



2021 Campus Race to Zero Waste Case Study Competition

Drexel University

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

Bo Solomon, Procurement Services, Drexel University, jbs328@drexel.edu 215-895-5864

2. Focus of Case study

In Drexel's dining services, how can we support the need for student safety while minimizing the use of plastics?

3. Detailed description of campaign or effort:

Care about climate and human safety? Want to make your voice heard at Drexel?

Be part of the solution! "Climate, COVID-19, and Drexel Dining" is a case competition in which interdisciplinary teams of Drexel undergraduate students propose answers to the following question:

As the climate emergency accelerates, we now find ourselves grappling with Covid-19 safety measures that have suddenly increased our reliance on single-use plastics – a major driver of fossil fuel consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. In Drexel's dining services, how can we support the need for student safety while minimizing the use of plastics?

The competing teams must craft an evidence-based solution that considers institutional realities, accounts for a budget, considers real-world challenges regarding implementation, and provides a student-focused communication plan. The strongest team proposals will demonstrate an understanding of the problem and the management parameters and will show an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving.

Representatives from Drexel Business Services and Aramark at Drexel will be available to provide context and answer team questions at the launch event and during office hours. The winning team's proposals will be considered for adoption by Drexel Dining Services and Aramark at Drexel.

Spots are limited! Competition open to five to six interdisciplinary teams dependent on applicant pool. Students are encouraged to form teams of people (5-person max) or apply individually for team placement.

<https://drexel.edu/sustainability/about/climate-year/interdisciplinary-case-competition/>

4. Planning steps & timeline to implement:

- Idea formed August 2020.
- Meetings and communications began September 2021.

- Aramark, Business Services & Westphal College began working with us October 2020.
- Prize money donated from Aramark and Business Services January 2021
- Flyer created January 2021.
- Announcement January 2021 DrexelOne Communications
- Competition Launch Jan 20, 2021
- Judge's Office Hours Jan 22, 2021
- Workshop: "Fracked, Cracked and Discarded: Environmental Injustice and Plastics." Dr. Diane Sicotte, Associate Professor of Sociology, will discuss environmental injustice generated by the global production networks turning ethane (a natural gas liquid) into plastics. Jan 22, 2021
- Competition Week Jan 20 – Jan 26, 2021
- Competition Final Jan 27, 2021
- Prize distribution Feb 1, 2021
- Participant Survey Feb. 12, 2021
- Aramark & Business Services implement ideas.

5. Resources and stakeholders involved.

\$2000 prize budget from Drexel Business Services and Aramark, Drexel Community Scholar (and former Co-op student) Aditi Bawa's idea and University Student Government representative Shivani Patel was moderator of the competition. Business Services Tony Klaumenzer, Aramark Nick Mendez as and Dee Nicholas, Assistant Professor, Westphal College, Office Hours and judges. Drexel Climate & Sustainability team selection, 25 students participated in the competition. Katie Barak, planning committee, Academy of Natural Resources.

6. Describe the Results of this campaign component.

- a. General results: 5 teams of 5 students presented proposals. 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes were awarded.
- b. Specific measurable impact figures, if applicable: The first prize winning team (Grab & Go) proposed moving Urban Eatery, one of Aramark's dining locations, from single-use serving utensils to little or no single-use by supplying reusable totes and bamboo cutlery at the beginning of each school year. They also created an APP for students to order meals ahead of pickup times to reduce student/staff interaction times. Dining Services has requested samples and quotes for reusable bags and reusable cutlery sets, which were part of the proposal that was submitted by the winning team. Business Services and Aramark are also currently reviewing our sourcing policies, in hopes of developing more sustainable practices. We hope to develop a list of measurable outcomes over the Summer and to begin working towards those outcomes next Fall.
Dining Services and Aramark has also expanded our mobile ordering greatly this year. Specifically, in the Handschumacher Dining Center and at Urban Eatery. At both of these locations, students can now order meals for pick-up, via the Get Mobil App.

Lastly, as Dining Services and Aramark reviewed all of the presentations, we realized that the many of the proposals contained suggestions for items that we had already implemented, such as trayless dining. This forced us to reevaluate the way we communicate what sustainability initiatives we have undertaken. We are looking to identify ways to communicate this and the importance of sustainability in general, better moving forward.

7. What would you do differently in the future?

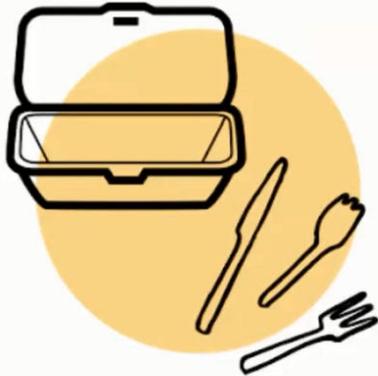
Students could submit their own teams, we found that the teams we put together were more interdisciplinary, future case studies will be held with teams that the Climate & Sustainability group puts together.

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

Begin ASAP with your first competition, students will be excited to make a difference with real-life decision making. Allow students to lead as much as possible with faculty and staff offering guidance.

9. Photos and Graphics

FEATURES:



Primarily take-out meals model at Urban, little to no single-use plastics available



Reusable tote bags and bamboo cutlery distributed on meal plan



Accompanying app to order ahead