



2021 Campus Race to Zero Waste Case Study Competition

Central Michigan State University

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

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2. Focus of Case study

(Summary 25 words or less)

The Central Michigan University Case Study measured the impact of educational, student-made videos and student engagement content created during the Campus Race to Zero Waste competition.

3. Detailed description of campaign or effort:

(300 words or less)

Although Central Michigan University (CMU) has engaged in the Race to Zero Waste in the past, we have never utilized extensive promotional content because the competition has been administered through Facilities Management. However, for the first time at CMU Facilities, a team of student employees were tasked with creating educational videos, flyers, and content that could be distributed in the campus community to increase student engagement both on- and off-campus.

Of all the materials and content produced, the most impactful were a series of videos on how students can engage in waste reduction practices. This included a video on the importance of waste reduction, how students can conduct their own personal waste audit, a video on how off-campus students can start their own compost bin, and an educational walk-through video of CMU's entire composting stream from fork to farm. These were released every two weeks during the competition, and even garnered attention from state communities such as the Michigan Campus Sustainability Collective (See section 4 for content).

Other promotional efforts included a CMU Campus Race to Zero Waste Flyer, 500 of which were hung around campus during week one of the competition in order to garner excitement (See section 9). Secondly, at the beginning of week five, CMU released its first official sustainability pledge - a comprehensive online form which anyone can take to commit to living a more environmentally and socially sustainable lifestyle (See section 4).

The education and awareness campaign at Central Michigan University demonstrated adaptivity and maximum engagement during turbulent times. Overall, it is estimated that over 1,000 campus and community members were able to engage with our educational materials, which is hypothesized to have reduced the municipal solid waste leaving CMU each week.

4. Planning steps & timeline to implement:

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

- CMU Facilities Management hired three students in the fall of 2020 to promote and facilitate the Campus Race to Zero Waste, one of whom specializes in content creation and film production.
- Students constructed an education and outreach plan in order to promote waste reduction throughout the competition in conjunction with broader university sustainability goals.
- Students established connections with University Communications and departmental social media channels to maximize content outreach and student engagement when content was released.
- Students developed a 90+ person email list with student organization and departmental leaders to provide weekly updated and new content directly to students and community members.
- Students worked with minimal supervision to construct the most effective outreach materials. This was done through student-led filming and content creation.
- Content was released in an organized manner to maximize engagement:
 - **January 23:** Campus Race to Zero Waste blog post released:
<https://blogs.cmich.edu/sustainabilitycmu/2021/01/23/2021-campus-race-to-zero-waste/>
 - **January 31:** 500 Campus Race to Zero Waste promotional flyers hung around campus
 - **January 31:** Campus Race to Zero Waste promotional flyer hung around campus, CMU Race to Zero Waste website went live: <https://www.cmich.edu/diversity/Pages/Campus-Race-to-Zero-Waste-.aspx>
 - **February 12:** CMU President Bob Davies shares the Campus Race to Zero Waste promotional video (created by Facilities):
<https://www.facebook.com/cmichpres/posts/1380511895640957>
<https://youtu.be/fn1-9jG0ZyQ>
 - **February 17, February 25:** Central Votes and the CMU Student Government Association share informational social posts (created by Facilities) on Campus Race to Zero Waste:
<https://www.facebook.com/centralmichiganvotes/posts/3706957369424829>
<https://www.facebook.com/CMICHSGA/posts/10159445717199994>
 - **February 24:** DIY Waste Audit Video released: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjL4GiK-y_E
 - **March 3:** Waste Education Composting Video released:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGyLPnlp8Fs>
 - **March 7:** Sustainability Pledge released:
https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=brxxyMZ8V0qk6yIwn8NJY_KB-HDwS6JEi_-BASANhYtURDNaWVfVOTFGOVFUOE5ROTFYVFINVkJZSTyQIQCN0PWcu
 - **March 10:** Local newspaper, Central Michigan Life, published article on CMU Race to Zero Waste efforts: <https://www.cm-life.com/article/2021/03/cmu-participates-in-campus-race-to-zero-waste>
 - **March 18:** DIY Composting Video released:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_eP5gww6IE
 - **March 30:** Student paper (*Central Michigan Life*) publishes column submitted by Facilities, *Central Michigan Life* shares on social media platforms:
COLUMN: Garbage is the great equalizer, let's face it head on

<https://www.cm-life.com/article/2021/03/column-garbage-is-the-great-equalizer-lets-face-it-head-on?fbclid=IwAR000ymlpjim3JmUSGXXSmQaOsLSNJd8KmGtZV6sqF2JBLQTjL2ieExBr40>

Resources and stakeholders involved

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

The Campus Race to Zero Waste and Case Study was accomplished mainly because of the organizational efforts of three student employees. These students (Eric Urbaniak, Teresa Homsy, and Lindsey Gibb) are paid hourly and work a combined total of 20 hours per week for CMU Facilities Management. Facilities management also funded the print expenses for any promotional flyers, totaling approximately \$400.

In addition to the leadership of these three students, several student leaders around campus volunteered helped to promote and engage students in the Race to Zero Waste, led by the paid students in Facilities. Notably, there was significant social media support from student organizations such as CMU Take Back the Tap, CMU Student Government Association, CMU Sierra Club, Central Votes, and *Central Michigan Life*.

5. 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.*)

In summary, this engagement and education campaign garnered attention at the local, state, and national levels. The local student paper, *Central Michigan Life*, published several articles on waste reduction efforts at CMU as a product of our outreach (see below), and the NWF posted one of our videos to the national Campus Race to Zero Waste Facebook Page. Additionally, several of our videos were shared with the West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum, a 501c3 Nonprofit which communicates with and educates academia, private, and public sectors on sustainability best practices. Notably, our videos were shared with the Michigan Campus Sustainability Collective, a group of university sustainability leaders from throughout Michigan who meet monthly. Most recently and as a product of these efforts, CMU students have been noticeably more engaged in institutionalizing sustainability at CMU. The most impactful demonstration of this was a recent piece of legislation that was unanimously passed in the House and Senate of the Student Government Association calling for the Board of Trustees to add the term "sustainable" to the CMU mission statement. All in all, while not precisely quantifiable, the social movement to integrate sustainability into our lives and institutions has been noticed at CMU, and is being actively pursued.

- i. <https://www.cm-life.com/article/2021/03/cmu-participates-in-campus-race-to-zero-waste>
ii. <https://www.cm-life.com/article/2021/03/column-garbage-is-the-great-equalizer-lets-face-it-head-on?fbclid=IwAR000ymlpjim3JmUSGXXSmQaOsLSNJd8KmGtZV6sqF2JBLQTjL2ieExBr40>

- b. Specific measurable impact figures, if applicable (*Ex: Reduced contamination rate 13%, Gathered 316 pledges to recycle more, etc., 250 people engaged, etc.*)

Below are the quantities of individuals who engaged with various educational and promotional awareness materials:

- Promotional Flyers (hung in all residential halls): Visible to 3096 students, as well as staff and faculty

- Sustainability Pledge: 93 Commitments to live a more socially and environmentally sustainable life through various means (more recycling, reusable water bottles...)
- Campus Race to Zero Waste promotional video: 254 Views (YouTube)
- DIY Waste Audit Video: 191 Views (YouTube)
- Waste Education Composting Video: 78 Views (YouTube)
- DIY Composting Video: 424 Views (YouTube & LinkedIn)
- COLUMN: Garbage is the great equalizer, let's face it head on: 118 Engagements (Article clicks)
Approximately 9,000 people reached

6. What would you do differently in the future?

In the future, it is likely that the sustainability team in Facilities Management will work ahead of time to develop educational content for all waste and donation streams at CMU, including the food pantry, surplus sale, student clothing store, and all other recycling, composting, and landfill waste streams. Because of the pandemic, we were unable to host in-person events or outreach efforts. This will be considered in the future as we aim to connect with students even more. Possibilities for organized events include tours of waste facilities, waste audits, or campus and community clean-ups.

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

We would advise any university interested in the Race to Zero Waste to get involved in rudimentary video production, find ways to motivate students, and engage with student organizations to share content and promote waste reduction. Race to Zero Waste is a fun and competitive way to increase education about recycling and waste reduction efforts and help get students in all areas of campus become involved. Interested colleges and universities should be sure to focus on creating a student team dedicated to outreach and education. Involving students with waste reduction efforts during the Campus Race to Zero Waste is an effective method of inspiring interest in greater sustainability projects at the university, as well as garnering support for social and environmental justice movements, as they are heavily related. As it pertains to our case study, student involvement was vital and educational for both the students involved and those who engaged. Be sure to research video production and find students passionate about education through film.

The CMU Facilities Management department welcomes questions from other universities about our Campus Race to Zero Waste practices and student engagement tools. The Race to Zero Waste provides universities with a unique opportunity to learn from one another when it comes to waste reduction and environmentalism.

8. Photos and Graphics

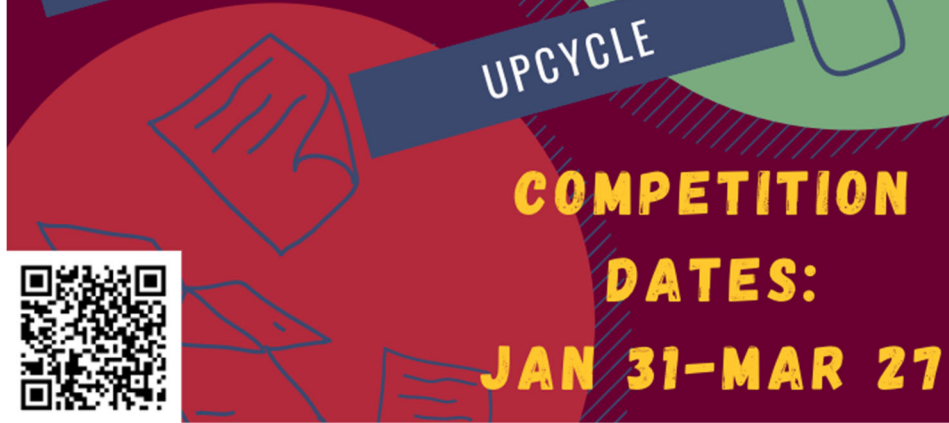
- Content Release Calendar:
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2021 CAMPUS RACE TO ZERO WASTE



**COMPETITION
DATES:
JAN 31-MAR 27**



Flyer designed by CMU student and Sustainability Liaison, Eric Urbaniak

CAMPUS RACE TO ZERO WASTE

We're starting CR2ZW strong
with a **39% diversion rate!**



That means 39% of the solid waste leaving
campus is either composted or recycled.



**But we CAN do better -
let the competition commence!**

WHAT IS CAMPUS RACE TO ZERO WASTE?

CMU is participating in a **national competition** against similar universities and colleges (and residence communities) to see who can **reduce their waste** over the course of the next 6 weeks!



Central Sustainability / Facilities Management

HOW DO YOU GET INVOLVED IN CR2ZW?

Check out our **recycling guide** and **recycle** as much as you can!

Be conscientious when throwing things away - **upcycle, recycle** and **reduce** your waste as much as possible!



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WHY SHOULD YOU GET INVOLVED?

Although CR2ZW is a friendly competition, **reducing our waste** has far-reaching **benefits** to the **environment**.

It **diverts** tons of **garbage** from **landfills**, reduces **methane** and **CO2** emissions, lowers **pollution** and **lessens the burden** on disenfranchised communities.



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Social posts designed by CMU student and Sustainability Liaison, Teresa Homsí

Recycling Guide



Acceptable Materials

PAPER

- Newspaper, magazines (including glossy inserts), soft covered books, cardboard, brown paper bags, office paper

Remove envelope windows, no need to remove tape, staples or metal spirals



METALS

- Aluminum, tin, scrap metal

Examples: canned food containers, beverage cans, aluminium foil, pie plates, empty aerosol cans



GLASS

- CLEAR glass, bottles and jars only

No need to remove labels and rinse lightly



PLASTICS

- Plastic bottles and jugs with a neck; caps and lids (rinse and flatten, no need to remove labels)

#1, #2, #3, #5, and #7 plastics only

UNACCEPTABLE Materials

- Wrapping paper
- Plastic bags
- Colored glass
- Pyrex
- Window glass
- Plate glass
- Pizza boxes
- Greasy containers



For more information on recycling, visit the Isabella County Recycling Center's website.

Flyer designed by CMU student and Sustainability Liaison, Teresa Homsí

All videos filmed and produced by CMU Student and Sustainability Content Creator, Teresa Homsí
Introductory blog post authored by CMU students Eric Urbaniak and Teresa Homsí
Sustainability Pledge authored by CMU students Eric Urbaniak, Teresa Homsí, and Lindsey Gibb