



Where is the Water?

Authors

Elena King & Sean Norton

Sponsor

Maia Heffernan

Sustainability Engagement Institute Staff Ambassador

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Executive Summary

Problem Statement

A majority of the students who attend Western Washington University are either under the misconception that the drinking water on campus is unsafe to drink, or are unsure if the water on campus is safe to drink. Due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic and rumors that have spread across campus over the years, there has been a general confusion and belief that there are contaminants in the water. This causes a major concern on campus as Western wants students to have access to potable water across campus and not fear risking illness if they are to get water from the water fountains. This misconception is impacting Western's previous plastic water bottle ban. Western is in the process of deciding to fully bring back bottled water on campus. This is so that students who have to take medication have access to water in the marketplaces around campus if they feel unsafe drinking from the water fountains.

Description of Project

This project is intended to address the misconceptions and rumors surrounding Western's drinking fountains by producing two deliverables. The first deliverable is to create an inventory of other college campuses that have had successful water bottle bans and to collect information on the successes, challenges, and solutions to learn how each college was able to implement a successful water bottle ban. By studying other campuses, this project will allow for valuable information to be gained by Western Washington University from the other colleges. The other deliverable is to create a plan for an educational campaign to help make students, faculty, and staff aware that the water across campus is safe to drink and to address the misconceptions and fears of the drinking water.

Summary of Recommendations

The first recommendation is to address the misconceptions of unsafe drinking water during freshman orientation by having a member from the Environmental Health and Safety department provide freshmen with information on the water quality on campus. A majority of the misconceptions have happened from the moment that students arrive on campus and are never addressed even when they are seniors. The second recommendation is to provide Terrence Symmonds, the Associate Director of Residence Life with resources to update his orientation training for the RAs on campus.

Introduction

Statement of Need

The reason behind this project is to address the concerns of unsafe drinking water on campus and to increase the use of drinking fountains on campus to help reduce waste from single-use water bottles. This project is important as this will help to promote a resilient future for Western Washington University in limiting the footprint of garbage in the landfill and increase the awareness of the availability of sustainable water drinking fountains around campus. By looking at implemented water bottle bans from peer institutions and creating a plan for an educational campaign to inform the students, faculty, and staff about the quality of water on campus, this will help to impact Western's decision on reversing the water bottle ban and bringing back single-use water bottles.

Project Goals

The short-term goal for this project is to increase the use of the water fountains to help reduce the waste from single-use water bottles. The long-term goal for this project is to challenge politics surrounding water rights and push the narrative that clean drinking water is a human right and should be free to not just students on Western's campus but around the world.

Background Research

The background research focused on the water bottle bans implemented at Washington State University, Seattle University, Cal Poly Humboldt University, and Macalester College. Group psychology research was conducted with the guidance of Gene Meyers, an environmental psychologist who provided us with resources on the best ways to psychologically interact with the student body.

Methodology

The methodologies used in this project include interviews and an inventory of other universities with successful single-use water bottle bans. Using interviews will help gain more of an understanding of the students, faculty, and staff's thoughts and concerns on the water quality of the drinking fountains. Using an inventory is the most efficient method to cross examine various universities. It is helpful to visually compare the different successes and challenges of Western Washington University to other universities.

Interview Plan

The faculty and staff from Western Washington University interviewed are involved with water issues on campus. Students interviewed are not under the College of the Environment and have no prior knowledge about water issues on campus. The faculty and staff from Western Washington University interviewed are Lindsey MacDonald, Seb Genge, Gene Meyers, and Gary Carlton. Lindsey MacDonald is the Associate Director for the Sustainability Engagement Institute. Seb Genge is a student majoring in Business and Sustainability and is the Associated Student Western Washington University Vice President for Sustainability. Professor Gene Myers teaches human ecology core, and in the Education and Eco-Social Justice emphasis. Gary Carlton is a Safety Officer for Environmental Health and Safety. Hearing the viewpoints of faculty, staff and students creates a better understanding in developing a plan for an educational campaign for sustainable drinking water habits at Western Washington University. Depending on the faculty and staff expertise more in depth conversations will be asked on top of the interview questions listed below.

Questions for Students

1. Do you think that the water on campus is safe to drink? If not, where on campus do you think the water is unsafe?
2. Do you use the water fountains on campus? If so, how often do you use the water fountains and which ones?
3. Do you use your water bottle on campus?
4. If you were in need of water and there was not a bottled water option on campus and you forgot your reusable water bottle at home what would you do?
5. What information would you need to feel that the water is safe to drink on campus as well as change your water use habits?

Questions for Faculty and Staff

1. As a faculty or staff member what have you seen that has been done to address the fear of contaminants in the drinking water?
2. As a faculty or staff member are you comfortable with drinking water from porcelain water fountains in the older buildings on campus?
3. How would you go about creating an educational campaign for students of Western Washington University?
4. What other faculty or staff members do you think that we should contact?

Inventory

An inventory was created using four universities that have implemented a water bottle ban on their campus. This allowed for a better understanding of how Western Washington University (WWU) could be more successful in their water bottle ban implementation. Other comparison factors are water accessibility issues, fear of communal water fountains, increase in purchasing of other bottled beverages, rumors of contaminants in water sources, and an implementation of an educational campaign. A more detailed description for these comparisons is water accessibility within the university is viewed as poor and inconvenient causing issues with students, faculty, and staff. Secondly, communal water fountains on campus have created fear of spreading germs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Another comparison is whether the purchasing of other bottled beverages has increased due to the water bottle ban. One more comparison is a comparison on whether or not rumors of contaminants were found in the university's water source. Lastly, a comparison on which universities have implemented an educational campaign following their water bottle ban. These six categories help better the understanding of the campus drinking water landscape. This inventory will help to create more sustainable ways WWU campus can address water accessibility issues.

Results

Primary Research - Interviews

Students

This is a summary of the notes taken from student interviews (see Appendix 1).

A common response to the first interview question was that many students do drink the water on campus but prefer the newer water fountains. There is a stigma around the older buildings having less desirable water fountains and drinking water. In response to the second question, many students reported using the water fountains several times throughout the school week to fill up their water bottle. All students answered yes to using a water bottle on campus. Answers to the fourth question varied amongst students as some would get a cup from the coffee places on campus to use at water bottle refill stations, while others simply would not drink water on campus and wait until they get home. The remainder drink water from the fountains. Students answered the fifth question with two recommendations, the first being that the water fountains be tested and the second being a request for signage above the water fountains saying that this water is safe to drink.

Faculty and Staff

This is a summary of the notes taken from faculty and staff interviews (see Appendix 2)

In response to the first interview question, faculty and staff answered that emails from the Environmental Health and Safety department (EHS) are sent out to let the Western Washington University know if the water is safe to drink or not to drink. Faculty and staff responded to the second question that some older water fountains have bad water pressure which makes them less desirable to use. The third question had many great ideas, first being that there should be signs both on or near the water fountains and vending machines promoting the use of drinking water from fountains. Another solution is creating a drinking water landscape orientation for new students at Western Washington University while providing higher quality water bottles as needed. For the fourth question, faculty and staff suggested a surplus of other faculty and staff associated with environmental studies that have an interest in this project.

Secondary Research - Inventory

This inventory table below compares universities that have implemented single-use water bottle bans to Western Washington's drinking water landscape.

Table 1: Inventory of universities with successful water bottle bans

University Name	Implementation of Water Bottle Ban	Water Accessibility Issues	Fear of Communal Water Fountains	Increase in Purchasing of Other Bottled Beverages	Rumors of Contaminants in Water Source	Implementation of Educational Campaign
Western Washington		x	x	x	x	
St. Louis Washington	x	x				x
Cal Poly Humboldt	x			x		x
Seattle University	x					x
Macalester College	x	x		x		x

St. Louis Washington

Successes

St. Louis Washington University has a strong sustainability culture with student activism focused on a drinking water educational campaign called Tap it (Daues, 2009). In the drinking water educational campaign, Tap-Water vs. Bottled-Water, taste tests were conducted by placing signs and table tents throughout campus to show students that there is no difference (Daues, 2009). Another way students were engaged is by looking at the “tower of consumption” (Daues, 2009, para. 16) built out of discarded single-use water bottles collected from campus trash cans showing the waste created. St. Louis Washington retrofitted more than 100 existing water fountains as well as adding new filling stations across campus leading to more students using free water fountains rather than buying bottled water (Daues, 2009). In 2009 Washington University in St. Louis banned plastic water bottles (Daues, 2009). Since then, the sales of bottled water as well as other bottled beverages plummeted 39% (Daues, 2009).

Challenges

The first major challenge is availability of water fountains on campus to students, faculty and staff (Daues, 2009). The second challenge is the need to educate students on the importance of drinking water from tap rather than buying single-use water bottles (Daues, 2009).

Cal Poly Humboldt

Successes

Cal Poly Humboldt University has phased out single-use plastic water bottles from campus, being the first public university in California and third in the US to do so (Bender, 2019). Humboldt State University did not renew their pouring rights contract with PepsiCo and let it expire at the end of June, 2017 (Bender, 2019). Students had motives other than wanting to get rid of the plastic packaging of water as the idea of selling water would threaten the ideal of water as a natural born human right (Bender, 2019). Educational campaigns on their bottled water demands “required approximately 43 barrels of oil per academic year” (Bender, 2019, para. 28) and in turn was “releasing 35,000 pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere” (Bender, 2019, para. 28). Humboldt State University now owns two hydration stations and has 16 water filling stations on campus (Bender, 2019). Geospatial students created an interactive map of Humboldt State University that includes where to find water filling stations on-campus (Bender, 2019).

Challenges

Since the ban of single-use water bottles from campus went into effect, the 40 year contract with PepsiCo did not end and still sold other plastic bottled beverages (Bender, 2019). PepsiCo funded Humboldt State University with around \$58,000 worth of athletic scholarships in exchange for pouring rights (Bender, 2019). Pouring rights allowed PepsiCo to reserve 80% of Humboldt State University shelf space for their products (Bender, 2019). The option for students and staff to not buy other plastic bottled beverages at Humboldt State University has been working with a lot of vendors and pushing, trying to get more either glass or aluminum containers as an alternative (Bender, 2019).

Seattle University

Successes

Bon Appétit Seattle University's food service vendor made the push towards banning single-use bottled water at catered events and in the cafeteria offering alternative iced water with compostable cups and glass or aluminum bottles (Gassman, 2013). The campaign educated the campus community on all the reasons why tap water is better than bottled water (Gassman, 2013). During year two of the campaign, the facilities department installed bottle fillers and filters on over 30 water fountains (Gassman, 2013). Seattle University's bookstore sold 2,000 reusable water bottles within 18 months from the start of the single-use bottled water ban (Gassman, 2013). Proceeds from the purchasing of reusable water bottles were given to Seattle University's Engineers Without Borders program allowing them to give 80,000 Haitian people clean water for a year (Gassman, 2013). Seattle University also sources these bottles from non-profit Corporate Accountability International (CAI), which put \$1 from every reusable water bottle sold towards the organization Think Outside the Bottle campaign to remove plastic water bottles from other schools and campuses (Gassman, 2013).

Challenges

When trying to remove single-use bottled water, Seattle University's contract with PepsiCo had to be altered (Gassman, 2013). In doing so, PepsiCo made the university sell Pepsi's Aquafina Flavorsplash, a flavored water similar to that of vitamin water, bottled teas, and sodas as artificial sweeteners would be added by the manufacturer (Gassman, 2013). Different students worked on the campaign each of the three years and each fall the new students started over from scratch (Gassman,

2013). Students tried to get the Executive Team to ban the sale of bottled water without seeking out staff or faculty members to coach them on how to go about doing this (Gassman, 2013). A junior that took up the campaign in year two collaborated with two environmental student clubs and a class project to collect over 1,000 petition signatures (Gassman, 2013). Although beneficial to the cause this student did not accept the Sustainability Manager's offer to help, losing all the signatures for the next students (Gassman, 2013).

Macalester College

Successes

Macalester's facilities and food services on campus were very receptive to working with the students' proactive efforts with trying to ban single-use water bottles (Pillsbury, 2010). The sustainability group associated with pushing the policy of banning single-use water bottles received very little resistance in implementation (Pillsbury, 2010). Students, faculty and staff surveyed expressed support for the policy and helped with being better able to find and address concerns (Pillsbury, 2010).

Challenges

It was difficult to find an alternative for single-use bottled water at campus events. It was also difficult to upgrade the water fountain infrastructure around Macalaster's campus (Pillsbury, 2010). Bottled water coolers, with a large jug at the top, are now used for events as well as placed near department offices due to the lack of availability of tap water sources in the direct area (Pillsbury, 2010).

Recommendations

After several interviews from faculty, staff, and students along with the inventory of other similar universities there are several recommendations that were uncovered. These recommendations will help to increase the accessibility of water at Western Washington University and to address the misconception of contaminated water on campus. The first recommendation is to address the misconceptions of unsafe drinking water during freshman orientation which is a part of the [plan for an educational campaign](#). A majority of the misconceptions have happened from the moment that students arrive on campus, and are never addressed even when they are seniors. Addressing this misconception at the start of the students career at Western would help to decrease the misconceptions of unsafe drinking water on campus. The second recommendation is also displayed in the [plan for an educational campaign](#) and it outlines recommendations for creating educational materials for Terance Symmonds. Terrance Symmonds is the Associate Director of the University Residences Facilities at

Western and is in charge of all of the training and orientations for the RA's on campus. Terrance would like to address this misconception with the students on campus and has agreed to add the materials that are created to the mandatory orientation training for RA's. These recommendations at a local level will hopefully increase the use of drinking fountains on campus to mitigate the need for purchasing single-use water bottles. At a regional level these recommendations could be helpful for other campuses in the Pacific Northwest as increasing the use of drinking fountains can help other college campuses reduce their waste from single-use water bottles. The main goal of this project is to address the misconceptions of unsafe drinking water and, at the same time, we are also addressing the political barriers that having free safe drinking water should be a human right. The timeline for the educational campaign is listed below.

Table 2: Timeline

<p>Winter 2023</p>	<p>Creation of a full educational campaign. This will include the creation of any materials such as flyers, posters, PowerPoints, etc. This will also include conversations with faculty who are in charge of vendor contracts. The purpose of this quarter is to gather all materials to educate the student body about the water quality on campus as well as reevaluate the contract that Western currently has with Walton beverage to prevent the further distribution and selling of single use water bottles.</p>
<p>Spring 2023</p>	<p>Connecting with Ronna Briggs and EHS to present about the water quality on campus during freshman orientation. The purpose of this quarter is to make connections with the New Student Services/Family Outreach department to be able to educate freshmen during their orientation at the start of when they arrive on campus.</p>
<p>Fall 2023</p>	<p>Assess the progression of the educational campaign by interviewing students again about their thoughts on the water quality on campus and analyzing the successes and challenges of the educational campaign. The main purpose of this quarter is to look into the ways that the educational campaign is deficient and the ways that it is successful to update and increase the distribution of knowledge.</p>
<p>Winter 2024</p>	<p>Looking into funding to increase the number of accessible water fountains on campus by implementing new water fountains or retrofitting the current older ones on campus. The purpose of this quarter is to increase the number of water fountains on campus while also making them more accessible to the student body.</p>

Tracking Progress

In the time frame of this quarter (Fall of 2022) two deliverables were completed. The inventory of four other universities that had a water bottle ban and a plan for an educational campaign. What must be done in the following quarters is listed in the timeline above for the implementation of a successful single use water bottle ban at Western Washington University. This project will be deemed successful when several goals are achieved. The first is addressing the misconception of contaminants in the drinking water on campus. Success will look like the student body having greater knowledge of the water quality on campus and would hopefully lead to an increase of water fountains on campus being used. The second is Western reevaluating their vendor contract with Walton Beverage. Success would look like being able to work with Walton Beverage to remove single-use water bottles from the vending machines or finding a new vendor who will adhere to not using single-use water bottles. The third is finding the funding to add additional water fountains on campus to make them more readily available and more accessible to students. Success for this could look like adding brand new water fountains or retrofitting the current older water fountains on campus to make them more appealing to students. Overall, these successes may not happen in the order of the timeline, but all of these goals would lead to a collective success of the rumor of contaminants in the water fountains dissipating while creating the foundation to make water on campus more accessible for students and helping Western to progress towards a single-use water bottle ban.

Budget

This project does not call for a budget as the only deliverables that will be produced are an inventory and a plan for an educational campaign. The plans listed in the plan for an educational campaign do not have a cost as they rely on communicating with different faculty and staff on campus.

Conclusion

Western Washington University prides itself on being as sustainable as possible, so focusing on banning single-use water bottles aligns with the goals set out by the University. Due to many challenges faced, since the first banning of single-use plastic water bottles on campus in 2014, the single-use bottles have now made a return to campus as an aluminum container that is easier to recycle. This reinstallation of single-use water bottles reinstates the questions about Western Washington's goals for sustainability and whether Western views access to potable water as a human right.

Analysis of the interviews of both students and faculty and staff in primary research found that students have a fear of drinking from the older water fountains at

the school. This fear originates from a misconception of lead being in the water. Faculty and staff recommended placing signage on vending machines to guide students to use the water fountains as well as make an educational campaign. In the secondary research for the inventory of other universities with successful single-use water bottle bans, there was a noticeable trend of implementation of campus-wide educational campaigns. Although Western Washington doesn't have the exact same challenges as the other universities, the educational campaign will differ and need to be tailored to the unique challenges that Western Washington University faces.

The educational campaign was built around understanding and addressing the psychology of the student body's misconception of lead in the water. An understanding of group patterns and thinking directed the educational campaign to address concerns scientifically and procure recommendations on creating materials for the educational campaign.

Appendix 1

Student Interview #1 - David Kipins

Do you think that the water on campus is safe to drink, if not where on campus do you think the water is unsafe?

"I think the water is safe to drink. Except for one time I visited the VC and saw some nasty water color that made me feel very unwell."

Do you use the water fountains on campus, if so how often do you use the water fountains and which ones?

"I would use them daily but it would be outside the office of admissions. We had a nice one with water a bottle filler."

Do you use your water bottle on campus?

"Yes. It is a western hydro flask."

If you were in need of water and there was not a bottled water option on campus what would you do?

"I would go to the water fountain and get water. There are no water fountains I feel unsafe to drink from."

What information would you need to know that the water is safe to drink on campus as well as change your water use habits?"

"As long as it passes state regulations I'm perfectly fine. I much rather be told when the water is bad."

Extra question: How would this change your mind?

"I would think about the water quality at our school more if the water is bad."

Extra question: Have you heard about the rumor of lead in the water fountains?

"I haven't heard about the rumor of lead in the water on campus."

Student Interview #2 - Kevin Hubbard

Do you think that the water on campus is safe to drink, if not where on campus do you think the water is unsafe?

“I believe that water on campus is safe to drink, especially since WWU encourages the use of reusable water bottles and the multiple refill stations across campus. However, I usually only use one refill station and I haven’t heard much about Western’s water being tested for lead recently. So even though I believe that the water on campus is safe to drink, I do have my concerns on when the last test for lead in the water at WWU was taken.”

Do you use the water fountains on campus, if so how often do you use the water fountains and which ones?

“Yes, I do use a water fountain on campus. I usually use the water fountain at least once a day in the morning after my first couple of classes. The only water fountain I use is the one in the Communication Facility on the first floor. I don’t really use the other water fountains on campus due to mainly being the communication facility for the majority of the day.”

Do you use your water bottle on campus?

“Yes, I have a metal reusable water bottle that I use on campus.”

If you were in need of water and there was not a bottled water option on campus, what would you do?

“If I was in need of water and there was not a bottled water option on campus, I would use the vending machines to get a drink or use the water fountain if I was in desperate need of water. However, this is my solution to this scenario if I wasn’t allowed to use my own water bottle or if I didn’t have my own water bottle at the time.”

What information would you need to know that the water is safe to drink on campus as well as change your water use habits?

“The main information I would need to know, in order to feel like the water is safe to drink on campus as well as change my water use habits would be to know how often the water on campus is being tested for lead and what are the results of those tests. I feel like WWU doesn’t really advertise or share much about how often the water on campus is being tested and the results of the previous tests. If this information was more known to other students, I believe that the water on campus would mainly only be seen as safe without any doubts or worries.”

Student Interview #3 - Lee Hamilton

Do you think that the water on campus is safe to drink, if not where on campus do you think the water is unsafe?

“Bond hall is unsafe I think. It tastes metallic. Although, other places on campus have nice water.”

Do you use the water fountains on campus, if so how often do you use the water fountains and which ones?

“Yes. I would use the water fountains once a day in the Carver because that's where classes were.”

Do you use your water bottle on campus?

“Yes. I have been using a water bottle since high school. I have had several within that time.”

If you were in need of water and there was not a bottled water option on campus what would you do?

“Drink from the water fountains. I would prefer not to drink from the bond hall water fountains.”

What information would you need to know that the water is safe to drink on campus as well as change your water use habits?

“I want new water filling stations with water bottle filler at water fountains that are made out of porcelain.”

Extra question: How would this change your mind?

“It would help me believe the water is safer to drink and the water bottle tracker is nice knowing that people are using it.”

Extra question: Have you heard about the rumor of lead in the water fountains?

“Yes. But I don't have any fear of it being in the water as if there was I would be suing Western Washington.”

Student Interview #4 - Megan Billeter

Do you think that the water on campus is safe to drink, if not where on campus do you think the water is unsafe?

“There is safe water everywhere on campus unless you are in the older buildings. I only like water from the newer buildings knowing that the pipes are of better quality.”

Do you use the water fountains on campus, if so how often do you use the water fountains and which ones?

“The only time I use the water fountains is in the carver gymnasium where the weight training room is.”

Do you use your water bottle on campus?

“Yes. I have two hydro flasks that I bought freshman year.”

If you were in need of water and there was not a bottled water option on campus what would you do?

“I wouldn’t drink water until I came home from classes or if I was very dehydrated and needed a drink I would go to a place that has a newer water fountain in it.”

What information would you need to know that the water is safe to drink on campus as well as change your water use habits?

“I want the Elkay water bottle filling stations all around campus.”

Extra question: How would this change your mind?

“When we I drink from the newer Elkay water bottle filling stations it tastes like clean water where the older water fountains taste “leady””

Extra question: Have you heard about the rumor of lead in the water fountains?

“Yes, freshman year I heard that the older buildings had lead in the water fountains. The water fountains look rusty and decrepit which implies ‘to me’ that the fountain is unsafe to drink out of.”

Student Interview #5 - Michelle Colman

Do you think that the water on campus is safe to drink, if not where on campus do you think the water is unsafe?

“Sure and no”

Do you use the water fountains on campus, if so how often do you use the water fountains and which ones?

“yes , i use the one on the first floor of AW tuesdays and thursdays use the DAC drinking fountains almost every day”

Do you use your water bottle on campus?

“Yes”

If you were in need of water and there was not a bottled water option on campus what would you do?

“Get a cup from one of the coffee places on campus and refill that cup throughout the day”

What information would you need to know that the water is safe to drink on campus as well as change your water use habits?

“I look at the appearance of the drinking fountain. The first time I use them I try a sip first and if it tastes weird like metal I stop drinking from it.”

Student Interview # 6 - Nick Conti

Do you think that the water on campus is safe to drink, if not where on campus do you think the water is unsafe?

“Yes, I drink the water on campus. I think that there might be places on campus that the water is unsafe to drink but idk where.”

Do you use the water fountains on campus, if so how often do you use the water fountains and which ones?

“Yes, whenever I am thirsty, I only use the water fountain that is in the Rec.”

Do you use your water bottle on campus?

“No I just drink from the water fountain”

If you were in need of water and there was not a bottled water option on campus what would you do?

“Drink from the water fountains without a water bottle”

What information would you need to know that the water is safe to drink on campus as well as change your water use habits?

“I am more concerned about the temperature of the water. I don't really have a concern about the water so I would not need any information to think that the water is safe to drink.”

Student Interview #7 - Oliver Winter

Do you think that the water on campus is safe to drink, if not where on campus do you think the water is unsafe?

“For the most part yeah, I think that probably the old buildings like the environmental studies building, miller hall, and the humanities building.”

Do you use the water fountains on campus, if so how often do you use the water fountains and which ones?

“Yes , I use the water fountains every day and primarily use the ones in the Rec center and the ones and I typically use the new Elkay ones that are new with the water bottle refill stations. I would not fill up my water bottle in a sink anywhere.”

Do you use your water bottle on campus?

“Yes”

If you were in need of water and there was not a bottled water option on campus what would you do?

“I would look for the closest water fountain to get water.”

What information would you need to know that the water is safe to drink on campus as well as change your water use habits?

“I don’t need any convincing but it would be to close or identify water fountains that are not safe to drink from. I would need a sign above the sink water to know that it is safe to drink from.”

Student Interview # 8 - Seb Genge

Do you think that the water on campus is safe to drink, if not where on campus do you think the water is unsafe?

“Yes, I think that there is a bit of bias towards water spouts in Old Main. The new Elkay ones seem super safe.”

Do you use the water fountains on campus, if so how often do you use the water fountains and which ones?

“Yes , the main factors are whatever is closest. Classes decide where to get water from and the VU.”

Do you use your water bottle on campus?

“Yes”

If you were in need of water and there was not a bottled water option on campus what would you do?

“I would drink out of the fountains. Wouldn't buy a water bottle unless it was the reusable one.”

What information would you need to know that the water is safe to drink on campus as well as change your water use habits?

“Knowing what clean water means to begin with and understanding what that means fully and hearing credible information that states that the water is safe to drink.”

Do you think that having clean water to drink is a human right?

“Yes. Good, safe, well working water fountains on campus give access to those who can't afford to purchase water from vending machines.”

Student Interview #9 - Veronica Angulo

Do you think that the water on campus is safe to drink, if not where on campus do you think the water is unsafe?

"I have heard rumors saying that there has been lead in the water so I am unsure if the water is safe to drink or not. Red square fountain probably all the water fountains in old main and bond hall"

Do you use the water fountains on campus, if so how often do you use the water fountains and which ones?

"Rarely, less than once a week and i use the one in the MCC "

Do you use your water bottle on campus?

"Yes"

If you were in need of water and there was not a bottled water option on campus what would you do?

"I would go to starbucks and asked for a cup of water and reuse it throughout the day"

What information would you need to know that the water is safe to drink on campus as well as change your water use habits?

"Water quality test results as an email of the water fountains that are safe to drink on campus."

Student Interview #10 - Xavier Rodriguez

Do you think that the water on campus is safe to drink, if not where on campus do you think the water is unsafe?

“Yes, I think that possibly the really old buildings like old main and bond hall would have drinking water that is unsafe to drink”

Do you use the water fountains on campus, if so how often do you use the water fountains and which ones?

“Yes, I only use the water refill stations (ELKAY) that is on my route to wherever U am walking but I don't use the water fountains that only have the spot where you use your mouth to drink from. Those ones look gross and do not look clean.”

Do you use your water bottle on campus?

“Yes”

If you were in need of water and there was not a bottled water option on campus what would you do?

“I would not drink from the fountain and would just wait to drink water until I got home.”

What information would you need to know that the water is safe to drink on campus as well as change your water use habits?

“I would need to know how often they are sanitizing the regular water fountains before I would ever drink from them.”

Appendix 2

Faculty/Staff Interview #1 - Lindsey MacDonald

As a faculty member what have you seen that has been done to address the fear of contaminants in the drinking water?

“Email from EHS (environment and health safety) letting staff know that the water is safe to drink.”

Has your department or other departments that you know of shared any information about the drinking water on campus that has not been provided to students?

“No”

As a faculty member are you comfortable with drinking water from porcelain water fountains in the older buildings on campus?

“Yes, in High Street Hall the source or lead in the faucets are from the pipes that the water sits in gets some lead into the water. I Will run the water for a minute to get the lead in the water from the pipes flushed out.”

How would you go about creating an educational campaign for students of western washington university?

The more educational information at the decision points the better. There should be signs next to places selling bottled water where to find free drinking water. I think that it is wrong to commodify drinking water, that it should be a human right to have free drinking water. Looking at the factors other than just the sustainability lens like water rights, the cost of water that is free from drinking fountains, new student orientation packet/tours, addressing the water issue there and letting them know that we have really good water compared to other places, creating a positive orientation around the water on campus and in Washington, giving them a high quality water bottle, and having a system to reuse forgotten water bottles. There could also be training for new employees about water quality.”

What other faculty members do you think that we should contact?

“AS executive board, Seb Genge, Dr. Sislana Leadbetter, Bruce Boyer, Gene Meyers, and Gary Carlton.”

Faculty/Staff Interview #2 - Gene Meyers

What are some recommendations that you would suggest to go about an educational campaign to address the misconception of water on campus?

"I would suggest you look into group psychology. You should have facts known like what's the level of lead in lake water so that the students can compare the water quality. Compare vulnerability by being able to explain the mechanism physiologically and understand what the lead does to the body. Look up lead level in bottled water. Have focus groups with likely groups of students. Students in the focus groups should be toward the target audience which would be freshman/ first years. Does it change their opinion about how they think about the water on campus? You could look at Reddit to see where the misconception has come from. Have background knowledge on this like do the Elkay fountains have a filter in them? If so, how often do they change them? What is the safe level from the federal standard? Using pre-enactation which is commonly used when you want to counter some piece of propaganda. Say you may hear that the older buildings have lead. You may hear that there is no safe level of lead, then explain why and address those concerns. University has replaced x amount of drinking levels. There are always trace amounts of lead even in soda cans. There is no such thing as 0 amounts of lead. Procedures for special cases if there are any. Explain why we can't put signage everywhere. Who are they hearing the information from? Showing how our testing is reliable. The physical plant folks are reliable. We want people who are educated to be people that the freshmen are going to trust like seniors and physical plant people. Having social proof. Seniors can have a lot of influence. In the presentation you can have testimonial video or a map of all the drinking fountains. Show that it is the norm here. You could have a video of the place and people who tested the water and figure out where they do the testing of the water. Explain that if there really was lead in the water that students would be getting sick and there would be major lawsuits but we do not have those. Show that the university cares about its students and we are making that visible and highlighting the representation about the university. You could recruit a key group of students or people who believe in the idea. At some point you could connect with social media outlets and news channels on campus.

Faculty/Staff Interview #3 - Cassie Hage

What were the successes and challenges that your campus faced during the implementation of your plastic water bottle ban?

“The successes were due to significant student interest as well as there being a faculty member that was a part of the executive vice chancellor team that was able to internally help with the transition during the water bottle ban. The chief officer and chancellor were also on board and made the call that there would no longer be single-use containers on campus. We also focused on the freshman and unfortunately did give them a reusable plastic water bottle to use on campus. The main challenges were distributing water during our larger events but we did start giving out reusable water bottles that guests and visitors could fill up at the start of our tours so that they were able to have water to drink. Another challenge we had is that some departments were either unaware that they needed to follow the water bottle ban or they just did not want to participate. Our clinical department did not participate as they needed to use single-use items for patients.”

What are some recommendations you would suggest to go about our educational campaign?

“I would suggest working with the campus news outlet and have them write an article about the water quality findings and the water bottle ban so that more students, faculty, and staff are aware. I would also suggest a social media campaign as most students use social media. Having influencers on campus like the student union or active student groups would also be very helpful. I would suggest that your campus look into joining the campus race to zero waste campaign as well as look into the fill it forward campaign.”

Faculty/Staff Interview #4 - Terrance Symmonds

What recommendations would you suggest to educate the students about water quality in the dorms?

“I was unaware that the students thought that the water on campus was not safe to drink. Any materials that you make please send them to me and Viki since we structure all of the RA's orientations and training and we both will look it over and because I think that it would be great information to add.”

Faculty/Staff Interview #5 - Gary Carlton

How would we go about getting permanent signage above all of the drinking fountains to display the water quality?

“Honestly I think that it would be too large of an undertaking as there are thousands of water sources that students can drink from and we have already proven with testing from EHS that the water is safe to drink. We do currently have signage for the places on campus that are not safe to drink from and actually are putting in our last work order to make those signs permanent. I think that it would cost a lot of money to put signage up on all water sources to address an issue that currently is not a problem. I think that if we went around and put signage in the older buildings that students think are not safe to drink from it would cause more confusion because then students might ask questions why in the newer buildings there are no signage but in the older ones there are.”

Would you or someone from EHS be willing to give a presentation about water quality during freshman orientation?

“It would normally be me that does the presentation but I am actually retiring in a couple of weeks. I would suggest you talk to Grant Whitman. He is one of the other safety officers and I think that he would be willing to do a presentation. I will also send you the PowerPoint that I created when I used to give presentations about water quality.”

Faculty/Staff Interview #6 - Sarah Schmidt

Could you please tell me what the contract between Western and Walton beverage states about signage on the vending machines?

“The contract states that there cannot be signage near the vending machines.”

Would you be able to provide us with a copy of the contract so that we can read it and see if there are any legal loopholes that we can find about signage?

“Unfortunately I can’t give you a copy of the contract and if you would like it you would need to request it from public records.”

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