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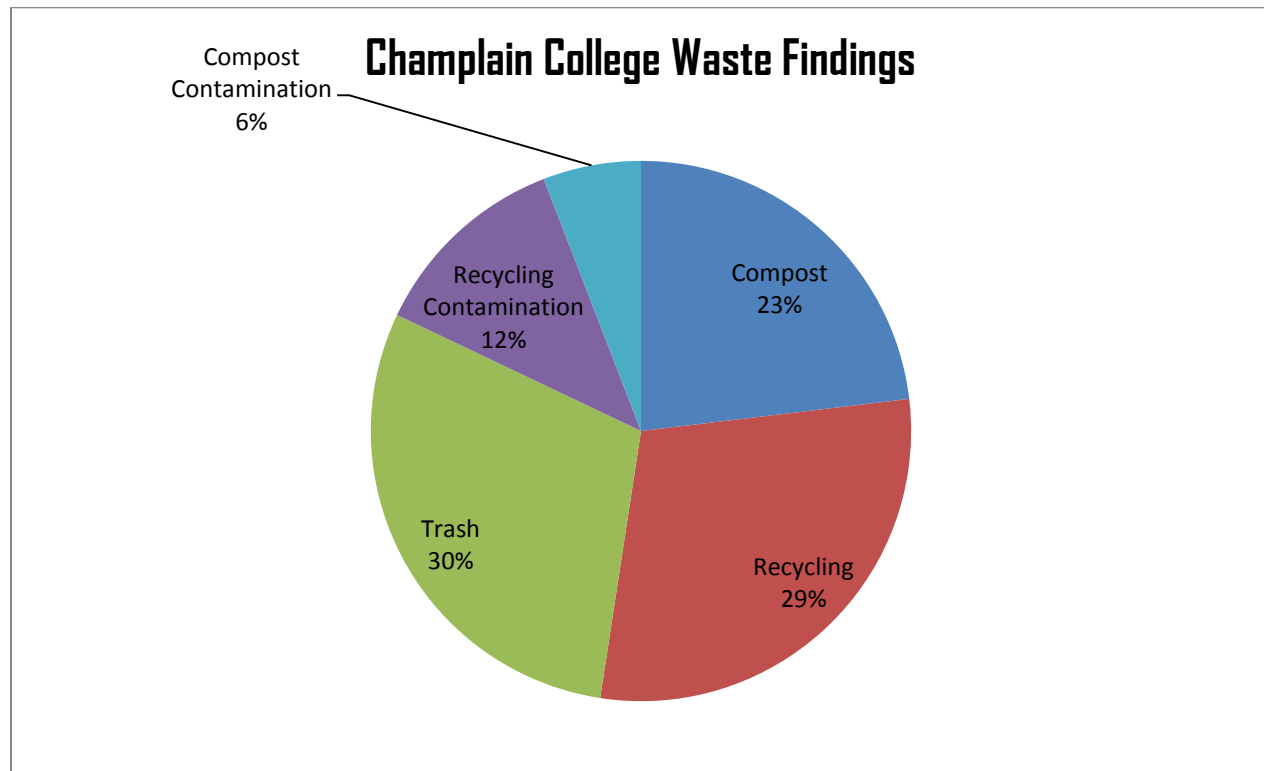
Champlain College

Waste Analysis



Overview: The goal of the waste analysis plan of Champlain College was to analyze trash receptacles and measure the data received on contamination levels. The process of gathering data included weighing the weight of the bag before separating the contaminants, as well as the weight of the contaminants separated by category. The “smart” waste receptacles on campus that include a compost, recycling, and trash section were the primary area of focus during my research and data gathering.

Findings: My initial theory stated that students who lived on campus in dorms with the “smart” waste receptacles implemented were more likely to properly use them and therefore less contamination levels would be recorded at these sites. Although the data gathered suggested the “smart” waste receptacles were helping reduce contamination levels, the findings proved that improvements could be made. Data was gathered between the hours of 8:30AM-9:30AM so that each individual entry had the same 24 hours between the last time of collection. Out of 13.8 pounds of compost only .4 pounds of contamination were recorded, all of which was recyclable materials. A total of 17 pounds of recycling was analyzed, and not a single scrap of contamination was recorded. The 27.2 pounds of trash that was analyzed had the highest levels of contamination with 3.4 pounds of compost and 7 pounds of recycling.

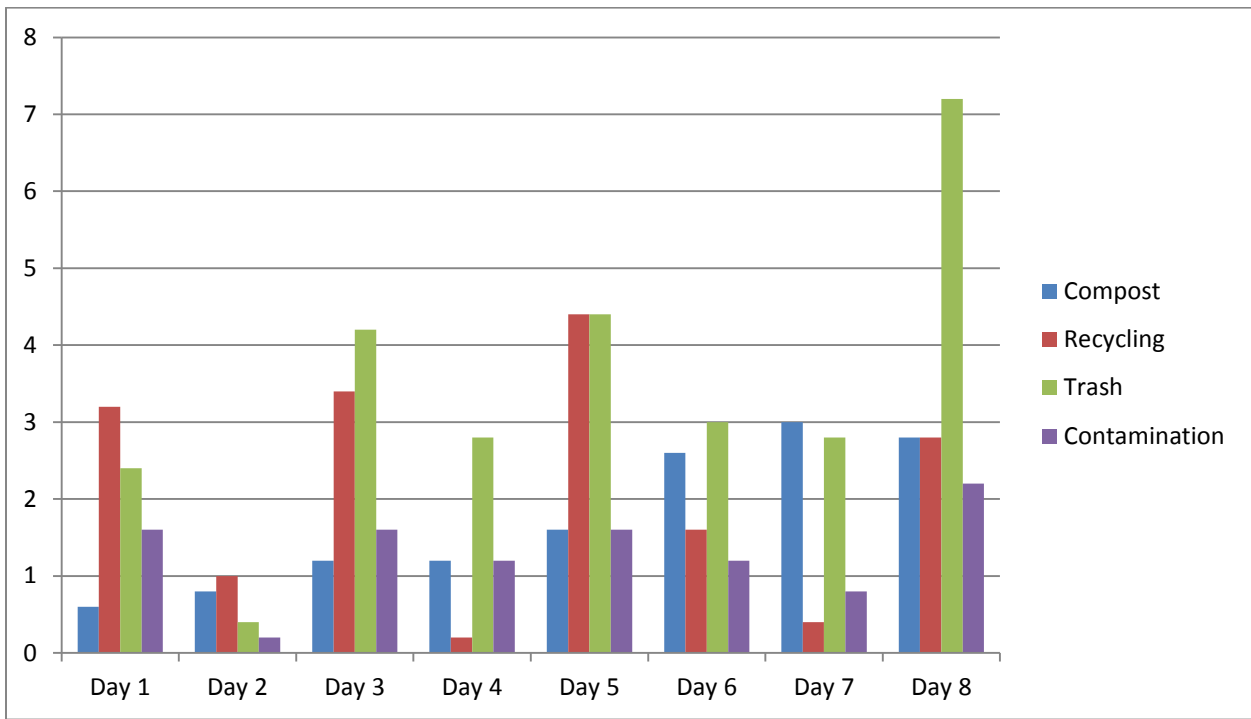


Suggestions: Certain days that data was gathered showed evidence of negligence from students using the “smart” waste receptacles. While the recycling bag would be relatively empty, the trash bag would be overflowing with trash and contaminants. Certain students actually continued to pile recycling and compost contamination into an already overflowing trash bag even though both compost and recycling bags had plenty of space available. It seems that although the Eco-Reps are doing an excellent job with encouraging proper waste management practices currently, there could be an implementation of additional resources that may better help to encourage those that have not fully adopted proper waste management practices themselves. One of the ways Champlain College can improve student support of proper waste management practices could be to create more incentives for those who are following along with a zero-contamination lifestyle. The Dorm Kilowatt Challenge encourages students to turn off unnecessary lights and conserve energy, a similar challenge could be proposed based off zero-contamination principles. Another way the school can benefit the environment and encourage closed-loop practices is to set up a compost bin for dorms in order to support the soil at our Campus Garden located behind Rowell Hall. JaniTech Waste Services currently disposes of the compost that they collect for a charge but the local composting facility associated with the Chittenden Solid Waste District known as Green Mountain Compost accepts food scraps for no charge. If the Eco-Reps felt up to the challenge, they could assist with personally delivering their collected food scraps not already needed for the Campus Garden compost. This would require more work to be done by the Eco-Reps but may prove to be a rewarding experience. In addition to encouraging proper waste management, Champlain College should cater to ease of use for students to adapt to the zero-contamination principles. My data collection noted that for dorms/residence halls, the addition of a pizza-box recycling receptacle would be extremely beneficial. Many times the recycling bag would overflow due to a single pizza-box or other cardboard box leaving many students to use the trash or compost bag for their recyclables. A short 3x3 recycling blue-bin which could be emptied weekly rather than daily would greatly reduce overflow and contamination levels. Another way to encourage students to practice proper waste management would be to post the results of the waste analysis to inform the students of the contamination levels and whether they are rising or decreasing. Eco-Reps could perform waste analysis of their own and relate their percentage based results to other dorms in order to locate the areas with a need for improvement.

Data Collection



Data Results



More Info



CSWD (2)



Sustain Champlain (3)

References:

1. Standardized Symbols for ACT-148, CSWD.com.
URL: <http://cswd.net/about-cswd/universal-recycling-law-act-148/>
2. Act 148: Universal Recycling & Composting Law, CSWD.com.
URL: <http://cswd.net/about-cswd/universal-recycling-law-act-148/>
3. Sustain Champlain. Sort-It-Out: Waste Separation Guidelines, Champlain College.
URL: <http://www.champlain.edu/student-life/campus-and-community-programs/sustain-champlain/resources-sustain-champlain/sort-it-out-waste-separation-guidelines>