

Surplus Store Revitalization and Promotion

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Provost's Sustainability Internship Program: Receiving Services

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Abstract

The Surplus Store Revitalization and Promotion project is the reorganization and rebranding of the Surplus Store with the goal of establishing a prominent role in the purchasing process of furniture and lab equipment by departments within the UCSC system. This project began with redesigning the store's interfaces and internal systems, as well as the physical store's organization. We also focused on promotional efforts, including the redesign of the Surplus Store website, the introduction of the Surplus Store Weekly Newsletter, re-development of the Surplus Store Facebook page, and the creation of two reusable banners to be hung at the base of campus advertising the store. The end goals of this project include a developed online presence, increased traffic to store, and a clearer path of communication between departments, procurement, and Receiving Services (the Surplus Store). The results of this project are an increase in number of customers, a decrease in the number of items sent to the landfill, and an increase in revenue and profits.

Introduction

The UCSC Surplus Store is the last stop for furniture and equipment on this campus before it enters the waste stream. The University of California Office of the President has set a goal of Zero Waste (defined as 95% diversion from landfill) for all UC campuses by 2020, and though UCSC has diverted 65% of the waste stream as of 2014-2015, “there is still a large amount of landfill waste that could be reduced, reused, repaired, recycled or composted instead” (Zero Waste 2020)(Figure 1). Along with this, “waste diversion rates have plateaued on many campuses in recent years, with only UC Riverside and UC San Francisco achieving significant increases in diversion rates since 2014-15” (UCOP Sustainability). Because the Surplus Store is the last party responsible for much of this waste, we see our role as breaking this plateau. We have redeveloped our procedures to reduce, reuse, or recycle the “waste” that reaches us before it reaches the landfill. In order to achieve UCSC’s 2020 Zero Waste Goal, Surplus Store aims to foster a culture of responsible use, environmental stewardship, and communication across departments within this campus. This goal will be achieved by increasing waste-stream knowledge and the use of the Surplus Store through a rebranding effort, as well as through developing a presence within the campus and the community. By changing our procedures to be more effective, we aim to reduce the unnecessary purchase and disposal of viable furniture and equipment on our campus, thereby lessening the waste stream from the source.

Project Description

The goal of this project was to reorganize and rebrand the Surplus Store such that it establishes a prominent role in the purchasing process of furniture and lab equipment by departments within the UCSC system. We sought to reduce waste and recycle furniture in a financially and environmentally sustainable way, in part by adjusting UCSC’s established systems to easily track and measure the campus’s furniture and equipment from its purchase to its disposal. We aimed to maintain this waste reduction in the future through the creation of sustainable practices that ease the process of reuse and recycling within the UCSC campus. We created these sustainable practices through the development of user-friendly online request forms and explanatory guides for users within our website, as well as by developing a comprehensive inventory system as well as a Procedure Manual for future operation of the Surplus Store. The brunt of the Revitalization and Promotion Project was the redesign of the physical and online Surplus Store. The focus of these redesigns was to make the Surplus Store more streamlined, effective, and appealing to customers. We promoted these changes through the development

of a Weekly Newsletter, by upgrading the Surplus Store Facebook page, and by designing and purchasing two reusable banners to hang at the base of campus. As well as communicating with those on campus, we also worked towards developing the Surplus Store's relationship with city and nonprofit organizations in order to reduce the waste stream by creating a path of reuse and recycling for University property subsequent to the University's use of it. This project will positively benefit UCSC by reducing its amount of landfill waste and an increase in the store's use will create a broader financially viable purchasing option for departments on campus. Thus we will be able to contribute to the larger UC 2020 Zero Waste goal while simultaneously becoming a better resource for our customer base and fostering a deeper internal understanding of the purchasing and disposal procedures on our campus, particularly those dictated under UC Policy BFB-BUS-38 (University of California Policy: BFB-BUS-38).

Project Timeline

- August, 2017: Creation and implementation of the Surplus Store Weekly Newsletter (See Figure 2)
- October, 2017: Switch inventory into the new system
- November, 2017: Begin re-designing the layout of the Surplus Store
- November, 2017: Redesigned the Surplus Newsletter to be in-site (Figure 3)
- November, 2017: Survey departments on campus about their experiences and expectations of the Surplus Store
- December 1, 2017: Submitted Campus Sustainability Plan Grant Application (Strategy 2.3 Action 2.3A)
- January 18, 2018: Granted Campus Sustainability Plan Grant for the creation of two banners (Figure 4)
- May, 2018: Designed, ordered, and received two reusable promotional banners
- May, 2018: Redesign the Surplus Request Form to implement in-site
- June, 2018: Complete the Receiving Procedure Manual

Project Stakeholders, Student & Mentor Roles

The stakeholders for this project were:

- Robert Kemp, Director of Copy/Mail/Receiving Services, was the mentor for this project. Robert directed us towards useful contacts within UCSC and coordinated meetings with us. He met with us weekly to oversee and work alongside us in this project.
- Zachary Morse and I were the Campus Surplus Zero Waste Interns working on the project. Though we have differing titles, we found ourselves working together on the

majority of the project, as most tasks overarched the entire department in this stage. We were responsible for research, creating contacts, creating content for outreach and interior use, applying for grants, and contributing to the redesign of the Surplus Store procedures and sites. Those tasks that we were individually responsible for are listed below.

- Emily Peterson: Lab & Technology Equipment Surplus Coordinator
 - Responsible for the graphic design of the outreach materials, website, and manuals
 - Outreach to labs on campus
- Zachary Morse: Surplus Furniture Zero Waste Coordinator
 - Responsible for the research of UCOP and UC policy
 - Outreach to Humanities, Social Sciences on campus
- The Provost's Sustainability Internship and Sustainability Office funded this internship and project.
- The Campus Sustainability Plan Grant funded this project's two reusable, promotional banners.
- The UCSC Sign Shop coordinated the creation of the two banners.

Measurable Results

The end goals of this project include a developed online presence, increased traffic to store, and a clearer path of communication between departments, procurement, and Receiving Services (the Surplus Store). The results of this project are an increase in number of customers, a decrease in the number of items sent to the landfill, and an increase in revenue and profits. The metrics for success for this project are the weight of incoming goods, to be measured with procedures which will determine how customers found out about the store or a particular good, and by tracking the number of customers signing up to receive the Weekly Newsletter. As the development of this project was a year-long process, the quantitative results will be measured in the 2019-2020 school year onward. a scale which was acquired within this project, and the Aged Inventory Report, which tracks the turn-over rate of the goods within the Surplus Store. We will measure the success of individual facets of our outreach efforts through a questionnaire which has been integrated within our sales procedures, as well as by tracking the number of customers who sign up for the Weekly Newsletter. As the development of this project was a year-long process, these results will be measured in the 2019-2020 school year.

References

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UCOP Policy:

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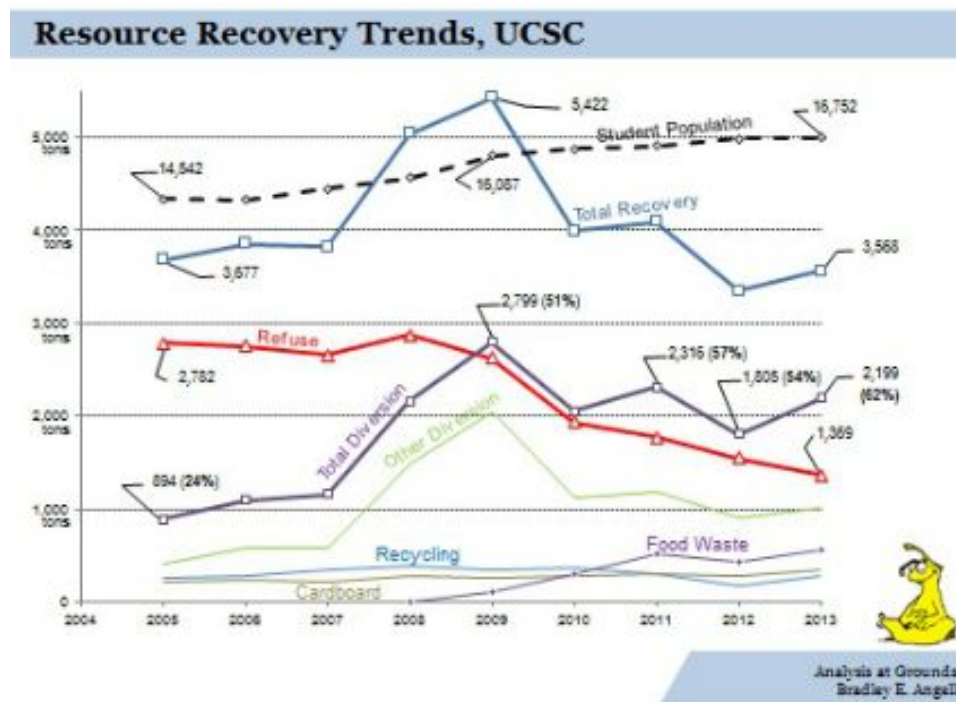
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Appendices

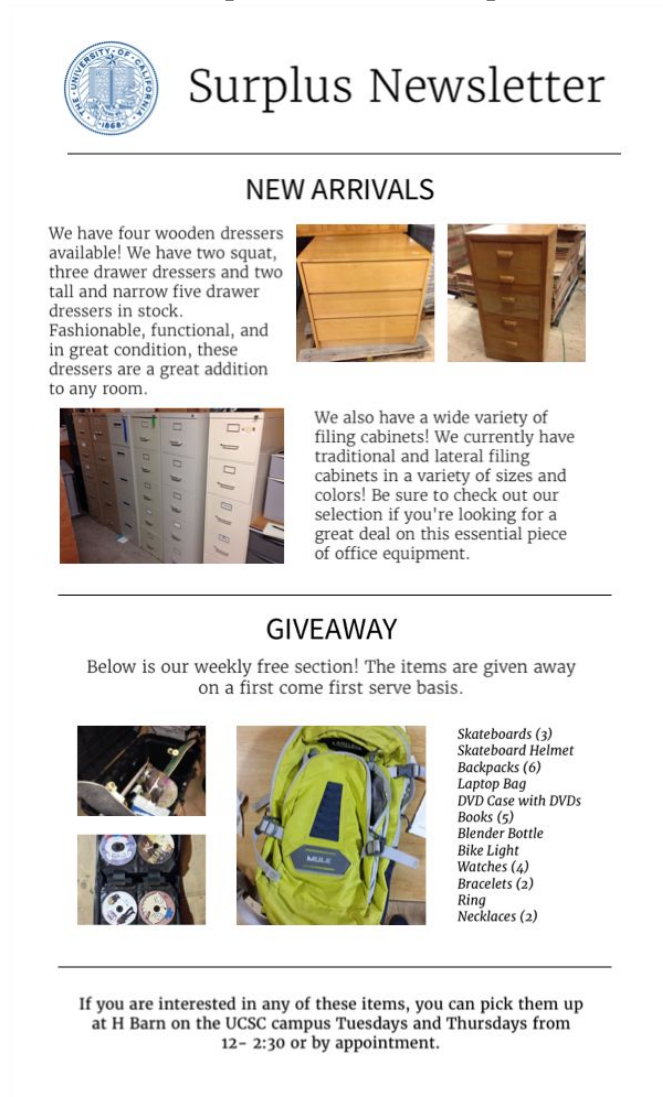
Figure 1: Resource Recovery Trends, UCSC



Source: <https://recycling.ucsc.edu/zero-waste-2020/index.html>

This chart describes the resource recovery trends within UCSC, within the context of the UC's Zero Waste 2020 Goal.

Figure 2: Example of Original Surplus Newsletter



Source: receiving@ucsc.edu

This is the first Surplus Newsletter which was sent out in August, 2017. The newsletter has since been developed to be in-site, but still includes the same information. This newsletter was implemented in an effort to promote the Surplus Store.

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Figure 3: Example of New Surplus Newsletter



Source: receiving@ucsc.edu

This is an example of the current Surplus Newsletter, which has been redeveloped to be in-site and largely automatic. This was done with the purpose of consistency, such that a range of workers can be easily trained to run the Surplus Newsletter without affecting the quality of output. This letter was designed to be as closely aesthetically related to the original newsletter as possible within the confines of our technological resources.

Figure 4: Surplus Store Promotional Banner



Source: <https://www.receiving.ucsc.edu/surplus-store/index.html#surplusstore>

This is an image of the Surplus Store banner. Two of these banners were printed through the aid of the Campus Sustainability Plan Grant. They were designed and printed to be a reusable resource which can be used indefinitely by the Surplus Store. They will be posted for the first time by both entrances of the campus as a promotional effort during the 2019-2020 school year.