



Macalester College 2020 RecycleMania Case Study

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

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2. Focus of Case study

To reduce waste and promote sustainable periods at Macalester College by providing socially just, free, and environmentally friendly menstrual cups to the student body.

3. Detailed description of campaign component:

SustainaCup is a student-led program at Macalester College. It seeks to minimize waste and improve the sustainability of menstrual periods economically and environmentally while also promoting wellness and social justice.

The program was launched by the Macalester College Sustainability Office in the Fall of 2019. The goal of SustainaCup's initial phase was to test whether menstrual cups could be distributed free to students on campus and at a reasonable cost to the institution.

The program was intended to lower the cost of providing menstrual products to students while also increasing accessibility to students. Free tampons and pads were already available in many, but not all, bathrooms on campus. SustainaCup's goal was to make a menstrual cup available to every student who needs one, and to stay within the budget spent on free tampons and pads. This would be a cost-neutral way to give all menstruating students access to free products.

Funding was procured from on-campus and off-campus partners. First, we had a grant from the Sustainability Office Small Project Fund. In addition, the Macalester Student Government Community Chest Fund supported the launch. These one-time college grants allowed SustainaCup to demonstrate popularity and affordability to the college, in particular to the Health and Wellness Center which was interested in providing menstrual cups but had concerns about cost.

Finally, SustainaCup received an excellent bulk discount from OrganiCup the menstrual cup manufacturer, in exchange for promoting their name. They are a reputable brand based in Europe which follows high environmental and health standards. OrganiCup piloted their Campus Cup program modeled off of SustainaCup at University of Connecticut.

Because SustainaCup proved to be economically feasible, and not significantly more expensive than supplying tampons and pads, the Sustainability Office and the Health and Wellness Office have agreed to continue the program in the future. OrganiCup will continue to offer a bulk discount for our campus.

4. Planning steps & timeline to implement:

- July/August 2019 - Identified funding and distribution partners on campus. Met with departments including Mailing Services to place menstrual cups in mailboxes for discrete distribution; Health and Wellness to fund the program and ultimately take over the program after the launch; Student Government to fund the initial launch phase; and Campus Events to distribute menstrual cups from the Campus Information Desk.
- September 2019 - Researched menstrual cup brands and negotiate a discounted bulk cost for the school. Chose OrganiCup.
- September 2019 - Organized a launch event including Nadyo Okamoto, the founder of Period., to build on campus program recognition. Worked with Macalester College Program Board to fund event.
- Late September – Purchased 324 menstrual cups (our student population is around 2000-2500)
- September / early October 2019 - Developed branding materials for the launch event and SustainaCup distribution
- October 17th – Launch event and first day of distribution – Information desk distributed menstrual cups through the end of October
- November – Purchased 216 more menstrual cups since we had distributed all of them
- December – Health and Wellness submitted budget request for annual funding for 200 menstrual cups this would allow 2/5 of each incoming class to get a menstrual cup if they were interested
- In the spring, the Sustainability Office had planned to table for SustainaCup at a menstrual health event led by Mactivists for Reproductive Justice, a student org, and for Sustainapalooza, a zero waste event. Unfortunately, coronavirus forced the cancellation of these events. At spring break, only 60 menstrual cups remained in stock suggesting great popularity of the program.

5. Resources and stakeholders involved

- Sustainability Office – Designed and implemented the initial program and funded the purchase of menstrual cups
- Health and Wellness Center – Supported the continuation of the program through taking over distribution and applying for ongoing funding
- Mailing Services – Distributes

6. Describe the Results of this campaign component

- a. General results (*ex: attracted attention of campus president, campus paper did a news story on the event, etc.*)

SustainaCup led to the publication of a campus news story and was launched at a Program Board event. The program also gained the attention of the Health and Wellness department who is now

seeking annual funding to establish an ongoing SustainaCup program. Finally, SustainaCup gained the attention of OrganiCup, the company from whom we purchased cups. OrganiCup requested to feature our program in one of their promotions.

b. Specific measurable impact figures:

Over 500 menstrual cups were distributed in the first 5 months of the program. Six departments across campus engaged with the program through supporting distribution, financing, and promotion.

Every student who responded to success surveys benefitted from their menstrual cup and even students who struggled with the fit were inspired to try other brands. This suggests that the program encouraged students to consider new period management options which reduced waste. Beyond menstrual cycle management, the public promotion of SustainaCup sparked many conversations among students and staff which helped to break down the stigma around periods on campus.

7. What would you do differently in the future?

In the future, developing a more consistent branding for the program sooner would have been beneficial. Putting up promotional material earlier would have helped particularly with the launch event. Perhaps making the event ticketed may also have aided in making the event seem more exciting for students as our attendance was lower than hoped. In addition, using the campus hashtag #heymac for social media posts may have helped to expand campus attention.

Otherwise, the fundamentals of distribution all went well and the material presented in brochures, social media, and event all went well.

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

Research the menstrual cup brands thoroughly before settling on one. Many well-established menstrual cup brands are expensive and are less willing to negotiate affordable bulk discounts. On the other end of the spectrum, menstrual cups available on Ali Baba or Amazon often are not well vetted for safety. I was unwilling to purchase from a brand which hadn't passed governmental health and safety standards.

Photos and Graphics

SustainaCup

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE SUSTAINABILITY
OFFICE, HEALTH AND WELLNESS

ECONOMICS

The average menstruating person spends
\$60/year on tampons

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Menstrual cups are a discrete solution for
gender non-conforming people to manage
their periods.

WELLBEING

Tampons contain harmful chemicals known to
cause conditions such as Toxic Shock Syndrome -
menstrual cups eliminate this risk.

ENVIRONMENT

Macalester alone discards about 350,000
tampons/pads a year, which don't biodegrade
and often pollute our lakes and oceans

PLEASE COMPLETE A SURVEY ABOUT
YOUR EXPERIENCE AT:
[HTTPS://BIT.LY/SUSTAINACUPSURVEY](https://bit.ly/sustainacupsurvey)

DISTRIBUTION LOCATIONS:

- HEALTH AND WELLNESS CENTER
- CAMPUS MAIL (ORDER AT [HTTPS://BIT.LY/SUSTAINACUP](https://bit.ly/sustainacup))

Quarter sheet that accompanied all SustainaCup giveaways highlighting why free menstrual cups are important.
Designed by Miriam Eide '20

PERIOD.TALKS WITH NADYA OKAMOTO



THE IMPORTANCE OF REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE



OCTOBER 17, 2019
6:30-8:00 PM
JBD LECTURE HALL



Period Talks. Was the launch event marking the beginning of SustainaCup. The event was cofounded by Program Board, the Sustainability Office, and Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies. This poster was designed by Yuzuha Shibata '22. The image is from period.org.

THE SUSTAINABILITY OFFICE PRESENTS:

SUSTAINACUP

With the support of: Health and Wellness and MCSG



DISTRIBUTION LOCATIONS:

MAILING SERVICES: (SPO OR MAILING WINDOW)

FILL OUT THIS FORM - [BIT.LY/SUSTAINACUP](https://bit.ly/sustainacup)

INFORMATION DESK: LIMITED TIME ONLY



LAUNCH EVENT:

PERIOD. TALKS WITH NADYA OKAMOTO
THE IMPORTANCE OF REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

October 17th, 2019 at 6:60-8pm in JBD Lecture Hall

Co-Organized with Program Board and support from WGSS

Leading up to the launch event, this poster was circulated beside the event poster to highlight SustainaCup. It was designed by Miriam Eide '20. The image is from OrganiCup's website.

Case from Macalester University

Miriam, a student at Macalester University, created the program SustainaCup, which offers free OrganiCups to students on campus.



SustainaCup was launched at Macalester with the intention of alleviating period poverty on campus and providing a more environmentally friendly period product (...). As soon as they were available the **cups flew off of the shelves**. They were available at our front desk, but also through Mailing Services to allow students to get cups discretely. Many students took advantage of both sources and due to the low costs that OrganiCup was able to provide, the Health and Wellness Center is appealing for an annual budget line for SustainaCups so that they continue into the future. Still, **I hear a buzz about the cups** and the students I have spoken to are excited to have the opportunity to try using menstrual cups.

Miriam – Zero Waste Coordinator at Macalester’s Sustainability Office

Case study on Macalester included in the OrganiCup promotional materials.

<https://themasweekly.com/77098/features/sustainacup-improving-menstrual-product-accessibility-across-campus/>

<http://macsustainability.blogspot.com/2019/12/new-sustainacup-program-addressing.html>

<https://mn350.org/2020/05/whats-happening-with-sustainability-at-macalester-college/>

<https://ecohusky.uconn.edu/2020/05/01/campus-cup-project-brings-free-menstrual-cups-to-uconn-period/>