

Ohio State's FOD Zero Waste Internship

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Ohio State's Zero Waste Goal

By 2025, Ohio State has a goal of diverting 90% of campus waste from landfills through recycling, composting, reusing, and reducing.



Position Background

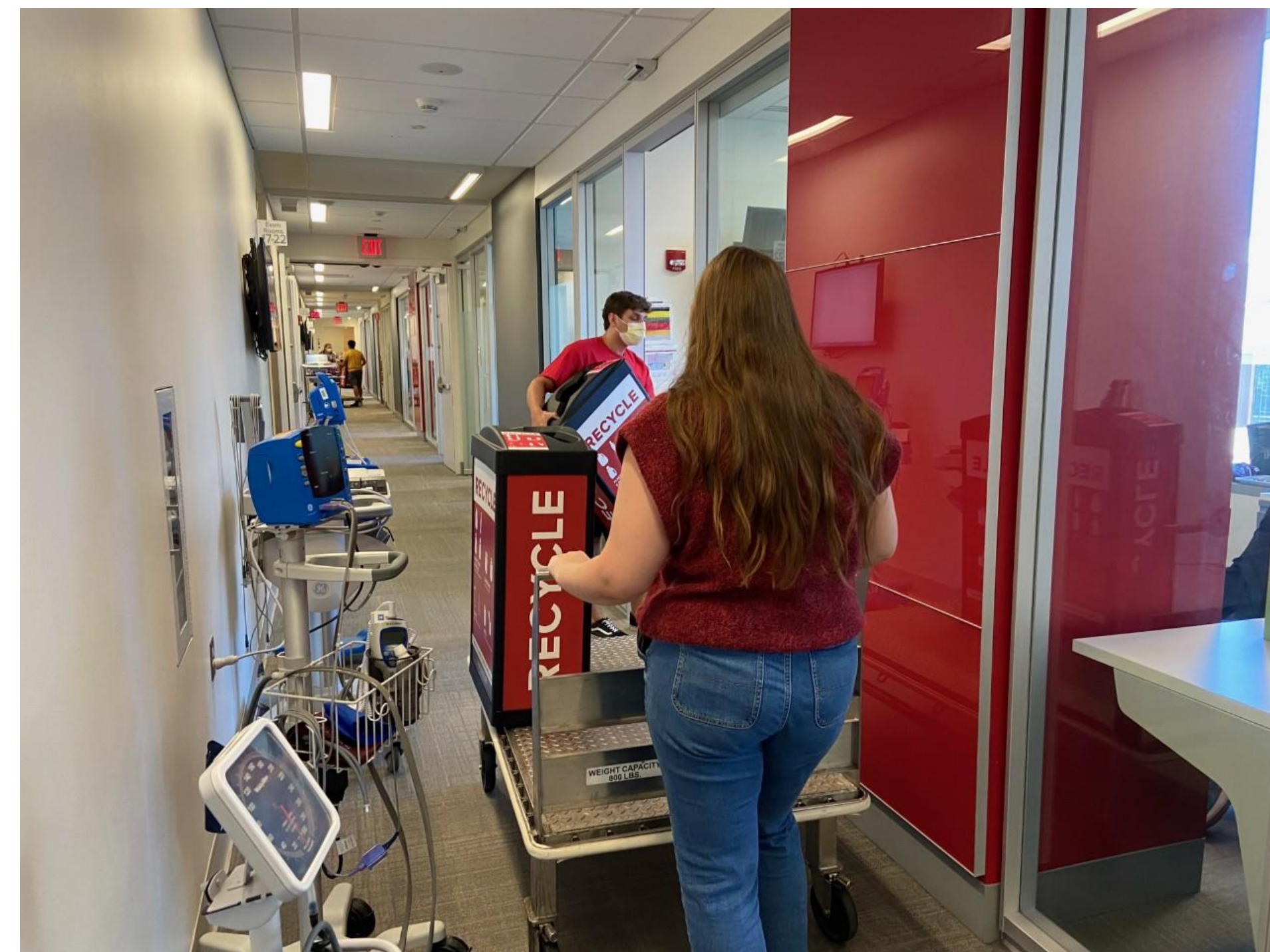
Over the summer and this fall, I have worked as a zero waste intern with Ohio State's Facilities, Operation and Development (FOD) sustainability department that is located on west campus.

FOD ensures that campus facilities are well managed and are properly operating. This department of FOD focuses on the operations for zero waste and sustainability on campus.

I found this internship through the SENR intro survey course and a stadium zero waste tour. I applied at the end of Spring 2022 semester and secured this position. I have the option to work until graduation.



On The Job



My roles as a zero waste intern varied from day to day, but mainly included:

- Auditing campus building waste infrastructures and writing reports to address any problems found and recommending solutions.
- Tabling events for;
 - OSU staff bin distribution for the compost drop-off program
 - Educating students on dorm/café compost program
 - Informing students about compost bins for their dorm rooms
- Working with Wexner's sustainability team to implement recycling by installing recycling bins in the nursing stations of The James Hospital.
- Installing exterior and interior compost bins to all campus dorms and cafes.
- Excel data reporting on campus composting infrastructure and metrics.
- Working at Ohio State Stadium

Other Experiences



Price Farm Organics:

Another Intern and I were able to explore a compost facility, Price Farms Organics, and see how a compost facility runs firsthand.

It was neat to see the steam coming off the compost piles and the machines they use to "filter" small piece of contamination out. As well see some of the final products that were made from compost.



Zero Waste at Ohio State Stadium:

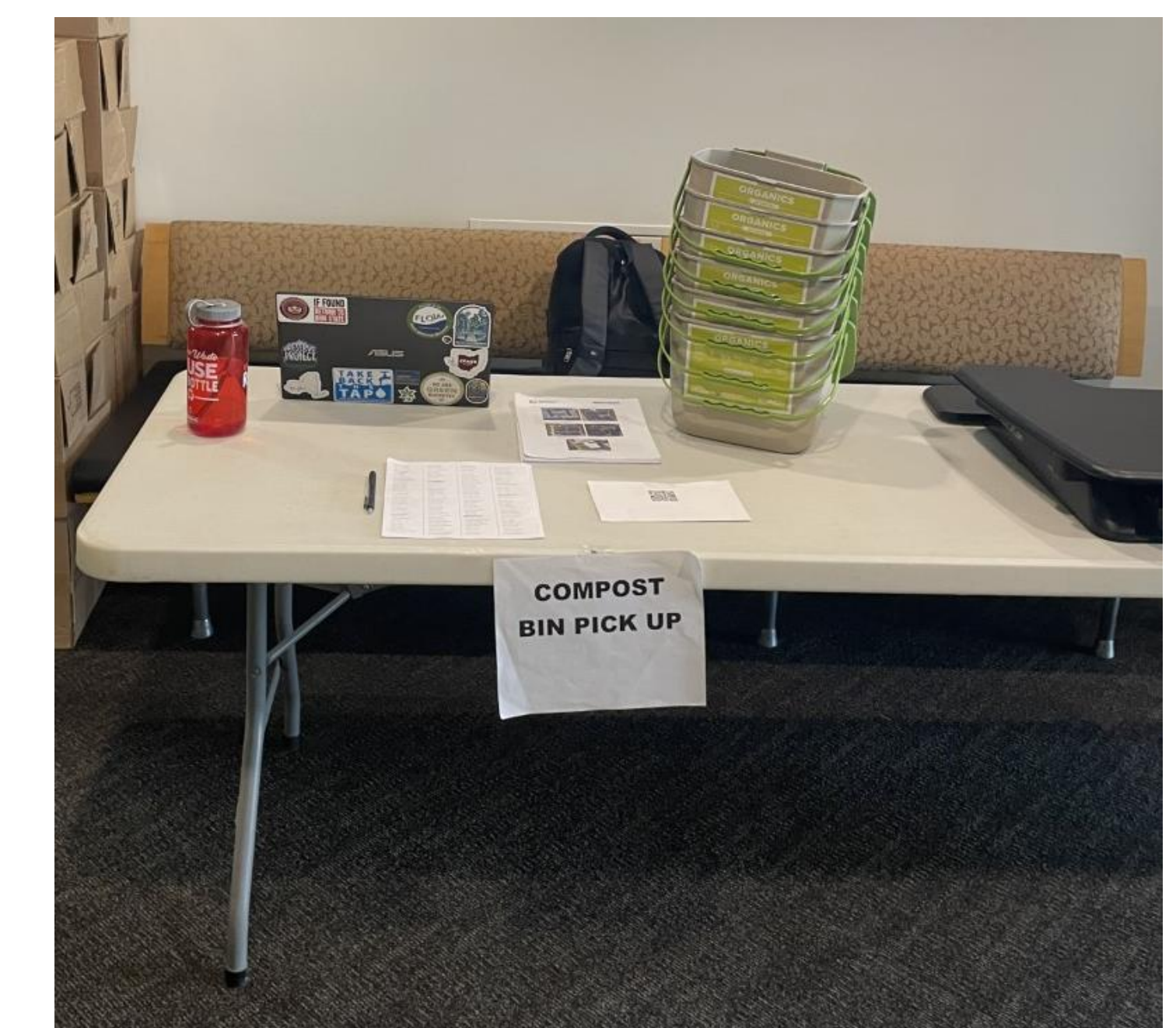
I was able to work at the stadium with:

- Educating fans/vendors on zero waste, and recycling/composting materials.
- Decontaminating the waste stream leaving the stadium

Reflection

My experience as a zero-waste intern with Ohio State FOD is extremely positive. This opportunity provided me with hands-on experience in the sustainability sector and allowed me to increase my knowledge on recycling and composting.

I would like to use this opportunity to find another internship that involves data analyzing and planning either in the waste industry, or more broadly in the sustainability sector.



Recommendations

For students who are interested in a similar internship, I highly recommend it! It is a great opportunity to explore future career paths, and could potential be something you enjoy.

- Do not be afraid to get your hands dirty or stepping outside of your comfort zone!
- Ask as many questions as you can, it is a learning experience
- Keep track of all the projects that you do during your internship for future reference.



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