



## **2024 Campus Race to Zero Waste Case Study**

### **Fresno State Climate Action Team**

Organic Waste diversion On Campus (2023-2024)

#### **Contact Information**

##### **Feng Teter**

Sustainability Analyst / Specialist

Office of the Provost

Division of Academic Affairs

California State University, Fresno

Email: [fengkt1@mail.fresnostate.edu](mailto:fengkt1@mail.fresnostate.edu)

Phone: (559) 278-2636

##### **Hillary Rodriguez**

Climate Action Fellow

California State University, Fresno

Email: [hillarodriguez@mail.fresnostate.edu](mailto:hillarodriguez@mail.fresnostate.edu)

Phone: (562) 674-7256

#### **Focus of Case Study**

This case study discusses strategies to promote waste diversion on campus and the outcomes of implementing these strategies during the 2023/2024 academic year.

#### **Detailed Description of Campaign or Effort**

During the 2023/2024 academic year, Fresno State Sustainability made significant advancements in promoting and implementing measures to reduce organic waste on campus. Efforts began in September 2024, coordinating with various campus entities, including the

Grounds Department, College of Science and Mathematics, Dining Hall, Student Pantry, and on-campus restaurants. An initial area of 600 sq ft was provided by the Grounds Department to start composting, and the College of Science and Mathematics approved a budget for purchasing necessary composting tools. Meetings were held with managers of campus restaurants to educate them on waste sorting and coordinate food scrap collection times.

Outreach and education played a significant role in the project's development. At the beginning of the spring semester, composting and gardening volunteer opportunities were launched for students. A total of 40 volunteers participated, assisting with tasks such as turning compost, fertilizing plants with compost, and planting in designated areas. The initiative was promoted through social media announcements and regular tabling events, where ongoing volunteer activities and waste sorting challenges were highlighted. Educational topics such as water management, pollinators, and indigenous plants were also covered.

The project encountered initial challenges with contamination, particularly from the University Dining Hall, which frequently placed incorrect materials in compost bins. This led to significant amounts of waste being discarded. Discussions with managers and the distribution of printed fliers improved the situation, although issues with plastic and latex glove contamination persisted. These contaminants were easier to identify and separate from the compost pile.

Tracking the weight of collected waste was initially challenging due to the lack of a scale. Estimates were made using a 5-gallon bucket. In January 2024, a scale and thermometer were acquired, allowing for more accurate tracking of waste and compost pile development. Collaboration with other campus departments, such as the Writing Center for shredded paper collection and ASI for recycling bin placements, further supported the initiative. The Early Education Center also contributed significantly by providing educational opportunities about composting and recycling.

The project saw considerable growth in operations due to these outreach and education efforts, along with the addition of new collaborators. May recorded the largest amount of organic waste collected, totaling 2,633 pounds. Plans are in place to increase this number and involve more entities and individuals in the project.

## **Planning Steps & Timeline to Implementation**

**Planning Stage** (September 2023- December 2023)

- Established relationships with different departments and organizations on campus ( College of science and Mathematics, grounds department )
- Coordinated and secure approval for composting yard space.
- Established clear, measurable goals and objectives for waste diversion and compost production.
- Developed a comprehensive plan outlining all phases of the project, including timelines and responsibilities .
- Assigned roles to manage the project, collect waste, educate and generate outreach in the campus community, etc.
- Created training programs and conducted sessions for staff and volunteers on composting techniques and waste sorting.
- Designed promotional materials, including fliers, posters, and social media content, to educate and engage the campus community.

#### **Implementation Stage (January 2024-Present)**

- Coordinate and schedule waste pickup times
- Implement a small-scale pilot program to test and refine processes before full implementation.
- Monitor progress on a weekly basis and make necessary adjustments to improve efficiency and effectiveness.
- Implement a system for tracking waste collection, compost production, and volunteer participation.
- Recognize and celebrate key milestones to maintain enthusiasm and support for the project.
- Prepare and share monthly reports on the project's progress and outcomes with stakeholders.
- Create schedules and guidelines for composting maintenance.
- Educate stakeholders about proper waste sorting and accepted organic waste.
- Invite the campus community to volunteer events.
- Promote the initiative and educate different campus community groups about composting.
- Address sorting system issues and continue educational efforts.
- Hold regular meetings with the team to address inconveniences and challenges

## Resources and stakeholders involved

This project was supported by various campus entities and resources. Tools used in the project were a combination of borrowed items from the Associated Students Inc. (ASI), Biology Unit, Horticulture Unit, and Grounds Department. Additionally, the acquisition of tools and materials, which amounted to \$2,997.99, was financed by the Office of the Provost and the College of Science and Mathematics. Part of these funds was also used to support other sustainability initiatives outside of composting.

### Borrowed Items:

- Shovels
- Rakes
- Rubber boots
- Containers
- Gorilla carts

### Purchased Items:

- Pitchforks
- Hoses
- Gloves
- Thermometers
- Scales
- Worms
- Sunhats
- Trash cans

## Results of this campaign component

### General Results

- Featured in the Fresno State Science and mathematics website <https://www.fresnostatecsm.com/fresno-state-champions-sustainable-practices-through-innovative-projects/>
- Participated in several outreach community events on campus and the community (e.g. CSM science carnival, Kids day) <https://www.fresnostatecsm.com/first-science-and-mathematics-carnival/>
- Featured in Campus Newspapers <https://fscollegian.com/2024/04/green-practices/>

## **Specific measurable impact figures**

- Recruited 40 volunteers on campus to engage in climate action projects.
- Diverted 9263 pounds of food waste to make compost
- Given 10 presentations to classes or clubs on campus
- Recovered 4059 pounds of edible food delivered to the student Cupboard.

## **What Would You Do Differently in the Future?**

- Expand operations to divert more organic waste from landfills.
- Increase collaboration with more campus offices and external organizations (e.g., restaurants, student living communities).
- Seek support from the Jordan Agriculture College.
- Obtaining certification to operate heavy machinery is also planned, as current manual compost management limits expansion potential.
- Create more volunteer opportunities to engage more members of the community.
- Create a program to incentivize the community to bring their organic waste from home to campus.
- Organize compost distribution events so the community can benefit from the program and learn more about composting.

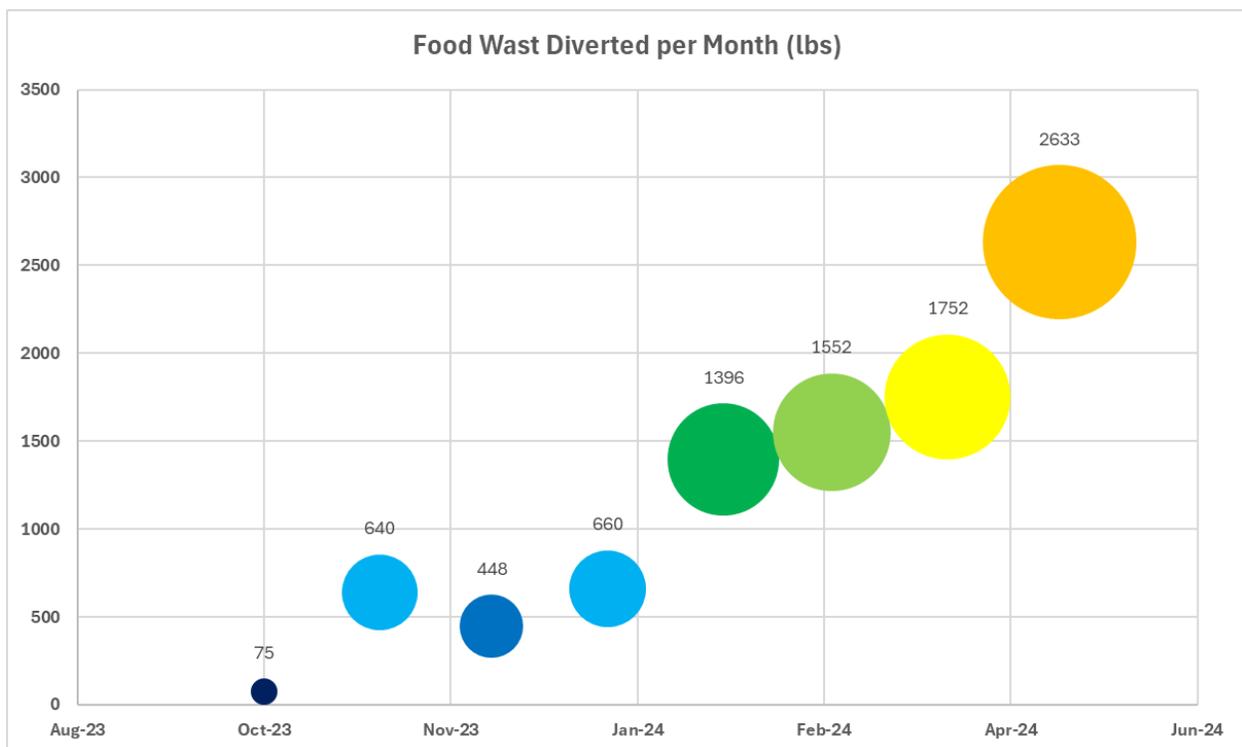
## **Advice for Other Colleges**

- Involve as many people as possible at different levels, including education, volunteer work, and direct support by contributing organic waste.
- Make the process user-friendly to encourage participation. Install clearly labeled, visible trash cans and offer direct waste pickup from food facilities or offices.
- Establish a regular volunteer base through service-learning courses or direct communication with professors.
- Provide necessary equipment (e.g., gloves, boots) to ensure volunteers can work comfortably.
- Host volunteer opportunities at various times to maximize participation.
- Record and document data on waste collected, compost produced, and volunteer engagement. Use photos and videos to visually represent progress. This data can be used for educational purposes or reporting results to different campus organizations.

- Knock on a lot of doors and be persistent. If you don't hear back from a person or institution, keep insisting and have patience.
- To smooth the volunteer sign-up process, use tools like Google Forms, Eventbrite, or SignUpGenius to streamline and manage registrations effectively.

## Photos and Graphics

Figure 1. Food Waste diverted per month (lbs)



Picture 1. CSM Science Carnival, waste sorting and compost activity for kids.

Picture 2. Weekly tabling event promoting and educating composting.

Picture 3. Teaching Kids about the Composting process.

Picture 4. Processing organic waste.

Picture 5. Composting volunteer events official flier.

Picture 6. Celebrating milestones on social media.









# Let's Compost!



DO YOU NEED  
VOLUNTEER HOURS AND  
WANT TO LEARN HOW  
TO COMPOST?  
**JOIN US!**

EVERY TUESDAY  
AND THURSDAY FROM 11  
AM TO 12 PM IN THE  
SCIENCE 2 COURTYARD.

REGISTER BY SCANNING  
THE QR CODE BELOW.



For questions follow us on Instagram  
[@fsclimateaction](https://www.instagram.com/fsclimateaction)

**FRESNO STATE**  
College of Science and Mathematics

← Posts



[View insights](#)

[Boost post](#)



Liked by [tribeta\\_csufresno](#) and 53 others

