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## **Executive Summary**

The CATS Optimizing Recycling Education (CORE) Project conducted five focus groups during the 2023/2024 academic year to evaluate the Bin It to Win It (BI2WI) recycling competition and gather insights on recycling behaviors, attitudes, and education as well as other sustainability initiatives among University of Arizona dorm residents.

Key findings revealed that participants had difficulty understanding the concept and purpose of BI2WI, faced barriers such as inconvenient recycling bin locations and unclear guidelines, and emphasized the importance of timing, motivation, incentives, and infrastructure in promoting recycling participation. Participants also highlighted the need to foster a culture of sustainability by integrating sustainable living into residential life from day one.

Based on these insights, the CORE Project recommends introducing recycling education early in the academic year, changing the timing of BI2WI, enhancing BI2WI marketing and outreach, redesigning incentive structures, standardizing recycling signage, and collaborating with campus partners to embed sustainability into residential life programming.

By implementing these strategies, Housing and Residential Life can create a more supportive environment for sustainable practices and drive long-term behavior change in the dorms, though success will require ongoing collaboration and commitment from all stakeholders.

## **Introduction**

Recycling contamination rates in dorms on the University of Arizona campus remain high despite years of continuous recycling education on campus. The CATS Optimizing Recycling Education (CORE) Project was developed to identify the main sources of recycling contamination and to use data collected to create a recycling education plan that would be used in subsequent years. This recycling education plan would help reduce recycling contamination levels, increase recycling rates, and promote sustainable living in the dorms.

As part of the project, a month-long competition was held in October, 2023 to promote proper recycling and sustainable behavior among dorm residents. The competition which was initially 'Recycle mania' was rebranded as Bin It to Win It (BI2WI) and organized in the Fall instead of the spring.

This report elucidates insights from five focus groups that took place within the 2023/2024 academic year during both fall and spring semesters. The focus group discussions explored the participants' awareness of BI2WI, their interests and motivation to recycle and suggestions on how to improve recycling culture and sustainability among students in the dorms. The findings listed in this report will contribute to the formulation of the recycling education plan that will help to positively influence recycling knowledge and behavior of students in the various dorms.

## Methodology

### A. Recruitment

To ensure proper representation during the focus group discussions, invitations were sent to all members of the living learning communities (LLCs) on campus except for the RA and CD specific focus groups. This aimed to reduce biases in opinions about various focus group discussion questions. Residents were also recruited through email announcements, social media posts, and flyers in the dorms. Some participants were entered into a drawing for \$50 CatCa\$h and others were provided with meals as incentives to take part in the discussions.

### B. Focus Group Sessions

There were 5 focus group discussions conducted. The discussions lasted between 45 to 75 minutes and followed a standard script with open-ended questions covering topics such as experiences with BI2WI, perceptions of recycling behaviors and attitudes, and suggestions for improvement. There were two moderators for most discussions: a main and a co-moderator who helped record the session and moderate questioning. The focus group script used for moderating the discussions is listed in Appendix A. These questions were slightly adapted based on the participants present in the focus groups.

### C. Data Analysis.

Focus group responses were digitally recorded and manually transcribed, then coded using NVivo. The responses were then analyzed to identify key themes, patterns, and insights. The analysis also incorporated quotes from participants to illustrate the findings.

## Key Findings

### 1. Awareness and Understanding of BI2WI

In all the focus groups, the participants present expressed difficulty in understanding the concept behind BI2WI. Participants reported learning about BI2WI through various channels such as email blurbs, posters, stickers, flyers, and bulletin boards created by their RAs. Most participants grasped that the aim of BI2WI was to encourage recycling among dorm residents. However, the depth of understanding varied. One participant stated, "I understood the premise was to recycle and to win points for your dorm, but I wasn't sure how we earned those points or what it meant: those points."

Another participant mentioned, "So I think they just focus too much on the points instead of actually educating residents and actually sharing the information and like teaching them how to recycle properly and stuff like that."

This suggests that while marketing materials raised awareness of the competition and encouraged competitiveness among dorms, they did not always effectively convey the specifics of how it worked and why it mattered.

A participant stated, "I don't think people really knew fully what it was in our dorm." This also confirms that despite some residents hearing about the competition, they did not understand the rationale behind it. The participants agreed that their lack of information affected their interest and motivation to participate in BI2WI.

Even though some RA and CD participants admitted they received some form of training, they admitted that the information they received was not comprehensive enough to give them a good understanding of BI2WI.

Some RA participants reported that recycling bins in their dorms were often contaminated with non-recyclable items during the competition, indicating confusion among residents about what can and cannot be recycled, basically because they did not have enough understanding to pass down to their residents. One RA reported, "I think I did an especially horrible job. We were in last place, and I recognized that every time I go recycle, things were still plastic bags and there were still plastic bags and stuff in our recycling bin." RA participants requested pre-made bulletin board content to fill in the gaps in their knowledge about recycling and provide accurate and relevant information for dorm residents.

On the other hand, a few participants also expressed limited awareness of the competition, with one noting, "I didn't see any posters, so I don't have a lot of information about this." Since some residents were unaware of BI2WI it indicates the need for more effective marketing strategies

## 2. Barriers to Recycling Participation

Participants discussed various barriers that prevented students from recycling properly in the dorms. One major issue was the inconvenience and inaccessibility of recycling bins. Participants from dorms like Navajo Pinal and Yavapai discussed the inconveniences associated with recycling in these dorms. Some participants lamented the fact that some recycling bins were in inconvenient locations, and residents were unable to access the building through the same exit after recycling.

A participant commented, "Stadium doesn't have any recycling inside. You must go all the way down to the basement. You must go out of your way to recycle." Another participant stated, "I'll be honest. I didn't even know we had a recycling bin."

Some dorms like Navajo Pinal had a peculiarly placed bin that even affected the desire of residents to recycle and take part in BI2WI. An RA mentioned, "For stadium, this year it was really hard...It was really bad, and it gets overflowed by the time the games even start. And then after it's worse and it's so contaminated, there's not even any room to recycle or trash."

Another problem was the lack of clear information about what materials could be recycled and how to prepare them. Contamination of recycling bins was a common concern. A participant shared, "I've seen

so many people recycling like plastic bottles or cans and stuff, but don't know that they have to rinse them."

Participants also noted that recycling habits often stemmed from students' upbringing and prior knowledge, rather than being influenced by the competition itself. One student said, "I think I was mainly already recycling on my own because I just grew up that way. We have a composting bin; we recycle a lot. My parents always taught me to make sure recycle, reuse everything that you can." If dorm residents were not brought up in this same way, it affected the way they saw the need to recycle.

Another barrier was the lack of clear signage and education about proper recycling practices. Participants noted that residents often struggled to distinguish between recyclable and non-recyclable items, leading to contamination. A participant commented, "At my housing, it's very confusing. The posters are not very clear and easy to understand where to put what."

Some participants also felt discouraged and apathetic about recycling, believing that their individual efforts would not make a significant difference. One participant stated, "I feel like people care, but I know a lot of people get discouraged...they're like, well, I care, but the most chance of the other people caring is low, so why bother if the recycling is going to get contaminated and we not going to win." Another reiterated, "we are never going to win against a dorm like Arbol, why bother."

### 3. Importance of Timing and Engagement

Regarding the timing and duration of BI2WI, while some participants agreed that the two-month duration for the recycling competition was ideal, others argued that having the competition for too long may cause residents to lose interest. Feedback from most focus groups suggested moving BI2WI from October to September when the residents were new, making it easier to instill a culture of sustainability in the new students at that time. Also, discussions highlighted that the month of October, when BI2WI was organized was packed with many campus events that sometimes drew the attention of residents away from the competition. Hence avoiding overlap with major campus events and exams was important for maximizing participation.

One participant mentioned, "I think beginning in September, into the middle of October will be a great time. Maybe six weeks is a better sweet spot of a sort. Still not too much but giving them enough time". Other participants shared, "between homecoming, football games, and family weekend, all that stuff is already getting pushed out enough in October". "Especially in this one month in October, you have Halloween, and you have sort of midterms."

Participants recognized the importance of raising awareness from the moment students arrive on campus. They suggested incorporating recycling education into orientation week and move-in day. One participant suggested, "I think mentioning like, hey, when you move in, there's going to be this competition, there's going to be possible prizes. I think mentioning the incentives early on while they're still soaking everything in. I think that would help with engagement."

They also highlighted the need for starting messaging and engagement early and sustaining it throughout the year, rather than limiting sustainability efforts to a single competition or event like BI2WI. Participants suggested that presentations on recycling and sustainability should be given to incoming

students during admitted students' day. In addition, sustainability materials should be integrated into Destination Arizona. It could also be required for residents to complete quizzes or short courses on recycling and sustainability before or during move-in.

To help with engagement during the implementation of sustainability initiatives and competitions such as BI2WI, some participants advised the Housing marketing team to utilize existing items in the dorms, such as television screens, to display daily or weekly updates during BI2WI. This would help attract the attention of dorm residents.

One participant mentioned, "I've always felt like they're underutilized. You have a TV; we can have more interactive content for marketing .... That would be really cool to show to the residents where's our standing is today like day 13, oh my gosh we moved up to like 13th place instead of 14th like, let's keep going."

Another suggestion to improve engagement during programs like BI2WI was to collaborate with sorority and fraternities since a substantial number of residents were involved in Greek life as well. "So, if you could somehow tie in the two and work with fraternities and sororities, to educate them or something, maybe that could also work."

The discussions from the various focus groups highlighted the importance of proper timing and engagement during initiatives like BI2WI to increase its overall success.

#### 4. Personal Convictions and Motivations

The focus groups probed the reasons why dorm residents recycle and why some participate in BI2WI, while others do not. Participants stated that residents who consistently recycled often had personal convictions rooted in their upbringing or environmental values. One RA shared, "For my residents that I saw recycling or other residents, they all shared a love for nature, respecting others. And they're just like, I grew up this way."

Participants shared that aside from being taught how to recycle while they grew up, their desire to recycle properly was fueled by their desire to preserve the planet for future generations and their passion for sustainability.

Also, some residents who recycled properly did so because of things they had learned in school, through experiences, or club activities. A participant mentioned, "I learned a lot about recycling in my environmental science class."

For others, the competitiveness of BI2WI motivated them to recycle. One participant shared, "I think for us, one of the better ways is the competition, maybe it's an honors kid mentality or just like an academic kid mentality, but as soon as we made it about what floors could have the most recycling, then people started doing it."

These suggestions inferred that tapping into residents' personal values and experiences could be an effective way to encourage recycling participation. By framing sustainability as a matter of personal responsibility and connection to the environment, Housing could increase participation in sustainability initiatives like BI2WI.

## 5. Incentives and Recognition

Participants in the focus groups offered a variety of suggestions for incentives and means of recognition that could motivate students to participate more actively in recycling and the BI2WI competition. As established earlier, some residents are not encouraged to participate in BI2WI because of the types of incentives that are given as well as the way the incentives are distributed. They also acknowledged the challenges of providing compelling prizes within the constraints of university policies and budgets.

An RA lamented, " you can't buy individual prizes. You can't put that on the purchase form. You can't buy gift cards with incentives. So, it's really difficult."

Another participant shared, "I think some of the incentives, like CatCash are great, but I think incentives like laundry cards or something like that could potentially catch some students' attention a little bit more. I think sometimes our students as sad as it to say, sometimes money is just not a thing for them."

Participants emphasized the importance of offering tangible rewards to individuals who demonstrate excellent recycling habits or significantly contribute to their dorm's BI2WI performance to encourage them to continue with their recycling habits, as well as motivate others.

There were concerns about the distribution of BI2WI prizes, particularly regarding the use of cash prizes to purchase sustainable items or food for the entire dorm. There were suggestions to raffle smaller prizes that give more students a chance to win a prize during BI2WI. Also, providing a mix of prizes for both deserving individuals and the entire dorm would serve as a good incentive. Additionally, introducing new prizes and incentives like trophies, tote bags, t-shirts and reusable water bottles would encourage residents to participate in BI2WI.

While most participants encouraged Housing to be more creative with incentives to encourage students to be interested in BI2WI and other sustainability related events, others argued that incentives only help in the short term. Rather, efforts should be focused on education about recycling and sustainability to maintain residents' interest in proper recycling after BI2WI. A participant shared, "Sometimes people will get the incentive and then they'll just give up on it and not fully pursue it. So, I feel along with the incentive there has to be some larger picture education about it and why it really matters to get people more interested."

There were also suggestions to host more sustainable related programs in dorms where students could make arts and crafts they could keep while learning about recycling and sustainability. One participant enjoyed the complimentary donuts she received in her dorm while attending such art and craft events learnt a thing or two about recycling, she stated, "if you join you get a free donut or something like that and people really like it".

To recognize the efforts of dorms and individuals who recycle properly, especially during BI2WI, participants encouraged Housing to make the competition rankings more publicly accessible and recognize the efforts of residents who are keenly involved in recycling and sustainability initiatives.



## 6. Infrastructure, Resources and Accessibility

Participants emphasized the need for improved recycling infrastructure, resources, and accessibility in the dorms. They suggested adding more recycling bins in convenient locations, such as kitchens and common areas, to make it easier for residents to recycle. One participant pointed out, "the location of the trash and recycling is very confusing for that building."

In analyzing the recycling behaviors of dorm residents, participants agreed that the turnover of students in the dorms affected the recycling culture in the various dorms. They agreed that despite Housing channeling efforts into recycling education, dorm residents changed from year to year, hence the recycling education had to be started afresh each year. A participant mentioned, "75% of the people in most dorms are freshmen, the turnover of people is really high."

Participants also called for clearer and more visually engaging signage to help residents understand what items can be recycled and how to properly dispose of them and where to find the bins. They also suggested using posters and stickers in other areas, such as kitchens, bathrooms, and other common rooms, alongside the main recycling areas, to attract the attention of residents to recycling and sustainability messages. A participant suggested, "Having a little sticker to put on the mirror would be really nice. But having a small version to even put on the recycling can in the rooms would be kind of nice too."

Another shared, if you were to have that in the bathroom, they're like oh, there's something to read."

They also suggested a complete revamping and standardization of the signage in the dorms, especially the recycling rules, stating that they were too similar in appearance. They argued that the effectiveness of teaching students how to recycle properly greatly depends on the appearance of the recycling signage. They advocated for changes in font sizes, images, and emotional appeal to enhance its impact. More directional signs were also deemed necessary to solve the problem of hidden recycling bins in the various dorms.

In terms of infrastructure, some participants argued that they were disadvantaged during B12WI due to the types of recycling bins they used and the location of these bins. Participants from dorms with the 'dumpster' kind of recycling bins felt disadvantaged because both recycling and trash bins looked similar and served as a source of confusion. These participants advocated for a change in these kinds of recycling bins. One participant lamented about how the recycling bin in her dorm got contaminated due to its unprotected nature and closeness to the stadium, "It was really bad, and it gets overflowed by the time the games even start."

In addition to traditional recycling, participants expressed interest in exploring composting options for food waste, particularly in dorms with dining facilities. A participant shared, "A lot of our residents ask a lot about composting, especially with the 85 north being an all you can eat place. Like in our dorm, there's food waste. And so, a lot of them have been asking if there's a way to compost."

Participants also suggested partnerships with resourceful organizations such as Compost Cats, SFS, and Eco-Reps to help with recycling and sustainability education in the dorms.

## 7. Fostering a Culture of Sustainability

Many participants emphasized the significance of prioritizing sustainability right from the start and throughout the residential experience. They suggested that by incorporating recycling and other sustainability initiatives into residential life in a visible and celebrated manner, students would be more likely to embrace the sustainability agenda. This, in turn, would encourage them to recycle more effectively and even participate in BI2WI.

They suggested initiatives such as sustainability-themed living learning communities, dorm-specific sustainability projects or traditions, and increased involvement of CDs and RAs in promoting sustainable habits. One participant suggested, "the specific living learning communities would be a good idea, because then you have the kind of 'unconsensual' responsibility of being sustainable, so you don't really have to have a choice."

An important highlight from the focus groups was that the attitude and interest of CDs and RAs towards recycling and sustainability initiatives trickled down to the residents since they were very influential in the lives of these residents. Participants agreed that when staff model proper recycling behaviors, it sends a message that sustainability is a community priority. One participant mentioned, "I think I want to share the importance of sustainability to me personally because I know I'm lucky and I think that can make a difference. Just so you guys know, our dorm really cares about recycling properly and leading a sustainable life."

Feedback gathered from the CD and RA focus groups suggested that the training they received on BI2WI was not comprehensive enough to help them understand the program. They also mentioned that aside from the BI2WI training they received, they had very little sustainability efforts incorporated into their meetings. A participant shared, "we went through like three weeks of training and they just like threw that in there and it was like they quickly like went over it, but it was overshadowed by another piece of training that they were doing."

They also suggested collaborating with Residential Education to incorporate more sustainable messaging into wildcat living.

Additionally, participants suggested having other sustainability-themed events aside from BI2WI and Less is More in the various dorms to encourage sustainable living. A CD participant suggested that since the dorms already had funding for events, incorporating sustainability-themed events into dorm programming would be helpful.

## Discussion and Results

There is a lack of clear comprehensive information about BI2WI and recycling practices in general. Many participants expressed difficulty understanding the rationale behind BI2WI despite seeing marketing materials. This lack of understanding affected their interest and motivation to participate. Even RAs and CDs who had received some training admitted the information was not comprehensive enough. The lack of standardization of information on what can be recycled and how to properly prepare materials was a major barrier, leading to confusion and contamination of recycling bins.

Participants suggested starting recycling education and competition promotion earlier, ideally when new residents arrive, to instill sustainable habits from the beginning. Overlapping with other major campus events in October detracted from BI2WI. Participants wanted to see sustainability incorporated into orientation, move-in, and ongoing dorm programming, not just limited to a short-term competition.

Personal convictions rooted in upbringing, environmental values, and educational experiences were key motivators for consistent recyclers. However, the competitive aspect of BI2WI and incentives also drove participation for some. While participants saw value in providing compelling incentives and recognition for recycling efforts, they noted difficulties with types of prizes allowed and equitable distribution. Participants wanted to see more meaningful incentives like laundry cards or individual prizes, not just dorm-wide cash prizes to purchase communal items. Public recognition of top-performing dorms and individuals was also suggested.

Infrastructure issues created inequities and barriers. Inconvenient, inadequate, or difficult access to recycling bins deterred participation in some dorms. Clearer, more engaging signage was needed to communicate recycling guidelines. Also, the high turnover of students each year poses a challenge for building a consistent recycling culture. Partnering with campus organizations could bolster recycling education.

Cultivating an overall culture of sustainability was seen as an essential norm that had to be incorporated into wildcat living. This requires visible prioritization and celebration of sustainable practices, involvement of RAs and CDs in modeling and promoting recycling, sustainability-themed programming and living spaces, and campus-wide initiatives beyond a single competition.

From the discussions, the effectiveness of BI2WI and other sustainability initiatives has been stifled by poor communication since many dorm residents do not have a good insight into the programs as well as proper motivation.

## Limitations

There were several limitations faced when organizing the focus groups.

1. There were problems with recruitment and attendance. Despite the numerous recruitment methods, such as emails, flyers, and social media posts used for the various focus groups, there was a low turnout for the focus groups. The highest number of participants in attendance was six, while the lowest was two.
2. Problems with RA email distribution list. To help recruit participants to the various focus groups, emails, blurbs, and flyers were sent to the RAs via their distribution list. However, it was later discovered that the distribution list was non-functional, and they never received the emails.
3. Skewed representation of participants in various focus groups. The objective of the focus groups was to gather feedback from participants in all the dorms. However, not all the dorms were represented in the different focus groups, which resulted in findings that were biased towards the dorms with participants present. Despite this, some of the findings can still be generalized.

## Recommendations

Based on the focus group findings, the following recommendations can help improve interest in recycling and participation in sustainability related initiatives in the dorms:

1. Introduce recycling and sustainability messaging early in the academic year, leveraging the excitement and receptivity of new residents. Incorporate recycling education into orientation activities and early communications. Information about sustainability initiatives and BI2WI as part of welcome packages and early messaging, sets expectations from day one.
2. Dorm residents should be given more education on the importance of recycling and participation in competitions such as BI2WI. Many participants implied that their lack of understanding of the rationale behind BI2WI affected their participation in the competition.
3. The timing of BI2WI should be changed from a 4 weeklong program in October to a 6 weeklong program from the beginning of September to Mid-October. Starting in September and running through mid-October also leverages the back-to-school energy and allows for coordinated promotion during welcome events.
4. More effort should be put into developing a comprehensive marketing and outreach strategy for BI2WI. Engaging and informative content should be created for social media platforms popular among students to increase the competition's social media presence.

During the BI2WI competition, amenities such as TV screens in the various dorm lobbies or common rooms should be properly utilized. The marketing team of BI2WI can create content and display it on these screens to catch the attention of dorm residents. Also, these TVs can be

used to provide daily or weekly updates and an explanation of the point system for the competition.

5. To address the inequity in the distribution of BI2WI marketing materials. The BI2WI marketing team should put more flyers and stickers in several visible areas in the dorms so that they will be accessible to all students.
6. Small stickers with recycling information could be put up in kitchens and communal bathrooms and on recycling containers in the various dorm rooms. Residents could read information on these stickers as they washed utensils in the kitchen or used the bathroom or as they sorted out items to recycle in their dorm rooms.
7. To increase residents' interest in BI2WI and proper recycling in general, there should be collaboration with the Wildcat Living Committee to incorporate recycling and sustainability messaging into their communications and programming throughout the year, not just during BI2WI.
8. To make CDs and RAs more interested in recycling and sustainability programs, sustainability should be integrated into staff training, on-boarding, and education. Comprehensive BI2WI training should be done for both RAs and CDs. Recycling should not only be discussed when CDs are being informed about BI2WI. Also, clear expectations should be established regarding sustainability initiatives in the different dorms. Additionally, CDs and RAs should be involved in developing sustainability initiatives and campaigns.
9. Staff should model and normalize recycling behaviors. When RAs, desk assistants, CDs, and other leaders demonstrate proper recycling habits, it sends a message that sustainability is a community norm and priority. Staff should also integrate sustainability education into daily communications. RAs and CDs can discuss recycling habits and locations during one-on-one chats with residents.
10. Housing should provide pre-made bulletin boards detailing engagement activities that can be done during BI2WI. Some RAs get discouraged by the burden of having to create material for bulletin boards during BI2WI. Providing them with pre-made bulletin boards will help them to easily convey the important information that needs to be relayed to dorm residents.
11. Housing should modify the incentive structures to raffle smaller prizes that give more students a chance to win, rather than just a few large prizes for top-performing dorms. This could help combat the "why bother" mentality that comes with low perceived chances of winning.

Providing a mix of laundry card prizes and other prizes, rather than just CatCa\$h may be better as some students may find laundry cards more useful.

12. There should be an overall redesign and implementation of standardized, eye-catching signage across all dorms to clearly communicate recycling guidelines:
  - Signage should be made colorful and eye catching. Text font and images should be made bigger and easier to read.
  - Large green 'V' and large red 'X' should be put against items that should and should not be recycled.
  - Signs should be made simple enough for kindergarten kids to read and understand.
  - The color backgrounds could be changed to green for items that can be recycled and red for items that should not be recycled to create a clear distinction.
  - The recycling rules signage should be made bigger to accommodate larger images.
  - Signage should include more images of confusing items, such as straws, plastic utensils, and paper receipts, on the 'Do not recycle' poster.
  - Marketing should consider changing 'Do not recycle' title to 'trash'. Since some students just read the 'recycle' in the 'Do not recycle' text.
  
13. Signage should be placed in higher traffic areas beyond just the recycling areas, such as on residence hall doors that students must regularly pass by. Additionally, there should be signage in common areas like kitchens, where students may be disposing of materials that can be recycled.
  
14. Housing should provide additional recycling locations in dorms with inequitable distribution of recycling bins as it negatively affects the recycling habits of dorm residents.
  
15. Continuous evaluation of BI2WI and other sustainability related programs and interventions. There should be periodic focus groups and surveys to gather feedback and ideas from dorm residents. There should also be regular review and update sustainability programs to keep them fresh, engaging, and relevant to students' evolving needs and interests.

## **Conclusion**

The focus group discussions provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities for promoting recycling and sustainability in the dorms. While initiatives like BI2WI have raised awareness about recycling, there is still significant room for improvement in terms of education, infrastructure, incentives, and culture.

By implementing the recommendations outlined in this report, Housing and Residential Life can create a more supportive and engaging environment for sustainable practices in the dorms. Clear and consistent communication, convenient and accessible recycling options, meaningful incentives and recognition, and a strong culture of sustainability are all essential elements for driving long-term behavior change.

However, the success of these efforts will require ongoing collaboration and commitment from all stakeholders, including housing staff, CDs, RAs, and residents themselves. As one participant aptly put it, "It's not going to happen right away." The behavioral change we would like to see will take time and combined effort.

## **Appendix A**

### **Focus Group Discussion Script**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

- Moderators introduce themselves.
- Introduce the reason for meeting.

This Focus Group discussion is part of a series of discussions that will be held as part of the Cats Optimizing Recycling Education (CORE) Project. The project seeks to broaden the understanding of campus recycling behavior and maximize educational interventions to ensure proper recycling in the dorms.

In today's focus group discussion, we seek to evaluate the effect of Bin It To Win It (BI2WI) on student recycling behaviors as well as the current interventions to promote proper recycling in the dorms.

- Ground rules.
  1. Participants are encouraged to actively listen and respect each other's opinions even if you do not agree.
  2. There is no right or wrong answer, feel free to express yourself and be aware that confidentiality will be maintained.
  3. The discussion will be led by the moderator, each participant will have equal opportunity to contribute.
- Have participants introduce themselves as well.
- Move on to questions.

#### **QUESTIONS**

##### **1. Awareness and Education:**

a) Can you describe your experience with BI2WI?

- Do you understand the concept of BI2WI? Did it make sense to you?
- Did you feel the Bin It to Win It marketing materials (floor stickers, posters, bin decals etc.) helped students to understand the program?



- Was it difficult getting students interested in BI2WI?
- What changes can RA's make to increase students' interest in BI2WI and recycling in general?

b) What do you think about the name 'Bin It to Win It' versus 'Recycle Mania'? Do you prefer one over the other?

- Considering the one-month duration of Bin it to Win it in October compared to the two-month duration of Recycle Mania in February and March, which timing do you find more appropriate for engaging residents and promoting recycling efforts?

c) How important do you think sustainability is to residents of your dorm?

- Can you think of ways to make sustainability more important in dorm culture?

## **2. Motivation and Incentives:**

a) What do you think motivates students to recycle?

- Is it personal conviction or external factors?

b) Would incentives such as rewards or recognition encourage better recycling habits? Why or why not?

c) Will punitive measures for poor recycling encourage proper recycling?

- If yes, what punitive measures would you suggest?

## **3. Suggestions**

a) What do you think about these posters?

- Are they effective in encouraging recycling? Why or why not?

(Show recycling rules signage, then rotating signage)

- Are there any changes you would like to be made to current signage?
- What kind of signage would you like to see in recycling areas?

(Get participants to critique some of the current signage, giving feedback about appearance and what changes they would like to see)

b) What additional measures do you think can be put in place to make residents more interested in recycling?

## Appendix B

### Example of recruitment flyers

**WANT A  
FREE  
DINNER?**

**Come to the CORE Project  
Focus Group on Tuesday,  
March 26th!**

We would love to hear your perspective on  
recycling and sustainability in the dorms!

**When: 5-6pm (3/26)**  
**Where: Likins 142**  
**Food: Tumeric Catering**



**Sign up via Google Form!**

Figure 1.

**Want to win \$50 in  
CatCa\$h?**

**Attend the CORE Project Focus  
Group via Zoom for a chance to win!**  
We want to hear your thoughts and ideas  
about recycling in the dorms!

**April 16th, 2024**  
**Meeting via Zoom**  
**5 - 6 pm**

**Sign-up link:**  
<https://forms.gle/AdALHesfy8u93n5V9>

Figure 2.

**Appendix C**  
**Focus Group Pictures**



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5