



Love Your Brain! Protect your most valuable asset at Stanford!

Three articles to inspire and motivate you to wear a bike helmet for every ride, even short trips.

■ **Tahoe-bound! Roble and Casa Zapata win Stanford's third annual Bike Safety Dorm Challenge**

Pages 2 - 4

■ **Cycling toward safety**

Pages 5 - 7

■ **Op-Ed: Students: Befriend Your Brain**

Pages 8 - 9

Tahoe-bound! Roble and Casa Zapata win Stanford's third annual Bike Safety Dorm Challenge

http://transportation.stanford.edu/alt_transportation/dorm-challenge.shtml

Getting students to wear bike helmets and follow the rules of the road often seems to be an elusive goal. At Stanford, the goal could increasingly be within reach, as hundreds of students and staff rise to the challenge of encouraging and practicing bike safety.

Stanford's third annual Bike Safety Dorm Challenge spurred friendly competition among 21 undergraduate residences from Sept. 18 to Dec. 14. A record 951 Stanford undergraduates pledged to bike safely, up from just over 650 students who pledged when the challenge launched in 2010.

"I wear a helmet when biking, skating and riding a scooter because of the simple risk mitigation analysis of doing so," Pratkanis said. "The cost of wearing a helmet is very low, but the amount of risk it eliminates is extreme in terms of mitigating potentially life-long debilitation. The choice is pretty clear: Wear a helmet!"

As an incentive, Stanford's Parking & Transportation Services (P&TS) offered two grand prizes—a free charter bus trip to Lake Tahoe for each of the two winning dorms. Roble surpassed other dorms by attaining the highest number of participants, with 196 Roble students pledging to bike safely. Casa Zapata, Burbank and Muwekma-tah-ruk tied for first when each dorm reached 100 percent participation. Casa Zapata was the lucky winner of a three-way-tie prize drawing, clinching one of the two trips to Tahoe.



Casa Zapata

Deputy Allen James, Department of Public Safety, and Ariadne Delon Scott, P&TS bicycle program coordinator, kicked off the competition by hosting a training session on bike safety for the Resident Assistants (RAs), which was arranged by the Office of Residential Education in the fall. For Lynsey Motell, an RA with Casa Zapata, personal experience influenced her dorm's decision to participate.

“I had a bad bike accident freshman year that landed me in the hospital,” Montell said. “As a result, we took a survey at the beginning of the year and found out that most of our residents would wear helmets but didn’t, because they didn’t have one. So I got more information about the bike helmet subsidy, and we ended up getting everyone who wanted one a new helmet for free with matching Casa Zapata stickers on them. It was really great to see, especially the freshmen, challenging each other and other residents to make the pledge and wear their helmets!”

The FROSH Bike Helmet Subsidy Program enables students to contribute \$5 each for a helmet and the remaining \$15 is subsidized by sponsoring departments: P&TS, Public Safety, Risk Management and Residential Education. The Campus Bike Shop also provides logistical support for the program. The subsidy program has grown to 10 participating dorms in 2012, up from seven participating freshman dorms at its inception in 2011.

Given the affordability of bike helmets, Tony Pratkanis, a resident of Roble, considers wearing a helmet almost a “no brainer.”



Roble

“I wear a helmet when biking, skating and riding a scooter because of the simple risk mitigation analysis of doing so,” Pratkanis said. “The cost of wearing a helmet is very low, but the amount of risk it eliminates is extreme in terms of mitigating potentially life-long debilitation. The choice is pretty clear: Wear a helmet!”

Sponsored by P&TS, the annual challenge promotes bike safety by encouraging undergraduate students to pledge to follow the rules of the road and to wear a bike helmet for every ride, even short trips. The dorm with the highest percentage of participants and the dorm with the highest number of entries each win a charter bus to Lake Tahoe. Student bike champions conducted spot checks throughout the challenge and awarded free gift cards to helmet wearers to thank them for being role models for bike safety.

Brodie Hamilton, director of Parking & Transportation Services, cites RAs rallying students in their dorms coupled with friendly dorm competition, real-time participation tracking, and the incentive of winning a trip to Lake Tahoe as helping to build momentum for the annual challenge.

“It’s encouraging to see that the Bike Safety Dorm Challenge increased participation for the third year in a row, enhancing bike safety among even more students at Stanford,” Hamilton said.

Highlights of the results

Number of participants: 951

Dorms posting 100%: three-way tie between Burbank, Casa Zapata and Muwekma-tah-ruk

Winning dorms: Casa Zapata won the three-way tie for 100% participation; Roble won the highest number of entries with 196 participants

Pledges: 15% of undergraduate students

Participation: 27% of undergraduate dorms (21 dorms out of 78)



Casa Zapata riding their free charter bus to Tahoe.

Cycling toward safety

By Erika Alvero Koski,
Stanford Daily, March 7, 2012

Students must be the driving force ensuring the movement's success in changing campus culture—especially in reducing the negative perception of helmet use.

A flurry of emails circulated among the student body earlier this quarter, sent by students warning their peers of a recent upsurge in biking citations by police officers stationed strategically around campus at various intersections. This increase was only one part of a larger and ever-growing movement on campus to promote bike safety.

Of the proponents of this movement, the Stanford Department of Public Safety (SUDPS) is a major force.

“If you’ve ever been the first person to an accident scene where there are serious injuries, it’s pretty traumatic,” said Deputy Allen James. “I liken it to being in wartime because I spent two years in Vietnam.”

Biking has been a part of Stanford’s culture for over 100 years, as proven by the group of bicyclists dubbed “the Encina wheelmen” who pose in front of Encina Hall in 1891 when the hall was first opened. (Stanford Historical Photograph Collection/Stanford University Archives)

James came to Stanford 20 years ago after working on the force in the East Bay. In addition to his other duties, he teaches the SUDPS bicycle safety diversion class, a one-hour class usually taught twice a month that allows students to void their bicycle citations in favor of bicycle safety education. The \$194 fine that accompanies a bike ticket is part of what pushed James to become involved in the movement and the class.

“I always felt so bad when we were out here trying to enforce the law, because I would look at the students, and I’m thinking, ‘They’re going to be eating Top Ramen noodles for months to pay this stupid ticket,’ because I knew how much it was,” James said.

The bike safety movement emphasizes a collaborative effort among various departments on campus. James, for example, works closely with Ariadne Scott, bicycle coordinator at Parking and Transportation

Services (P&TS). An avid cyclist, Scott aims to promote bicycle usage while implementing programs to enforce student safety. She has not owned a car in over 23 years.

“I think bikes symbolize freedom and the power to move and be self-propelled, ...especially with global warming and the idea that you can actually do something to offset that carbon [emission] by not driving. You can have a direct [impact on] making the world a better place,” Scott said. “We want people to ride—we just want people to be safe.”

Some of the new measures designed to promote safety include stronger enforcement of bike laws, a bike safety summit in November with the Stanford Trauma Center and signs below stop signs that read, “Bikes are required to stop at all stop signs.” P&TS sponsored a Bike Safety Dorm Challenge this past fall in which the winning dorm, Muwekma-tah-ruk, won a free charter bus to Tahoe.

As a result, Stanford has been designated the first and only Bicycle Friendly University at the Platinum level, the highest distinction given by the League of American Bicyclists.

Ultimately, campus administrators agree that students must be the driving force ensuring the movement’s success in changing campus culture—especially in reducing the negative perception of helmet use. “All student leaders have a huge role in this, as is true for a lot of other topics,” wrote Donovan Yisrael ’89, manager of Relationship and Sexual Health Programs and member of the “I Thrive @ Stanford” unit at Vaden Health Center, in an email to The Daily. “If an RA [residential assistant] or PHE [peer health educator] in an all-frosh dorm stands up and says, ‘We want you all to wear helmets and we are going to model that by all of us wearing helmets,’ that is a powerful message.”

Students with personal bike accident experience are some of the most vocal advocates for bicycle safety and awareness. Kali Lindsay ’12 is one such advocate. During her sophomore year, on her way to an appointment with an oral communication tutor, Lindsay was involved in a serious bike accident.

“I kind of remember getting off my bed, and that was the last thing I remembered,” Lindsay said. “The next thing I remembered, really clearly, was my parents getting to the hospital about 2 a.m. ...more than 12 hours later.”

Though Lindsay was unable to recall the event itself, witnesses later told her that she had fallen between freshman dorm Larkin and Meyer Library, hitting her head on the right temple. She sustained epidural hematoma, an injury involving bleeding between the skull and brain. The injury caused initial short-term memory loss and dizziness, which prevented her from reading for almost two months, forcing her to take the rest of fall quarter off.

“When you’re young you think, ‘Well, this can happen to me, and if it does happen, I’ll be fine,’” Lindsay said. “I started realizing this is real, and this is more than just a one-time thing...it felt like I couldn’t control my mind anymore.”

While she was able to return for winter quarter of that year, it would be a year and a half before Lindsay felt like her former self again. She experienced unexpected panic attacks in seemingly innocuous situations and had to undergo therapy to overcome her emotional instability. She is now a freshman RA and has become involved in campaigning for helmet usage and bike safety.

“It’s hard when I still see my freshmen going around and not wearing their helmets,” Lindsay said. “It’s hard to get up every day to go to class and see people biking without their helmets, texting [or] riding on each other’s handlebars.”

She worked with both Scott and James, along with the Office of Residential Education (ResEd), to fund bike helmets for her entire dorm, Larkin. The program has been expanded to fund the purchase of helmets for all freshman dorms and “everyone who wants them,” according to James.

While helmet usage is far from becoming the norm, the accounts provided by students such as Lindsay and the efforts of P&TS and the SUDPS may be beginning to take effect.

“I’ve been on campus on and off since 1985, and I’ve never seen this much attention being paid to promoting helmet wearing,” Yisrael said. “I’m hoping that we are reaching a ‘critical mass.’”

Op-Ed: Students: Befriend Your Brain

Stanford Daily, February 22, 2010

There was a head-shaped hole in the badly shattered windshield of the car on Campus Drive. The paramedics and police had come and gone, but there was still a small crowd of people in front of the Arrillaga Center for Sports and Recreation.

Bike and car collision?

I wondered, driving by in the opposite lane.

And if so, was the cyclist wearing a helmet?

“No. No helmet,” said Deputy Allen James of Stanford’s Department of Public Safety. He’d been the officer at the scene. “And she’s going

“Whether or not someone wears a helmet is really about their perception of risk,” explained Dr. David Spain, chief of trauma and critical care surgery at the Stanford Medical Center. “Sure, any one time you go out on your bike, you’re unlikely to have a crash. But if you do, wearing a helmet reduces your risk of serious head injury by 80%. It’s really about relative risk. We can fix almost everything else you can break, but we really have little to offer for head injuries. For lack of a \$40.00 helmet, you’re risking the biggest investment you’ll every make in your life — your education.”

to take a long time to recover.” I’d called to ask James because for the 10 years I’ve lived on campus, I’ve been increasingly dismayed at how few students wear helmets. Sometimes it seems like the only cyclists wearing protective headgear are oldsters like me.

That’s not entirely true, James explained.

“The graduate students are better at wearing helmets,” he said. “But it’s considered uncool by the undergrads. And they say it messes up their hair.”

“It’s the geek factor,” agreed Ariadne Scott, Stanford’s Bicycle Program Coordinator, “and following the crowd.”

James, an 18-year veteran on the force and current bicycle safety officer, explained that at least once a week a cyclist is hurt badly enough to be taken to the hospital. And unprotected heads connecting with cars or concrete isn’t unusual. James hears the students say the campus isn’t a dangerous place to bike. “But all it takes,” he warned, “is a short fall from the seat.”

“Whether or not someone wears a helmet is really about their perception of risk,” explained Dr. David Spain, chief of trauma and critical care surgery at the Stanford Medical Center. “Sure, any one time you go out on your bike, you’re unlikely to have a crash. But if you do, wearing a helmet reduces your risk of serious head injury by 80%. It’s really about relative risk. We can fix almost everything else you can break, but we really have little to offer for head injuries. For lack of a \$40.00 helmet, you’re risking the biggest investment you’ll every make in your life — your education.”

Scott and James try hard to get students to wear helmets. During bicycle registration each term, they distribute bike safety information. They give presentations to groups of international students, and provide bike safety classes for cyclists who get issued a ticket. Even so, compliance with wearing helmets on campus is dangerously low, and the result can be a disaster that shatters a bareheaded biker’s life worse than a windshield with a head-shaped hole.

So student — befriend your brain. Please. That precious organ helped you get to this particular place of higher learning. It deserves protection from a fall from your bike or a collision while you’re cruising. When you hop on your bike, strap on your helmet.

It’s the safe — and smart — thing to do.

Mary Sullivan, campus resident