

STUDENTS LIVING **CARDINAL, GOLD & GREEN**

Reducing waste can be accomplished in many ways. This month's contribution to Students Living Cardinal, Gold and Green highlights some unique opportunities offered to students, faculty and staff, through two student-empowered organizations: the Student Government Sustainability Committee and the Zero Waste Team.

ISU STUDENT GOVERNMENT SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Q: What is the mission of the Student Government Sustainability Committee?

A: The Sustainability Committee of Student Government is a hands-on way for students to get involved with sustainability initiatives on campus! Each subcommittee, ecology, energy, outreach/education and waste chooses and executes projects. Often forming partnerships with other campus departments or groups like ISU Dining, Facilities Planning and Management, other committees in Student Government or the Inter-Residence Hall Association (IRHA). We are focused on promoting sustainability to Iowa State students and showing them the different forms that it can take!

Q: What has the Sustainability Committee accomplished so far this year? What projects are coming up?

A: The Waste Subcommittee is partnering with IRHA to educate on-campus students on how they can be sustainable while living in a dorm setting. They will facilitate a social media challenge for on-campus students, who can enter to win one of three sustainable bundles each one contains a; Rocketbook, reusable notebook, Swedish dishcloths (for sustainable dish cleaning) reusable bags, a reusable water bottle and a reusable mug. The challenge is focused specifically on commitments students are making to reduce waste such as: showing off a secondhand purchase, using a reusable straw, choosing products in reduced and recyclable packing and composting.

Q: What messages and understanding about waste would the Sustainability

Committee like to make sure to communicate to students?

A: The Waste Subcommittee is focused on showing students the different ways they can be sustainable while living in a dorm or off-campus apartment - where they might lack control over sustainability features - insulation, heating and lighting to name a few.

Regardless of where you live, you can always work to reduce your waste through sustainable "on-the-go" swaps, including: reusable shopping, lunch and snack bags, eating utensils, water bottles, coffee mugs, and meal planning. Other opportunities include doing a trash audit to determine what exactly you are throwing away and (if you do a lot of cooking or eating in), completing a refrigerator audit, making a shopping list and when you do have food waste - composting it through the Ames Food Waste Diversion Program (FWD) or Freddy Court food waste composting bins.

The bottom line? Anyone, whether you live on-campus or off-campus, can reduce the waste you generate! Your individual actions are important. If you can't minimize your environmental impact through heating and insulation because you don't own a home, you can

shift your focus to reducing the waste that leaves your dorm or apartment.

Q: How can students stay updated about Student Government Sustainability Committee projects and get involved with the waste subcommittee?

A: Every subcommittee recruits volunteers to assist with projects and initiatives as needed. To learn more about getting involved with the subcommittees, students can email Student Government Sustainability Director, [Elizabeth Smith](mailto:Elizabeth.Smith@isu.edu) or follow the Sustainability Committee on Instagram [@isusustainability](https://www.instagram.com/isusustainability). There is also an opportunity to get involved with the Student Government Sustainability Committee by applying to be a committee member. Applications are accepted at the beginning of each academic year. Keep updated on the application timeline, as well as the committee's activities and initiatives on the [Sustainability Committee's Instagram profile](https://www.instagram.com/isusustainability).

Q: What else should students know about the work of the Student Government Sustainability Committee?

A: Students should know everyone is welcome to apply for the Sustainability Committee! There is no



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Photo Courtesy of Ayodeji Oluwalana



experience requirement or preferred major. Different majors bring unique perspectives and ideas - and that diverse representation is important to the success and relevance of the committee's impact! If students have a project idea but applications for the committee are not open, they should not hesitate to reach out to the committee! Ideas and feedback are always welcome!

The Sustainability Committee also oversees the distribution of the Green Initiatives Fund: \$15,000 is available at the beginning of each academic year to provide financial support to student-led sustainability projects. Any student organization is eligible to apply, as long as the project is connected to the facets of sustainability (environmental, social or economic).

Any questions or requests for additional information about any of the committee initiatives, projects and efforts can be directed to Iowa State University Student Government Sustainability Director, Elizabeth Smith, via email - edsmith1@iastate.edu.

ISU ZERO WASTE TEAM

Q: What is the mission of the Zero Waste Team?

A: The Zero Waste Team is a volunteer-based group put together by Facilities Planning and Management (FPM) Recycling Services, composed of faculty, staff, and students who are

passionate about the university's waste minimization and landfill diversion efforts. The team serves as advocates for a zero waste vision across campus toward engaging peers and colleagues in their respective departments and buildings. The team also assists with specific zero waste opportunities including volunteering during campus education and engagement events.

Q: What ideas or projects is the team pursuing related to this month's theme "Gone With the Waste?"

A: The team's current focus is related to implementing and refining a social media campaign on waste reduction and appropriate recycling practices.

Q: How does the Zero Waste Team interact specifically with students to get them involved with your mission?

A: Most team members are students that constitute the waste subcommittee of the Student Government Sustainability Committee. They have been visibly engaging the student body through various initiatives such as composting initiatives (food and paper towel), reducing plastic consumption in the dining halls, increasing the number and visibility of recycling bins in Parks Library and various educational pieces to increase awareness and engagement throughout ISU campus. It has been a great connection!

Q: How does the Zero Waste Team connect with students, faculty and

staff on campus, as well as with the greater community?

A: This is accomplished primarily through meetings usually once a semester (at the beginning of the semester) to discuss projects/initiatives to pursue and the support needed throughout. Waste audits are also an effective way to connect to and engage with campus and community stakeholders - offering an especially unique opportunity to understand what is being thrown away and the quantity, as well as educate on the need to reduce waste and increase reuse, recycling and composting appropriately.

Q: How can students stay updated on team projects and get involved with the Zero Waste Team?

A: Students, as well as faculty and staff, can stay updated on campus zero waste initiatives and progress through the [ISU Recycling Services website](#). They can also register to be a part of the Zero Waste Committee by completing a [Zero Waste Team Registration Form](#) found on the [ISU Recycling Services Recycling Initiatives webpage](#).

Another unique consideration of waste is just ensuring that the waste we produce as a campus community is disposed of properly. With that in mind ISU, in conjunction with our Keep Iowa State Beautiful initiative (in affiliation with [Keep Iowa Beautiful](#)), also offers an Adopt Campus program for students, faculty and staff to sign up to adopt a part of the ISU campus and keep it litter-free. This opportunity is open to individuals, groups, clubs, departments or even colleges. The unique part of this opportunity is that scheduling clean-up efforts is entirely up to the volunteers.

To learn more and complete the [registration form](#) to adopt a campus area, visit the [Keep Iowa State Beautiful webpage](#).