Zero Waste SWATeam Meeting

Date: 10/30/2020

Time: 4PM-5PM

Attendees: Meredith Moore (iSEE), Tim Stark (co-chair & faculty), BK Sharma (co-chair & faculty), Yuanhui Zhang (faculty), Caitlin Aylmer (Staff), Shantanu Pai (Staff), Thurman Etchison (Staff), Cassidy Steel (Student), Leah Courtney (Student), Maddy Liberman (Student), and Julija Sakutyte (Clerk)

Agenda

Roundtable discussion

* Student Ambassadors Program will be instructed by Meredith Moore and Eric Green in an NRES 285 in SP21
* Develop Recommendations for Single Use Plastics
* Review effectiveness of new recycling bins
  + Due to COVID-19, any assessment would be inaccurate.
  + Postpone to FY21
    - SWATeam will reconvene in SP21 in order to assist in creating the assessment that Shantanu will conduct.
    - Measure Recycling Literacy, Contamination Rates, and Total Recycling to holistically analyze effectiveness.
      * Recycling Literacy: Survey
      * Contamination Rates: Measurement
      * Total Recycling: Visual Audit
* Mask Recycling Program
  + Shantanu will have an update on the initial results for the program.
* Review dining hall food waste: Clean Plate Program
  + No progress thus far.
  + Thurman will talk to the Leadership Team Meeting at Dining to discuss this idea and bring results back.
  + Northwestern has a Clean Plate Program.
    - Shantanu has a connection to explore if needed.
    - Thurman also has a connection to NW to reach out to first.
* Improve Purchasing website to promote zero waste products
  + iBUY Zero Waste website design will be ready for review in February
    - Building a framework with active (webinars) and static (manuals, purchasable goods) guidance.
* “Adopt-a-highway” Zero Waste
  + [IDOT](http://idot.illinois.gov/about-idot/employment-opportunities/community-involvement/index) runs the “adopt a highway” program
  + Zero Waste Team can pass on this adopt-a-highway ownership to the next Zero Waste SWATeam.
  + Requirements are 4x a year clean-up.
    - Adopted for a 2-year-period at a time.
  + Qualifies for a monthly sustainable event.
  + Opportunity to socialize outside of a structured entity.
  + Society of Women Engineers has a contract with City of Champaign; they are able to borrow materials and clean up Green Street.
  + Could also think to “adopt” other green space, too.
    - Scott Park
      * There is another group that cleans up Scott Park annually.
    - [Boneyard Creek](http://www.boneyardcreek.org/).
    - Helms Park.
  + Joe DeLuce: Executive Director at Champaign Park Districts
  + Cassidy Steel will lead this initiative
    - Next meeting (11/13) will present results of preliminary findings.
* [Litterati](https://www.litterati.org/) is a program you can use to inventory city waste
  + Could be helpful in targeting waste reduction.
  + Informal Waste Audit
* Waste Auditing
  + UIC did a waste audit study (found [here](https://uofi.app.box.com/s/hb0hs83k1wm266prq4luycjaln3utvj7))
    - UIC needs differ as an urban commuter campus.
  + UIUC is planning to do a waste audit: waste generation by location, and residual waste (the waste inappropriately sent to waste transfer station).
  + Maddy, Shantanu, and Aaron are currently working through current abilities to regulate university-contracted vendors
    - O’Hare has completely recyclable/compostable materials.
    - UIC attempted to restructure a contract with Chic-Fil-A, but was unsuccessful due to a lack in mechanism for achievement.
* Yuanhui Zhang knows of conference on circular economy planned by [National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine](https://www.nationalacademies.org/).
  + Campus Student Representatives can present at this conference on sustainability initiatives/waste on campus.
  + Conference planned for mid-July 2021

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.