

ShareGreen



[Submit a Case Study](#)

Case Studies

Browse proven green business case studies from Canada by industry sector.

ShareGreen is open to everyone. Feel free to make comments on the case studies or submit one of your own. [Submit a case study.](#)

Contact: casestudies@sharegreen.ca

Education

Food and Beverage

Government

Manufacturing

Professional Services

Resource Extraction

Retail

Tourism

Transportation

All Case Studies

Education

SFU's Zero Waste Program

Aug, 12 2014 | Industry Sector: Education |



Challenge

SFU recognizes their responsibility and power as a community and are taking action to reduce their environmental footprint in a big way. As part of SFU's Sustainability Strategic Plan, the university made a commitment to diverting a minimum of 70% of waste from landfills by 2015. This goal was developed as a result of a number of issues, including the lack of consistency in recycling options across campuses and the three municipalities in which they are located; the upcoming 2015 Metro Vancouver organics disposal ban and associated regional solid waste management plan and diversion targets; and pressure from the university community to take leadership in environmental responsibility and education.

SFU's target mirrors that of Metro Vancouver in both percentage and timeline, making the university's Zero Waste Initiative part of a bigger, regional goal to have one of the highest recycling rates worldwide. This target is part of, and contributes to, SFU's wider Zero Waste initiative to both reduce and divert waste associated with campus operations.



Strategy

SFU launched the Zero Waste Stations Project in January 2014, as the first and primary project of the Zero Waste Initiative. The aim of this project was to standardize waste collection across all three SFU campuses, starting in public areas – in one week, all existing, stand-alone garbage and recycling bins were removed and replaced with streamlined, standardized 4-stream Zero Waste Stations. These stations accept food scraps and compostables; mixed paper; mixed recyclables; and landfill garbage, and the same colours, signage and order of streams is now found at all waste stations in all public areas across SFU. This has increased the number of materials that can be diverted, while at the same time making recycling at SFU easier, consistent and more convenient. To develop the colours and icons for the different streams, SFU worked closely with Metro Vancouver and other regional institutions, and is now pioneering a regional standard for public space waste diversion.

Using these public facing waste stations, innovative communications and education tools were used to engage the SFU community in Zero Waste. The communications program has developed and implemented a variety of tools and media, including a music video, Zero Waste web portal, student Zero Waste Educators (face to face contact training at stations), social media campaigns, Zero Waste events such as the President's BBQ, and tactile and graphic signage. Two targeted campaigns have been run to date: 'It's time for Zero Waste at SFU' campaign alongside the music video in Spring, and a 'Separation anxiety' campaign in Summer. Due to the transient nature of the University community, semester-long campaigns will continue to be developed as a key part of the initiative, using internal and external media. The program is also being integrated into the curriculum, with students from several credit courses undertaking Zero Waste projects in the first two semesters.

This initiative is a learning and research project, and ongoing feedback from the community is actively encouraged and pursued in order to drive regular updates and improvements to the program. There are several ways in which the community can provide feedback, including online surveys, in person at events, and by email or phone. Station signage was redesigned for the Summer semester based on such feedback. Progress of the program is closely monitored through data from waste haulers, and regular on-campus waste and compactor audits.

This public-facing, high visibility initiative focuses on educating the SFU community on issues of waste and how waste connects to sustainable communities. Waste is something that everyone comes into contact with in very tangible ways, and therefore a strong starting point for driving culture change within the university. The initiative is now looking beyond public spaces, and is currently running a pilot program with 2-stream Zero Waste stations in washrooms, so that all paper towels can be composted. The next phases of the program will target classrooms, offices, labs, meetings, events and exterior spaces - so that eventually all areas of the university's operations will be streamlined with standardized Zero Waste Stations, replacing all stand-alone garbage and recycling bins.

However, the Zero Waste program goes beyond just diversion, and also focuses on reduction. Several reduction projects are currently underway, including a project to reduce the use of Styrofoam and other non-recyclable take-out food containers on campus, and replace them with compostable or recyclable options. The initiative aims to eventually integrate Zero Waste into every area of the university's culture and operational practices, encouraging the community to think about their everyday habits and actions through the lens of sustainability.



Result

On SFU's main Burnaby campus, diversion from landfill has increased from 32.8% in 2011 to 47.4% (May 2014), based on all available data. 8% of this increase can be attributed to the updates in signage implemented in the Summer semester as a result of community feedback. 198 tonnes were diverted between January and May 2014, saving SFU \$19,000 in landfill disposal fees. As the program continues and expands to other areas of campus operations, these savings are expected to increase.

There have also been successes with Zero Waste events. For example, the 2014 President's BBQ – one of the biggest campus events of the year – was a Zero Waste event for the second year running, diverting 100lbs of food waste and compostables, and 38lbs of aluminum cans from the landfill.

SFU will continue to drive innovation by pushing the boundaries of Zero Waste, through transferring the innovative methods and models developed to industry, institutions and organizations across North America, and remaining a regional leader in Zero Waste.



Website Links

www.sfu.ca/zerowaste

0 Comments



Post new comment

CAPTCHA

This question is for testing whether you are a human visitor and to prevent automated spam submissions.

What code is in the image?: *

Enter the characters shown in the image.

[Search a Case Study](#)



[Home](#) [About](#) [Resources](#) [Case Studies](#) [Sustainability Challenge](#) [Media Centre](#) [Student Challenge](#) [Site Map](#)

2014 ShareGreen. All Rights Reserved.

[Follow ShareGreen](#)