



2024 Campus Race to Zero Waste Case Study Colorado School of Mines

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Focus of Case study: The focus of this case study is how we reduced our waste to landfill by 1500 tons in one year.

Detailed description of campaign or effort:

In spring 2023, we started a campaign to expand waste reduction efforts on campus. We expanded move-out waste diversion through donations, clothing swaps, surplus property sales, and educational campaigns. We added a furniture donation POD to our graduate student apartment complex and put up fliers around the complex to promote. We found that using a POD that sits 24/7 is filled more often than having a donation truck parked for limited days and hours. Feedback from previous years was that the donation trucks parked for several hours per day/week were not available during the times needed by students (they move out at odd hours). The apartment manager told us that the POD rented by the Sustainability Office was filled and emptied 3 times prior to pick up. We also started a new mattress recycling campaign at move-out. There was a cost associated with the POD rental and mattress recycling pick up and recycle (40 mattresses). However, our inspiration was a reduced waste to landfill amount and reduced waste management tipping fees/landfill fees for mattresses. In addition, we added metal clothing donation bins from USAgain (free) and a book donation bin (free) in front of our main café. Pounds collected were nearly 800 lbs. in books and 3,000 lbs. in clothing. We also ordered free postage paid return shipping boxes for mailing back toner cartridges from Xerox and HP.

In fall 2023, we implemented a new Eco-Rep program to expand education around recycling in on campus student housing, including bathrooms and showers. We created educational materials designed to reduce waste at move-in. We sent out some in packages and hosted tables with information about reducing waste at move-in at pre-move-in events such as summer Launch. Examples include postcards put inside packages with tips to reduce move-in waste, table posters, and factsheets on what to bring that included waste reduction tips. At the end of 2023, we reduced our waste-to-landfill from 2,000 tons in 2022 to 500 tons in 2023. We did expand composting in 2023 in our Student Center and expanded composting to our main café kitchens in spring 2024 where we averaged about 536 lbs. per week of compost. We participated in the 2024 CRZW competition /organic waste category this spring.

Planning steps & timeline to implement:

Planning and engagement centered around major events and months with sustainability related themes to increase engagement:

- 1) June/July – Pre-move-in waste diversion communication/engagement
- 2) August - Move-in waste diversion signage and volunteers
- 3) October - Campus Sustainability Month – recycling education through digital boards, newsletters, Daily Blasts, etc.
- 4) April -Earth Day Month – recycling education; move-out waste diversion communication
- 5) May - Move-out waste diversion bins/volunteers

Resources and stakeholders involved:

Budget – additional costs from sustainability funds

- Funds for furniture POD (\$250), mattress recycling (\$345)
- Clothing and book donation bins were free
- Composting cost: \$500/month plus \$745/month for 8 months for main café
- Lab recycling: \$2500 per year (nitrile gloves, plastic boxes, plastic film, block Styrofoam, etc.)

Volunteers

- Mines Green Team
- Fraternities/Sororities for service days
- Eco-Reps

Describe the Results of this campaign component:

General results: Wrote about it in Sustainability newsletter; some social media posts

Specific measurable impact figures: Reduced waste to landfill from 2,000 tons to 500 tons in 1 year.

What would you do differently in the future? Not sure. Maybe schedule furniture donation pickups well in advance (e.g., once per week in May).

What advice would you give to another college that wanted to do a similar effort? Try to keep it simple if possible. It's harder to get volunteers for move-in and move-out because most students leave for summer. This year we are working with fraternities and sororities that need volunteer hours.

Photos and Graphics

