Zero Waste SWATeam Meeting

Date: 10/16/20

Time: 4-5PM

Attendees: Morgan White (F&S), Ximing Cai (iSEE), Tim Stark (Faculty & co-chair), BK Sharma (Faculty & co-chair), Yuanhui Zhang (Faculty), Mike Ollinger (Housing/Dining), Thurman Etchison (Housing/Dining), Aaron Finder (Purchasing), Caitlyn Aylmer (Illini Union), Cassidy Steel (Student), Leah Courtney (Student), Maddy Liberman (Student)

**Agenda**

Recommendations

* What recommendations would you like to see?
  + On 2020 iCAP Objectives Assessment, final slide notes were to
    - Develop recommendations for Single Use Plastics
    - Review effectiveness of new recycling bins-Develop recommendations based on new waste collection data
    - Review dining hall food waste –clean plate reward, weigh plates, mix salads not open bar,
    - Add carbon footprint to foods
    - Develop Incoming Freshman Message, e.g., LAS 101
    - Improve purchasing website to promote zero waste products-Develop accountability measures for ICAP objectives and yearly reporting
  + Circular Economy: The idea of retaining spending within the CU community.
    - Example: The Student Sustainable Farm sells produce to community and dining halls.
    - Future thinking in terms of sustainability.
* What objectives would you prioritize?
* What are you worried about?
* What are you excited about?
* [Submit your own SWATeam wishlist submission](https://forms.gle/g5GaBWvPwKVH7GgQA) prior to the meeting
  + [Submissions from SP20](https://uofi.app.box.com/file/714727048834)

Vending Machine Alternatives

* SWATeam next step in proceeding with this discussion.
* Individual team member steps
* Seeing what options are in the vending machine contracts
  + Vendor could benefit from this in their marketing strategy (“Look at what we did at U of I”)

**Did not discuss** America To Go Sustainability Criteria

* SWATeam next step in determining criteria
* Individual team member steps
* Deadline?

Illini Union Shadowbox Recycling

* SSC proposal (will be voted on 10/17)
* Add shadowboxes to display what can be placed in each individual container to reduce contamination/sorting discrepancies

Water/sewage Waste

* Potable water purchased is charged to each department
* Unclear if there is measurement of sewage/water usage
  + No evident system of waste measurement on campus

Food Waste

* Shift from EnviroPures to Grind2Energy in dining halls
  + Information on EnviroPures can be found on the iCAP portal [here](https://icap.sustainability.illinois.edu/project/enviropures)
  + Cost about the same to operate, but the EnviroPures have some unintended consequences and aren’t as carbon neutral as previously thought.
  + ISR, Ikenberry, and FAR have the anaerobic digesters
    - Plans to add Grind2Energy at PAR and LAR fell through due to funding.
      * Revolving loan fund (RLF) may be an option if there are energy and water savings which would pay for themselves over 10 years.
  + Operate by bringing food waste to anaerobic digester at local sanitary district.
  + Four costs: (1) equipment, (2) water and energy costs, (3) hauling fee via local contractor, and (4) sanitary district dumping fee.
  + Yuanhui Zhang brought up Hydrothermal Liquefaction Research, which showed impressive results in his research.
    - Starting next January to convert dining hall food waste to crude oil.
      * More information can be found [here](https://icap.sustainability.illinois.edu/project-update/ssc-funds-e2e-pilot-scale).
    - Labor & energy costs are greatest input costs for this project.
      * Currently difficult to determine if this will provide a net economic benefit.
      * Collection and pre-treatment of food waste is the labor-intensive part of the process
    - Does this project have a supply need? Most Natural Gas users produce it themselves or have a close relationship with those producing it.
      * Can be used to sustain waste-water treatment plant, which is a net energy user.
    - The Hydrothermal Liquefaction project is with UCSD.
* Reducing food waste is difficult during COVID-19.
  + Takeout style of the dining halls is reducing the efficacy of tracking post-consumer food waste.
    - Currently at a standstill.
* Post-Pandemic, options for reducing post-consumer food waste should be explored!
  + Incentivizing programs to influence consumer behavior
    - Clean plate program
      * Rewards eligibility every time plate is waste-free.
      * **Tim Stark and Thurman Etchison will head a recommendation about this project/concept at a pilot-scale.**
        + Considering applying for funding from the SSC as a student-led project.

Will need a student to lead this project, but don’t anticipate any barriers in identifying someone.

* + Penalizing food waste (Ex: $1 per piece of sushi left over, universities in China charging for leftover food) is also an option.
  + Marketing campaigns to create positive connotations about positive behavior.
* 10% reduction simply by introducing small plates near larger plates.

Materials Waste

* Aluminum recovery and recycling (in Midwest) is pretty straightforward; most aluminum cans are recycled content.
* Plastic Recovery and recycling are more complex. Recovery is difficult due to the various kinds of plastic.
  + Recovery is a vital part of zero-waste.
    - BK Sharma knows that there is interest in funding research for plastic recovery.
      * Next few years will reveal new methods to recovering plastics.
  + UIUC recycling is centered around commodity recyclables.
    - Plastic is baled and stored at Waste Transfer Station due to drop in market.
      * Not necessarily a dire concern. Aluminum bales have been held for upwards of four years before selling!
* Single-Use Plastics in dining halls have increased due to COVID-19.
  + Unable to reduce many aspects of waste for sanitary/health concerns.
  + Single use plastics that are not bottle shaped (#1 & #2) are NOT recyclable.
    - This means plastic cutlery, takeout containers, etc.

Food Literacy Project

* 2 students have signed up to participate in the FLP.

Sustainability Ambassadors Program

* Recommendation accepted
* Update [here](https://icap.sustainability.illinois.edu/project-update/zw001-student-sustainability-ambassador-program-submitted) on iCAP portal.

Next Meeting (10/30)

* Each member should be thinking about each recommendation that they want to proceed with.
* Submit recommendation ideas [HERE](https://forms.gle/g5GaBWvPwKVH7GgQA).