Zero Waste SWATeam Meeting

Date: 12/4/2020

Time: 4PM-5PM

Attendees: Morgan White (F&S), Ximing Cai (iSEE), Meredith Moore (iSEE), Timothy Stark (Co-chair & Faculty), Brajendra (BK) Sharma (Co-chair & Faculty), Yuanhui Zhang (Faculty), Caitlin Aylmer (Staff), Aaron Finder (Staff), Thurman Etchison (Staff), Mike Olinger (Staff), Leah Courtney (Student), Maddy Liberman (Student), Julija Sakutyte (Clerk), Nate Sun (Student, non-voting)

Agenda

***NEW!*** Letter of Support for SSC Project (Illini Union Shadowbox Recycling Initiative)

* Letter of support approved.
* JS will draft letter, run it by BK Sharma, Tim Stark, and Shantanu Pai.
* Expect to finish by next week (12/11).

Cassidy Steel: Adopt-a-Highway/SWATeam Cleanup Program

* No Update

Cassidy Steel: Composting Program Partnership with Urban Canopy

* No Update

(Optional) Cassidy Steel: Environmental RSOs

* No Update

(Optional) Maddy Liberman: Vermicompost Project

* Project funded.
* Distribute vermicompost kits to community members.

Maddy Liberman: Additional Scope for Grind2Energy (Residence Hall Composting)

* No update on specific project.
* Wants to create a report in conjunction with other as an informational resource and serve as a potential baseline for future composting recommendations.

Maddy Liberman: NERC project

* First university to join program.
* Need to identify a department/unit which will sign agreement and manage program expectations afterwards.
* Purchasing doesn’t necessarily have the spread to manage a program like this.

Thurman Etchison: Food Literacy Project

* Student Contact initiated, will discuss plan with Dining dietitian.
* Could insert the project information into the dining nomenclature.
* Could include on SMARTway program.
* Will need to apply criteria to the existing menu.
* Students want to incorporate a QR code on the menu tags.
  + Allows more flexibility in the narrative told about the food.
* Create icons for criteria and include that alongside labels for vegan, vegetarian, etc.
* Stick to easily implemented ideas.
* The end goal is to increase student awareness of dining hall food metrics.
* Messaging/Engagement component: posters, TV displays, engagement on the floor.
* Modify the app to include the food literacy components.
* Students are not waiting around for a long time getting their food, so individual QR codes may not be the most effective.
* Consider using a whiteboard system to add on the Food Literacy Project metrics.
* Consider soliciting a food nutrition cohort to conduct a pilot program.
* Consider a dining “food literacy guide” to pop up when dining app users are within a geographical location.
* Contact Engagement and Education SWATeams to discuss the messaging process and potential student populations to assist in the development of this program.

(Optional) Yuanhui Zhang: NASEM Circular Economy Conference

* NASEM is specifically excited about campus student involvement.
* iSEE Living Lab proposal surrounding circular economy could receive funding up to $30K.

(Optional) Shantanu Pai: Mask Recycling Program

* Not in attendance.

Roundtable discussion

Recommendations Wishlist

* Update the Waste Transfer Facility processes and procedures
* Each semester, school should have one week with sustainability theme. There could be sustainable design competitions, "no plastic bag for a week" challenge, and donating things to the need.
* batteries (A few of us co-wrote a proposal a couple of years ago.)
* No non-recyclable single use plastics available from food service provider
* Create a marketing campaign to raise awareness and reduce odd waste on campus. This would include a presence at convocation and quad day.
* Recyclopedia being developed by F&S
* Campus-wide student competition to help educate about zero-waste (in collaboration with Education SWATeam)
* Zero waste cannot be achieved without recycling and composting. Our team could start by monitoring the amount of waste at different locations on campus. And we can pick top 10 locations that generate largest amount of waste and implement composting and recycling trash bins. At the same time, volunteers could be assigned at each place to educate people to put trash in the right place. In this way, education and recycling could be done at the same time.
* SID tags on dumpsters being implemented.
* In identifying possible recommendations, I think we would do well to confer with Shantanu about what he thinks is feasible, should be a priority, etc. He seems to have a good grasp of where we are and where we need to be.
  + glass (I heard what Shantanu said about this; on the other hand, I wonder if we cannot build on what Housing/Dining is already doing; Thurman is a key resource here.)
  + plastic bags (one of a number of suggestions from the students in December)
  + solar panels (when the time comes - another student suggestion)
  + sustainable utensils and dishes (another student suggestion)
* Would like to pursue an anaerobic digester for campus.