



2021 Campus Race to Zero Waste Case Study Competition

Towson University

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

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2. Focus of Case study

TU's social media Education and Awareness campaigns were focused on waste reduction and avoidance best practices, with an emphasis on food waste and wasted food.

3. Detailed description of campaign or effort:

Three campaigns were launched through @SustainableTU via Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Fix-It Fair: Food Waste Edition (February 15-26)

Via Instagram, users were asked to create and share reels that display their favorite ways to reduce food waste by tagging TU's Office of Sustainability, TU's Office of Civic Engagement & Social Responsibility and TU's Campus Activities Board, and hash-tagging #TUFoodWasteChallenge and #CR2ZW. This two week competition was meant to engage students in repurposing their food waste. The participants who submitted content won from categories such as easiest, most cost-effective, tastiest and lowest food print. This challenge was promote through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. This effort was a spin on our annual CR2ZW Fix-It Fair, which highlights reuse and repairs over recycling and disposal.

Declutter Challenge (March 8-26)

This two week challenge targeted TU residence during the week leading-up-to and the week of spring break. The purpose was to help students responsibly discard or relocate their surplus or unwanted possession, as a precursor to move-out. Via Instagram, users were challenged– On day one, get rid of one item. On day two get rid of two items, and so forth, until day fourteen. They are encouraged to sell, gift, recycle, take-home and/ or donate their items, just avoid the landfill! This challenge was promoted through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and email outreach.

Waste Responsibly

The two challenges, noted above, were complemented by a long-term infographic campaign, which was distributed through @SustainableTU on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and displayed on digital screens throughout campus over the course of the CR2ZW challenge. These graphics illustrated low waste items and practices juxtaposed to high waste items and practices. The slogan of this campaign was “Waste Responsibly”. This evolved into multiple narrower focused infographics addressing waste reduction such as “Cook Responsibly,” “Clean Responsibly,” “Mask Responsibly,” etc., which highlighted waste reduction and diversion.

Graphics and video footage from these campaigns can be found in the final section.

4. Planning steps & timeline to implement:

- October 2020
 - Initiate brainstorming for waste reduction campaigns and challenges (inspiration from Campus Race to Zero Waste webinar.)
- Late October – December 2020:
 - Research which types of materials are discarded most, by whom and at which locations.
 - Research what types of platforms targeted audiences utilize most.
 - Contact possible collaborators to converse about potential solutions and popular engagement activities (student groups and other departments.)
 - Develop a social media challenge and set of resources to share – with input from collaborators.
- Early January 2021:
 - Request official graphics from TU Art Services for the campaign (earlier the better!)
- Late January 2021
 - Create complementary posts and captioning for the campaigns
 - Plan a posting schedule in a master calendar (e.g. Hootsuite.)
 - Submit campaign reminders through campus news platforms.
 - Activate student groups and departments by reminding them of the upcoming challenges (calendar invite.)
- During the campaigns in February – March 2021:
 - Launch official invitations to participate in the challenges on social media platforms.
 - Create and post supplemental graphics and messages to spur inspiration (e.g. share related, timely content from other accounts.)
 - Engage with other campus and regional social media accounts.
 - Answer direct messages and inquiries on social media, daily.
 - After the competition portion:
 - Follow-up with users who submitted content by commenting on their post.

5. Resources and stakeholders involved

- **TU Art Services:** Created official, TU branded, campaign graphics to distribute on campus and through campus platforms.
- **Student marketing assistance:** The TU Office of Sustainability utilized a part-time graphic design student to develop marketing and outreach materials for these campaigns.
- **TU's Office of Civic Engagement & Social Responsibility:** Partnered with CESR to promote the campaigns to a wider network of students.
- **TU Campus Activities Board:** Partnered with CAB to promote the campaigns to a wider network of students.
- **Campus event marketing tools:** Submitted invitations and campaign reminders to existing TU's daily news, master calendar, via direct email and display screens throughout campus for campus-wide promotion.

6. Describe the Results of this campaign component

- The Office of Sustainability had 7205 engagements with 1647 unique users on our social media platforms throughout the two campaigns during the competition. The Fix-It-Fair: Food Waste Edition alone accounted for 5305 engagements, with a majority coming from Instagram Reel Views. See tables below.
- One Instagram reel from the Fix-It Fair: Food Waste Edition competition gained +2,000 viewers within the first 2 hours. This is our most viewed reel to date.
- In general, the Office of Sustainability saw increased user engagement on Facebook and Instagram through followers, likes, views, and sharing. The Twitter account saw less engagement activity.
- On Instagram, user accounts tend to save and share event invitations and instructions, as well as, recordings of events, on IG TV more than other content.
- During the competition, @SustainableTU had more social media interactions than usual from other student groups and campus departments such as TU Advising, TU Dining, TU Store, TU Civic Engagement & Social Responsibility, TU Campus Activities Board, TU Student Government Association, as well as accounts from other universities in Maryland.

Total User Engagements with @SustainableTU Social Media Platforms

	Fix-It Fair: Food Waste Edition	Declutter Challenge	Waste Responsibly	Total
Facebook				
People Reached	439	415	365	1219

Engagements	21	4	6	31
Instagram				
Likes	112	21	126	259
Shares	8	6	7	21
Story Views	987	641	299	1927
Reel Views	3720	n/a	n/a	3720
Twitter				
Likes	11	3	5	19
Retweet	7	1	1	9
Total	5305	1091	809	7205

Average Unique User Interaction Per Post

	Fix-It Fair: Food Waste Edition	Declutter Challenge	Waste Responsibly
Facebook			
Unique User Interaction Per Post	336	185	69
Instagram			
Unique User Interaction Per Post	965	42	45
Twitter			
Unique User Interaction Per Post	1	2	2
Total	1302	229	116

7. What would you do differently in the future?

- Share more instructional and resource-based content.
- Post more content at the start of the short-term challenges to gain momentum faster.
- If students are expected to engage with direct action, an incentive, such as course credit, should be considered for maximum participation.

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

- Create content that is region-specific or institution-specific.

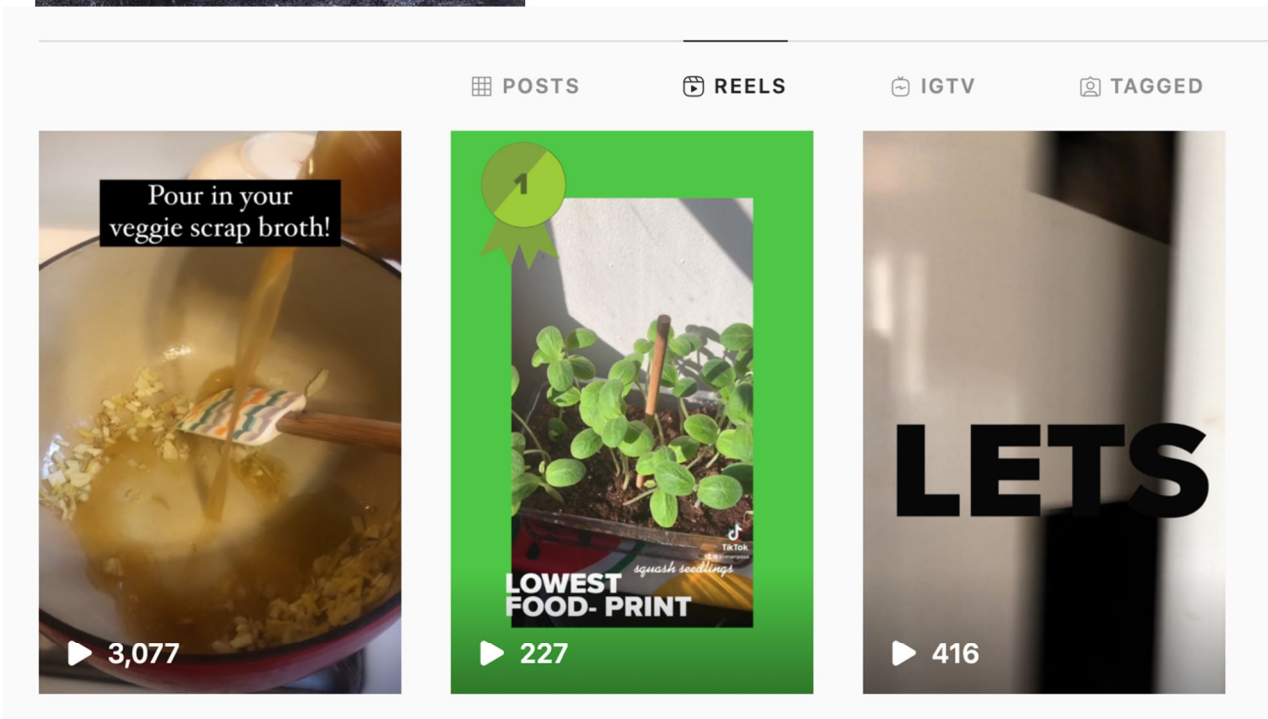
- Don't reinvent the wheel. Consider expanding on existing quality content and programming.
- Research which social media platform your targeted audience uses most. (In this case, students and student groups were the target audience, so Instagram was the main channel of engagement since it is currently the most trafficked platform from TU students and TU student groups.)
- Add music to social media content. Especially with video content– adding trending music genres can boost viewership.
- Collaborate with other departments from the planning stage to the execution stage of the competition for increased support and promotion.
- Utilize reels and hash-tags on Instagram.
- Always link information to your social media post (e.g. "Learn more using the link in our bio.")
- Create content that is accessible to individuals with disabilities by providing an image description and captioning when possible!

9. Photos and Graphics

Fix-It Fair: Food Waste Edition

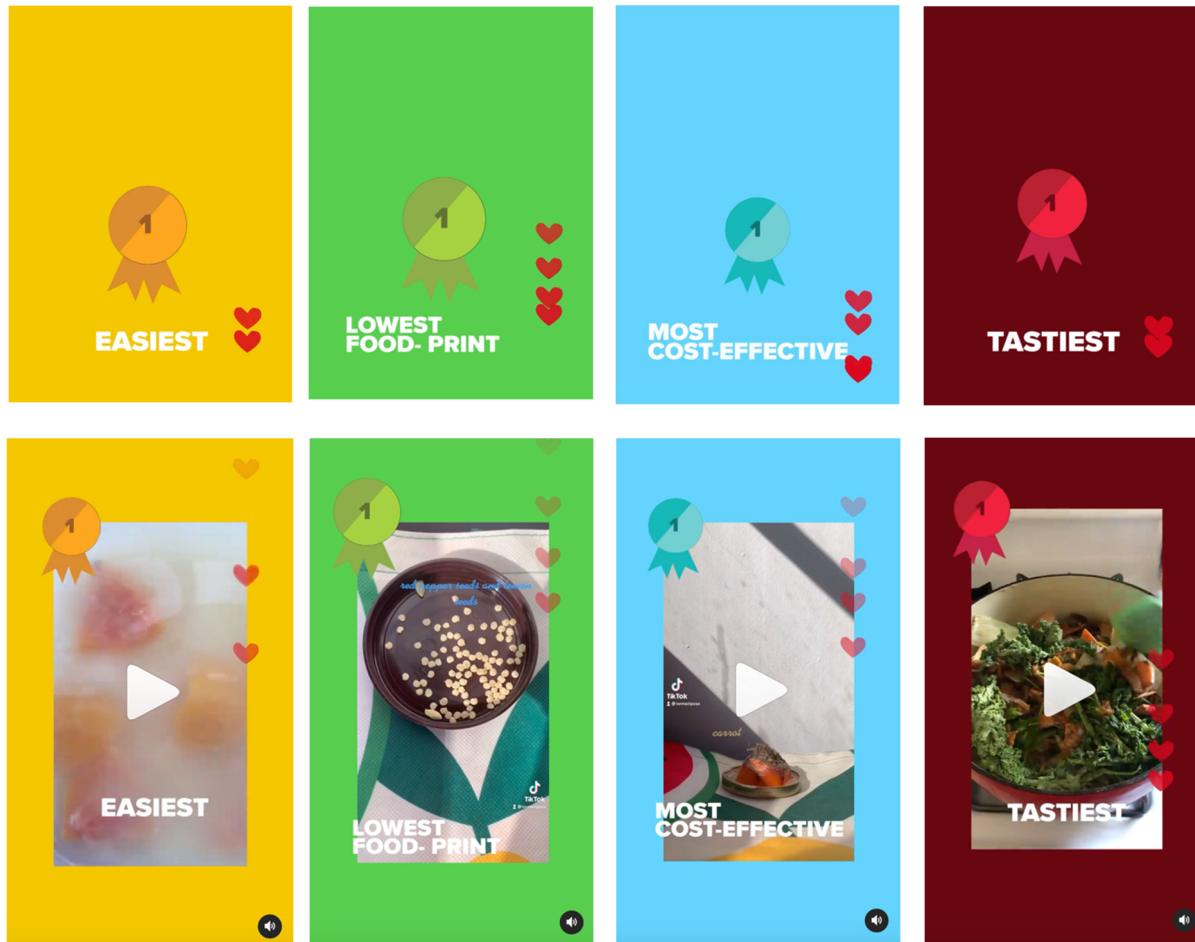


- The graphic, featured to the left, was commissioned through TU Art Services to advertise student engagement through Instagram during the virtual challenge.



- Reels created by TU's Office of Sustainability and shared from [@SustainableTU](https://www.instagram.com/SustainableTU) during the Fix-It Fair: Food Waste Edition competition. The reel to the left gained +2,000 unique viewers in the **first 2 hours!** View the reel [here](#), or copy link: [instagram.com/sustainabletu/reels](https://www.instagram.com/sustainabletu/reels)

Fix-It Fair: Food Waste Edition (cont.)



- Screenshots from a reel on @SustainableTU that announced the categories that participants could win from: easiest, lowest food print, most cost-effective and tastiest.

Declutter Challenge



Declutter for 14 days
& share your pictures
along the way!

Day 1 → get rid of 1 item
Day 2 → get rid of 2 items
Day 3 → get rid of 3 items

HOW MANY DAYS CAN YOU GO?

DONATE, SELL, GIFT, OR RECYCLE AVOID THE LANDFILL!



Tag @SustainableTU & @TU Engaged
#DeclutterTU #CR2ZW



- Invitation to participate in the challenge. Post on social media and flyer distributed via email and text.

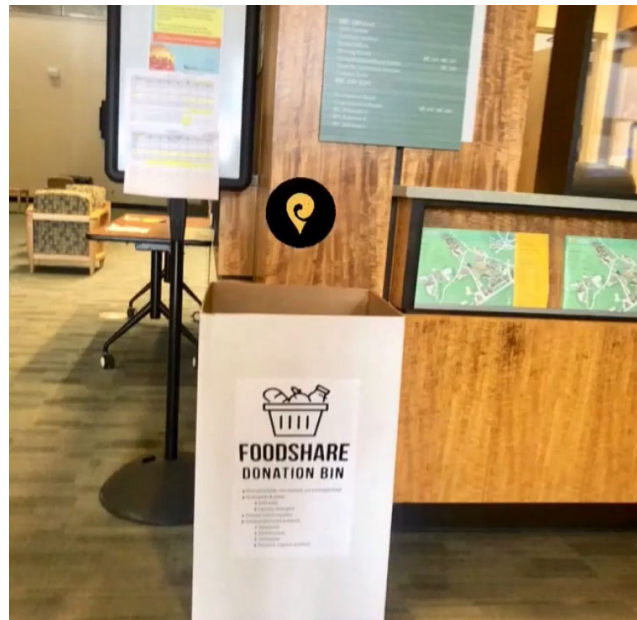
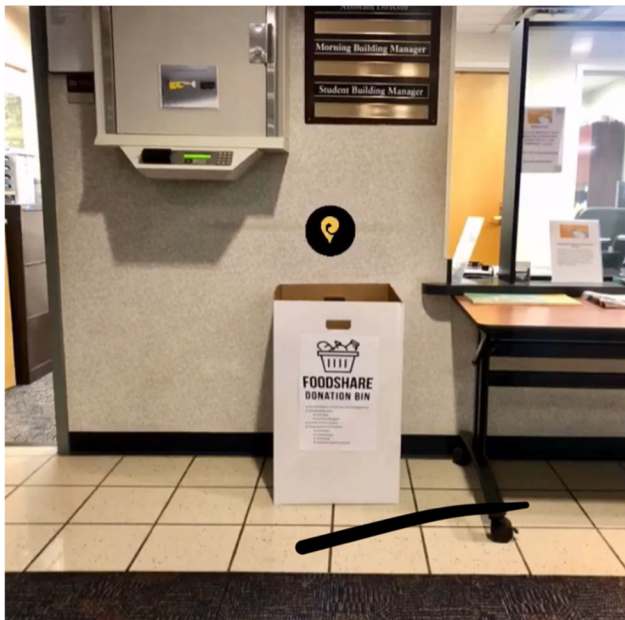


- Social media graphic – using TU branding to inspire action during the challenge (TU's brand colors are black and gold, and the mascot is a tiger.)

Declutter Challenge (cont.)



- Social media posts made during the challenge– highlighting the temporary TU FoodShare donation bin locations to for students to discard unwanted (but still prepackaged and unexpired) food during the Declutter challenge.



Waste Responsibly



- The graphics featured on this page were posted on social media, @SustainableTU, AND displayed as a slide on existing presentation screens throughout campus buildings. This way, the campaign had visibility, both, on-campus and off-campus.

