



2021 Campus Race to Zero Waste Case Study Competition

Macalester College - Dirty Training

1. Contact info (name, department, school, email, phone)

Christie Manning, Sustainability Office, Macalester College, cmanning@macalester.edu, 651-696-6164

2. Focus of Case study

(Summary 25 words or less)

To educate incoming first years on the environmental justice implications of waste, promote refusing waste to halt the cycle of production and consumption, and teach basic logistics of waste sorting at Macalester.

3. Detailed description of campaign or effort:

(300 words or less)

Dirty Training is a peer education effort for waste reduction. In their first weeks at Macalester, all first years are offered a training led by students that goes over the “why” of waste reduction, with a focus on the unjust and disparate effects of landfills, incinerators, and trash on vulnerable populations. Dirty Training then goes over the “how” of waste reduction, connecting students to options like our campus Free Swap as an alternative to buying things new and throwing them out, and going over waste sorting basics at Macalester.

Dirty Training has previously been conducted in person, but this year we pivoted to a virtual training due to COVID. Each dorm floor received training at the same time, which provided an opportunity for students to see the faces of their neighbors and built community. Logistically, it also helped that RAs could communicate information about Dirty Training and other opportunities all at once. For students studying remotely, alternative Dirty Training sessions were offered, along with encouragement that they research trash sorting and alternative waste options wherever they were living.

On the Zoom call, a pair of Dirty Trainers presented a slide show followed by an interactive Kahoot quiz that to test what students had learned; Dirty Trainers then took questions and offered resources to learn more or look up information from the training later on.

To incentivize students to attend the training, the Sustainability Office pledged to donate \$1 to a social justice organization, and 10 students were randomly selected to win a \$100 gift card to the Highlander, the Macalester bookstore.

4. Planning steps & timeline to implement:

List out in bullet format each of the steps involved in planning.

- July 2020 -- student workers from the Sustainability Office recruited students to be Dirty Trainers using various forms of social media and in the daily newsletter

- July -- These workers coordinated with other peer lead campus groups for first years (Sexy Trainers, for sex ed, and POP trainings, for racial equity) to create a calendar of when trainings would occur.
- August -- Later in the summer, Sustainability Office workers designed and conducted a workshop to teach Dirty Trainers how to conduct their own training, as well as designing the [training for first years](#).
- August -- Towards the end of the summer, Dirty Trainers who had been fully trained were given a spreadsheet with options of times to sign up with a co-lead; these times all occurred during the school year.
- August -- For organizational purposes, Dirty Training planners drafted a Google calendar for Dirty Trainers of when all trainings would occur, along with the name and contact information of the leaders, and the Zoom link
- August -- Sustainability Office workers coordinated with RAs to send their residents information about all the trainings and Zoom links
- September- October --Throughout the fall, a supervisor from the Sustainability Office emailed reminders to Dirty Trainers when it was their day to present.

5. Resources and stakeholders involved

Explain what budget or in-kind resources were needed, what if any campus dept's or groups supported the effort, what staff or volunteers were involved.

Sustainability Office— trained Dirty Trainers and designed trainings; coordinated with RAs

RAs—sent out information for first years to be able to attend

Sexy Trainers and POP Trainers—coordinated times to conduct respective trainings to reach everyone with no overlap

Student volunteers—became Dirty Trainers to lead trainings

6. Describe the Results of this campaign component

- a. General results (*ex: attracted attention of campus president, campus paper did a news story on the event, etc.*)

First years spent time with Macalester values of striving for Zero Waste. They were exposed to sustainability concepts through an Environmental Justice lens and gained basic tools to help reduce their waste. Throughout training, students were engaged and asked questions, and were able to apply their learned knowledge throughout the semester as they lived on campus.

- b. Specific measurable impact figures, if applicable (*Ex: Reduced contamination rate 13%, Gathered 316 pledges to recycle more, etc., 250 people engaged, etc.*)

Dirty Trainers conducted 18 trainings during September and October. An estimated 350 students attended the training, out of a class of 563.

7. What would you do differently in the future?

Moving forward, it would be helpful to look to past Dirty Trainings. While we were able to adapt this year's training to be remote due to COVID, in person trainings allow for more fun and interactive ways to teach, such as a waste sorting relay race, although the increased focus on environmental justice was new this year. Having games/quizzes that review EJ concepts in addition to waste sorting concepts would strengthen the focus even more, especially if they were conducted in person.

8. What advice would you give to another college that wanted to do a similar effort?

When possible, connect the material directly to the real world—for us, that looked like researching and including information on where *exactly* Macalester’s trash goes when it gets taken away. That kind of information can be challenging to find but is well worth it and makes everything learned feel more relevant, including to the trainers! Encouraging the Dirty Trainers to have a short meeting before they present so they can divide up presenting responsibilities is really helpful, especially to work out technical difficulties ahead of time. Finally, planning as much as possible ahead of time during the summer also makes a big difference. This helps things go smoothly once the year is underway and all student trainers and planners are busy.

9. Photos and Graphics

Get Involved in Environmental Justice as a Dirty Training Facilitator

Submitted by: ~~_____~~, Sustainability Office

The Sustainability Office is still looking for any students interested in leading Dirty Training for incoming first-years this fall. Dirty Training sessions will focus on the importance of waste reduction given the disproportionate health and pollution impacts incinerators and landfills have on low-income communities and communities of color. Dirty Trainings hope to shift the emphasis of Zero Waste from a target to hit and towards a justice-oriented goal based on caring about all communities—especially BIPOC communities. Dirty Training will provide a guide to waste-sorting options at Mac with an emphasis on refusing products when possible as the best way to minimize impact. If you are interested in becoming a Dirty Trainer, [please fill out this facilitator sign-up form!](#)

Screenshot from Mac Daily (Macalester Daily newsletter) 7/23/2020