

Cats Optimizing Recycling Education CORE - Progress Report

Email

namohasante@arizona.edu

Project Manager Name

Jill Burchell

Requested Metrics

Basics

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

Courtney Kim- Student

RAs – 262

CDs – 14

GCDs – 7

ACDs – 5

Custodial Unit-100

Facilities management-5

Eco reps- 6

Total number of people involved in CORE project- 402.

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)

Courtney Kim
Recycling Specialist- Total number of hours (10 hours/week)

Engagement

of students directly engaged with recycling education

FALL 2023

7631 students engaged directly through Bin It to Win It (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.

SPRING 2024

299 students engaged directly through 1 on 1 recycling education in the dorms so far.

Arbol de la Vida- 105 out of 685 residents (Completed)

Coronado- 160 out of 650 residents (Completed)

Colonia de La Paz- 34 out of 439 students (Ongoing)

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

2 Focus group meetings held so far (11/16/23 and 02/13/2024).

of students reached through these events

- 2 students were present for the 1st focus group discussion.
- 3 students were present for the 2nd focus group discussion.

Recycling

#Results from recycling surveys conducted

Recycling contamination quiz sent to 7,631 students and 31 staff in the fall semester with 996 students completing the Quiz.

Recycling survey for spring semester scheduled to be done later this semester.

2. # Contamination rates

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

Recycling data collected by Facilities Management showed 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
December- 42.1% 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 fall 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
December- 1.17 pounds per resident

The decrease in average recycling weight during the month of December may have been due to the absence of students during the winter break.

This spring semester, recycling data collected by Facilities Management shows a decrease in the percentage of contamination per person in the dorms, particularly in the dorms where 1-on-1 education has been done.

January- 45.3 % per resident
February-27.6 % per resident

Contamination rates in dorms where 1-on-1 education has been completed.

Coronado

January-45.7% per resident
February-17.0% per resident

Arbol de la Vida

January- 45.1% per resident
February-32.6% per resident

There has been a surprising decrease in the average recycling weight per resident this semester, despite the appreciable decrease in contamination rates.

January-0.75 pounds per resident
February-0.50 pounds per resident

Project Accomplishments

Last fall, we sent out a recycling contamination quiz which assessed students' knowledge on recycling. We also organized a recycling competition (BI2WI) and our first focus group. There was a 27 % decrease in recycling contamination rates in the dorms over the course of BI2WI.

The CORE team identified that the recycling area in Kaibab Huachuca had an ambiguous recycling sign. The 'recycling' sign was painted on top of the trash bin rather than the recycling bin. In consultation with Residential Facilities, the 'recycling' sign was painted in the right spot, i.e., over the recycling bin. Following the painting, recycling contamination from our data has been inconsistent; there have been both high and low levels of contamination recorded. However, communication with an RA from Kaibab Huachuca during the focus group held this semester shows that painting the recycling sign over the appropriate bin has caused a significant improvement in recycling contamination in the dorm. This claim has been verified with a decline in the contamination rates recorded by facilities management.

1-on-1 recycling education has also been started and 3 dorms have been visited so far. CORE team members have been moving from room to room in the various dorms, engaging dorm residents, inspecting their recycling and addressing several misconceptions about recycling on campus. A common question that has come up during these 1-on-1 sessions has been whether straws are recyclable? All misconceptions regarding recycling on campus have been cleared during these 1-on-1 sessions. These sessions have also given the team the opportunity to provide recycling education tailored to the needs of individuals visited. Aside recycling contamination data collected, these 1-on-1 sessions have provided insights into recycling 'problem areas' in the 3 dorms and have informed the creation of appropriate signage to address these problems.

Next Steps

1. Conduct a recycling survey later this semester.
2. Organize online drop-in session with CDs to get feedback about BI2WI and how to maximize recycling education, engagement, and outcomes in the dorms.
3. Have 2 more focus groups this semester to elicit more student perspectives on recycling on campus. One of these focus groups will be held online. Incentives for individuals in the form of \$50 CatCash will be provided to encourage student participation. The online focus group will increase accessibility to students making it easy for them to join in irrespective of their physical location.
4. Explore joining staff meetings of various dorms to access the perspective of CD's and their RAs on recycling education and interventions in the dorms and discuss how to improve recycling outcomes.

5. Assess various recycling locations and evaluate how painting backgrounds or putting up metallic signs can increase recycling outcomes.
6. Explore partnering with RHA, ECO reps and Hall councils to increase the reach of recycling education in the dorms.
7. Adjust the timing of 1-on-1 educational sessions and have more afternoon sessions.
8. 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.
9. Standardizing recycling signage across campus and redesigning recycling rules signage, incorporating student feedback from the focus groups held.

Challenges Faced

It has been challenging finding the right time to have 1-on-1 educational sessions in the dorms. Finding the soft spot between going early enough to meet students before they go to class but not too early to wake them up from their sleep has been difficult. CORE team members have been occasionally given the cold shoulder because they woke people from their sleep. Occasionally, there are very few students in the dorms.

Looking at the recycling data of dorms where 1-on-1 education has been done, there has been an abnormal increase in recycling contamination rather than the expected reduction in recycling contamination rates. However, in comparing the number of students reached in the dorms, the dorm with the higher student reach has a lower contamination rate, showing that the 1-on-1 education has been somewhat effective. Comparing the recycling data from the CORE team with that from the facilities management team, there has been a significant reduction in the percentage recycling contamination in the first two dorms where the 1-on-1 education has been completed when the months of January and February are compared. Additionally, even though there has been a reduction in contamination rates, the estimated amount of recycling per dorm resident has also been reduced.

There have also been challenges in collecting recycling contamination data. Dorm recycling is collected very early in the mornings or at other odd times by the facilities team. As such, contamination data collected may not be representative of the actual contamination going on in the dorm. In places like Honors village where there is a recycling/trash chute system, recycling easily gets contaminated.

The first focus group of the semester faced a low turnout despite the expectation that RAs would be more eager to participate in the focus group. Feedback from the RAs pointed out that CDs should be involved in the information sharing since they can use their influence to encourage student

participation.

Project Support

CSF has been very supportive of the CORE project. Further assistance in marketing our focus group discussions will be appreciated.

Photo Link

Media/Links