



Zero Waste Case Study:

Campus Safety Strategy for Winning the Great Guru Garbage Game

July 2016

Background:

The Great Guru Garbage Game, a competition between Aquinas College's Zero Waste Gurus, was held during the month of February (2016). Twenty Zero Waste Gurus participated representing 12 campus buildings, including:

- Academic Building- Anne Marie Ferratt, Susan English, & Stacia Barczak
- Albertus Hall- Rob Peters
- Art and Music Center- Betsey Ingraham & Mary Hurd
- Browne Center- Mary Clark-Kaiser
- Campus Safety- Mark McCann
- Cook Carriage House- Tim Ramsay
- Donnelly Center- Laretta Simpson
- Flannery Hall- Brigid Avery
- Holmdene- Tori Guerrini & Chad Gunnoe
- Hruby Hall- Angie Schloser-Bacon, Damon Bouwkamp, & Jessica Vaglica
- Jareki/Lacks/Hauenstein- Christina Radisaukas
- Wege Student Center- Mark Schmidbauer & June Stevenson

Each building competed for the highest percent change from their second highest building diversion in Fall 2015. The Campus Safety Office won the competition by a large margin. This case study was completed to understand why they were so successful, and share the best practices with others on campus.

Objective:

The Campus Safety Office's second highest diversion rate from Fall 2015 was 77.5%. They had to increase that diversion rate as much as possible to win the competition. Education of their employees and promotion of behavioral change were key strategies for accomplishing the goal.

Execution:

At the start of the competition, Mark McCann held a meeting with his staff to inform them of the competition. He also invited a Center for Sustainability intern to train the entire Campus Safety staff in Zero Waste sorting. According to Mark, office staff were reminded of the competition

through emails, personal conversations, and “not-so-gentle reminders” throughout the month. There was a lot of emphasis placed on the fact that Zero Waste habits were a part of Campus Safety staff job descriptions now, another tactic unique to the Campus Safety office. Campus Safety had several advantages in the competition, including their small office size and a lack of outside and visitor interaction within the office.

Results:

The Campus Safety office increased their diversion rate to 97.5%, a full 25.9% increase from their fall diversion rate. They beat the second place building by an 8.3% change, the largest margin among the buildings who finished with a positive percent change. Mark also states that individuals who originally struggled with Zero Waste are now recycling not only in the office, but also in their own homes. “Thank You” cards were also sent out to employees who were particularly dedicated.