



Going Waste-Free On Campuses

Eco Promotional Products, Inc.
Case Study, Volume One

DOING COOL THINGS THAT MATTER

An Eco Promotional Products, Inc.
Initiative to Create Change

Many campuses have taken it upon themselves to be waste-free and promote sustainability to their students and faculty. But what does going waste-free mean? For some it means cutting back on garbage, recycling more and using a refillable bottle. But for these schools it's more. Not only are they promoting or giving out reusable items such as silverware, straws and to-go cups and containers, but they also offer courses, seminars and have giveaways for students to learn more.

University of San Diego, Rider University, Chartwells at UNCA and University of the Pacific have all started small to make a big change. By giving away or offering a replacement for single use items such as straws, silverware and even to-go ware (clamshells and coffee cups), they are hoping to not only see reduction in waste on their campuses but a permanent change in student and faculty consumption behavior. Over the course of their waste reduction journey we will research, interview and look deeper into the programs and movements set in place and what kind of a difference they are making.

Most of these schools have begun initiatives of some kind to aid in the efforts of going waste-free and hope their students pick up on these habits and actively pursue a waste-free lifestyle. Each school has had various successes in the small initiatives they have begun with their waste-free movements. The University of San Diego has kept over 150,000 cups and lids out of landfills since

2016 with their waste reduction initiative. Rider University has been working to eliminate single use plastic bags and straws and has been putting in efforts to phase out bottled water. Chartwells at UNCA offers a reusable cup program which discounts the price of a cup of coffee and donates to local charities. University of the Pacific is participating in the Last Straw Campaign through Bon Appétit and is phasing out single-use plastic straws.

Not only are these universities hoping to rid their campuses of single use waste, but they are also hoping to see a return on investment and a continued drive to recycle and reduce waste among students. On a college campus it is hard to avoid single use items as it is an on-the-go type setting. It's even harder to generate interest or break people out of set habits when it comes to new ideas. By introducing reusable items, these campuses hope to achieve a more waste-free outlook that not only expands on campus but in students' daily lives as well. Another challenge these schools are facing is finding a way to measure waste reduction.

Eco Promotional Products has provided reusable utensil and straw sets to these schools to help with their waste-free journey. By introducing these items in dining locations and distributing them at outreach events, they are beginning the process of "phasing out" single use items. At University of San Diego, they are working to comply with California State Law that "prohibits dine-in restaurants from automatically providing plastic straws." In order to comply, they are selling reusable stainless-steel straws not only in their restaurant, but they are offered across campus at all dining locations. University of the Pacific has been handing out bamboo utensil sets at new student orientation as well as prizes to students who volunteer or participate in their activities. The university is also beginning a

new leg of reducing single-use disposable items by selling reusable to-go clamshells and coffee cups. When used, the customer gets a discount on their meal or drink and can exchange their used one for a clean one. Rider University hands out straw sets at trivia nights and at big campus events such as National Campus Sustainability Day. Chartwells at UNCA sell the sets at their retail location. They also give them away through social media and during their education events using a prize wheel. Students have been drawn to the idea and are even more excited when they win the items. We asked the schools to track either the usage of the utensils and straws or to note the decline of single use disposables and we will follow up to find out how well the waste-free journey is going.

How far will this movement go? Can campuses really become waste-free? Is this same idea taking place in more than just schools? This study will investigate how deeply this impacts schools, society and the environment. Is it simply a trend? Is it because of regulations or laws? Are people participating because they have to or because they want to? Living waste-free has never been as obtainable as it is now, so how are you living waste free? What can you do?

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