



Georgetown University 2026 Campus Race to Zero Waste Case Study Competition

Contact Info

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Focus of Case Study

Increasing awareness and education of sustainable practices and waste-reduction strategies at cafes by partnering with the student-run nonprofit organization The Corp for the campaign *Sip Sustainably*.

Detailed Description of Campaign or Effort:

If there's one thing college students love, it's a good café. Armed with a freshly brewed latte and free Wi-Fi, they can take on their studies with newfound vigor. At Georgetown University, students support each other by grabbing coffee at The Corp, a student-led nonprofit organization that employs 300 Georgetown undergraduates. No matter the time of day, each of The Corp's 4 on-campus cafes is packed with students, faculty, and staff enjoying a good ol' cup of joe.

On campuses across the country, hundreds of pounds of waste are produced by single-use disposable cups. However, many students do not realize the impact the disposable cup from their coffee order has on the environment. The Georgetown Office of Sustainability aimed to raise awareness of this issue and further educate the Georgetown community about waste-reduction strategies through CR2ZW by partnering with The Corp and The Corp Green for the *Sip Sustainably* campaign.

Sip Sustainably (February 16th – 27th) was a multi-week event comprising three key actions: an exclusive drink collaboration, an increased discount for using reusable mugs, and a tabling event that gave away free reusable mugs. The Corp and The Corp Green, with input from the sustainability team, developed *Very Berry Matcha*, a specialty drink available for purchase only during the campaign period. The drink's purposefully green design and fruity flavoring were intended to evoke imagery of the Earth we all seek to keep green. The Corp advertised this specialty drink on a flyer that simultaneously promoted CR2ZW. This flyer was posted at all Corp locations across Georgetown. A major component of *Sip Sustainably* was increasing The Corp's pre-existing \$0.25 reusable mug discount to \$1 during the campaign. The Office of Sustainability and The Corp agreed to cover the cost of this discount 50/50 for up to 250 drinks. This increased discount promoted zero-waste action by rewarding those who brought a reusable mug for their drink. On February 19th, Zero Waste Interns tabled at Uncommon Grounds, one of The Corp's cafe locations, and handed out free reusable mugs with informative cards detailing the importance

of reusing and spreading CR2ZW awareness. The discount and tabling were heavily promoted on The Office of Sustainability's Instagram ([@sustainablegu](#)) through posts and [reels](#), which The Corp reposted.

Planning Steps & Timeline to Implement

- August - November 2025: Brainstorming for CR2ZW campaigns, activities, and collaborations took place between the Sustainability Communications and Engagement Coordinator and the Sustainability Communications and Engagement Intern. An initial vision for *Sip Sustainably* was created.
- November 13th, 2025: The Office of Sustainability reached out to The Corp and The Corp Green via email to explore a collaboration and schedule a meeting to discuss logistics.
- December 2nd, 2025: The Office of Sustainability met with the engagement and sustainability heads of The Corp and The Corp Green via Zoom to discuss the potential for collaboration and make changes based on The Corp's feedback.
- December 5th, 2025: The Corp officially agrees to the collaboration following internal discussions within their board.
- December 2025 – January 2026: The Corp, The Corp Green, and The Office of Sustainability engage in consistent communications regarding the promotion and finalize its details. A contract is signed by both organizations to clarify responsibilities. During this period, marketing promotions (posts, flyers, mug-info cards, etc.) are developed and finalized.
- February 1st 2026: [Slate & Sip](#), one of our office's initial efforts for CR2ZW, took place. Zero Waste Interns and EcoRep volunteers decorated the chalkboard in the Leavey Center to advertise the Office of Sustainability's events for Campus Race to Zero Waste. One of the events highlighted on the chalkboard was the *Sip Sustainably* collaboration with The Corp. The chalkboard stayed decorated for two weeks, being erased for another organization's marketing on February 14th.
- February 16th – 27th 2026: The *Sip Sustainably* campaign goes live.
 - February 16th: The Corp publishes their flyer as an Instagram story. The Office of Sustainability posts on Instagram to promote the upcoming tabling event.
 - February 18th: The Office of Sustainability publishes a reel on Instagram promoting the \$1 reusable mug discounts and showcases one of the office's reusable mugs in use.
 - February 19th: The tabling event at Uncommon Grounds takes place. Members of our team arrive 30 minutes early to set up the event.
 - February 20th – 27th: The Office of Sustainability consistently reposts published items to our story to continuously promote the event.
- April 9th 2026: The Corp shares a Sustainability Cup Reuse Report with The Office of Sustainability, detailing the campaign's results and the organization's plans for future zero-waste efforts.

Resources and Stakeholders Involved

The teams within the Office of Sustainability and The Corp collaborated closely on this effort to maximize results while remaining mindful of both organizations' financial constraints. We agreed to raise the pre-existing \$0.25 reusable mug discount to \$1 and split the cost, each organization covering a \$0.50 burden for every discount invoked. The \$1 discount would be available until the final day of the campaign or once the discount had been invoked 250 times, for a total of \$250 between The Office of Sustainability and The Corp. This cap was set to adhere to each team's budgets. The discount was employed 85 times, resulting in an actual total cost of \$85 split evenly between our organizations. The Office of Sustainability further budgeted to purchase 100 mugs (for a total of \$615.00) for this effort.

The Office of Sustainability Team (including our Zero Waste Interns) played important roles in the success of *Sip Sustainably*. The Sustainability Communications and Engagement Coordinator was responsible for initiating and maintaining contact between our office and The Corp regarding this campaign, and the Sustainability Communications and Engagement Intern led the campaign's social media marketing and the creation of promotional materials. The Zero Waste Interns played a vital role in preparing the reusable mugs and tabling. They spent time unboxing and preparing the reusable mugs with information cards and volunteered to hand them out during the school day at the tabling event alongside the Sustainability Communications and Engagement Intern.

The Office of Sustainability also worked closely with Corp Green, The Corp's interest group focused on reducing waste and promoting sustainability across their storefronts. Their communication and support were essential to raising the \$0.25 discount to \$1 and spreading awareness of zero-waste action at The Corp locations.

Results of this Campaign Component

a. General Results

- i. While all of the Office of Sustainability's efforts and activities for CR2ZW aimed to raise awareness of waste reduction and sustainable action at Georgetown, *Sip Sustainably* specifically led to heightened student responsiveness to The Corp's reusable mug discount. Our Sustainability Communications and Engagement Intern and Zero Waste Interns noted during the tabling event that many students were surprised to learn about the discount, but were excited to take advantage of it and begin bringing reusable mugs even after the promotion period.
- ii. Follow-up communications with The Corp and The Corp Green have initiated discussions to create a tumbler campaign and expand the reusable mug discount, with The Office of Sustainability's support for future academic years. Current intentions are to eliminate at least 1,000 disposable cups by extending the \$250 budget period from two weeks to a full semester in Fall 2026, with the \$0.25 discount increasing to \$0.50. The Corp also intends to make waste data reports a regular part of its operations, enabling a comprehensive understanding of how its reusable mug discount impacts waste reduction.

b. Specific Measurable Impact

- i. At the tabling event, we gave out 40 reusable mugs. These mugs hold both hot and cold drinks and feature our office's logo. As such, these mugs are not only useful, reusable items for students, but also serve as effective promotional materials for the Office of Sustainability and its mission.
- ii. 85 disposable cups were saved from being thrown out during the campaign as a direct result of the \$1 reusable mug discount. This figure accounts for the recorded number of times the \$1 discount was used across all 4 Corp cafes: 28 at UnCommon Grounds, 20 at MUG, 8 at Hilltoss, and 29 at Midnight Mug. 1.113 kg of cup waste was prevented, based on the amount of waste produced per cup type and size.
- iii. The Office of Sustainability's Instagram post promoting the tabling event had 807 views, resulting in 4 shares and 3 profile visits to our Instagram (@sustainablegu). Our Instagram reel advertising the increased reusable mug discount and tabling event had 472 views.

What would you do differently in the future?

In the future, our office would further spread awareness of the *Sip Sustainably* campaign and The Corp's reusable mug discount by flyering at select locations. As there are numerous "hot spots" at Georgetown for flyers, using these spaces would ensure that more members of the Georgetown community are made aware of the promotion. Ideally, our office would also make the specialty drink a larger aspect of the campaign. Originally, the intention was to make the drink available only to those who brought a reusable mug. This was changed to make the drink readily available to all during the campaign and increase engagement. In the future, we will heighten the promotion of the specialty drink. For example, everyone who purchased the specialty drink would be entered to win a sustainable swag bag from our office, containing a tote bag, reusable mug, and other such environmentally-minded items, or a free drink voucher with The Corp.

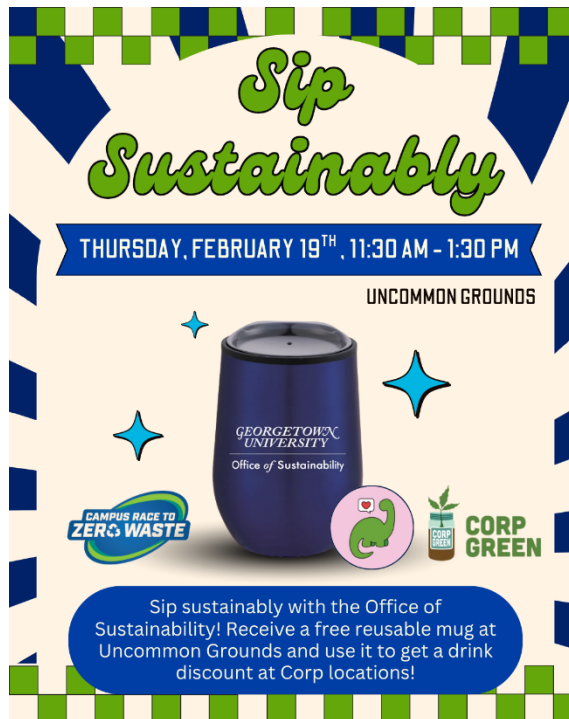
What advice would you give to another college that wanted to do a similar effort?

Our office's advice is to start communication with collaborators early. Since budgets are set so far in advance, it is instrumental to make contact very early in the year to ensure both organizations have adequate budget, resources, and time to engage in this collaboration. As indicated in our timeline, the campaign took months to finalize. Make sure your office and collaborators feel they have sufficient time to work on this collaboration while also keeping up with their internal responsibilities. This is particularly true if a college is working with a large-scale corporation such as Starbucks, which may have additional barriers as compared to a local or student-led organization. Early communication is also essential for building relationships between organizations that may facilitate future collaborations.

Additionally, we recommend scheduling the campaign around holidays, breaks, and large campus events to ensure it receives maximum focus. *Sip Sustainably* began on Presidents Day and ended at the start of Spring Break, which may have reduced the campaign's effectiveness, as The Corp had limited hours over the holiday and many students were leaving campus by the end of the campaign. While this can be tricky due to conflicting schedules, it will be less of a barrier if communications are established early on.

Finally, make sure your ideas are ready, but be receptive to changes. Cafes have valuable insights into their customers' purchasing and waste-related practices. Our communications with The Corp gave us a better understanding of how the Georgetown community makes decisions about their coffee purchases, which influenced the planning of the specialty drink and the cost-sharing of the discount. It's a collaboration, so be open to changes and share your ideas knowing they'll come out even better for it!

Photos and Graphics



From left to right: (1) The Corp's flyer and social media story promoting the specialty drink and \$1 discount. This flyer was showcased across The Corp's 4 café locations, as well as at their 2 convenience stores. (2) The Office of Sustainability's social media post for *Sip Sustainably*, as seen on our Instagram @sustainablegu.



Photos taken at the *Slate & Sip* event promoting CR2ZW. The last listed promotional item reads “Drink collab with The Corp Feb 17 – 28”. The second photo shows Zero Waste Interns, EcoRep volunteers, and the Sustainability Communications and Engagement Intern who created the chalkboard design. Photos were taken by a passerby on the Sustainability Communication and Engagement Intern’s phone.



Photos taken at the tabling event on February 19th. The final image shows two Georgetown undergraduate students posing with their reusable mugs and stickers from The Office of Sustainability. Photo credits go to Kelsey Olmen, Sustainability Communications and Engagement Intern.

Additional Supplemental Documents and Information:

- [The Office of Sustainability’s Instagram @sustainablegu](#). Our Instagram features the post and reel created to promote this campaign, as well as the numerous other posts/reels created to spread awareness of CR2ZW and our other activities and collaborations associated with it.
- [The CR2ZW Impact Report](#). This Impact Report, created by our team, is a comprehensive report of all the engagements and activities our office held during Campus Race to Zero Waste. It details all the events that took place, our placement in participating categories, waste data, and more. It also contains more photos from our events.

- [The Corp x Office of Sustainability Cup Reuse Report](#). This report, created by The Corp post-campaign, details the impact of the heightened discount and discusses future prospects for reducing waste from disposable cup use.