



## 2023 Campus Race to Zero Waste Case Study University of Massachusetts Amherst

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### Focus of Case study:

New2U move-out collection and move-in tag sale at UMass Amherst diverts useful items from landfills during move-out and keeps them in the hands of students.

### Detailed description of campaign or effort:

In 2013, UMass Amherst students noticed the massive amount of senseless waste generated during spring move-outs. Working with guidance from the Post Landfill Action Network (PLAN), student sustainability fellows and Sustainable UMass staff partnered with Residential Life and the Office of Waste Management to develop and launch New2U – a sustainable move-out collection and move-in tag sale that promotes waste diversion, reuse, and a circular economy while providing sustainability engagement opportunities and supporting incoming students. New2U now collects items from ten tents distributed across all seven residential areas. It is one of the largest move-out collection operations of its kind - this year coordinating the sustainable exodus of over 14,000 students from 52 residence halls.

This Fall 2022, we hosted our first New2U tag sale since the pandemic (move-out collection re-launched in Spring 2022). We were challenged to re-establish the institutional awareness of this signature sustainability program, which had faded from student's memory during the two-year transitional period of remote work, school, and life necessitated by a global pandemic. We leaned on our campus partners in New Students Orientation & Transitions (NSOT) to help publicize the fall move-in tag sale to incoming students. Move-in weekend and orientation events were publicized digitally and on sandwich boards throughout campus. The one-day on-campus tag sale is accessible to all students and offers a \$5 early bird entrance (free for international students). Prices average 75% off retail - a significant savings for students who can outfit their entire room for under \$200. All tag sale revenue is cycled back to campus sustainability projects through the Sustainability Innovation & Engagement Fund (SIEF), which provided initial funding for New2U.

Planning for New2U move-out collections begins early in the semester and carries through move-out week. Prior to move-out, tents are erected in all residential areas with bins and signage for self-sorting items (kitchen/cleaning supplies, non-perishable food, electronics, décor, school supplies & books, clothing & textiles, bathroom & toiletries) and pallets to place large items (appliances, furniture, storage). Student Affairs & Campus Life assists with promotion through digital communications and floor meetings with residents. New2U signage is placed in every residential waste room. Facilities staff and RA's receive training on what can be brought to tents.

All clothing and textiles are recycled through BayState Textiles and a new partnership this year with ToughStuff Recycling allowed us to divert foam mattress pads from the landfill. Non-perishable food is collected and donated locally. All other donated items (roughly 10,000 pounds) are moved by staff, volunteers, and hired movers in trucks from tents to the on-campus storage and tag sale location, which is a large open space set up with pallet boxes for organizing small items and clearly marked open areas for furniture, storage, appliances, rugs, fans, lamps, decorative pillows. Over the summer, student interns are hired by Sustainable UMass to clean, test, and organize these items in preparation for the Fall move-in tag sale.

### **Planning steps & timeline to implement:**

#### *Program establishment:*

- Reach out to PLAN ([www.postlandfill.org](http://www.postlandfill.org)) and/or peer institutions and review [CRZW](#) and [AASHE](#) case studies for inspiration and assistance in establishing a move-out collections & reuse program on your campus.
- Secure buy-in from your college or university's Residential Life department and Waste Management or Facilities Operations Department. You will also need committed university sustainability staff and/or students to hold responsibility for annual planning and management of the program.

#### *Annual planning & execution cycle:*

- Early Spring (Jan/Feb):
  - Revisit previous year (what worked/didn't)
  - Discuss move-out & commencement timeline to determine New2U collection dates
  - New2U promotion & volunteer recruitment planning
  - Confirm placement and sizing of tents and place order
  - Reserve 2 rental golf carts for area leads on each side of campus (only necessary for large campuses).
- Mid Spring (Mar/April):
  - Confirm signage needs, what is on hand, and any printed material needs & place these orders. Using durable signage for collection tents means we rarely need to replace. Waste room signage and any printed promotional materials generally need to be updated and printed each year
  - Confirm tent and golf cart rentals
  - Assess staffing needs using staffing matrix (**PHOTO**) & put out bid for external movers if necessary to supplement collections staffing (butts in trucks) – for a large campus like ours we have found needing at least two trucks with two people each for each side of campus (4 trucks, 8 people), Sustainable UMass rents and staffs one box truck on West side, Special Projects runs a few pick-

up trucks on East side with 2-6 staff. Put out a bid to local moving companies for 2 trucks with 4 people to cover gap.

- Confirm New2U move-out collections dates/times & set up signup.com volunteer sign ups.
- Meet with and train Residence Education staff – provide handouts they can share with their RA's and residents
- Meet with and train Maintenance Supervisors – provide handouts with text and images for maintenance staff of what can/cannot be brought to New2U tents
- Confirm trailer size and placement with Baystate Textiles for textile recycling, confirm container size and placement with ToughStuff for mattress pad recycling
- Confirm bottled water donation from UMass dining for volunteers
- Promote/recruit volunteers, the earlier the better so they can take advantage of late move-out perk. Other perks include: \$20 voucher for fall tag sale, New2U t-shirt, meal ticket for some
- Late spring (May):
  - get collection materials (signage, t-shirts, supplies) out of storage, assess what is needed
  - continue to promote/recruit volunteers (students, classes, events, partner departments, alumni, community members)
  - Update contacts and information on collection crews instruction sheet, distribute. This should include:
    - all important contacts
    - Map showing New2U tents, storage location, textile trailer and mattress pad container.
  - begin compiling area lead/volunteer supply boxes, one for each side of campus/golf cart (t-shirts, gloves, duct tape, volunteer instructions, lead instructions, bottled water, snacks)
  - Post and hire Summer intern positions (2-3 students totaling 30h/wk)
- New2U move-out last minute prep:
  - Send message to all volunteers with what to wear, instructions, and where to meet
  - Confirm tents are in correct locations and have all four sides, Keep tents fully closed until tents are set up and collection crews begin running (otherwise stuff and trash is dumped in tents and toters)
  - Office of Waste Management brings clean toters and pallets to tents, and pallet boxes to storage location
  - Sustainable UMass staff sets up tents, signage for sorting items in front of toters, & pallets, sign and bags for hangers near clothes/textile toter, heavy duty contractor bags for clothes/textiles, sign for mattress pad recycling, volunteer instructions signage. Outside tent, place signs for trash (broken/unsalvageable items) and broken rigid plastic (which Office of Waste Management picks up for recycling)
- New2U collections execution:
  - Each evening send reminder to next day volunteers. Print out volunteer list for next day... In the morning place with the east/west side golf carts
  - Area leads, pick up golf carts & supplies, meet volunteers at check in points at each 3-hour interval – give t-shirt, go over volunteer instructions, distribute volunteers to tents, organize items in tents, make sure enough bags at each tent for textiles.

- Drive east & west side tent route with any new-to-campus movers or individuals working collections prior to or at very start of collections
- Collections crews drive from tent to tent on assigned side of campus. Collect bagged clothes and bring to textile trailer, bring mattress pads to mattress pad container, bring all other items (furniture/appliances and small sorted items to storage location), sort into designated areas/containers. Contact area lead if any tents low on supplies or any questions or other needs.
- Summer:
  - 2-3 student summer interns hired to work combined 30h/wk cleaning & testing appliances & electronics and organize all items for the tag sale.
    - Food items are first to be assessed, organized and donated to a local organization
  - Time permitting, inventory is taken using the PLAN spreadsheet which allows to track weights and potential GHG emissions averted by reuse over landfilling
  - Time permitting, individual items are priced with stickers, but signs are posted listing general prices of items
  - Large items (furniture, appliances) are double ticketed, purchaser takes one ticket to counter to pay and writes name/contact on ticket on item.
  - Sustainable UMass secures credit card processing equipment
- Fall Tag Sale:
  - 7am staff and volunteers arrive to prepare space, students begin to line up outside for early bird entry
  - 8am -9am early bird entry \$5 cover charge or free for international students
  - Volunteers circulate to answer questions & assist shoppers
  - Helpful to have reusable bags or baskets at entry
  - Line forms for checkout and staff/volunteers tally customers items in line to expedite checkout
  - Customers can sign up for delivery on or off campus for large items (for an additional charge)
  - Day after tag sale, sustainability staff and student interns deliver items.

**Resources and stakeholders involved:**

*Program supported by:*

- Sustainable UMass – planning, move-out & tag sale leadership & execution, and volunteer coordination
- Operational Services (formerly ResLife Facilities Operations) – planning, tent rental, move-out operation & logistics (traffic patterns, etc.), meal tickets, golf cart gas
- Office of Waste Management – planning, provision and set up of tent and storage location materials (toters, pallets, gaylords, etc.), removal of broken rigid plastic (for recycling) and trash from outside collection tents, removal of banned materials and mattress pads from roll-off dumpsters
- Residential Life – promotion and training of hall RA staff & getting information to residents
- New Students Orientation & Transitions – promotion of move-in tag sale
- Student Affairs & Campus Life – promotion of volunteer recruitment for New2U and move-out collections

*Fall 2022 Move-in Tag Sale*

- 3 Summer student interns – 30h/wk for 10 wks
- 2 FTE sustainability staff for the tag sale day
- 22 Volunteers contributing almost 80 collective hours.

#### *Spring 2023 Move-out Collection*

- Hired external moving company due to short staffing – 2 trucks, 4 people, 6 days - \$19,700
- Box truck rental for Sustainable UMass - \$694
- Mattress pad/topper recycling - \$2,000
- 2 golf carts for 8 days - \$964
- Misc. supplies - \$93
- Tent rental (10 tents) - \$6,045
- Meal tickets for campus staff & volunteers working multiple shifts - \$140
- Direct 2023 New2U move-out collections costs: **\$29, 636**
- 2 FTE sustainability staff for the entire collection period (including weekend days)
- 2-4 Operational Services “Special Projects” FTE staff for entire collection period
- Volunteers: 49 2.5-hour shifts covered totaling 122 hours of service

#### **Describe the Results of this campaign component:**

- **General results:**
  - New2U was featured in a high level 2023 UMass Amherst Sustainability Report
- **Specific measurable impact:** figures, if applicable (*Ex: Reduced contamination rate 13%, Gathered 316 pledges to recycle more, etc., 250 people engaged, etc.*)

#### *Fall 2022 move-in tag sale:*

- Engaged 22 volunteers in 80 hours of service
- Served over 450 incoming students
- Saved students average of 75% off retail
- Generated over \$10,000 in sales which is cycled back to campus sustainability projects through the Sustainability Innovation & Engagement Fund (SIEF).

#### *Spring 2023 move-out collections:*

- Engaged 32 volunteers in 122 hours of service
- Collected 505 pounds of non-perishable food and donated to local Amherst Survival Center (photo)
- Collected and recycled over 7,000 pounds of clothing and textiles through BayState Textiles (photo)
- Collected and recycled nearly a full shipping container of foam mattress pads in partnership with ToughStuff Recycling (photo)
- Collected roughly 10,000 lbs. (approx. based on previous year’s collections) of dorm room appliances, furnishings, household and school supplies including a full-size upright piano! (video?)

#### **What would you do differently in the future?**

Better data tracking of donated inventory, assured storage and tag-sale space, less reliance on volunteers and/or more help recruiting and managing volunteers, greater commitment from administration and university staff (to avoid cost of hiring movers). Increase accessibility even further.

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

Talk to PLAN. Find an institutional peer (similar size, etc.) and pick their brain about what has worked for them. Get ResLife and your Waste Management folks on board - these will be key partners. And just keep swimming, you will encounter many challenges, but they can be overcome!

**Photos and Graphics:**

**All associated New2U files, images, graphics can be found in this shared folder:**

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1FiMMty48\\_6XNIUlitoxQmjkkTF2v2xO0?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1FiMMty48_6XNIUlitoxQmjkkTF2v2xO0?usp=sharing)