



Raritan Valley Community College

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Focus of Case study

Recording and analyzing the compost and recycling trends at RVCC and educating staff and students on proper composting and recycling habits.

Detailed description of campaign or effort:

There was a noticeable increase of improper recycling and composting habits around campus. There was an increase of trash being found in compost and recycling bins, which caused the increase of recyclable materials to be thrown into the trash. Also, there was a drastic decrease in the use of the state funded composter on campus because of compost having to be thrown out. Because of this data, as a team we analyzed the placement of the bins across campus, the signs that are placed above the bins, and also the education on recycling and compost of students and staff members. We created new simpler signs to label the proper bins. There was a poster and petition created which urged students on the importance of proper waste disposal. Also, we hired on two RVCC students to film a video on proper recycling and compost. Finally, we talked to the staff members in the kitchen on composting excess food used.

Planning steps & timeline to implement:

- *List out in bullet format each of the steps involved in planning.*
- January 2022- the compost signs were redone
- January 2022- went around and properly placed bins across campus
- January 2022- March 2022- collected data twice a week of composting and recycling numbers
- February 2022- created sticker labels for the composting bins on campus
- February 2022- created social media posts and email outreach to promote education on recycling and composting along campus
- March 2022- created poster board and had volunteers educate individuals (for 4 days in the cafeteria) on composting and recycling while urging them to sign a pledge to use the knowledge that they learned
- March 2022- the compost, recycling, and landfill signs were redone
- March 2022-May 2022- created 2 videos on the proper ways to recycle and compost

- May 2022- we ordered 4 new orange tops with lids for cafeteria organics collection bins.

Resources and stakeholders involved

- Budget
 - RecycleMania intern: \$750
 - Grant from the Department of Environmental Protection: \$6,095
 - This covered interns, new lids, and a video display.
 - Bottle cap collection box: \$242.
- Stakeholders
 - Sustainability Coordinator
 - Video adjunct
 - Interns (2 composter, CR2ZW, and 2 video)
 - 12 Environmental Club members and student volunteers who helped with pledge
 - Facilities Department provided support

Describe the Results of this campaign component

- General results**
- Specific measurable impact:**
 - The main result of this project is that we discovered that the post-consumer contamination of organic waste is a challenging problem that deserves ongoing student education, in addition to intuitive signage and a very distinctive bin so that people don't think its garbage.
 - We had about 44 pledges for our petition we had people sign
 - We collected were around 1120 lbs. of organics (here's the link to the spreadsheet https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1lsdB2G4bcVvji30EwhnoW3LwryqKVggjllTiR_F5Wrw/edit?usp=sharing)
 - Pledge and education did not help much with contamination of post-consumer organic waste collected, so we decided that improving signage and making a student orientation video would be productive next steps. We also added a bottle cap collection box (from Terracycle) when we made the video.

What would you do differently in the future?

What we would do differently in the future would be create more of a solid outline of what would be accomplished in each week, in regard to what we were looking to accomplish and setting goals for what we were looking to accomplish in the semester. Also, we should have created more awareness earlier on in the year for the students and staff, so they would hopefully be mindful of the separation of their waste. Also, to have more green technology initiatives via social media platforms that students and staff might use.

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

- Create a solid outline of what you are looking to accomplish.
- Find creative ways to create interactive initiatives with the staff and students to create some excitement around composting and recycling.
- Do not expect drastic changes because it takes time to create a habit of proper disposal of waste.

- Stay in constant contact with custodial staff and kitchen staff and communicate on the separation of trash and food waste for proper disposal of each.

Photos and Graphics

- 2-minute compost waste video: <https://youtu.be/VO0ZN607FyY>
- 15 second compost waste video: <https://youtu.be/bW-SWlu9i08>
- Link to pictures of the poster used to spread awareness:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aE9XegS3owJf4mKr9kwJvaRBNKSkcDu_cl-UPo10uk/edit?usp=sharing
- Link to the photos taken during the production of the video:
<https://photos.app.goo.gl/6XFVsra8WH7B1P339>
- Link to pictures of the new signs: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1DqBVDtHz-qGNRCwr8sXjwjlZ-JZllyOz647HEdv9Hi8/edit?usp=sharing>
- Link to the petition: [Waste Sorting Pledge at RVCC \(google.com\)](https://www.google.com/petitions/Waste-Sorting-Pledge-at-RVCC)
- Picture of the pledge outreach:

