

Zero Waste Internship

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Position Introduction

I heard about this position through my survey class required for all majors in the School of Environment and Natural Resources. The position is in the facilities operations development departments of Ohio State and specifically under the heads of sustainability. Currently, the main focus has been implementing campus wide composting. My fellow interns and I are serving as the arms and legs of our supervisors by helping to physically implement the program by distributing necessary infrastructure. We have also been on the front lines of educating people (students staff) who are curious about the program and what it will mean for them and the space that it is in. Many RA's of dorm room buildings have been concerned about possible smell, and there were some misunderstandings around how often the compost will be taken out and if the organic waste- to-soil transformation will happen indoors in the provided bins. Zero Waste interns are here to educate and resolve misunderstands and answer questions. Specifically for my career, this is exactly the kind of work I want to be doing. I want increase sustainability in large scale businesses and operations, like The Ohio State University.

Residence Hall Composting



This year, FOD is implementing access for all students to compost from their dorm room. Students can sign up for a free compost bin to have in their room and to be dropped off at any of the collection bins that us Zero Waste Interns have placed around campus. Ohio State sends the collected organic waste to a composting facility that is of the industrial level, allowing it to accept more items than a tradition residential composted that many students may be used to. Some students and staff are unaware that bones, dairy, ect can be composted at Ohio State, so the Zero Waste interns dispersed labels and stickers stickers to bins across campus as well as on all of the personal composting bins. We have also spoken with Staff around campus when we deliver the collection bins on what is accepted.

Indoor Compost Collection Bins



Over the summer, the Zero Waste interns assembled and delivered compost cans (pictured above) to nearly every building on campus. We went to every dorm and every building that served food. The compost bins were designed to blend in seamlessly with the trash and recycling as if they were always there. We hope to continue to turn composting into a normal practice for everyone on campus. We utilized the trucks from FOD to be able to complete this task as pictured above. In addition, we delivered the proper liners as well as instructions on how to properly maintain this new waste stream to all the related managers. During this time we also answered questions about composting in general, as well as how it would affect daily life.

Composting in the RPAC

The image below is an example of the installed indoor compost bins on campus



Ohio State has been composting behind the scenes for a few years, however, this is the first time the students and other members are able to compost their leftover products. The indoor compost “ErgoCans” are accompanied by vertical signs meant to catch the attention of the user and easily explain what items are accepted in the compost and what is trash or recycling. In the RPAC, the court side café provides a large majority of its food in compostable materials and having these bins will completely increase their environmental benefit.



Outdoor Compost Collection Toters



The toters pictured above, place by Zero Waste Interns, are located outside of every building that has indoor compost collection, as well as seven drop off locations. These bins are always near the recycling and trash dumpsters to make compost as easy as every other waste stream.

Price Farm Organics, Marysville Ohio



Price Farm Organics is a family owned composting farm that processes the food scraps from the vendors at Ohio State home games. Myself and my coworker Logan Gould, along with the supervisor for The Ohio Stadium zero waste program Cecil Okotah, visited the facility in fall of 2022. The organic waste from campus goes to a separate facility in London that is of a larger scale and is able to sort out contaminants



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