

Surplus Store Revitalization & Promotion

Zachary Morse zmorse@ucsc.edu

3rd Year Environmental Studies/Economics Major, Sustainability Studies Minor

Provost's Sustainability Internship Program: UCSC Surplus Store

Zero Waste Furniture Surplus Coordinator

Mentor: Robert Kemp rakemp@ucsc.edu

2. Abstract:

In response to the growing need for waste reduction, the UCSC Surplus Store set out to begin reorganizing and revamping its operations, in hopes of mimicking the success of similar operations around the nation. By acting as the last stop of an items life cycle before the landfill, we have the opportunity to help foster a greater culture of reuse as well as aid in making sure things that do need to be disposed of are done so in an environmentally friendly manner. With the many policy and budgetary restraints that our operation faces, we focused primarily on building relationships with people across campus, as well as working with other supply chain actors to try to gain more visibility. We were able to reorganize our physical store, begin creating a better website and have changed internal operations. We also have begun finding ways to measure the amount of waste we are able to save from going to landfills by giving it a second chance at being utilized to its fullest extent. The data we are now able to collect will become a valuable resource in making future changes to improve service and acquire funding.

3. Introduction: Problem Definition, Context & Background:

UCSC, along with the rest of the UC system has set out the ambitious goal of going zero waste by 2020, as outlined in the UCOP Sustainable Practices Policy. While the deadline is appearing to have been too optimistic, there has still been notable overall progress by the entire UC system. Unfortunately, these increases in waste stream diversion have plateaued in recent years and more avenues must be looked into to break past the

75% barrier the system sits at as a whole (Waste Reduction and Recycling, see Fig. 1).

A big part of aiding in the reduction of the campus's waste stream has to do with the furniture and lab equipment from departments after they have outlived their use. Several UCOP policies have established the need to reduce this waste stream by utilizing a surplus store system and responsibly sourcing new purchases.

Our campus is not alone on this endeavor, and other university systems have also had great success, yet there is a lot of room for improvement. Looking at model universities such as Oregon State, Perdue and the University of Texas, Austin, we have strived to identify ways in which we can improve our surplus system through more publicized auctions, and a better understanding of ways to finance our operation. By adopting some of their successful practices, we hope to become the sustainable stewards that the UCSC community deserves.

4. Project Description:

Goal Statement:

Our main goal was to bring awareness to the Surplus Store as a viable purchasing option for staff, faculty, students, and the general public through multiple avenues of marketing. We set out to establish stronger relationships with city and nonprofit organizations in order to reduce the waste stream through reuse and recycling. We aimed to reduce waste and recycle furniture in a financially sustainable way, in part by creating a way to easily track and measure furniture or equipment from its purchase to its disposal. There are many ways in which individuals can reduce their waste stream, but often viable office waste is overlooked. To many, a new office requires new furniture or lab equipment.

We hoped that by increasing our outreach and visibility efforts, as well as integrating more with procurement, we would be able to teach people how to both save money and be environmentally friendly.

Project Objectives:

We have been able to create and implement small changes to our in-store practices that will hopefully ease the process of reuse and recycling on the UCSC campus.

Additionally, we have reorganized the physical and online Surplus Store to be more streamlined, effective, and appealing to customers. The facebook group is being better managed, and weekly newsletters are now automated. The website does have a better user interface, although there is still room to improve, and we have identified ideal models to emulate. We hoped to find a way to reduce unnecessary transport, and we have established some partnerships with divisions in regards to moving truck access, yet there is still progress to be made on this front. Looking back at our original big picture planning worksheet, most of our written objectives were accomplished, with a few exceptions for things we no longer deemed necessary or feasible.

Needs Statement:

By reorganizing the Surplus Store, both in its internal functions and its role it plays on campus, we had and continue to have the opportunity to better serve our customers and open a greater conversation about the purchasing and disposal procedures on our campus, particularly those dictated under UC Policy BFB-BUS-38. By offering a sustainable alternative to new furniture, and diverting things out of the waste stream, our operation is able to bring awareness. While we face budgetary and policy limitations on the

actions we were able to take, they have now been acknowledged and we are finding ways to effectuate change that is within our scope. Our conversations with other campuses were productive in finding the best management practices that have worked for others. While we are still learning and growing, we offer a service that many other campuses don't, but as we better hone our practices, we may help entice other institutions to adopt similar programs.

5. Project Timeline:

- August/October 2017: Creation and implementation of the Surplus Store Weekly Newsletter, familiarization with procedures
- November, 2017: Research of UCOP and UCSC policies regarding procurement, disposal and surplus
 - Survey departments on campus about their experiences and expectations of the Surplus Store
- October, 2017: Switch inventory into the new system
- November 12, 2017: Begin re-designing the layout of the Surplus Store
- November 17, 2017: Redesigned the Surplus Newsletter to be in-site (see 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 2018, CSP Grant awarded, banner design process and communications began.
- Winter: Outreach to UCSD, UCSB began. Frequent meetings with Division Managers (Social Sciences), ECS, ITS. Determination of E-waste procedures
- Spring: Division outreach on campus (Humanities & PBSci), collaboration with other UC surplus department interns
 - Procedure manual finalization
- May 1, 2018: Ordered & received two promotional banners
- Future Date: Banner posted, fully integrated into procurement punch out system.

6. Project Stakeholders, Student & Mentor Roles:

The surplus store has close ties to many of the academic divisions, who often use us

as a means of disposal for unneeded inventory (as mandated by university policy). We have been trying to change the nature of these relationships so that they also utilize our store as a way to get discount items and prevent them from going to the landfill.

Additionally, there are surplus departments at other UC campuses, but prior to this year there had been very little collaboration between us and them.

We were able to get some funding through the Campus Sustainability Plan Grant, which we have used to purchase and hang a promotional banner at the entrances of the campus (Figure 3). Our relationship with sustainability efforts on campus come from our goals to reduce waste, but these ties were weak before the PSI program.

Robert Kemp, our mentor, is director of copy/mail/receiving services and plays a key role in helping guide the surplus store. His position allowed him to know people all throughout the campus, and he set us as interns to develop better working relationships with many of these individuals and the departments they run.

My position was originally billed as the furniture coordinator, while Emily, the other PSI intern, was focused more on lab equipment. In the end, these titles were less important as we worked together on much of our endeavors, regardless of the surplus material in question.

7. Measurable Results:

The main results we are hoping to be able to see, either this year or in the future by surplus employees, is how our outreach efforts have drawn in new customers and created new relationships. We did not have a way to really quantify these goals, so one of our big accomplishments is creating a way to better collect data to determine the effectiveness of

measures we took. We have now implemented a way for customers to give more feedback and report how they found us, and this will be tracked in a database going forward. This will give us data to help inform future outreach efforts for the staff to undertake. We hoped to be able to measure an increase in sales, which according to our recent interview with Surplus Store staff, is already being noticed although the quantitative data for the year is still incomplete. Additionally, in the procedure manual we developed, there are now new methods to track the weight of items we save from going to the landfill, so that the staff can help determine our contribution to campus waste diversion efforts. Another great change is the way in which we track the age of our inventory allowing for us to determine our turnover rate as well as being able to decide when things are no longer worth enough to be sold.

Many of these results are more back-end and data driven, but they were measures we were lacking before and as the store gathers more data, it will be able to find better ways to work to divert waste, as well as quantify how much we already prevent from going to the landfill. The greater, qualitative impact we had is the fact that we were able to have discussions with so many departments and campuses about what we can do to improve our service and serve both the customers and the environment better.

8. References:

University of California Policy: BFB-BUS-38. Office of the Chief Procurement Officer. 2011, Web. <https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/3220479/BFB-BUS-38>

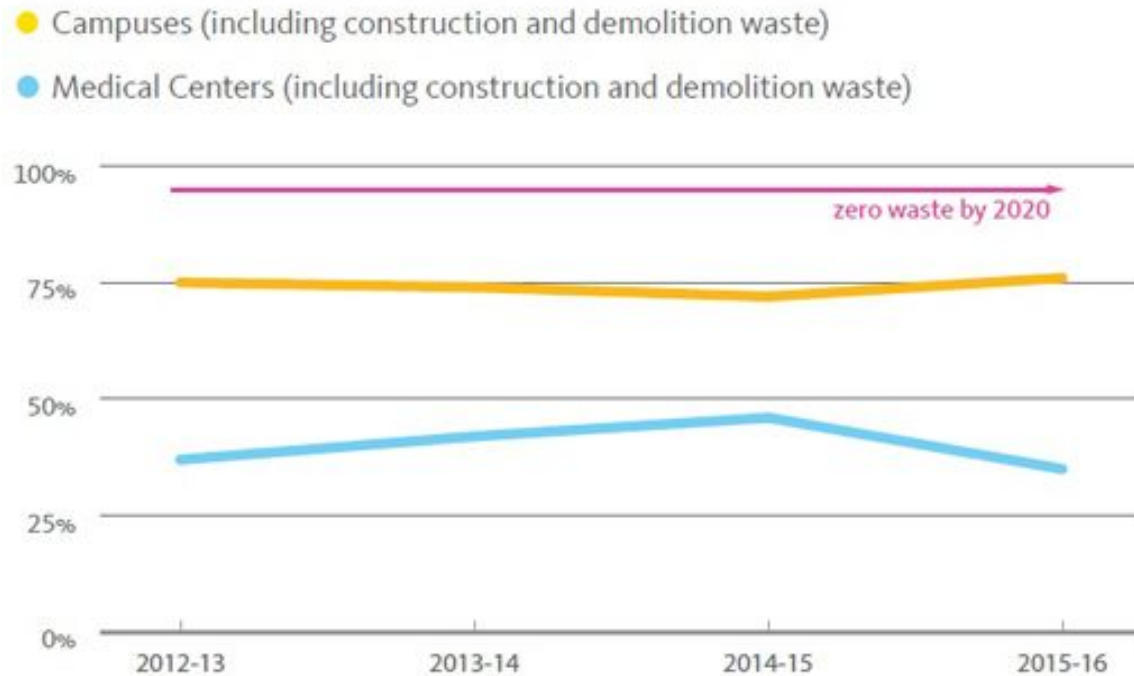
UCOP Sustainability. Waste Reduction and Recycling. Web. <https://www.ucop.edu/sustainability/policy-areas/waste-reduction-and-recycling/index.html>

UCSC Campus Sustainability Plan 2017-2022

Appendix

Figure 1:

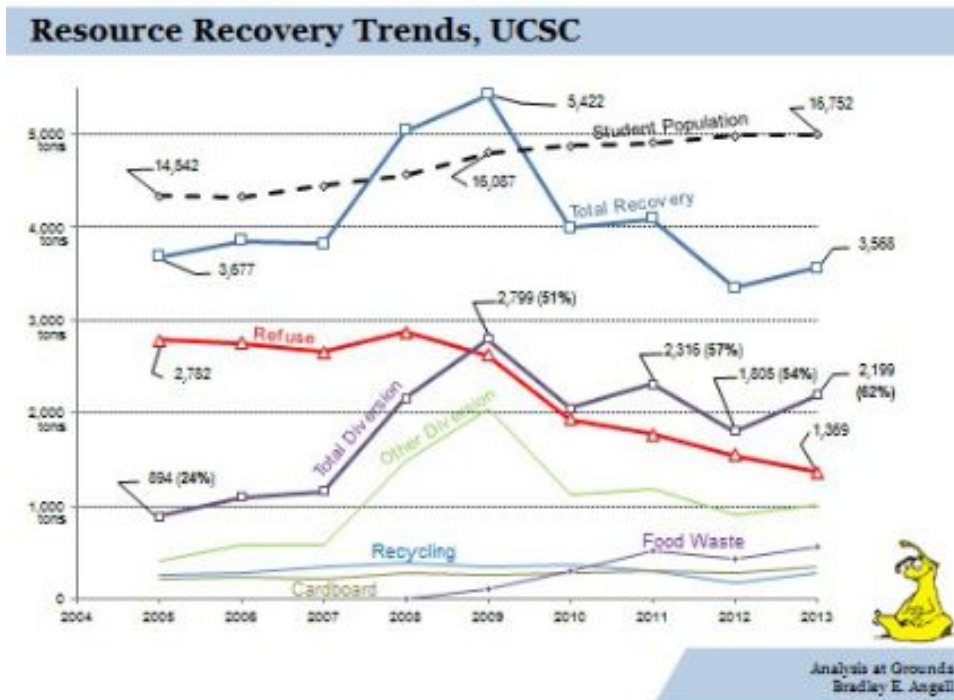
PERCENT SOLID WASTE DIVERTED FROM LANDFILL SYSTEMWIDE



UCOP Sustainability. Waste Reduction and Recycling. Web.

<https://www.ucop.edu/sustainability/policy-areas/waste-reduction-and-recycling/index.html>

Figure 2: Resource Recovery Trends, UCSC



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

Figure 3: Surplus Store Promotional Banner



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

Utilizing funds awarded from the Campus Sustainability Plan Grant, we were able to develop our first major promotional materials in the form of two large, reusable banners printed at the UCSC Sign Shop. We are planning to post them for the first time at the campus entrances during the next school year, and in the future will aim to post them at times when most of our customers tend to move.