

THE PROBLEM

Did you know it takes 500 years for one Styrofoam cup to dissolve? In the 21 weeks of the 2011 fall semester Chi Omega Fraternity's Psi Chapter used approximately 40, 500 pieces of Styrofoam including cups, bowls and plates. That number meant that on average our chapter was using 276 pieces per day. I knew that something had to be done. Components of Styrofoam, such as Ethylene, Styrene, and Benzene, have a very harmful long-term effect on the Earth's environment. Drilling for these components can lead to land erosion, and burning Styrofoam in landfills contributes to our already deteriorating ozone layer.



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THE PROJECT

I had three key goals in mind when I set out to begin Styrofoam reduction at Chi Omega's Psi Chapter.

1, Inform the chapter as to the detriments of Styrofoam usage.

2.Cease the daily use of Styrofoam cups by making them unavailable to the chapter.

3. Find and implement an alternative to Styrofoam cups that is more environmentally friendly, but is still within the allotted budget.

The house mother provided me with the numbers that I needed to convince the President, Housing Corps, kitchen staff, and ultimately the entire chapter that something needed to be done. After making an announcement to the entire chapter the plan was created an implemented within four days. From that point on I worked with the kitchen staff weekly, monitoring the amount of Styrofoam that was put out weekly.

Girls Gone Green: Reducing Sorority Styrofoam Usage Architectural Studies Student: Sara Turner

SUST 4103: Capstone Project for Sustainability Minor Faculty: Dr. S. Boss and Dr. T. Messadi

GRAPHS



THE OUTCOME

Getting rid of Styrofoam for a chapter of 352 girls took some adjusting. While the plan was adopted very quickly by the staff and executive boards of the house, it still took the girls a little convincing. Many times a day I heard girls complaining about not having a cup to get coffee, or not having a cup so that they could take their drink to class.

I made a point to contact Jere Clune, the Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing for the company Ultra Green. The company specializes in biodegradable paper products that are not only recyclable, but can be used as compost as well. After several phone calls and emails I realized that it was not possible to switch to such a product without drastically increasing the budget allotted for kitchen supplies.



NOVEN	/IBER				
	1 cups	Ben E. Keith Co		2 40/25	
	1 bowls	US Foods		1 4/125	
11/7/1		US Foods		2 20/25	
11/7/1	1 plates	US Foods		1 4/125	
11/10/1	•	US Foods		3 20/25	
	.1 plates	Ben E. Keith Co		1 4/125	
	ov cups	Ben E. Keith Co		2 40/25	
	ov cups ov cups	US Foods US Foods		1 20/25 1 20/25	
11/29/1	•	US Foods		2 20/25	
				-	
	total orders placed		pieces ordered	cost	272.27
cups plates		7		500 100	273.37 84.22
bowls		2 1		500	84.22 29.82
50W13		1	-	.00	25.02
DECEM	IDED				
				4 20/25	
	1 cups	US Foods		1 20/25	
	.1 cups .1 plates	US Foods US Foods		2 20/25 1 4/125	
	.1 cups	US Foods		2 20/25	
12/12/1	•	US Foods		2 20/25	
	1 bowls	US Foods		1 4/125	
12/14/1	1 cups	US Foods		1 20/25	
total	orders	placed	pieces ordered	cost	
cups		5	- 40	000	98.32
plates		1	5	500	54.32
bowls		1	5	500	29.82
SUMM total	ARY orders	placed	pieces ordered	cost	
total	orders				980.38
	orders	placed 35	330		980.38 524.26
total	orders	35	330	000	
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500				29.82	х
1000	24.58	@	12.2	9	х
500				54.32	х
1500	36.87	@	12.2	9	Х
500				29.9	Х
2000	81.38	@	40.6	9	х
500				12.29	х
500				12.29	х
1000	24.58	@	12.2	9	Х
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This project obviously relates to sustainability on many levels. It is first and most importantly connected to the sustainability domain concerning Social Systems. believe that using Styrofoam is a cultural issue. Americans are all about things being done quickly and easily, with as little effort as possible on their behalf. Styrofoam fuels that mentality because it's something we don't have to think about. We use it, and throw it away, never considering the long term impacts of our choices.

This type of project has the potential to spark campus-wide involvement. Imagine having all Greek Life at the University of Arkansas working toward a common goal of eliminating, or reducing Styrofoam usage. Imagining the difference that could be made just by our university is overwhelming. Reducing Styrofoam usage at the University of Arkansas has so many inherent benefits for students. Money saved by not purchasing Styrofoam could be put towards other campus projects and activities for students. Finances aren't the only thing that will be affected by the reduction of Styrofoam.

Evaluating the long term effects shows that we can reduce emissions that are eating away at our ozone layer. While we can't stop the damage that has already been done, we can certainly do our part to prevent more from happening. I strongly believe that if students are made aware of the actual numbers when it comes to Styrofoam usage they will make a conscious effort to do their part in taking care of our environment and planet, and will being making more environmentally sustainable choices.

The first 2 weeks there was absolutely no Styrofoam put out at all. This was very good news for the environment, but not for the kitchen staff. No one was there to clean the dishes all weekend so several girls that lived in the house ended up having to clean it themselves, which is against Housing Corps policy due to the fact that using the kitchen equipment without proper training is an insurance liability. The house mother, kitchen staff, and President came to the consensus that Styrofoam would only be available on the weekends to ease the responsibility of the kitchen staff.

Although my plan to completely rid Chi Omega of Styrofoam was not possible, I know that a tremendous standard was set that will impact not only the current members, but future members as well.

FAY JONES **SCHOOLOFARCHITECTURE**

SUSTAINABILITY



Above: Chi Omega Fraternity, Psi Chapter Below: Psi Chapter President, Kelly Lamb

