



## 2018 RecycleMania Case Study Competition

### *Case Study Template*

Please focus your case study on one component of your RecycleMania competition. This could be your outreach and marketing strategies, fundraising strategies, techniques to engage key campus stakeholders to ensure success, connecting with off-campus partners, key events or gatherings, incentives for engagement, etc.

Note: Submissions for the 2018 RecycleMania Case Study Competition may be used as a best practice resource on [www.recyclemania.org](http://www.recyclemania.org).

1. Contact info (name, department, school, email, phone)

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2. Focus of Case study

(Summary 25 words or less)

Physical Facilities (PFOC) partnered with Aramark to reduce waste associated with meal preparation and to capture and divert post-consumer food scraps from the landfill.

3. Detailed description of campaign component:

(300 words or less)

Aramark has installed a food waste tracking terminal called LeanPath in Robertson Dining Hall (Rob's). The objective...to reduce food waste related to meal preparation. The terminal allows culinary team members to weigh and document (photograph) all food waste prior to disposal.

Lessons learned from LeanPath have helped team members avoid overproduction, food expiration, and have led to better trimming practices.

The preparatory food waste, once logged in the LeanPath system, is combined with food and paper waste cleared from students' plates.

The combined food scraps are then staged in a specialized compactor designed to hold food waste. Once every ten days, the compactor is transported to a class II compost facility where the organic waste is transformed into nutrient-rich compost.

Physical Facilities monitors the process, working to ensure the integrity of the waste stream and planning how to best utilize the high-quality finished product. Approximately 40 yds. of compost, created from the



food waste from Rob's, will be incorporated back into The University's landscaped beds and turf grass in the Spring of 2018.

In addition to better managing its food waste, Aramark has nearly eliminated single-use items, investing heavily in reusable serving and glassware.

Also, the tray-less program at Rob's helps to reduce daily water usage and energy from the dish machine; it is no longer necessary to wash thousands of trays each day.

The **Recyclemania Competition** has enabled The University of Akron (UA) to further promote this initiative. Lucky students who cleaned their plates during Recyclemania were rewarded for reducing overall food waste. Students received vouchers for reusable mugs and discounted refills. Signage promoting the competition could also be seen throughout Rob's. Recyclemania has been a key component in the initiative's student outreach attempts; incentivizing engagement has led to less contamination and improved waste reduction, i.e. clear plates.

#### 4. Planning steps & timeline to implement:

*List out in bullet format each of the steps involved in planning.*

- (Fall 2017) Food scrap recycling initiative/waste reduction strategies, i.e. LeanPath & elimination of single use items, launched at Robertson Dining Hall after approximately one (1) year of planning
- (Fall 2017) Objective – work out the operational obstacles as they appear/streamline the process 'behind-the-scenes' before initiative promotion/student engagement
- (Fall 2017) Pre-planning for initiative promotion/(incentivized) student engagement
  - Identified Recyclemania as the best platform to begin promotion
    - Purchased reusable mugs and confirmed discounted refills
- (Spring 2018) Food scrap recycling initiative and waste reductions strategies are in place and have successfully diverted on average 8,400 lbs. of food waste per-month since August, 2017/operational 'bugs' have been worked out
- (Spring 2018) Signage promoting Recyclemania designed and printed
- (Recyclemania, 2018) Signage in place & students rewarded with reusable mugs for 'cleaning their plate'
- (Recyclemania, 2018) Digital article sent out via University's Email Digest promoting Recyclemania/'clean your plate' campaign

#### 5. Resources and stakeholders involved

*Explain what budget or in-kind resources where needed, what if any campus dept's or groups supported the effort, what staff or volunteers were involved.*

Physical Facilities and Aramark were the two (2) major stakeholders involved. Facilities purchased the



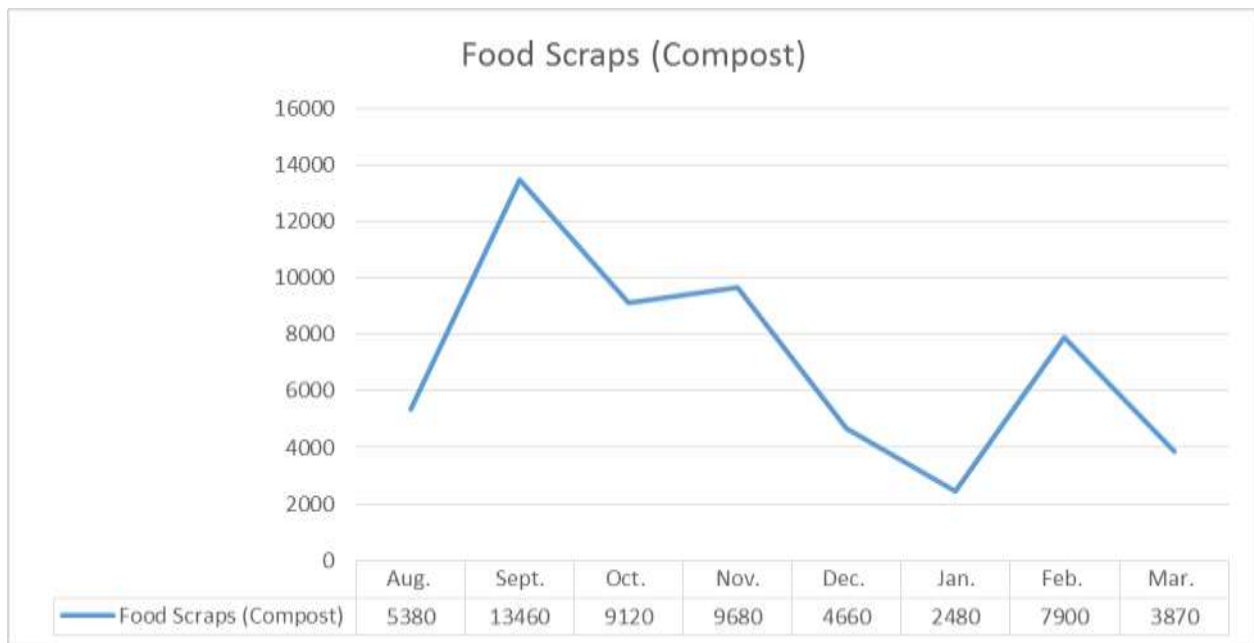
signage and the reusable mugs, as well as, worked with internal communications to promote the initiative via Email Digest. Aramark offered mug recipients a discount on beverage refills, hung signage, and managed food waste disposal (recycle). Student employees acted as *Recycling Ambassadors* identifying and rewarding dining patrons who cleared their plates.

6. Describe the Results of this campaign component

A. General Results

- i. The University’s email digest highlighted Recyclemania and the ‘clean your plate’ campaign
- ii. Further waste reduction was achieved in February and March, 2018 (specifics below)
- iii. A different (temporary) outlet for food scraps was identified;
  - A. Akron Zoo reached out to PFOC after learning about the University’s food waste reduction and diversion initiatives
  - B. In the immediate, UA supplied Akron Zoo with a nitrogen rich feedstock i.e. food scraps to help balance out the carbon rich bedding material being fed to their anaerobic digester
  - C. The temporary collaboration, realized through the Recyclemania promotion of UA’s food scrap recycling program, has allowed the Akron Zoo to balance their C:N ratio
- iv. A permanent future collaboration may be possible

B. Specific Measurable Impact Figures





In an eight (8) month period, UA has recycled 56,550 lbs. of food waste from Robertson Dining Hall. Partial collection occurred in the months of August, December, January, and March. Two weeks of collection happened in the program's first month, August 2017. The University's winter recess occurred late December through early January. Lastly, spring break limited collection in March, 2018.

The Recyclemania programming, i.e. signage & 'clean you plate' campaign, went into effect February and March, 2018. To show progress or the effect of Recyclemania programming, it is most appropriate to compare two (2) typical months (four (4) weeks of collection / without breaks in scheduling); one (1) month of collection during specialized programming and one (1) month of collection prior to any sort of promotion.

February's (2018) collection is most appropriately compared to October, 2017. There is a difference of 1,220 lbs. of food scraps between the two (2) months, or nearly 14% waste reduction. Anecdotal evidence, provided by the dining service staff, suggests that a reduction in post-consumer waste is responsible for the realized waste reduction. A decrease in contamination has also been noticed.

Other contributing factors include continued improvement(s) in avoiding overproduction and food expiration.

Waste reduction will continue to improve as students and other patrons of Rob's become more conscientious. Recyclemania has served as the platform from which UA's awareness campaign has launched.

B. What would you do differently in the future?

Areas of improvement include full utilization of social media and increasingly better incentives.

C. What advice would you give to another college that wanted to do a similar effort?

If a college or university is utilizing Recyclemania to promote (introduce) a new recycling initiative, ex. single-stream recycling, food scrap recycling, incentive program, etc., make sure that the program is sustainable (operationally) and meaningful (making a difference) in advance. Program partners must simplify the initiative so it does not enact an unnecessarily heavy burden onto typical operations. The program should have measurable results, i.e. data to support progress made. A probationary period will help to ensure the program's success.

D. Photos and Graphics

*Please include photos and other visuals below, examples could include social media posts, posters or other graphics related to the project. Include captions where necessary.*



Please see attached (email).

*Please email completed template form and supplemental documents (photos, newspaper articles, website links, etc. to [helpline@recyclemaniacs.org](mailto:helpline@recyclemaniacs.org) with "RecycleMania Case Study submission-Campus Engagement – Awareness Campaign" in the subject line. **Case study submissions are due no later than Friday, May 11, 2018.***