

Cats Optimizing Recycling Education - CORE - Progress Report

Email

namohasante@arizona.edu

Project Manager Name

Jill Burchell

Requested Metrics

Basics

1. # of people in the core project team involved in planning and execution of the project (if they're a student/ staff/ faculty etc.).

3 CORE Staff

Jill Burchell- Staff

Nana Adwoa Akuffo Amoh-Asante- Student

Chloe Stenmark- Student

RAs – 262

CDs – 14

GCDs – 7

ACDs – 5

Custodial Unit-100

Facilities management-5

Eco reps- 8

(Pima-2, Honors-3, Likins-1, Apache- Santa Cruz –2)

Total number of people involved in CORE project- 404

2. # of hours on this project (broken up by students/ staff)

Jill Burchell

Primary Project Coordinator (5-10 hours/week)

Nana Adwoa Akuffo Amoh-Asante

Graduate Assistant –Total number of hours spent (20 hours/week)

Chloe Stenmark

Recycling and Facilities Specialist - Total number of hours (15 hours/ week)

Engagement

1. # of students directly engaged with recycling education

7631 students engaged directly through Bin It to Win It (BI2WI)

2. # and type of interactive events held (i.e. Focus groups, interventions, workshops)

1 Focus group meeting held so far (11/16/2023).

of students reached through these events

2 students were present for the focus group discussion.

Recycling

1. #Results from recycling surveys conducted

Recycling Contamination quiz sent to 7,631 students and 31 staff with 996 students completing the Quiz.

2. # Contamination rates

Over the course of BI2WI, recycling contamination rates in the dorms decreased by 27%.

The top 3 dorms with the least recycling contamination were Apache-Santa Cruz (13.8%), Babcock (16.3%) and Pima (17.5%).

Recycling data collected by Facilities Management shows a decrease in the percentage of contamination per person in the dorms across time:

August- 45.7% per resident

September-45.1 % per resident

October-39.3% per resident

November- 43.5 % per resident

The contamination rates improved during BI2WI. Following the competition, the contamination rates/resident were better compared to the months preceding the competition.

Also, there was an increase in the average recycling weight per resident over the semester:

August-0.16 pounds per resident

September-0.96 pounds per resident

October-1.25 pounds per resident

November- 1.40 pounds per resident

Project Accomplishments

An email with recycling information was sent out to all dorm residents. The email included a recycling contamination quiz that 996 students completed. Almost a quarter of students (24.40%) falsely believe water bottle packaging should be recycled. More than a quarter of students (28.70%)

incorrectly believe padded envelopes should be recycled. 11.40 % of students believe a 10-page paper should not be recycled, when it should.

From the data collected, many students believe non-recyclable materials, mainly soft plastics like plastic bread bags, cereal bags and water bottle packaging should be recycled. 19.0 % of the students do not agree that plastic egg cartons can be recycled, even though they can. Many students are also unable to determine whether materials like padded envelopes, napkins and candy wrappers should not be recycled.

There was a 27 % decrease in recycling contamination rates in the dorms over the course of BI2WI.

BI2WI engagement experiences: 284 sustainable engagements

1. 262 sustainability education entries (programs, events, bulletin boards, etc. that teach about sustainability)
2. 22 engagements with sustainable features (programs and events that were facilitated using sustainable materials)

BI2WI video submissions: 25 recycling education videos

1. 750 total likes
2. Pima had the most per capita likes with 56% of building population liking their video.

We held our first focus group discussion with 2 student participants. Participants shared their experience with BI2WI and thoughts on how to improve the program in the upcoming year. Participants also shared their views on how to promote proper recycling among students and critiqued current recycling signage, providing more insight into how to make recycling signage more appealing and educative.

Next Steps

1. Continue with the hiring process for Recycling Specialist to complete CORE Team and facilitate the easy collection of recycling data.
2. Expand 1-on-1 education in dorms (i.e. lobby tabling, dorm storms) once full CORE staff is on board.
3. Have 3 more focus groups in the spring semester to elicit more student perspectives on recycling on campus. This will include one focus group exclusively for Resident Assistants, since they have the unique perspective of having experienced the old program Recycle Mania and the new program BI2WI. They can offer comparisons of the two programs that most dorm residents would not be equipped to speak about.
4. Create and make available reports from focus group discussions.
5. Conduct a recycling survey in the spring.

6. Near the end of spring semester, incorporate what was learned to revise the education and communications plan for Fall 2024. Make adjustments to programming and marketing in an effort to improve recycling outcomes for year 2 of the project.

Challenges Faced

Despite the large scale and far-reaching recycling education contamination rates remained higher than desired in the dorms. Even with a decrease of 27% over the course of BI2WI, rates are not in the single digits as desired. Contamination continues to be a problem.

The difficulty with staff recruitment, which persisted for a greater part of the semester, caused delays in recycling data collection. Also, the Recycling Specialist employed for part of the semester resigned. A Recycling and Facilities Specialist was hired later in the semester and could not do much work due to the timing.

The focus group discussion faced a low turnout. Even though discussions were very informative, low turnout affected the quality of the qualitative assessment. In the future, Resident Assistants and Community Directors will be involved in the dissemination of focus group discussion information. Also, frequent reminders concerning the focus group discussions will be sent to students.

There was some difficulty putting out some marketing signs (yard signs) during BI2WI. Some dorms, e.g., Manzanita-Mohave did not have courtyards where yard signs could be put. The hard ground in certain commonly used areas made it difficult to put up yard signs there. Also, there was some concern about the floor stickers being on certain flooring surfaces. This led to some inequity in the distribution of marketing materials between the various dorms. In the future, more feasibility studies will be done prior to the distribution of marketing materials, to ensure equitable distribution. CORE was able to test the feasibility of the floor stickers for 1 month during this year's competition. The floor stickers did not leave residue on most floor surfaces when picked back up after 1 month. Floor signs will be expanded for Fall 2024's BITWI competition.

Project Support

CSF has been very supportive in helping CORE find student workers, continuous support in that regard will be appreciated.

Photo Link

https://emailarizona-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/namohasante_arizona_edu/EtfvHpUYNM5PhqfdIFyG4_wBAIa7rh

AJucxiBOXjte-fVA

Media/Links

https://emailarizona-my.sharepoint.com/:w/g/personal/namohasante_arizona_edu/Eai3rs0ijnJPmKDqO4x16FYBA6AF7BTxmMEfd4IDRAz12w