



Bridgewater College – 2019 RecycleMania Case Study

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Focus:

The primary focus of this case study is to provide a detailed description of Bridgewater College's efforts towards *food waste reduction*. We chose this category to promote sustainable living on campus and further to support the college's overall effort to conserve energy, water and further to minimize waste. Bridgewater College and its dining services provider, Parkhurst Dining, have established an excellent partnership that has placed a strong emphasis on lowering food waste levels within the college. This effort has seen great success across our campus and is one we are always aiming to perfect. As a higher education, the college aims to engage students, faculty, staff, and the surrounding community in food waste reduction and waste minimization results. Within the United States of America, 40 percent of all food produced is wasted while, at the same time, one in 10 citizens go hungry. In addition, the environmental impact from discarded food is alarming: primary sources of landfills and 4.4 billion tons of annual greenhouse gas emissions. These glaring statistics needs to be changed. Because of statistics like these, reducing overall levels of food waste is one of the top sustainability initiatives on Bridgewater College's campus.

Description:

The campaign effort is to promote the existing food waste reduction programs on campus and to encourage students to engage in this endeavor during the RecycleMania competition. Bridgewater College, in partnership with its dining services, has enacted numerous programs towards its goal of food waste reduction. These programs include 1) an efficient composting program, 2) a tray-less dining experience for students, faculty, and staff, and 3) collaboration with local non-profit organizations. Bridgewater College and its dining services provide the local Boys and Girls Club with unused portions of food that have not been consumed during its intended timeframe. It is through these collaborations within the community that create opportunities for Bridgewater College to minimize its levels of food waste.

Further, Bridgewater College does an excellent job at providing scenarios for students and staff to become more knowledgeable on food waste minimization initiatives. Internships and club opportunities exist for students to become engaged in food waste topics. Classroom opportunities exist as well for students to participate in these topics. Specifically, the college offers a course centered on food politics that heavily discusses food waste. It is through these classroom experiences that students become aware of these issues and encouraged to participate in events like RecycleMania.

Timeline:

- Early December 2018: Discussed program details with the Campus Sustainability Committee.
- Mid-December 2018: Met with Parkhurst Dining to discuss promotional aspects of RecycleMania. There was a strong desire to promote this event within the dining hall via various techniques that included a) displays on tables and napkin holders, b) presentations about RecycleMania via PowerPoint during peak hours of dining hall, and c) various displays on food counters providing statistical composting and food waste data.
- Early January 2019: Posted RecycleMania details on the college's web communication internal portal. This portal, "MyBC", is a secured access to students and provides a great opportunity for the campus community to become aware of this event.
- Mid-January 2019: The Eco-Action Club, a student club that promotes sustainability programs on campus, decided to help with promotional efforts: design, distribution/posting and social media.
- Late January 2019: The Eco-Action Club presented a rough design of Recyclemania 2019 competition posters to its club members and the Campus Sustainability Committee.
- End January 2019: The Department of Student Life approved the distribution of Recyclemania posters on campus buildings, most specifically in the residence halls.
- February 1, 2019: Eco-Action Club with the assistance of Michael Gruver completed the posting of promotional materials on all building on campus. In addition, the club conducted a short meeting with key stakeholders on campus to inform them this event and the desire for the heavy use of posters throughout campus buildings.
- March 27, 2019: Devin Lattimore, Senior Environmental Science Major, and intern with the Office for Community Engagement and Sustainability presented "Organic Waste Solutions-The Case for Composting at Bridgewater College" at The Environmental Virginia Symposium, Virginal Military Institute (VMI), Lexington, Virginia. The symposium brings together environmental professionals in government, industry and the non-profit sector, as well as college students from across the state to network, learn, and collaborate to solve complex environmental challenges. In his presentation, he shared how Bridgewater College was effective in reducing its food organics through various programs mentioned above including the impact of Recyclemania competitions on college campuses.

Resources/Stakeholders:

No additional resources were required for this event. Bridgewater College's Office for Community Engagement and Sustainability performs complete direction and promotion of events like RecycleMania. A monetary amount is set aside within the respective budget to cover various costs including supplies, printing, and additional promotional materials. Opportunities also exist within the department for off-campus travel trips to occur for students and staff. These trips to nearby facilities, such as a local composting site or food pantry, allow for further promotion and activism efforts within Bridgewater College and the community.

Results:

- I. At the end of the eight-week RecycleMania event, we were successfully able to reach out to almost every student on campus about RecycleMania and its range of program benefits: almost 50 students pledged to recycle and minimize waste on campus. The college's Eco-Action Club did tremendous promotional work, as numerous students within the club were active participants in the RecycleMania efforts. Posters and flyers were designed and created, shown below, and were displayed throughout the campus.
- II. Michael Gruver utilized the example ideas posted on the RecycleMania website to further promote and encourage participation within the event. He utilized a variation of the "Dorm Storm" activity as a main promotional technique. During the evening hours of the week, when dorms and apartment common areas are most populated, he travelled to each housing area and strongly encouraged all individuals to participate in the event. He informed as many students as possible about the event, the college's recycling information, and where the nearest recycling location is located.

- III. Michael enrolled in the Food Politics course during spring 2019. This course, taught by Professor Skip Burzumato, heavily discussed our country's current issues regarding food waste. Around the time span of the RecycleMania event, the college's director of dining services visited the class to discuss Bridgewater College's food waste efforts. She highlighted many of dining services' efforts towards food waste reduction that include almost 500 pounds of food per year being donated to the local Boys and Girls Club. A recent focus on portion size control within dining services has also positively contributed to lowering levels of waste.
- IV. A key proponent of our efforts was designated to ensure the recycling and waste habits of our college during the eight-week period were strong and able to trend into the remainder of the school year and beyond. At the end of March, Bridgewater College held a convocation and lecture as environmentalist Josh Tickell came to the college to speak. He is a large advocate for aiming to alter climate change and encourages individuals to establish a more-sustainable mindset. His visit to Bridgewater College coincided greatly with the end of the RecycleMania event and was an excellent source of encouragement to continue recycling and maintain sustainability habits beyond the event.
- V. In addition, Devin Lattimore's participation at The Environmental Virginia Symposium was a great success as the selection process for this presentation is very competitive. We shared our success stories in composting and food organic waste minimization efforts with conference attendants. We strongly believe that other colleges and universities will benefit from our experience.
- VI. In our various internship courses that Bridgewater College offers, such as ENV-480 or BUS-480, this has been the first year where the RecycleMania event has been included as a key part of the intended curriculum. As a result, we were able to complete this case study and promote the program on campus.
- VII. Anne Keeler, Bridgewater College's Vice President of Finance and Treasurer, has been a great supporter of events like RecycleMania and continues to be a great public figure within the college administration. She enjoys sharing the successful results of our efforts and is a strong advocate of our composting program.

Future changes:

- Bridgewater College's student-run newspaper, *Veritas*, is often a great way for groups on campus to promote various upcoming events and provide further reach and visibility throughout the campus. Unfortunately, due to time constraints and the publish periods of the newspaper; we were unable to promote the college's RecycleMania efforts via this method.
- Due primarily to time restraints and differing of schedules, we were unable to host as many "RecycleMania-themed" events as we desired. As mentioned above, a version of the recommended Dorm Storm was implemented but a second event would have proven to be even more effective towards the main goal of increasing awareness and participation.

Advice:

It is crucial to establish connections with potential supporting individuals within the college community. Gaining additional support from a college's administration, various clubs, students, etc. will further the reach of the event and provide greater opportunities for success. Collaborating with other groups and individuals will allow for a more diverse and wider array of ideas and resources.

These supporting individuals, as mentioned above, all possess varied knowledge and leadership capabilities that can add to the success of an event like RecycleMania. Establishing an environment where all supporting members can positively contribute to this event will prove to be beneficial. These varied stakeholders can add to the overall success of RecycleMania.

Lastly, we encourage schools to develop a strong partnership with their dining services. In our campus, the dining services cost-share the composting program and further makes great efforts towards minimizing food waste and are an excellent advocate on campus for this movement.

Photos/Graphics:

BRIDGEWATER COLLEGE
CHALLENGE TO GROW ON

Get involved in this 8-week recycling competition! All you have to do is recycle and tell your friends about RecycleMania.

- Make sure all recyclables are not contaminated
- Make sure all recyclables are in their proper container
- Encourage your peers to participate

Help Bridgewater rise to the top and show that we are the best recycling College in the nation!

Eco-Action Club
Program Sponsors

RECYCLE MANIA
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION



Check out how Bridgewater is doing in the competition!
<https://bit.ly/2E4orHM>

RECYCLE MANIA
In Partner with EcoAction Club

Find us on Instagram!
@bcecoaction

What is it?
An organization working to eliminate waste in some friendly competition with other universities

How Can I Help?
Help save the earth by doing something as simple as recycling in your designated recycling bins in your residence area