Zero Waste SWATeam Meeting

Date: 11/13/2020

Time: 4PM-5PM

Attendees: Morgan White (F&S), Tim Stark (Faculty & Co-chair), Shantanu Pai (Staff), Thurman Etchison (Staff), Mike Olinger (Staff), Aaron Finder (Staff), Cassidy Steel (Student), Leah Courtney (Student), Maddy Liberman (Student), Julija Sakutyte (Clerk)

Agenda

Update: Cassidy Steel on Adopt-a-highway for Zero Waste SWATeam

* No update. Will Follow-up with contacts

Discussion: Composting partnership Alex Poltorak

* [Urban Canopy](https://www.theurbancanopy.org/) is a business engaged in a closed local food cycle.
* Must discuss scale of program
* Must discuss how to apply the business model to the university
	+ Keep the collection process, management, and use within Champaign-Urbana
	+ Will reach out to Resilience SWATeam.

Discussion: Maddy Liberman Vermiculture Composting Kit Project

* Zero Waste and Resilience SWATeam would be used as resources for this student-led project.
* Pending funding.

Discussion: Using Grind2Energy for Student Compost

* Allowing composting in the residence halls which would go through the Grind2Energy system
* The logistics are challenging but this idea is certainly valuable.
	+ Pest control
* One factor to consider is the extra funding required for hauling to Champaign-Urbana Sanitary District (CUSD).
* Maddy Liberman will look into this project in SP21.

Discussion: Thurman Etchison on Food Literacy Project

* Students working with Meredith Moore in a two-semester project-based course.
* Students are currently conducting research and surveying student food literacy preferences.
* Thurman Etchison will connect with student team members and Meredith to guide their developmental process.
	+ Leah Courtney will send contact information of students to Thurman.
	+ Student members may be invited to a SWATeam meeting.

Discussion: Thurman Etchison on Clean Plate Program

* Leadership Team Concerns about Eating Disorders/rewarding binge eating as well as logistical concerns about cheating the system, funding the incentives, etc
* Leadership Team declined the idea of a clean plate program
* Dining is systemically moving away from self-serving items
	+ Ex: Pre-mixed salads vs. open bar
	+ ISR was created in thought of creating more opportunities for pre-mixed items
* Sampling items also considered to promote conscious decisions
	+ All items involved should be zero waste
* Staffing needs are a limiting factor of changing operational model
* Instead, Dining is planning on incorporating smaller plate sizes, which has been proven to decrease food waste
	+ Building a plan to implement this before service is back to pre-COVID levels.
* SSC funding may be pursued for transferring dining halls to smaller plate sizes.
	+ Zero Waste SWATeam could draft a letter of support.

Update: Aaron Finder on Sustainability Filters for Purchasing Website

* Aaron, Shantanu, and Maddy are working with Office Depot to inventory products which have a sustainable alternative.
* After the website is updated, the entire procurement procedure will be updated for sustainability policy
	+ Hopefully, the burden of documentation of sustainability procurement will be placed onto the vendors rather than the departments purchasing.
	+ Majority of the reporting should theoretically be pulled from a system rather than dependent on departmental submission
		- Departments will be required to report on certain metrics that the vendor is unable to provide.
	+ Jeremiah Yokley is working on the team to interpret data and directing the team towards most fitting solutions.
* Testing must be conducted to assess the best fit for the purchasing website/procedure, so patience from college deans is requested.
* [Northeast Recycling Council](https://nerc.org/projects/government-recycling-demand-champions#:~:text=The%20Government%20Recycling%20Demand%20Champion,products%20with%20post%2Dconsumer%20resin) facilitates memberships in which agreements are made with various organizations to commit to improving post-consumer recycling product use.
	+ Need to discuss who on campus would join this organization (the whole campus?)

Meetings Scheduled (Post-Thanksgiving)

* December 4th, 4-5PM (CDT)
* December 18th, 4-5PM (CDT)

Recommendations Wishlist

* Update the Waste Transfer Facility processes and procedures
* Each semester, school should have one week with sustainability theme. There could be sustainable design competitions, "no plastic bag for a week" challenge, and donating things to the need.
* batteries (A few of us co-wrote a proposal a couple of years ago.)
* No non-recyclable single use plastics available from food service provider
* Create a marketing campaign to raise awareness and reduce odd waste on campus. This would include a presence at convocation and quad day.
* Recyclopedia being developed by F&S
* Campus-wide student competition to help educate about zero-waste (in collaboration with Education SWATeam)
* Zero waste cannot be achieved without recycling and composting. Our team could start by monitoring the amount of waste at different locations on campus. And we can pick top 10 locations that generate largest amount of waste and implement composting and recycling trash bins. At the same time, volunteers could be assigned at each place to educate people to put trash in the right place. In this way, education and recycling could be done at the same time.
* SID tags on dumpsters being implemented.
* In identifying possible recommendations, I think we would do well to confer with Shantanu about what he thinks is feasible, should be a priority, etc. He seems to have a good grasp of where we are and where we need to be.
	+ glass (I heard what Shantanu said about this; on the other hand, I wonder if we cannot build on what Housing/Dining is already doing; Thurman is a key resource here.)
	+ plastic bags (one of a number of suggestions from the students in December)
	+ solar panels (when the time comes - another student suggestion)
	+ sustainable utensils and dishes (another student suggestion)
* Would like to pursue an anaerobic digester for campus.