

# Zero Waste Summit

Monday, November 10, 3:00 – 4:45 PM

JBHT 148

Carlos Ochoa began the summit at 3:00 PM by giving a brief overview of the meeting's agenda before addressing definitions of terms such as zero waste. He also informed attendees that solid waste from the University is sent to the Eco Vista Landfill in Tonitown.

We are currently limiting our efforts to Class 1 waste. Class 1 waste is household waste, or anything a person would put in a trash can. For this analysis we are not including furniture or computer surplus. Class 2 and 3 waste are hazardous waste, which is already highly regulated, and Class 4 waste is construction waste. This inventory looks at only Class 1 waste.

Within Class 1 waste, our categories are cans, bottles, cardboard, mixed paper, white paper, and organics. Organics include pre- and post-consumer waste (i.e. food waste from dining facility kitchens and food waste from trashcans).

Diversion rate is defined as diversion plus landfill weight divided by 100.

A waste audit is the process by which the composition of a waste stream is analyzed. Trash samples collected from buildings are sorted and weighed, and that data is entered into spreadsheets to be analyzed.

Our target year for becoming zero waste as an institution is 2021. We are assessing at our campus in terms of four sectors: Housing, Athletics, Facilities Management, and the Arkansas Union. There is no central collection point for this information, so we have been aggregating different kinds of data from different sources and different time periods. January 2014 to September 2014 is therefore the benchmark period that we have chosen to use.

In order to reach zero waste we have to reach a 90% diversion rate by 2021. We are currently at approximately a 16% diversion rate. Information gathered from all sectors was converted into metric tons. In the benchmark period we sent 2065.77 MT to the landfill and recycle 402.65 MT. Housing and Facilities Management make up the bulk of our waste stream, at 44% and 37%, respectively. Facilities Management was responsible for 67% of the recycling on our campus, with housing responsible for 15%. Calculating the number of recyclables from Housing is complicated because no one is tracking it. Responsible individuals collect and deliver recyclables to Razorback Recycling separately.

In response to a question about what parts of campus may be included, Carlos Ochoa stated that this assessment does include the Uptown campus buildings. Housing does have some data related to their move-in and move-out periods.

Carlos then presented and discussed waste data displayed in slides. (See PowerPoint presentation.)

Waste audits are an important tool for getting us closer to our 2021 goal. These are what tell us how much recyclable material is going into the landfill currently. The Office for Sustainability has conducted three waste audits so far. It was pointed out that Greek life poses a unique problem because students take a large portion of their waste out of the houses and onto campus with them, so the material that they are responsible for is not necessarily being captured on site.

Strategies to be addressed include bolstering existing programs, improving our infrastructure, exploring novel collection systems and methods, and education of the campus community. We are currently working on methods for holding zero waste events so that we will have the ability to host large events without large amounts of waste. The Office for Sustainability worked with Razorbash this year and achieved a 76% diversion rate, which makes us very hopeful for prospects in the future. Housing is exploring new recycling infrastructure for the residence halls. ClearStream receptacles add an element of peer pressure when people can see that their peers have recycled.

Now that we have a general idea of how much we are producing, we can begin to address it. The floor was then opened to general discussion. The following is a summary of what was discussed:

It costs the university about \$120 per ton to send our waste to the landfill. However, there are also costs involved in recycling, and it will be difficult but possible to save money by going zero waste.

Different areas of campus use different waste companies: Deffenbaugh, Waste Management, and the City of Fayetteville (for non-state properties, i.e. Greek life). If we had a centralized data tracking system, however, it wouldn't matter that different entities are collecting the waste. Waste Management is in the process of buying out Deffenbaugh, although for the foreseeable future they will continue to bid against each other.

Organic (compostable) waste is a major area to be addressed, and because of our size it would be logical to partner with the City of Fayetteville to implement a collection system for organic waste to be composted and use by the city.

Education is a barrier to people making the right choices in disposing of their waste (i.e. whether a specific item is recyclable). However, procurement is a powerful way to address this (i.e. not purchasing non-recyclable items). However, because procurement is so decentralized and we don't always have a choice in our suppliers, this can be difficult to accomplish. In any case, it will require more, and more deliberate, effort in the procurement process. One suggestion involved decentralizing costs associated with waste disposal so that budgetary units would have a direct incentive to manage their purchasing and recycling behaviors more effectively.

Dr. Matlock asked the group to consider our ultimate motive for going zero waste. Discussion included economic factors, responsible land use, and changing the culture of our campus and how people think about waste.

The Office for Sustainability is in the process of creating a Zero Waste Action Plan, which will lay out our motivations, our goals, and strategies for reducing and assessing our waste within a framework of continual improvement.

The meeting adjourned at 4:30 PM.