



2021 Campus Race to Zero Waste Case Study Competition

Georgia Institute of Technology

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

Emma Brodzik, Office of Solid Waste Management & Recycling, Georgia Institute of Technology,
emma.brodzik@facilities.gatech.edu (404)385-0088

2. Focus of Case study

AWARE (Actively Working to Achieve Resource Efficiency) is a deskside recycling program, that places responsibility on the individual to increase recycling and reallocate custodial resources.

3. Detailed description of campaign or effort:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it became apparent that despite limited resources our custodial teams would be required to complete additional tasks. This time of uncertainty and budget freezes brought about the expansion of the AWARE Program. Pre-pandemic, AWARE has been on campus since 2009 and was implemented through interested building managers or after renovations. As of August 2020, the entire campus community is now participating. Individuals in their office or at their desk are responsible for emptying and sorting their waste into communal stations. By eliminating the task for custodians to empty wastebaskets every day, we increased equity and reallocated the time to detail cleaning. This also saved resources, such as, no longer purchasing deskside bin liners saving 1.4 million plastic bags from going to the landfill each year. Leveraging the individual, we can collect 60% more recyclables and draw their attention to tangible ways they can reduce their waste footprint.

The President of the Institute supported the program expansion, as he participates in his office. Additional planning included a cost breakdown and time savings estimate with our Building Services team. Once the roll-out was planned, we communicated with building managers through their weekly meetings. Webinars and PowerPoints were shared, as well as, a news article in our Daily Digest email blast that goes to all students, staff and faculty. Recycling bin audits were conducted in buildings that required additional communal infrastructure. As the program implementation went on, all recycling stations were mapped using Arc GIS to estimate how many additional bins would be needed when the campus returns to capacity. This allowed us to submit an order for funding when it became available. Additional information sessions are planned as we leverage and integrate our educational video into our Welcome to Tech program through Human Resources.

4. Planning steps & timeline to implement:

- June 2020, ideation, how the program would work
- July 2020, detailed cost analysis of labor cost, purchases, etc. Shared to leadership
- July 2020, presented plans to building managers to prepare them for changes
- August 2020, announcement is made in Daily Digest
- August 2020, bin audits conducted in buildings that needed additional bins
- September 2020, continued audits

- November 2020, mapped recycling stations on Arc GIS
- December 2020, filmed educational video
- January 2021, Spring return to campus webinar and presentations, shared new video
- March 2021, submitted bin order for funding

5. Resources and stakeholders involved

Resources: Initial expansion was done using existing supply of recycling bins and trash cans. No changes made in individual deskside bins, if user did not want to be responsible, bins did not need to be used

~\$150,000 of bins are being purchased in 2021 to furnish buildings in need and will include an audit of all buildings and shift extra containers or replace damaged units

Stakeholders: Building Services (custodial team), Building Managers, Institute Communications, Office of Campus Sustainability, Office of the President

6. Describe the Results of this campaign component

- a. General results: Involvement of the President during strategic planning (which includes sustainability goals), increased campus community knowledge of what is/is not recyclable, increased equity and reduced strain on custodians
- b. Specific: \$750,000 of labor and purchasing costs reallocated, audits show potential for 60% more recyclables collected, over 300 YouTube views on [educational video](#), 100s of people attended webinars and presentations

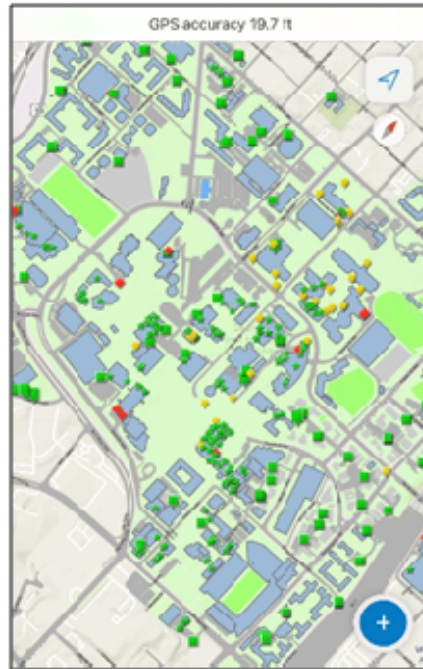
7. What would you do differently in the future? Plug into existing webinars and meetings more rather than trying to increase attendance to additional meetings.

8. What advice would you give to another college that wanted to do a similar effort? Be prepared for people to be uncomfortable with change, the growing pains will pass, and people will see the benefit and get used to the new protocol.

9. Photos and Graphics

Educational video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QCTW3KA8x9s>

News Announcement: <https://news.gatech.edu/2020/07/31/aware-recycling-program-expands-campuswide>



Left: Team visited campus buildings to record recycling and trash can counts
 Right: ArcGIS Map used during later phases of the expansion to monitor bin access

President's Message



"Georgia Tech is committed to developing leaders who understand the importance of a healthy planet to improve the human condition and are ready to make a difference. We carry out that mission not only through education and research, but very importantly, by being an example of sustainability in our own operations," said Georgia Tech President Ángel Cabrera. "The AWARE program helps the environment and it serves as a daily reminder to all of us that we can all make a difference."

WHAT IS RECYCLABLE?

PLASTIC BOTTLES & CONTAINERS

ALUMINUM CANS

MIXED PAPER

FLATTENED CARDBOARD

AWARE Georgia Tech Solid Waste Management & Recycling

RECYCLE.GATECH.EDU | RECYCLE@GATECH.EDU

Left: President Cabrera's message on the [AWARE Program webpage](#)
 Right: AWARE Poster that can printed from website



Georgia Tech

Safe Workspaces and You

WE ALL PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN KEEPING THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY SAFE.

1. Clean
 Clean off dust and dirt with a paper towel or water-moistened wipe.

2. Disinfect
 • **Wipe** the surface with the disinfectant until wet.
 • **Leave** the disinfectant on the surface for the appropriate time or air dry according to the disinfectant directions.
 • **Wipe** the surface dry if needed.
 *It is critical to follow the usage directions for all disinfectants.

3. Tidy trash and recycling
 Empty and sort your own desk-side office waste containers in community bins.

Office paper Clean plastic and all reusable containers Food waste and landfill materials

The KWARE program (Actively Working to Achieve Resource Efficiency) is now standard across campus and requires employees to empty and sort their own desk-side office waste containers.

Learn more at recycle.gatech.edu/kware.

Need to order supplies for your workspace?
 Environmental Health and Safety is providing the following for the remainder of 2020:
 • Cloth face coverings • Tissues
 • Hand sanitizer • Pre-washed thermoplastic aprons
 • Disinfectant • Dry wipes or paper towels

Work with your building manager to place an order.

TECH Moving Forward
 Start Good to Stay Good

Left: AWARE guide on digital sign displayed across campus
 Right: Hangtags on COVID protocols distributed at EH&S included AWARE information



Left: Before the program, wastebaskets cluttered halls and strained custodians in VanLeer
 Right: Auditing of trash can locations, adjustments made to provide recycling access in Klaus