



## Plastics Reduction Partner Certification User's Manual

Note: This document will continually be reviewed and updated. Comments and suggestions are welcome, email [jonesk@nwf.org](mailto:jonesk@nwf.org).

**A program of National Wildlife Federation, with support from the Campus Race to Zero Waste as a supporting partner.**

*Program designed by Amber Saxton, Sustainability Program Manager, Campus Efficiencies, George Mason University (Virginia), with support from Kristy Jones, Director, Higher Education Programs, National Wildlife Federation.*

**There are three levels of certification:**

- **Bronze (18-48 points):** Introductory badge - your college or university is newer to the plastics reduction space, and trying to get the word out about the need for change.
- **Silver (49-74 points):** Intermediate badge - your college or university is reducing plastics in practice, and your impact is visible campus-wide.
- **Green (75-100 points):** Advanced level badge - your college or university is institutionally committed, and demonstrating leadership in the plastics reduction space as a true change agent.

**Category 1: Build Awareness (12 maximum points possible)**

**Culture:** Inclusion of plastics reduction literacy and advocacy into student and employee (faculty/staff) orientations. 1 pt of maximum 2 pts for inclusion in student orientation each year, 1 pt of maximum 2 pts for inclusion in employee orientation each year. Topics could include university record

and should include rationale for action like pollution and degradation of the natural environment. Primer materials that can be adapted for universities will be available on NWF website.

Data collection required: Submit orientation materials that include relevant plastics reduction information (with page or placement noted).

Campus examples and other resources:

- George Washington University (Washington, D.C.) – 2019: [Incoming students can track how many plastic bottles they save through an app after receiving reusable water bottles at orientation](#)
- Duke University (North Carolina) – [Employee orientation](#)

**Residential Life: Education/awareness campaign or plastics reduction programming each year for residential students and/ or residence life staffers.** 0.5 pts for every 30% (up to 1.5 pts of maximum 2 pts) of residential students engaged about plastics reduction and plastics pollution in programs per year. Engagement = programming integration, including for floor initiatives, messaging, events, or other per year. Final 0.5 pts of maximum 2 pts for integration into trainings materials for Residence Life staff each year.

Data collection required - Submit short description of program and residence hall name if applicable for each year in the 3-year evaluation cycle. Attach any associated flyers/ materials used for each year (if materials not significantly different year to year, also attach with photos of their use from each year). Can calculate percentages by building (if whole building), or Resident Assistant's floors engaged as a percentage of whole. For final points, submit materials showing that this was part of Residence Life staff trainings (agenda, powerpoint, orientation materials, etc.)

Campus examples and other resources:

- University of Georgia – [Sustainability in the Halls](#)
- Chapman University (California) – [Residence Life Waste Management](#)
- [Campus Race to Zero Waste Activity Guide for Freshmen, Dorm Dwellers and Student Leaders](#)

**Social Media Engagement: Support go plastic free / plastics reduction focused 'takeover' (or hosting of content) of university's main social media account for posts/ tweets by a designated green student group, office of sustainability, or similar.** 0.5 of maximum 1 pt for at least one social media 'takeover' (hosting of content) of university social media account for sustainability per year (can be 1 day or 1 week, etc.); full 1pt for at least one sustainability social media 'takeover' (or hosting of content) per semester/ term with plastic reduction/ 'go plastics free' elements in at least 25% of content posted that year.

Data collection required - Submit links to posts, or document with all posts captured/ pasted in it.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Towson University (Maryland) – [Waste Responsibly campaign](#)
- Florida State University – [Student marketing campaigns aim to reduce single-use plastics](#)
- #breakfreefromplastic – [Plastic Free Campuses Social Media Toolkit](#)

**Deeper Dive:** Offer plastics reduction educational and awareness programming, and connect with #breakfreefromplastics resources and movement partners. 1 pt for development of plastics reduction educational programming by Office of Sustainability/ similar department; materials should be available free of charge via website, recorded webinar, speaker series, workshops materials, etc. Final 1 pt of maximum 2 pts if you utilize messaging and resources from breakfreefromplastics.org #breakfreefromplastics (BFFP), or sign the Break Free From Plastics 'Campus Pledge' from our BFFP movement partners Post Landfill Action Network (PLAN)!

Data collection required - Submit links to webinars, event recordings, speaker series notes, workshop materials, etc. For final point, show how you utilized official breakfreefromplastics.org resources including #breakfreefromplastics materials, or show signed pledge by university president from BFFP movement partner, PLANS' Campus Pledge.

Campus examples and other resources:

- American University (Washington, D.C.) – [Sustainability and zero waste teams spearhead single-use plastic reduction campaign](#)
- Stanford University (California) – [Tackling Global Challenges – Plastic, Speaker Series](#)
- University of Birmingham (United Kingdom) – [The Plastic Lifecycle – Part of the Plastics Problem Webinar Series](#)

**The Next Gen:** Offer on-site educational engagement (e.g., tours) or experiential learning opportunities with local K-12 and/or first-year university students focusing on plastics pollution and its environmental impact, as well as empowering solutions for change. 1 pt of maximum 2 pts for every type of small group tour or other on-site experiential learning experience offered (and conducted) per year to the local landfill, municipal or large recycling facility (MRF), industrial composting facility, anaerobic biodigester (ABD) site, business that upcycles recycled materials and offers experiential learning, etc. *Please describe what type of facility you took your group to, and what the learning outcomes were.*

Data collection required - Submit pictures of tours (no K-12 students unless photo release signed), and paragraph description of trip and learning outcomes. If pre or post issue (literacy) survey is conducted concerning the tour, please submit anonymous, aggregate results.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Duke University (North Carolina) – [Empowering Youth Civic Action on Plastic Pollution](#)
- Pennsylvania State University – [Marine Debris Resources](#)
  - [Plastic Pollution Curriculum and Activity Guide](#)
- International Coastal Cleanup – [Fighting for Trash Free Seas](#)

**Events and Tabling:** Student group, class project, office, athletics, etc. tables at campus events (e.g., Earth Day) or kiosks in a main part of campus sharing information from nonprofits, plastics free coalitions, their own research, or similar on how to reduce single-use plastics, and about plastics pollution (e.g., issue only, issue and ways you can help, etc.) 0.5 pts (maximum 1 pt) for each

engagement in an average year at on-campus events (2 tablings/ kiosking per year about plastic reduction, pollution, etc. = 1 pt. If you only do 3 over 3-year cycle = 0.5 pts since it is average 1 tabling per year).

Data collection required - Submit pictures or materials used to table and kiosk. Submit flyers or announcements concerning events or kiosking sessions (date, time, location, etc.)

Campus examples and other resources:

- Capital University (Ohio) – [Education on single-use disposable coffee cups tabling](#)
- Hobart and Smith Colleges (New York) – [Education and awareness tabling](#)
- Pennsylvania State University – [Move-in tabling, sharing tips for a greener return to campus](#)

**Visual Cues - Improving Diversion: Support better user awareness 'at the bin' to improve diversion rates by utilizing bin coloring (bins themselves or labeling) for different streams, and restrictive hole openings to avoid contamination.** 0.25 pts up to 1 pt (of maximum 1.5 pts) for every 22.5% of medium and large bins (23 gallon and above) on campus that have restrictive hole openings for different streams. Final 0.5 pts if over 90% of of medium and large bins (23 gallon and above) have color coding based on waste stream (on labels or bins themselves).

Data collection required - Submit percentage of medium to large bins (over 23 gallons) that have restrictive hole openings (e.g., circular holes for bottles, slits for paper, square/ diamond for trash, saturn/ other for compost, etc.). Submit percentage of medium to large bins (over 23 gallons) on campus that are color coded (bins themselves or labeling). Submit either spreadsheet or map showing which bins have such requirements. Spreadsheet does not have to be room, workstation or floor specific. It can have a building level line item, for instance, building "x", 70% (of medium and large bins meet requirements). Building level data is important as you assess how to replace bins.

Campus examples and other resources: coming soon

**Best Practice Awareness: Campus organization, group, guest speaker, etc. hosts discussion, speaker series, webinar, or class (portion of syllabus) focused on discussing UN Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) associated with plastics pollution as well as the need to reduce single-use plastics.** 0.25 for each event per 3-year evaluation cycle (up to 0.5 pts maximum) exploring these themes (themes include UN SDGs concerning responsible consumption and production, life on land, life in sea, human health, climate action, etc. - with a key focus on plastics pollution/ reduction of single-use.

Data collection required – Submit image of flyer or webpage link, etc. for event and if not listed, what was discussed - explain which UN SDGs were covered.

Campus examples and other resources:

- North Carolina State University – [UN Sustainable Goals at NC State](#)
- University of Florida – [Sustainable Development Goals in the Classroom](#)

## **Category II: Support Behavior Change (23 maximum points possible)**

**Water Bottle Refill Access: Percentage of water fountains that have water bottle refill stations installed or have been retrofitted with goose-neck bottle fillers on campus.** 0.5 pts of maximum 3 pts

for every 15% of total water fountains on campus having a water bottle refill station installed or goose-neck adapter options (could be previously installed, count by *current* percentage of total water fountains).

Data collection required - Table or worksheet with percentages (over time if documenting shift from current) for this category, with percentage of total highlighted.

Campus examples and other resources:

- George Mason University (Virginia) – [Water Bottle Refill Stations](#)
- Southeastern Louisiana University – [Water Filling Stations Help Eliminate Plastic Bottle Collection](#)
- University of Maryland – [Water Bottle Filling Stations](#)

**Water Bottle Refill Use: Usage of water bottle refill stations tracked on campus.** 0.25 pts of maximum 0.5 pt for having over 50% of refill stations with counters; additional 0.25 pts of maximum 0.5 pt for tracking and reporting refills annually. [Not weighted as heavily due to financial considerations for counters].

Data collection required - Submit excel worksheet or webpage with list of locations and whether they have counter; and table/ chart with yearly refill tracking for locations with counters.

Campus examples and other resources:

- College of William and Mary – [Taking Back the Tap](#)
- University of Michigan – [U Installs Water Refill Stations, Support Use of Reusable Water Bottles](#)

**Water Bottle Refill Map: Create and maintain online or mobile map of water bottle refill stations on campus.** 1 pt for offering a map of water bottle refill stations on campus online (static pdf or interactive map) or on a university app.

Data collection required - Submit webpage link for static pdf or mobile ready app version, of water bottle refill location map (ArcGIS, google, etc.) on your campus(es).

Campus examples and other resources:

- Georgetown University – [Think Global, Drink Local - Map](#)
- Randolph-Macon College – [Locations of bottle refilling stations \(downloadable map\)](#)

**Display Water Quality: To encourage people back to the tap, conduct regular water quality testing and display testing log and awareness information about the drinking fountain water on/ near water fountains/ water refill stations.** 0.125 pts of maximum 0.25 pts for displaying information at least 45% of water fountains/refill stations. Maximum 0.25 pts for displaying information at least 90% of water fountains/refill stations. Can be a simple sticker, poster, etc. with QR code to more info about benefits

of going back to the tap, and its specific water quality.

Data collection required - Provide pdf/ other records of regular water quality testing conducted, and pictures of their display at drinking fountains/ water refill stations. Provide Excel, map, or other document with count (as percentage of total) for locations that displaying information. Again display can be a simple sticker, poster, etc. with QR code to more info about benefits of going back to the tap, and its specific water quality.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Augsburg University – [Bottled Water Policy](#)
- Cornell University – [Cornell Tap](#)

**Green Events Guide:** Develop green events guide with associated policies for on-campus events to include plastics reduction strategies for purchased items and zero waste strategies for diversion; update as policies change. 1 pt of 2 pts maximum for creation and promotion of green guide (can be stock guide from partner/ open source advocacy group (e.g., check out breakfreefromplastics.org or Post Landfill Action Network/ PLAN's resources) - but should be adapted to your campus context if necessary). Should include strategies for purchasing alternatives (specific items available for purchase to students, faculty, and staff) to single-use plastic items typically purchased for events. Also must include zero waste strategies and standards for events. Examples of better alternatives include compostable or reusable serverware/ plates, reusable decorations and table covers, etc. Final 1 pt of 2 pts maximum for evidence in the form of case studies (e.g., images and description of how these green policy changes were specifically instituted at various events) and how the university disseminates and provides training on this green guide. Suggestion for inclusion in guide: criteria could include items that reduce barriers to purchasing more sustainable alternatives. For example, by promoting sustainably sourced reusables as your campuses giveaways (and buying fewer but better giveaways by raffling off items rather than providing to everyone at event), or fast-tracking student group or office purchasing for items like compostable plates or reusable table covers, etc.

Data collection required Submit webpage link for publicly available green events guide (should remain active for student and employee awareness building over the life of 3-year evaluation cycle (except for updates, etc.). *Suggestion: support this criteria item by follow up implementation of strategies that could help reduce barriers to purchasing more sustainable alternatives. For example, by promoting sustainably-sourced reusables as your campus's giveaways (and buying fewer but better giveaways by raffling off rather than providing to everyone at event), or fast-tracking student group or office purchasing for items like BPI certified compostable plates or cloth reusable table covers, etc.*

Campus examples and other resources:

- American University – [Green Event Guidelines](#)
- University of Pennsylvania – [Green Events Guide](#)

### Addressing Plastic Recycling Myths:

**Ride-a-long: Conduct annual ride-a-long or observation of route and facility processing of recycling by university's facilities manager/ staffer to municipal recycling facility (MRF) to verify end of life for plastic recycling by type.** 0.5 pts of maximum 1.0 pts for every annual observation/ ride-along during the 3-year evaluation period by Facilities/ Recycling manager or staffer with hauler or at MRF.

Data collection required - Submit photos and a paragraph or worksheet of after action or lessons learned from observation from Facilities staffer/ observer detailing how material streams are being processed (e.g., bottles, milk jugs, etc. (for plastics #1-#7); would also be great to include information on how aluminum cans, glass, etc. are being handled.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Colorado College – [Material Recovery Facility Tour](#)
- Michigan State University – [Take a Virtual Tour](#)

**Quality Review: Work with or ask for local department of environmental quality (or other state or independent review body) data of actual municipal recycling facility (MRF) recycling rates for plastics based on type.** 0.5 pts for verifying once within the 3-year evaluation period.

Data collection required - Report (documents) detailing actual rates from department of environmental quality (DEQ), review body, or similar as PDF or weblink.

Campus examples and other resources:

- EPA – [Plastics: Material – Specific Data](#)

**Waste Stream Infographic: Create online infographic or similar of university's waste streams following them from beginning (either production or at the bin) to final destinations (as close to as feasible/ traceable). Work with MRF, landfill or waste to energy incinerator (WTE), etc. to discuss where they are sending plastics specifically, but if possible all waste streams.** 1 pts for creation, public posting, and maintenance of infographic/ similar. Can use national data for production information if not traceable at beginning of life.

Data collection required - Submit web link to infographic/ similar.

Campus examples and other resources:

- University of Washington – [Studying the UW's Waste](#)
- EPA - [Infographic about Municipal Solid Waste \(MSW\) in the United States in 2018](#)

**Bin Messaging: Based on observation and MRF rate verification (criteria above), shift messaging or language 'at the bin' to the campus community to reflect MRF recycling realities to avoid "wish-cycling" and deal with myths about recycling plastics. Strong messaging can then provide justification for institutional support for reduction and reuse as superior zero waste strategies.** 0.75 pts of maximum 1 pt for bin sticker/ label changes; final 0.25 pts of maximum 1 pt for being bold with language to avoid 'wishcycling' and deal with plastic recycling myths. If current language already reflects

such a shift, submit current label for review.

Data collection required - Provide photos of stickers/ labels on/ near bins. If current language already reflects such a shift, submit current label for review.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Brandeis University – [Choosing the Correct Bin](#)
- Tufts University – [Recycling and Waste Signage](#)

**Supporting Reusables: Point of Sale Reusable Incentives** - Incentivize/ encourage through point of sale programs the use/ bringing of REUSABLE cups, containers, and/or bags to campus dining and retail locations. First 0.5 pts of maximum 3 pts for initial 'champion' or 'pilot' retail location enrolled and/ or using a program (e.g., barcode stickers on reusable containers, punch cards, mobile apps, etc.) that incentivizes or encourages reusable container, bag, bottle, and/ or cup use consistently throughout the evaluation cycle. **Receive another 0.5 pts** (up to 2 pts) for every 22.5% by percentage of total retail or dining sites participating in program. Participation means enrollment and/ or use of a program (e.g., barcode stickers on reusable containers, punch cards, mobile apps, etc.) that incentivizes or encourages reusable container, bag, bottle, and/ or cup use consistently throughout the evaluation cycle. Final 0.5 pts of maximum 3 pts for reporting usage counts and anecdotal results.

Data collection required - Name and email of person managing POS program and language for policy shift. Letter detailing first pilot location and information about the program they are enrolled in (e.g., barcode stickers on reusable containers, punch cards, mobile apps, etc.) and which non-profit, business, etc. you are using. For additional points, list of locations and percentage of total retail locations showing percentage of total retail or dining sites participating in program. For final points submit report of usage counts and anecdotal results.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Missouri State University – [Missouri State sells reusable bags](#)
- The University of Tennessee Knoxville – [The Mug Project](#)

**Supporting Circularity and Reuse: Graduation gowns** are made of 100% recycled ocean plastic or recovered plastic bottles, or a sustainable, non-virgin plastic material. Donation program for recovery and reuse for the next graduation at no or reduced cost to those who wish or have financial need to participate in program. 1.5 pts for university's graduation gowns being made from 100% recycled ocean plastic or recovered plastic bottles, or other more sustainable (non-virgin petroleum based) material. Final 1 pt of maximum 2.5 pts for having a recovery and reuse program for gowns (and caps if feasible) for reuse at the next graduation ceremony - provided to those who need free or low cost options for graduation.

Data collection required - Name and email of person managing purchasing, name of manufacturer procuring from. Show documents illustrating university's graduation gowns are made from 100% recycled ocean plastic or recovered plastic bottles, or other more sustainable (non-virgin petroleum based) material. For final points submit a letter verifying (and if possible estimate of reused gowns)



recovery and reuse program for gowns (and caps if feasible) for reuse at the next graduation ceremony - provided to those who need free or low cost options for graduation.

Campus examples and resources:

- The University of Alabama – [Graduation gowns promote recycling](#)
- Utah Valley University – [Graduation Regalia, Social Responsibility](#)

**Supporting Circularity: Athletics gear (uniforms, shoes, etc.) for campus teams and/ or club sports is made from 100% recycled plastic, recovered plastic bottles, or better alternative eco-material, instead of virgin petroleum based material. Additional points if is from recovered ocean plastic or recyclable at end of lifecycle.** 0.5 pt of maximum 2.5 pts for every 22.5% of university teams (can be official or club teams) that purchase/ use gear or uniforms made of eco-materials like 100% recycled plastic or better alternatives than virgin petroleum based materials. **Additional 0.25 pts** if at least some of the gear is made from 100% recycled material that is recovered ocean plastic. **Final 0.25 pts** if gear is designed with circularity in mind, and recyclable at the end of its lifecycle.

Data collection required - Name and email of person managing purchasing, name of manufacturer procuring from. Submit worksheet showing total number of teams and percentage of those that purchase/ use gear or uniforms made of eco-materials like 100% recycled ocean plastic or better alternatives than virgin petroleum based materials - threshold per 30% of university teams.

Campus examples and other resources: Coming soon

**Supporting Reusables - Sustainably-sourced reusables as Giveaways:**

**Institutional monetary investment and policy shift to support of purchasing and using REUSABLE, sustainable certified products (over single-use plastics).**

**Reduce Number of Giveaways: Reducing number of giveaways to buy better: University policy or demonstration of reduction in practice. Tips: use a prize wheel, prize app, raffle tickets, or the first "\_#\_" through the door, etc. to distribute fewer giveaways in lieu of giving to every participant/ attendee giveaways at events. Submit university policy with aim of, and/or show actual reduction of at least 30% for consideration.** 1 pt of maximum 1.25 pt for instituting giveaway reduction policy campus-wide, or demonstrating reduction in practice (without official policy). **Final 0.25 pts** of maximum 1.25 pts for conducting compliance checks on purchasing data at least once during evaluation cycle (on a year's worth of purchasing).

Data collection required - Name and email of person managing transition or policy. Table or worksheet with purchasing data for this category, with shift of percentage of total highlighted, and contract language for policy shift. from compliance check on purchasing data at least once during evaluation cycle (on a year's worth of purchasing).

Campus examples and other resources:

- Stanford University – [Sustainable Swag Guidelines](#)
- University of California at Davis – [Sustainable Swag](#)

**Supporting Reusable Giveaways: Offer sustainably-sourced REUSABLE TUMBLER/ CUP/ BOTTLE as giveaways at events or as a wider program.** 0.25 pts up to 1.5 pts for every > \$2,500 investment of university funds within the 3-year evaluation cycle in durable reusable tumblers/ cups/ or bottles as giveaways that support sustainable behavior change (as alternatives to typical giveaway purchases of cheap plastic promotional items or fast-fashion products (e.g., t-shirts)). **Final 0.5 pts of 2 pts maximum** if over 50% of your qualifying purchases are third-party certified and/ or sustainably-sourced products, as most environmental impacts come from extraction and production of goods. Examples include high-percent recycled content, products from B-Corps, 1% for the Planet, Rainforest Alliance, Climate Neutral Certified items, etc. Example: Move In or event giveaway items - perhaps jointly paid for by Housing, Athletics, Admissions, and other large volume purchasers - that is a Carbon Neutral Certified reusable water bottle/ tumbler, promoting the use of refill stations and supporting a behavior change to shift toward reusables. [Points limited based on potential financial constraints for smaller institutions].

Data collection required - Name and email of person managing transition or policy. Table or worksheet with purchasing data for this category, with shift of percentage of total highlighted, and contract language for policy shift within the 3-year evaluation cycle in durable reusable tumblers/ cups/ or bottles as giveaways that support sustainable behavior change (as alternatives to typical giveaway purchases of cheap plastic promotional items or fast-fashion products (e.g., t-shirts)). Submit third-party certified sustainably-sourced product information.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Massachusetts Institute of Technology – [First-year students encouraged to “reuse, refill, and replenish”](#)
- New York University – [Decorations and Giveaways](#)

**Supporting Reusable Giveaways: Offer sustainably-sourced REUSABLE BAGS as giveaways at events or as a wider program.** 0.25 pts up to 0.75 pts for every > \$1,000 investment of university funds within the 3 year evaluation cycle in durable reusable bags as giveaways that support sustainable behavior change (as alternatives to typical giveaway purchases of cheap plastic promotional items or fast-fashion products (e.g., t-shirts)). **Final 0.25 pts** of 1 pt maximum if over 50% of your qualifying purchases are third-party certified sustainably-sourced products, since most environmental impacts come from extraction and production of goods. Examples include high-percent recycled content, products from B-Corps, 1% for the Planet, Rainforest Alliance, Climate Neutral Certified bags that can be washed and reused thousands of times.

Data collection required - Name and email of person managing transition or policy. Table or worksheet with purchasing data for this category, with shift of percentage of total highlighted, and contract language for policy shift within the 3-year evaluation cycle in durable reusable bags as giveaways that support sustainable behavior change (as alternatives to typical giveaway purchases of cheap plastic promotional items or fast-fashion products (e.g., t-shirts)). Final 0.25 pts, submit third-party certified sustainably-sourced product information.

Campus examples and other resources:

- George Mason University – [Green Game](#)
- University of Maryland – [Reducing plastics in campus dining](#)

**Supporting Reusable Giveaways: Offer sustainably-sourced REUSABLE ACCESSORIES/ OTHER (e.g., flatware kits, straws, lunch items, etc.) as giveaways at events or as wider program.** 0.125 pts up to 0.375 pts for every > \$500 investment of university funds within the 3-year evaluation cycle in durable reusable accessories for giveaways that support sustainable behavior change (as alternatives to typical giveaway purchases of cheap plastic promotional items or fast-fashion products (e.g., t-shirts)). **Final 0.125 pts** if over 50% of your qualifying purchases are third-party certified sustainably-sourced products, as most environmental impacts come from extraction and production of goods. Examples include high-percent recycled content, products from B-Corps, 1% for the Planet, Rainforest Alliance, Climate Neutral Certified accessories that promote reuse and have no to low carbon footprint themselves. [Points limited based on potential financial constraints for smaller institutions].

Data collection required - Name and email of person managing transition or policy. Table or worksheet with purchasing data for this category, with shift of percentage of total highlighted, and contract language for policy shift. Show met prescribed threshold of investment using university funds within the 3-year evaluation cycle in durable reusable accessories for giveaways that support sustainable behavior change (as alternatives to typical giveaway purchases of cheap plastic promotional items or fast-fashion products (e.g., unsustainable t-shirts)). Final points, submit third-party certified sustainably-sourced product information, showing that it is over 50% of reusable accessory giveaways purchased.

Campus examples and other resources:

- North Carolina State University – [A Strawless Step Forward](#)
- Washington University in St. Louis – [Low Impact Dining at WashU](#)

## **Category III: Assess & Implement Operational Change (47 maximum points possible)**

### **Audits & Zero Waste Volunteering:**

**Participate in NWF CR2ZW Competitions: University participates in CR2ZW GameDay competition, Race to Zero, or other CR2ZW (formerly RecycleMania) programs, or provides data for an alternative campus-wide, multi-site, or large stadium zero waste audit event for consideration.** 1 pt of maximum 3 pts for every competition or program within the 3 year evaluation cycle reported to NWF's CR2ZW. Note for GameDay competition, club sporting events like soccer, etc. can also be submitted for consideration for this credit, but not for official ranking in competition. *If participating in similar campus-wide/ multi-building/ large stadium zero waste event not under NWF's CR2ZW, you can still submit for potential consideration.*

Data collection required - If part of official CR2ZW competition, note that (we can look up reports). If club sport and not a part of official GameDay, or if partial smaller effort that does not qualify for official CR2ZW Race to Zero or other CR2ZW competition, please follow the required data captures for the similar official program (can be found on our website), and email them to us instead. If participating in program unaffiliated to CR2ZW please submit metrics captured, data results, program information, etc. for us to review credit applicability.

Campus examples or other resources:

- University of North Texas – [We Mean Green Fund](#)
- Campus Race to Zero Waste - [www.CampusRacetoZeroWaste.org](http://www.CampusRacetoZeroWaste.org)

**Assess/ Audit Waste: University hosts and collects data for other regular waste audits.** 0.25 pts (up to 2 pts maximum) for each waste audit (at minimum an audit of an entire building or stadium) conducted and data reported during 3 year evaluation cycle.

Data collection required - Name and email for department or group in charge of clean ups or audits. Quantity (weight in pounds) collected during clean-ups, and types of materials recovered; or contamination rates, etc. for audits.

**Host Clean-Ups: University hosts and collects data for campus/ stream clean ups. Additional points if a student group, organization, governance body, or other groups develops or runs an 'adopt a' (campus site) program for exterior clean up/ litter removal.** 0.25 pts up to 1 pts possible for each campus or stream clean up (run by student organization, Facilities, or other department). **Final 0.5 pts** (making it 1.5 pts maximum) if campus has an "adopt-a-site" program, where a group (student, employees, etc.) can take on the responsibility for keeping various parts of campus clean from litter (e.g., could include cigarette butt clean up or site clean up).

Data collection required - Name of group adopting each site, and contact for organization overseeing adoption program. Quantities (weight in pounds) collected during clean-ups, and types of materials recovered.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Illinois State University – [Redbirds give back to environment during first Campus Cleanup Day](#)
- International Coastal Cleanup – [Fighting for Trash Free Seas](#)

## Support Reusables & Compostables: Foodservice

**"Dine-In" locations: use only durable, reusable/washable foodservice ware (e.g., ceramic or metal flatware, plates, cups, etc.) instead of single-use plastics or polystyrene.** 1.25 pt of up to 2.5 pts maximum for every 45% of all dine-in locations (e.g., largely dining halls but can include restaurants and other food courts if applicable) exclusively using foodservice ware that is durable, reusable/washable.

Data collection required - Letter or policy language from university/ dining operator/ etc., and pictures verifying that dine-in locations use only durable, reusable/washable foodservice ware (e.g., ceramic or metal flatware, plates, cups, etc.) instead of single-use plastics or polystyrene. Provide number of locations that do as a percentage of total dine-in locations (dining halls, restaurants, food courts, etc.).

Campus examples and other resources:

- College of William and Mary – [W&M Eliminates single-use plastics in dining halls](#)
- Virginia Commonwealth University – [VCU begins efforts to reduce plastic waste in dining locations](#)

**"To Go" locations: use reusable food container program and/or third-party certified compostable alternatives (e.g., containers, flatware, etc.) for foodservice instead of single-use plastics or polystyrene. First 0.5 pts** for implementing one reusable clamshell pilot in at least 1 to-go vendor location (e.g., grab and go, restaurants, concessions, other vendors, etc.). **Additional 0.5 pts** (up to 2 pts) for every 22.5% of to-go campus vendor locations (e.g., grab and go, restaurants, concessions, other vendors, etc.) that integrate the use of reusable food containers (e.g., clamshells) for foodservice instead of single-use plastics and polystyrene. **Additional 0.25pts** for written policy or vendor contract language showing requirement for reusables clamshell/ food containers in to-go foodservice locations. **Final 0.25 pts** (of 3 pts maximum) for use of high-content recycled reusables (> 50% recycled content).

Data collection required - Letter or policy language from university, and pictures verifying that to-go locations use reusable food container program and/or third-party certified compostable alternatives (e.g., clamshells, etc.) for foodservice instead of single-use plastics or polystyrene. Provide number of locations that do as a percentage of total to-go locations (dining halls, restaurants, food courts, etc.) on your campuses. **For final points**, submit spec sheets or other verification of the type of containers purchased showing that reusables are high-content recycled material (> 50%).

Campus examples and other resources:

- Lehigh University – [Reusable Eco-Container Program](#)
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) – [Reusable To-Go Program](#)

**"To-Go" locations - Compostables as single-use: use reusable food container program and/or third-party certified compostable alternatives (e.g., containers, flatware, etc.) for foodservice instead of single-use plastics or polystyrene. 0.25 pts up to 1 pt** (of 2 pts maximum) for every 22.5% of campus vendor locations (e.g., grab and go, restaurants, concessions, stadiums, other vendors, etc.) using third-party certified compostable alternatives for foodservice instead of single-use plastics and polystyrene. **Final 1 pt** (of 2 pts maximum) for use of compostable alternatives that have current third-party certification from the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) certified, Compost Manufacturing Alliance (CMA), etc. for product criteria – that include testing and strict limits for PFAS\* parts per million (ppm). US EPA's information on \*per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).

Data collection required - Letter or policy language from university, and pictures verifying that to-go locations use reusable food container program and/or third-party certified compostable alternatives (e.g., containers, flatware, etc.) for foodservice instead of single-use plastics or polystyrene. Provide number of locations that do as a percentage of total to-go locations (dining halls, restaurants, food courts, etc.) on your campuses. For final points, submit redacted invoice or other verification of purchase with spec sheets/ information showing that reusables are high-content recycled material (> 50%), and submit a letter affirming that the university has checked vendor, concessionaire, etc. purchases to ensure all their compostable foodservice ware is third-party certified (e.g., BPI certified, CMA certified, etc.) compostable.

Campus examples and other resources – coming soon

**Catering: On-campus catering, and off-campus preferred caterer contracts stipulate use of, reusable container program and/or third-party certified compostable alternatives for foodservice instead of single-use plastics or polystyrene. 1 pt** for official/ on-campus catering using reusable container

program and/or third-party certified compostable alternatives for foodservice instead of single-use plastics and polystyrene. **Final 0.5 pts of maximum 1.5 pts** for contract language for off-campus catering stipulating use of reusable container program and/or third-party certified (e.g., BPI certified, CMA certified, etc.) compostable alternatives for foodservice instead of single-use plastics and polystyrene.

Data collection required - University policy or dining website/ policy language showing that **on-campus** catering, and off-campus preferred caterer contracts stipulate use of, reusable container program and/or third-party certified (e.g., BPI certified, CMA certified, etc.) compostable alternatives for foodservice instead of single-use plastics or polystyrene (show elimination language - either phased or immediate). For final points, submit same documentation of contract language inclusion in **off-campus** catering contracts (could be those you allow on a preferred caterer list, those you allow university funds to be used to buy by groups and departments, etc.).

Campus examples and other resources:

- Old Dominion University – [ODU to Begin Phasing Out Single-Use Plastic Items](#)
- University of Notre Dame - [Sustainability](#)

**Flatware Dispenser Use: Vendors, concessions, and to-go locations use flatware dispensers, which can reduce usage up approximately 29% - which will help with fiscal and environmental resource responsibility. Note there are dispensers that are free to lease (typically to incentivize purchase of stock).** 0.25 pts if > 75% of vendor, concessions, and to-go locations on campuses use flatware dispensers. Final 0.25 pts (of maximum 0.5 pts) if all dispensers are stocked ONLY with third-party certified compostable (e.g., BPI or CMA certified compostable) flatware.

Date collection required – Picture in use and spec sheets of dispensers used. Provide (in Excel or in letter) a total number of concession stands, vendor/ restaurants, grab and go, etc. sites on campus, and letter affirming percentage of sites that use dispensers. Example: in a stadium, if you have 10 concessions stands, if 7 use then you have met the threshold for points. If concessionaires stands do not give out flatware, but they are centrally located on other booths - use percentage of the number of those central set ups. **For final points**, provide letter from university with manufacturer names, SKUs, etc. of stock used in various locations to verify that they are ONLY stocked with third-party certified compostable (e.g., BPI or CMA certified compostable) flatware.

Campus examples and other resources: coming soon

**Eliminating Condiment Packets: A major contaminant in front-of-house composting, points for eliminating condiment packets/ packs (which are mostly single-use plastics based), and pivoting to offering instead large refillable/ reusable condiment pump stations and/ or third-party certified compostable portion cups instead of single-use plastics or polystyrene.** 0.25 pts of maximum 1 pt per 22.5% elimination of single-use condiment packets/packs at all vendor, concessions, and to-go locations; offering instead large refillable/ reusable condiment pump stations and/ or third-party certified compostable or high content-recycled or sustainably-sourced paper portion cups.

Data collection required - Provide policy language and compliance check (sheet or document showing that vendors are not using single-use plastic, etc. packs or packets) showing total number of locations and percentage that have pivoted. For final points, submit pictures or spec sheets of refillable

condiment pumps/ large reusable containers used instead, and/ or provide sheet with manufacturer, SKU, product info, etc. for third-party certified compostable portion cups (that are filled behind the counter).

Campus examples and other resources:

- EPA – [Reducing Food Waste Packaging](#)

**Pivoting Paper/Fiber-based Foodservice Items: Pivot from paper-based foodservice items with coatings and or films that are not compostable safe (e.g., due to toxic PFAS, plastic/ petroleum-based coatings, plastic window films, etc.) to paper-based foodservice items that have current BPI or CMA certifications for compostability. This is an often overlooked area when pivoting away from single-use plastics but an important consideration when procuring compostable alternatives.** 0.25 pts of maximum 1 pt per 25% shift in non-compostable safe paper/fiber-based foodservice items to currently BPI or CMA certified compostable paper/fiber-based items (meeting PFAS limit requirements) at all vendor, concession, retail, to-go, etc. locations. Note: we do not certify safety of these types of products, but encourage universities to look into BPI, CMA, other similar third-party certifications and remain current on best science available concerning compostability of foodservice items as feedstocks.

Data collection required - Provide documentation shift in non-compostable paper/fiber-based foodservice items to reusables or currently BPI or CMA certified compostable paper/fiber-based items at all vendor, concession, retail, to-go, etc. locations.

Campus examples and other resources: Coming soon

## Support Reduction of single-use plastic: BEVERAGE CONTAINERS

**Bottled Water Ban: Campus-wide (retail locations, university catering, vending, and dining) ban of single-use plastic water bottles.** 1 pts of maximum 5 pts for policy creation/ contract language in pouring rights contract to eliminate single-use plastic water bottles; **additional 1 pt** of maximum 5 pts for policy creation or existing contract language that vendors, concessionaires, retail stores, purchasers, campus events, and catering contracts must eliminate single-use plastic water bottles. **Additional 1 pt per 30% shift** from single-use plastic water bottles to better alternative (e.g., refill and reuse, aluminum cans, etc.) (or if already accomplished provide supporting documentation as evidence). Suggestion: involve student groups and rely on follow up messaging and campaigns to encourage use of water refill stations and water fountains.

Data collection required - Name and email of person managing transition or policy. Table or worksheet with purchasing data for this category for at least 2 years (should show baseline year, and pivot year), with percentage of total pivoted highlighted, and contract language for policy shift.

Campus examples and other resources:

- College of Saint Benedict – [CSB Eliminates sale, purchase of plastic water bottles on campus](#)
- Macalester College – [Bottled Water Ban](#)

**Pivot All Beverage Containers in Dining & Retail: switch to refillable durable reusable options; or endlessly recyclable single-use aluminum or glass for beverages in all campus retail locations and**

**concessions instead of single-use plastic bottles. To count, university must have plan or intent to recycle the glass and aluminum.** 1 pt of maximum 3 pts per 30% of shift of stock to refill/ reuse or for single-use to better aluminum, glass or compostable cup options in retail and vendor/ concession locations for all beverages instead of single-use plastic bottles.

Data collection required - Name and email of person managing transition or policy. Table or worksheet with purchasing data for this category for at least 2 years (should show baseline year, and pivot year), with percentage of total pivoted to reusables, aluminum, glass, compostables, etc. away from single-use plastics highlighted, and contract language for policy shift.

Campus examples and other resources: Coming soon

**Pivot All Beverage Containers in Vending: switch single-use to endlessly recyclable aluminum cans or glass in campus vending machines instead of single-use plastic bottles. To count, university must have plan or intent to recycle the glass and aluminum.** 1 pt of maximum 3 pts per 30% to stock that is aluminum or glass options in campus vending machines for all beverages instead of single-use plastic bottles.

Data collection required - Name and email of person managing transition or policy. Table or worksheet with purchasing data for this category for at least 2 years (should show baseline year, and pivot year), with percentage of total pivoted to aluminum, glass, etc. away from single-use plastics highlighted, and contract language for policy shift.

Campus examples and other resources.

- SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry – [SUNY ESF Replaces plastic products in vending machines with aluminum](#)
- Beyond Plastics – [Plastic-Free Campus & Workplace Organizing Resources](#)

**Pivot Beverage Containers in Arenas/ Stadiums/ Athletics: switch to refill of durable reusables, endlessly recyclable single-use aluminum cans/ cups, and/ or third-party certified compostable cups arena concessions and athletes' beverages.** 1 pts of maximum 3 pts per 30% of stock that is aluminum, glass or third-party certified compostable for all beverages at arenas/ stadiums or athletics events, instead of single-use plastic bottles and cups.

Data collection required - Name and email of person managing transition or policy. Table or worksheet with purchasing data for this category for at least 2 years (should show baseline year, and pivot year), with percentage of total pivoted to reusables, aluminum, glass, compostables, etc. highlighted, and contract language for policy shift.

Campuses examples and other resources:

- University of Colorado – [U. of Colorado First to Sell Beer in Aluminum Cups](#)
- University of North Carolina – [UNC Introduces Recyclable Aluminum Cups at Athletic Events](#)

**Support Reduction of single-use plastic: STRAWS - Single-Use Plastic Ban** (always having limited stock available upon request for ADA considerations, that is marine biodegradable or third-party



**certified compostable (if you have industrial composting regionally).** 1 pt of maximum 2 pts for partial ban - must have at least 45% of on campus vendors (food vendors, retail locations, athletics/ event arenas, university catering, dining, events, etc.) instituting single-use plastic straw ban; **additional 1 pt of maximum 2 pts** for full ban, or at least 90% of on campus vendors (food vendors, retail locations, athletics/ event arenas, university catering, dining, etc.) instituting ban of single-use plastic straws. Exception: available upon request only for accessibility considerations - suggest working with your university's ADA office and asking them to survey affected those concerned if or which compostable alternatives would suffice, and note, bendy variety typically best, and suggest third-party compostable certified straws purchased (e.g., BPI certified) to ensure chemical safety.

Data collection required - Table or worksheet with data shifts over time for this category, with percentage of total highlighted. Contract language for policy shift required. If willing, costs to transition to reusable, compostable, or better alternative appreciated with names of brands.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Knox College – [Plastic Draws Short Straw in Battle with Paper](#)
- University of Portland – [Plastic straws banned on The Bluff, replaced with paper straws](#)

**Support Reduction of single-use plastic: FOOD WRAPPERS** - Pivot away from petroleum based/ single-use plastic food wrappers (e.g., candy bars, chips, etc.) to compostable alternatives in vending, concessions, retail, etc. locations. 0.25 pts for analyzing potential to shift, including fiscal and contract feasibility, another 0.25 pts for reaching out to manufacturers to inquire about such options, and final 0.25 pts of maximum 0.75 pts for over a 50% shift of stock to third-party certified (e.g., BPI, CMA, etc. certified) compostable wrappers on campus (e.g., vending machines, retail stores, food vendors, concessions, etc.) instead of single-use plastic/ petroleum based wrappers.

Data collection required - Name and email of person managing transition or policy. Table or worksheet with purchasing data for this category, with shift of percentage of total highlighted, and contract language for policy shift.

Campus examples and other resources: Coming soon

**Support Reduction of single-use plastic: OTHER** - Eliminate other single-use plastic items (e.g., balloons, mylar confetti, glitter, tape, plastic promotional items, single-use nametags, etc.) for use, purchase, or dissemination. 0.75 pts (up to 1.5 pts) per 45% reduction in purchases of said items within 3-year evaluation cycle (yearly average) campus-wide (e.g., for office, event, or other purchasing).

Data collection required - Name and email of person managing transition or policy. Table or worksheet with purchasing data for this category, with shift of percentage of total highlighted, and contract language for policy shift.

Campus examples and other resources:

- University of North Texas – [Biodegradable Confetti Giveaway Event](#)

## Support Reduction of single-use plastic: BAGS & BIN LINERS

**Shopping/ small bags: Campus-wide single-use plastic bag ban by vendors and at campus retail locations; pivoting to no bag as alternative or 100% recycled content or Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified paper bag alternative.** 1 pt up to 2 pts (of 3 pt maximum) per 45% elimination/ ban at all campus locations (food vendors, retail locations, athletics/ event arenas, university catering, dining, concessionaires, etc.) instituting ban of single-use plastic shopping and small bags. **Final 1 pt** of maximum 3 pts for either replacing with no alternative ('bag free') - with some paper options 'available upon request' for accessibility reasons - or if providing an alternative bag, purchasing and distributing sustainably-sourced paper bags. Sustainably sourced means high (> 75%) post consumer recycled content (not just 100% "recyclable", but content) and/or Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified bags to avoid harmful effects of deforestation. If "bag bans" not allowed within state, a policy shift to use bags, but aforementioned sustainably-sourced paper bags might be a potential option as a contract preference - speak with your university's legal department to verify and if the case, submit policy changes for consideration of points. Note: PLA bags are not recommended as alternative for this type of bag as they act the same in the natural environment as plastic bags (e.g., they blow away and do not degrade outside of industrial composting conditions).

Data collection required - Table or worksheet with data shifts over time for this category, with percentage of total highlighted. Contract language for policy shift required, including for second point, recycled content and/or FSC certification verification.

Campus examples and other resources:

- University of Connecticut – [Victories for Zero Waste](#)
- University of Virginia – [UVA's Single-Use Plastics Reduction Strategy](#)

**Small Waste Bins/ Liners: Removal of trash bins and/ or single-use plastic bag liners from university offices and non-essential locations. Did you know?: Medium to large universities can go through over a million small plastic bin liners a year just in offices, and rarely have enough trash to justify the need for a bin!** 0.5 pts of 1.5 pts maximum for 90%+ elimination of small (e.g., under 23 gallon) trash bin liners from university offices. **Additional 0.5 pt** for follow up action of instituting a policy or contract language to ban the purchase of small plastic bin liners for offices and other small bins (e.g., conference rooms, classrooms, etc.), instead encouraging a walk to a close co-located, centralized waste station (e.g., in a breakroom copy room, hallways, lobbies, etc.). **Final 0.5 pt** of 1.5 pts maximum for eliminating duty to collect office trash bins/ liners for Housekeeping staff (office occupant responsible for bringing waste out to centrally located receptacles).

Data collection required - Provide policy or contract language if applicable. Estimate of the number of plastic trash bins (and approximate size/ gal) not purchased since policy shift, during 3-year evaluation period; and number of liners (and gal size) avoided during that same period. Please share estimate of cost savings associated with reduction of bins, liners as well as labor hours for Housekeeping (that can then be allocated elsewhere - perhaps to support composting or green cleaning!) all likely in tens of thousands per year.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Southern Oregon University – [Initiative to reduce trash cans – and trash – continues despite COVID-19](#)
- University of Virginia – [UVA Reduces Single-Use Plastics on Grounds](#)

**Large Waste Bins/ Liners: Reduce number of trash bins /single-use plastic bin liners used inside of them; co-locate trash with recycling; and use high-content recycled bags.** 0.25 pts of maximum 1 pt for reducing the number of large trash receptacles on campus by 25% (can not count small office trash bins here). Additional 0.25 pts of maximum 1 pt for co-locating over 90% of large (e.g., 23 gallon and above) interior and exterior trash bins with at least one diversion bin (e.g., cans and bottle recycling).

**Additional 0.25 pts** of maximum 1 pt for purchasing over 50% of large waste bins/ receptacles (trash, recycling, etc.) that are made with high-content recycled material (e.g., above 60% recycled content) and/or are recyclable at end of life to promote circularity. **Final 0.25 pts** of maximum 1 pt for purchasing over 50% of large waste streams' bags (trash, recycling, compost, etc.) that are made with high-content recycled material (e.g., above 60% recycled content) or BPI certified compostable material.

Data collection required - From beginning to end of evaluation cycle, list the percentage change of the number of large (e.g. 23 gallon - typically includes slim jim size - and above, interior and exterior) trash receptacles on campus (can not count small office trash bins here). Provide percentage of your total large bins that are co-located and large bins and bin liners purchased in evaluation cycle or an average fiscal year that are high-content recycled plastic (e.g., above 60% recycled content) or BPI certified compostable.

Campus examples and other resources – coming soon

### Support Reduction of single-use plastics/ polystyrene: PACKING/ SHIPPING

**Ban or reduce single-use polystyrene, foam, #6, etc. shipped to campus (e.g., coolers for laboratories, packing 'peanuts' and other shipping material, etc.), and support reusable or better alternatives (e.g., recyclable and recycled content paper/card board, mycelium-based or third-party certified compostable packaging, etc.).** 0.5 pt of maximum 1.5 pts for university purchasing policy or consistent contract criteria language in place to request and prefer sustainable packaging/ shipping materials and methods instead of single-use polystyrene. **Additional 0.5 pts** for reaching over 70% compliance with policy or performance contract. **Final 0.5 pts** for conducting a compliance check once within 3-year evaluation cycle on effectiveness of policy and if ineffective, action taken (e.g., meetings, emails, etc. with suppliers and purchasers) to rectify noncompliance.

Data collection required - Table of percentage shifts or worksheet with data shifts over time for this category, with percentage of total highlighted. Contract language for policy shift required. Could include purchased goods packaging shift from polystyrene to sustainable packaging. Please note if you are pursuing a strategy of simply a reduction in polystyrene used per shipment, or reducing the number of boxes and shipments, or reusing polystyrene. If willing please include costs or savings associated with shift, and names of alternatives.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Rochester Institute of Technology – [Center for Sustainable Packaging created at RIT](#)

- University of California, Berkeley – [University of California, Berkeley, leads the way with country's strongest single-use plastic ban](#)

**Ban or reduce single-use plastic packaging wrap/ film shipped to campus, and support reusable shipping and packaging materials (e.g., reusable pallet wraps, recyclable/ recycled content paper/card board, etc.).** 0.5 pts of maximum 1 pt for official purchasing policy/ contract language asking suppliers to reduce amount of plastic in packaging wrap, padding (e.g., single-use plastic wrap/bubble switched to recycled and recyclable paper paperboard/ cardboard padding). **Additional 0.5 pts** for over 30% shift away from plastic wrap/ films in packaging to reusable or sustainable single-use alternative packaging option.

Data collection required - Table of percentage shifts or worksheet with data shifts over time for this category, with percentage of total highlighted. Contract language for policy shift required. Could include purchased goods shipped in sustainable packaging (reduced plastic film/ wrap in packaging or alternative material packaging). If willing please include costs or savings associated with shift, and names of alternatives.

Campus examples and other resources: Coming soon

### **Plastics Recovery: Implement 'HARD TO RECYCLE' Programs**

*"A program that allows customers to return used products or materials to either the producer or distributor for responsible re-use or recycling consistent with applicable state and federal laws. These programs encourage responsible design for disassembly and recyclability, and protect the environment by keeping bulky or toxic products and packaging out of the waste stream." - Definition from UC Sustainable Practices Policy.*

**Commercial Plastic Film Recovery Program: Recycle plastic wrap/ film through large university operational/ commercial recovery program for hard-to-recycle program collection (e.g. TREX)** 0.5 pts of maximum 1 pt for assessing large volume sources of plastic wrap/ film received and/ or used by campus (dining, warehouse, bags, etc.). **Additional 0.5 pts** for eliminating at least 30% of it through reusable (e.g., reusable crates or pallet wraps, etc.) or sustainable single-use alternatives (e.g., certified compostable safe mycelium products) OR by collecting and recovering over 75% of plastic wrap you receive per year, diverting it for re-/down-/ upcycling.

Data collection required - Group name/ contact information (email) for primary coordinator for university. Name of hard to recycle program (e.g., TREX). Quantity (weight in pounds) of plastic diverted from trash to upcycling program. If willing to share estimate of costs averted from trash tipping fees, costs associated with program, and if any revenue generated from turning in of clean/ dry film.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Pennsylvania State University – [Recycling at Penn State Means “Being Everywhere, All the Time”](#)
- University of Washington – [Plastic film recycling on campus has changed](#)

**Small Group Plastic Film Recovery Program: Recycle plastic wrap/ film through smaller campus engagement recovery boxes for hard-to-recycle collection program (e.g. TREX)** 0.25 pts for a faculty, staff, student group, governance body, office, etc. on campus managing a hard-to-recycle plastic film recovery program that collects and turns in clean and dry film for upcycling into new materials. **Final 0.25 pts** of maximum 0.5 pts for collecting over 250 lbs. of plastic film/ wrap diverted for upcycling per year.

Data collection required - Recycle plastic wrap/ film through smaller campus engagement collection boxes and official weights diverted.

Campus examples and other resources – coming soon

**Large-scale Recovery of Other Plastics/ Polystyrene: Implementation of programs for other hard-to-recycle items (e.g., gloves, cosmetics, chip wrappers, lab gowns, graduation gown collection for free reuse, etc.)** 0.5 pts (up to maximum 1 pt) per program or major stream (e.g., PPE, polystyrene, toiletry bottles, etc.) with at least three small or one large collection locations per program/ stream. Note, cannot double count plastic film/ wrap counted above. Examples of programs include but are not limited to Teracycle boxes, Zero Waste (PPE) palettes, Kimberly Clarke - Right Cycle, VWR - Gown Up, Give Back, Sigma Aldrich - polystyrene cooler return and recyclable cooler program, Corning Recycles: Axygen, Corning and Falcon product packaging, or other hard to recycle or upcycling plastics program if not recycled by hauler at MRF. Note: Since many MRFs are no longer accepting glass, can receive 0.5 pt of 1 pt maximum for glass recycling program (to support pivot away from plastic bottles) if not accepted at MRF and you are part of a back to bottle or other large glass recovery/ reuse program.

Data collection required - Name of program and university contact overseeing program. Documentation of inclusion in program, and estimate of weight in pounds of plastic diverted. If willing, please share estimate of associated costs or revenues for each.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Antioch University – [Cap and Gown Reuse](#)
- University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign – [Glove Recycling](#)

**Support Upcycling: Host pop up or themed event (e.g., upcycled fashion show, upcycled work at Earth Day event, etc.), etc. to bring awareness about single-use plastics or polystyrene pollution. Support the creation and implementation of programs that repurpose/ upcycle plastics by students, faculty, or staff and offer maker space to design better reusables or to upcycle plastics.** 0.125 pts of maximum 0.25 pts for hosting pop-up or event of at least 15 people to bring awareness to single-use plastics pollution that repurposes or upcycles plastics during the evaluation period. **Final 0.125 pts** for having at least 30 people use maker space to design reusable alternatives or supportive equipment for reusable programs, design containers (food, packaging, etc.) that create less waste, or upcycle plastics (e.g., using Precious Plastics program, etc.) during the evaluation period.

Data collection required - Name of program and university contact overseeing program. Pictures, estimated attendance. (Note: If using Precious Plastics program documentation of inclusion in program or badges earned, and estimate of weight.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Collin College – [Library Makerspaces](#)
- Colorado State University – [Recycled fashion show to feature more than 40 student designs](#)

## **Category IV: Demonstrate Institutional Leadership (18 maximum points possible)**

**Governance:** University-wide governance bodies (faculty, staff, and student senates/ similar) or institutionally supported working groups/ task forces, a) have a sustainability representative/ officer, AND that representative or group b) investigates and promotes plastics and polystyrene reduction on campus. 1 pt of maximum 2 pts for each of the aforementioned groups (at left) that meet both criteria a) and b).

Data collection required - Name of group and representative's or group's contact information. Documentation of inclusion in minutes or deliverables from working groups' efforts.

Campus examples and other resources:

- George Washington University – [George Washington University commits to single-use-plastic ban](#)
- Virginia state higher education institutions – [Northam orders state agencies, colleges and universities to stop using single-use plastics.](#)

**Assess Sustainability Literacy:** Integrate sustainability – with plastics reduction, support for reuse, and if possible zero waste, circular economy, and closed loop systems – in institution-wide literacy or opinion surveys. 2 pts of maximum 2.5 pts for specific inclusion of sustainability literacy outcomes that must include question(s) on knowledge of plastics pollution and importance/ need for reduction of single-use plastics in **institution's survey(s)** once per 3-year evaluation cycle. **Final 0.5 pts** of maximum for inquiry gauging importance to cohorts tracked.

Data collection required - Name of survey and link to results. University contact overseeing survey data.

Campus examples and other resources – coming soon

**Curriculum Integration:** Integrate plastics pollution and need for reduction/ reuse policy into sustainability learning outcomes into a university course. 1 pt of maximum 2.5 pts for inclusion of plastics pollution and need for reduction/ reuse policy into sustainability learning outcomes in at least two non-required courses. **Additional 1.5 pt** of maximum 2.5 pts for inclusion in at least one university-wide **required/ foundational** course. Level of inclusion could include class project or assignment (e.g., presentation, journaling of single-use and reuse), video screening, part of a sustainability day/ week for that course, etc.

Data collection required - Name and number for courses; PDF of associated syllabi or paragraph with project type/ level of inclusion and description of sustainability and plastics pollution/ reduction learning

outcomes.

Campus examples and other resources (Assess sustainability literacy and Curriculum Integration):

- Bennington College – [Beyond Plastic Pollution Course](#)
- University of New Hampshire – [Assessing the Impacts of COVID-19 on Plastic Consumption and Recycling Behavior on College Campuses](#)
- Natural Resources Defense Council – [Single-Use Plastics 101](#)

**Research & Innovation Integration: Integrate plastics pollution and need for reduction in environment learning outcomes; materials science working toward better alternatives; research seminars or faculty research roundtables, or similar foci in university research and/or laboratory science.**

**Into university research and laboratory science.** 0.5 pts for at least one faculty-advised graduate, capstone, lab-based, or other intensive high-level research project concerning reduction or impacts of plastics (e.g., microplastics in streams, etc.) within the 3-year evaluation cycle.

Data collection required - Name and email of faculty, name of course and course registration number, and term course was taught. Short explanation of foci, projects specifics and results or awards. Threshold for points per faculty-advised graduate, capstone, lab-based, or other intensive high-level research project concerning reduction or impacts of plastics, etc. within the 3-year evaluation cycle.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Princeton University – [Plastic pollution is everywhere. Study reveals how it travels.](#)
- University at Buffalo – [To address the plastic pollution crisis, researchers turn to AI-guided robots, chemical recycling](#)

**Into faculty research round tables, lighting talks and other official academic events seeking to advance research and discourse on this topic.** 0.5 pts for at least one faculty-led public academic event that includes this topic, or is concerning this topic within the 3-year evaluation cycle.

Data collection required - Submit event flyers or similar (e.g., session recording, notes, agenda, etc.) from each qualifying faculty led public academic event that includes this topic, or is concerning this topic within the 3-year evaluation cycle.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Simon Fraser University – [It's raining....plastic?](#)
- University of Louisville – [Sustainability roundtables](#)

**Pursue my green lab or similar program for university laboratories.** 1 pt for certification of campus labs by my green lab, or university created and administrated (with compliance checks, etc.) similar program on campus. Specific actions to reduce single-use plastics and polystyrene must be noted.

Data collection required - Link to certificate/ program website or guide for first point - can be internal green lab program - if so, a guide to the program, including outlining plastics reduction criteria/ metrics.

For second point, worksheet or table with total number of labs and total participating (and a percentage enrolled in program). Also, paragraph in this worksheet's column D (at right) on specific actions taken to reduce single-use plastics and polystyrene should be noted within 3-year evaluation cycle. >>>

Campus examples and other resources:

- Texas A&M University – [Texas A&M University Launches Green Labs Certification Program](#)
- University of Washington – [Green Laboratory Certification](#)

**Circularity Criteria in Purchasing:** In purchasing policies, budget documents, design manuals for facilities and other large volume purchasers amend contract or bidding criteria to prefer items that a) have the ability to be repurposed, reused, or recycled at the end of its use and b) that are themselves made from recycled materials. This will help drive circular economics (away from take --> make --> waste linear model), helping drive up the recycling rates and recycled content goods in the marketplace. Prefer vendors with extended producer responsibility (EPR) to sustainably manage this process at end of use, and items that themselves are sustainably sourced and made of high content recycled materials. (Tip: for budget justification, incorporate life cycle cost analysis in purchasing decisions - to ensure durability of item is considered - not just upfront cost). 1.5 pt of maximum 3 pts for assessment. **Final 1.5 pts** for policy, design manual, or contract criteria language shifts if applicable. If there is no shifts necessary (already a reality) show policies or sustainable/ circular purchasing in practice (by the numbers), for furnishings (e.g., carpeting), furniture, foodservice items, equipment, waste bins/ stations, among other options, within the 3-year evaluation cycle.

Data collection required - Link to university's relevant documents (e.g., design manual, purchasing policy, contract language, etc.) with page numbers noted in worksheet for review. Table of percentage of purchasing shifts with data shifts over time for this category would be helpful, with percentage of total highlighted.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Haverford College – [Sustainable Purchasing Policy](#)
- University of California – [UC moves to scrap single-use plastics](#)

**Strategic Planning & Budget Integration - Plastics Reduction & Reusables:** Integrate action items for institutional support of plastics reduction and reusables specifically into goals/ metrics in university's official Strategic Plan, Facilities Master Plan, Sustainability Strategic or Action Plan, and/ or Climate Action (& Resiliency) Plan. 1.5 pts of maximum 3 pts for specific inclusion of goals with metrics for **plastics purchasing, use, and dissemination reduction and support for reusables**, per type of institutional level plan within the 3-year evaluation cycle.

Data collection required - Link to university's relevant planning document, with page numbers noted in worksheet for review (specific inclusion of goals with metrics for plastics purchasing, use, and dissemination reduction and support for reusables, per type of institutional level plan within the 3-year evaluation cycle.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Emory University – [Emory signs “Break Free From Plastic” Pledge](#)



- George Mason University – [Circular Economy and Zero Waste Task Force](#)
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University – [Virginia Tech progresses in reducing single-use plastic and solid waste](#)

**Strategic Planning & Budget Integration - Zero Waste:** Integrate institutional support for zero waste (above 90% waste diverted and designing out waste from purchasing) and shifts to closed loop systems (e.g., compost) specifically into goals/ metrics in university's official Strategic Plan, Facilities Master Plan, Sustainability Strategic Plan, and/ or Climate Action (& Resiliency) Plan. 1.5 pts of maximum 3 pts for specific inclusion of goals with metrics for zero waste per institutional level plan (to be updated with associated document) per type of institutional level plan within the 3-year evaluation cycle.

Data collection required - Link to university's relevant planning document, with page numbers noted in worksheet for review (showing specific inclusion of goals with metrics for zero waste) per institutional level plan within 3-year evaluation cycle.

Campus examples and other resources:

- Appalachian State University – [Waste Reduction Strategic Plan: Working Toward a Zero Waste Campus](#)
- Boston University – [Zero Waste Plan](#)

## **More Resources (Nonprofit organizations, government agencies, etc.):**

**Beyond Plastics** - [Plastic-Free Campus & Workplace Organizing Resources](#)

**#BreakFreeFromPlastics** - [Plastic Free Campuses Social Media Toolkit](#)

**Campus Race to Zero Waste (formerly called RecycleMania)**

- [Activity Guide for Freshmen, Dorm Dwellers and Student Leaders](#)
- [www.CampusRacetoZeroWaste.org](http://www.CampusRacetoZeroWaste.org)

**Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

- [Infographic about Municipal Solid Waste \(MSW\) in the United States in 2018](#)
- [Marine Debris Campus Toolkit](#)
- [Plastics: Material – Specific Data](#)
- [Reducing Food Waste Packaging](#)

**National Geographic Society** - [7 Things You Didn't Know About Plastic \(and Recycling\)](#)

**Natural Resources Defense Council** – [Single-Use Plastics 101](#)

**National Wildlife Federation:**

- A Plague of Plastics (National Wildlife magazine)

- [Stemming the Tide: Taking Action on Campus Against Plastic Pollution](#) (Resource Guide)
- [Test your knowledge of how plastic pollution impacts our marine environments](#) (quiz).
- [Text your knowledge of the materials you purchase and use each day](#) (quiz).

**Ocean Conservancy** - International Coastal Cleanup: [Fighting for Trash Free Seas](#)

### [Plastic Pollution Coalition](#)

**Post-Landfill Action Network (PLAN)** - [Plastic Free Campus Toolkit](#)

### **UN Environment Program (UNEP)**

- [Single-use Plastics: A Roadmap for Sustainability](#)
- [Beat Plastic Pollution website](#)

**Virginia State Government (state higher education institutions)** – [Northam orders state agencies, colleges and universities to stop using single-use plastics.](#)