RE-Thinking Waste, Recycling, and Housekeeping Efficiency.

A leaner Green
• UNC Charlotte is the fourth largest of the 17 institutions within the UNC system and the largest institution in the Charlotte region.

• Founded in 1968, UNC Charlotte is enjoying a period of profound growth and expansion. Seven new academic buildings were completed within the last six years. And a new student union opened in 2009.

• UNC-Charlotte has over 25,000 students supported by 4000 staff and faculty. Nearly ¾ of the student commute to campus. 5,000 live on campus, another 5,000 live immediately surrounding the campus.
Facilities Housekeeping

The Housekeeping Department has 135 positions that are on campus 24/7 in three shifts.

For efficiency, the majority of cleaning of the 30 administrative and academic buildings occurs during third shift (80 staff).

Provides day to day feedback contact from their zone
The Office of Waste Reduction & Recycling started in 1990, we have 14 full time staff positions.

• We collect over 40 items to be recycled and remanufactured from over 1300 bins daily.
• Over 2,000,000 pounds of recyclables were collected in 2010-2011.

- Service 47 buildings
- Immediate feedback
- Recycling Logo on shirts identify team
• Recession 2008 -

• On October 9, 2009, The University of North Carolina System sustainability policy was passed by the Board of Governors.
  • Stated that all 16 member institutions should work toward zero waste

• On October 16, 2009, the UNC Charlotte Sustainability Committee met for the first time.
  • tasked with creating a plan for a sustainable campus

• January 2011 Dr Dubois signs the American College & University Presidents’ Climate Commitment.

• Budget cuts
Thinking Sustainability

- Environmental
- Economic
- Social
Changing the way we operate

• With a new sustainability policy in place, the Presidents Climate Action Commitment Signed, and budget cuts facing our department, it forced and allowed us to think critically and make big changes to our program.

• We began by looking at more ways to capture recycling, save money on operations, and find efficiencies within the housekeeping and recycling departments. We were tasked with this even with the campus continuing to grow.

  • Increase staff efficiency
  • Reduce expenses
  • Realizing savings through waste reduction
  • Increase recycling
Problem #1

Our classrooms had no recycling bins

• Because our Recycling Team only worked first shift, we were unable to service recycling bins in classrooms during school hours

• Inevitably, many recyclable materials (paper, bottles, cans) ended up in the trash

• Conducted a survey of more than 170 students in 2008. The number one reason that they were unlikely to recycle was due to convenience

  • Trash bins in the classrooms and recycling bins down the hall – Which is more convenient?
Solution?

Remove the trash bin

By removing the trash bin from the classroom, we could now put both recycling and trash on even ground and remove the convenience factor.

Advantages:

• Trash would no longer be more convenient than recycling
• Housekeeping staff could spend less time emptying small trashcans from each classroom and focus more time in other areas.
• Potential increased recycling
Concerns:

• Getting buy in from faculty

• Would it create a mess in classrooms

Still a few problems:

• **had to be creative in the older buildings** to find a common area to place trash cans and trash bins

• **Some resistance**, some staff still wanted it the way it had been
  
  • We personally went to talk with staff to address these issues

• **Waste cans were moved from rest rooms and into classrooms**
  
  • We found out half way through the term that continuing education instructors had not been informed about the change, they assumed someone had moved their classroom containers
Student and staff take recyclables and trash to the bins in the hallway
Utilizing the successful recycling program model that relied on everyone taking it to the bin, we hoped everyone would also take their trash out of the classroom to a central trash can.

With the Senior Associate Provost' support, we chose two highly used buildings for the summer pilot. In the week between semesters, housekeepers removed the trash bins and we placed posters up.
Before the pilot started 3rd shift housekeeping recorded the amount of trash they had to pick up in the classroom during the 1st summer semester.

After the trash cans were removed they only reported an increase in litter to pick up the first week.

After the first week, litter decreased.
After years of being kicked, and hit with bottles and cans, the trash bin decided to stand up for itself...

...Right behind the recycling bins!

Where is the trash bin???

You can find them all together in the hallway.

Do your part for the environment at UNC Charlotte by dropping it in the right bin.

To learn more about recycling at UNC Charlotte visit us at www.uncc.edu/recycling
Expanded program during spring term 2010 to the entire campus

No trash cans are in the classrooms

Recycling again increased 20% - 25% in each building and additional trash left in classrooms was not a problem
Success

Virtually no litter problem in the classrooms

More time for Housekeepers to spend in the hallways, bathrooms and classrooms

Increase in recycling from 20% - 25%
Problem #2

Budget cuts continued to be prevalent throughout the university. We had to find ways to do more with less.

Previous setup: Faculty and staff members were required to take their recycling to larger bins located elsewhere in the building (usually a break room or closet).

However, their trash was being collected by housekeeping on a daily basis.

Again, creating waste was more convenient than recycling.
Solution?

Make the trash bin smaller...and require staff to take their trash to a common area, just like they did with recycling.
Staff and Faculty do their part by bringing it to central area

• Every faculty/staff member on campus has a desk-side blue recycling bin with a mini trash bin attached to the side.

• They empty and correctly separate the contents of these recycling blue bins into larger departmental bins labeled for news blend and office blend.

• And empty their own trash bins

Recycling Staff collects recyclable materials from the 1500 centrally location bins inside the academic buildings using 90 gallon toters.
Pilot #2

Our theory was that by handing out smaller trash bins, and requiring staff to take their trash and recyclables to larger bins in a common area, would reduce waste and increase recycling.

• We wanted to test it so we completed a pilot in our own building and weighed trash on a regular basis.

• We found that our trash weights were reduced and recycling increase by about 20%.

• Instead of the emphasis being on waste, we put it on recycling.

• At this point, we had some data backing our theory.
Concerns:

Our chief concern was gaining buy in from the staff. We were now asking them to remove their own trash after having it collected for years.

- Getting buy in from management
- How would we educate thousands of employees
- What would the benefits be to employees
- This would create a big change for the housekeeping staff

Benefits

The main benefits of this program were increased efficiency for our housekeeping staff, reduced cost of waste related fees, lower bin costs, higher returns for recycling, savings on trash liners, and not putting those in the landfill.
Getting the go ahead from the Chancellor and BOT

After getting permission, we began to create a plan

- Source the mini-bins
- Create an education / information plan
- Develop new housekeeping procedures and processes
- Set a date for the changeover

**July**

Replace old yellow bins in common areas with the black bins

**August 1st – 5th**

Hand out mini bins and cards. Also, recycling bins if they need them.
Contact building liaisons to set up daily education sessions to staff and faculty during the summer.

- We held sessions twice daily, everyday, for about a month.
- Sessions lasted from 20 to 30 minutes
- Covered the program with them and explained the new processes for collecting trash and office cleaning
- Went in detail about what materials could be recycled
- Addressed any current concerns that they had (some not related to the program)
- Provided posters and other recycling information
- Gave away aluminum recycling mugs to champions of the program
One of the benefits of the program was to increase housekeeping efficiency in buildings.

- Rather than going in offices three times per week, we only went in once.
- Allows Housekeeping Staff to focus more on floors, common areas and bathrooms.
- Introduced service card to inform employees about what was being done in offices.
Getting the Housekeeping staff up to speed

With 135 Housekeepers, it was important to educate them on new procedures.

No longer dumping trash or cleaning offices 3 times per week.

• Special exceptions
• None

5000 new mini bins were put out in 3 days.
Changing out old bins yellow bins in common areas to new black bins

These are the receptacles where employees would dump trash from their mini bins.

We added lots of these to make it easier. In most cases, these are located within 50 feet of every office.
Rollin out the Mini bin

The mini bin should only go in offices

- Would not be collected from other spaces
- Student spaces
- Break rooms
- Conference rooms
Office area with Cubicles.

Pull the old trashcan and replace with recycling (if they need one) and mini bins. Also leave the card on their desk.
This is a student work area. We shouldn’t put bins here.
No mini bins or recycling in conference rooms.
No mini bins in student computing or common areas.
In the process of rolling out our new office cleaning program, we discovered that you did not have a blue desk side recycling bin. We have provided you with a blue recycling bin today. Your new hanging mini trash bin is attached to the side of the new recycling bin.

Please use the blue bin to store and transport your recyclables to the nearest recycling collection area. The small black mini bin is used to collect trash. Employees are now responsible for taking their trash and recycling to the nearest common area with larger receptacles, which will be serviced daily. Information on what is recycled here at UNC Charlotte is listed on the back of this note.

If you have any recycling questions contact: Devin Hatley at dhhatley@uncc.edu or 7-0606. For more information, you can visit the recycling website at www.uncc.edu/recycling.

For Housekeeping questions, contact Michele Kohan at 7-0603 or mkohan@uncc.edu.

THANK YOU FOR RECYCLING

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**In the Paper bin**

We accept paper, chipboard and cardboard. Please break down cardboard and leave it by the indoor bins.

**Two different kinds of paper**

We ask that employees separate their paper into two blends (white and colored computer paper, manila folder blend (newspapers, slick paper). In addition, transparencies, and batteries, are recycled in some areas of the campus. However recycling collects these items up on a call-in basis.

**In the Bottle Bin**

We accept bottles and jars, juice containers, plastic bottles and jugs. Juice containers should go in the bottle bin. Please rinse materials before putting them in the bin. **We accept ALL plastics except #6.** Please look on the plastic material to indentify the number.

It is the staff's responsibility to empty their own bins in the building's common area which is usually located in a break room or closet.

We also accept aluminum and tin cans.
Program results and benefits

• More efficient Housekeeping process – Can focus on our true customers - Students

• Increased recycling by about 20% in offices

• Put emphasis on recycling rather than waste

• Opportunity to provide face to face customer service and recycling education to the campus community

• Save over $13,000 annually in trash liners

• Keep 20,000 trash liners out of the landfill