on a scale of 1 to 5) indicated that most students rated their quality of life as positive.

According to A.L. McFarland, a graduate student in the Department of Agriculture at TSU and primary author of the study, the researchers were able to make a "statistically significant" correlation between green space users and those who gave a high rating to their quality of life. "These findings indicated that those (students) who used campus green spaces more frequently rated their overall quality of life higher when compared with students who used the campus green spaces and

arboretum less frequently", said McFarland.

Higher quality of life wasn't the only bonus for green space users. "High users" of campus green spaces also rated their cognitive ability to apply knowledge learned in college as higher when compared to those students who spent less time in green spaces. It appears that going green is not just for the environment anymore, so, students—get outside and get happy!

Source: American Society for Horticultural Science

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