



Guide Toward A Greener Campus

Making your campus a more earth-friendly place can seem like an impossible task. But even small steps like starting a Green Team and eliminating trash containers can help bring campus-wide sustainability well within reach.

We've worked with an expert in campus and commercial sustainability to develop easy-to-implement steps toward making your campus a greener place. Step one? Gathering a group of individuals who are passionate about sustainability.



01. Create College Green Team

Selecting Green Team Members

The right mix of students, administrators, and community leaders can make your Green Team a success. Consider the following participants when gathering your team:

Champion: The team leader, passionate about improving sustainability on campus, and intent on remaining with the school for a long time. This could be:

- Director of Environmental Programs
- Director of Sustainability
- Dean of a program
- Person in a relevant campus leadership role

Campus Community Members: Interested in or responsible for reducing the school's environmental impact. This could be:

- Building staff lead
- Facilities staff
- Administration members
- Passionate students and/or a class

Community Leader: Brings broader ideas and community resources to the table. This could be:

- A person in the community known for green thinking
- Business leader known for environmental stewardship
- Representative from a regional recycler

Hosting a Kick-Off Meeting

Gathering Green Team members for a kick-off meeting can get everyone excited about the project. During the meeting, the Green Team should:

- Identify high-level objectives, plans, and steps to be taken
- Develop overall project scope
- Align plans for individual buildings with overall plans for the campus
- Determine target launch date for program
- Assign team responsibilities for next steps

After the meeting, the team should:

- Schedule meetings with members of facilities, maintenance, and contract services for cleaning and waste hauling who aren't represented on the Green Team
- Develop a communication plan to inform the campus community about the project
- Pinpoint key messages, which should include environmental and financial benefits for the school



02. Evaluate Current State

Creating a Baseline

Researching the current state of campus waste handling, recycling, and cleaning programs can help the team identify opportunities for improvement. Research should include an analysis of the costs of current waste hauling, cleaning, and recycling services.

Planning a Dumpster Dive

Going through the trash in a campus dumpster helps the team understand what people are throwing away. These steps will help you get started:

- Set up a time for the dive, keeping in mind that the best time is right before the dumpster is going to be emptied
- Before the dive, identify and list typical recyclable items
- During the dive, separate trash from items that can be recycled
- Document the dive. Take pictures and/or video of the items in the dumpster
- Estimate the percentage of items that could have been recycled

Taking an Inventory of Existing Containers

Walking through campus buildings will give you an idea of the recycling containers that may be in place. During this review, look for and document:

- Locations, quantity, and type of containers
- Signage and information communicating the types of items accepted for recycling



03. Create Zero Waste System

Considering Recycling Services

During this step, the team develops a proposal outlining recycling needs and solutions. As a part of this process, the team should:

1. Identify and document opportunities, including answers to the following questions:
 - What type of waste is being thrown away?
 - What additional types of recycling can be done?
 - What types of containers are needed?
 - Where should the containers be placed?
 - What type of signage and messaging should be displayed with the containers?
2. Investigate potential recycling services, the types of items they accept, and the associated costs. Options to consider include:
 - Existing waste service. Most offer recycling services for an additional cost
 - Local or regional recycling service. Cost may be a wash or could be a potential source of revenue for the school
 - Nonprofit recycler, which benefits the school, the organization, and the environment
 - Habitat Restore or Goodwill, which can reuse certain items found in the dumpster
3. Determine the benefits and challenges of working with each resource.
4. Look for opportunities to integrate reusable items into campus life, like switching from plastic to stainless silverware. Simple solutions like this can help your school save money.

Rallying the Team

Gather the Green Team to present options and make decisions. During the rally, the team should:

- Decide on a strategy and a recycling service
- Determine responsibility for the program launch. The person selected should be committed to the team and have the time and energy to lead the process
- Consider the feasibility of the launch date, and adjust dates as needed



04. Launch Zero Waste System

Preparing for the Launch

When developing a plan for the launch, the team should:

1. Determine the number of bins available for reuse and purchase new bins as needed.
 - Label all bins
2. Consider the following solutions for office workers, whose daily lives will be influenced by the changes.
 - Provide employees with receptacles or paper bags for collecting recyclables at their desks, which can be emptied at a centralized bin
 - Supply a clear list of items that can be recycled, including examples, and post it with the recycling containers
3. Develop a marketing and communication plan that includes:
 - Key messages
 - Communication channels, including professors, school website, and social media
 - Visual promotion of the program, including the dumpster dive video
4. Create an audit plan, including trackable measurements that highlight the program's success.
5. Finalize the launch plan, including the kick-off date.
6. Consider placing the recycling bins four weeks before removing trash receptacles. This may help people become more familiar and comfortable with the new process.
7. Find ways to naturally integrate the program into the everyday lives of students and faculty, so recycling eventually becomes part of the culture. Keep in mind that this may take several semesters.

Launching the Program

After months of planning, it's time to kick-off the program in buildings across the campus. Don't be afraid to over-communicate with members of the campus community, so everyone is aware of the program.



05. Recycler / Compost

Evaluating Your Success

Dumpster dives at the beginning, middle, and end of the semester will help the team identify items not being recycled. These audits shouldn't be needed after the program has been in place for 4-6 months.

Keeping the Program Going

Assign Green Team members to ongoing responsibilities. These can include:

- Checking in with the recycler on a regular basis. Are the materials being properly collected?
- Doing dumpster dives on an annual basis. What's being thrown away that should be recycled?
- Tracking success measurements on a scorecard, to be published and shared with the public. The scorecard should show how much is being recycled and how much is being reused.

Communicating Your Success

Capturing success stories and sharing them with the community is a great way to promote the program. School specific channels to consider include:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- School website
- YouTube
- Electronic bulletin boards
- Professors (during class)

Public channels to consider include:

- InsideHigherEd.com Getting to Green blog (<http://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/getting-green>)
- treehugger.com
- environmentalleader.com
- Local websites and blogs focused on green/sustainability (e.g., wmeac.org)

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Resources

General

Earth911.com: A site with green news and lifestyle information, recycling tips, and a locator for area recycling centers

Higher Ed

Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE): Check out this green organization's website at aashe.org. For information on their annual conference, visit conf2012.aashe.org

The Center for Green Schools: Check out this organization's website at centerforgreenschools.org

Second Nature: Visit this sustainability education website at secondnature.org

K-12

2nd Annual Green Schools National Conference: For information on the event, visit http://www.greenschoolsnationalconference.org/pre_conference_workshops.php