

Campus Sustainability Planning Studio

Spring 2011

Surplus Waste Reduction

Kerry Julvezan and Matthew Lang

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1.0 Introduction

Our goal with this project is to create awareness about surplus management on Western's campus, as well as propose solutions to increase our sustainability by more efficiently reducing, recycling, re-selling, and re-using surplus items. Currently, the re-sale aspect of surplus management is limited by lack of resources, including space, and time, resulting in a small turnover rate of unwanted excess campus property. Additionally, items that should be re-purposed or recycled are being directed towards the landfill; this is mainly due to misplacement and lack of communication by certain departments. We would like to discuss small more immediate solutions, along with long-term larger goals in hopes of increasing Western's sensibility and sustainability in managing surplus property.

1.1 Purpose of Project

Comparatively, Western is a leading university in its region when it comes to sustainability and facilitation of progressive green ideas on its campus. However, we are unnecessarily throwing away re-usable or recyclable property on a weekly basis. This has been ongoing for several years due to specific state laws that will be discussed in further detail later on in this report. If Western could develop a system compliant with state laws that would make excess items more available to local state agencies, non-profit organizations, and to the public, we could reduce our waste significantly! This is a long-term goal and state regulations, space, funding, and staff are the main roadblocks in way of increasing surplus management efficiency. However, there are preventative measures we as a Western community can take to reduce our waste, and keep nifty items out of the trash in the first place!

If equipment such as chairs, desks, computers, file cabinets, and shelving were more frequently re-purposed between departments, recycled, or re-sold, Western departments would save money otherwise spent on new equipment, in addition to waste disposal costs. Furthermore, the creation of such a project will prove to students and faculty that sustainability is important. When people see the added benefits of creating programs such as this, it proves to them that small changes add up and drives them to want to do more.

2.0 Methodology

Western's Surplus Inventory Department and Facilities Management were our key resources for developing our project. We began our research without having any previous knowledge of Surplus Property Management on campus. Staff in each of these departments helped us understand how an item is either disposed of, recycled, or re-sold. Through our research, we were able to learn what main components are preventing a more sustainable way of managing surplus property.

2.1 Internet Research

Studying other schools' surplus management programs was a good starting point for us to understand what works for other universities, and what doesn't. Early on, we began to

discover that a good portion of public and private universities nationwide already have surplus management programs that showcase and sell excess goods in a widespread manner (i.e. surplus store warehouses and online auctions). Nearly every university we studied stated that revenue generated through surplus sales is enough to fund such projects.

In addition to re-selling goods, some schools such as the University of Oregon partake in programs like "Recycle Mania". In this nationwide competition, participating universities keep track of waste generated and recycled over a 10-week period. This type of program brings campus communities together and promotes sustainability through increased recycling and waste reduction. (Recyclemaniacs.org, n.d.)

2.2 Case Studies

Throughout our research we were able to study several universities that have already created surplus stores.

Case Study # 1: Surplus property Operation/ University of Maryland

Surplus property forms are first filled out by facility members. Goods such as computers, printers, desks, chairs, and tables are among the many items sold. Once goods are collected Terrapin Trader Manager determines if the goods are showroom or bid items. Bid items are often bulk items that are put on the internet for sale. Goods that are put in the showroom are sold on a "first come" basis. The priority of goods sold first goes to the University of Maryland departments. After 1 week, priority is then given to other state of Maryland departments. After two weeks, other non-profit agencies and UMCP faculty, staff, and students are given access. After 3 weeks, all sales are opened to the general public. Any item that does not sell within 90 days is recycled or thrown away. Hours: Tuesday - Friday, 10:00a.m. - 3:00p.m. Net proceeds from items are transferred to originating departments. This provides an incentive for originating departments to want to use such a service.

Case Study #2: University Surplus Program/University of Connecticut

The University of Connecticut has created two showrooms to swap with other departments and sell goods to the general public. One of the showrooms is open Monday through Thursday from 1-3p.m. This showroom houses electronics and furnishings. The second showroom is open one Friday a month from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., and is open to the general public. Items that are not transferred to another department after 30 days are sold at an auction or public sale. Scrap items may not be given away to any University employee or any other party.

Case Study #3: Surplus Property Office/University of Wisconsin Stevens-Point

In 1995 the University of Wisconsin Stevens-Point began one of the first surplus property stores. The office is now run by one full-time employee and numerous students. Originally when the store opened goods were only sold within the university, however a year

later once they began to see an interest, they opened sales to other schools as well as the public. Federal and state programs are now allowing the university to donate items to places such as Mexico, Bulgaria, Nicaragua, The West Indies, St. Thomas, and other Caribbean Islands. In addition, state as well as federal agencies that require large amount of useable objects to be disposed of are even adopting and donating to such programs. This alone proves that once people and related agencies see how beneficial such a project is they jump right on board! Weekly public sales are held 1 p.m. to 5p.m every Friday, with special sales on designated Saturdays.

Case Study #4: Sonoma State University of California

In 1998, one of Western's peer institutions, Sonoma State University of California developed a management/redistribution plan for surplus university property (plan was revised in 2000 and approved by the campus President, Ruben Armiñana). The idea, actually recommended by the administration and finance department, provides a set of guidelines for selling, or recycling surplus/unusable items to other university departments, institutions, public agencies, and non-profits. These entities are notified of surplus items first. If not taken advantage of, items are auctioned to the public semi-annually. If items are not auctioned or sold, SSU will offer them to a certified off-campus recycling center. Placing surplus property in a landfill is SSU's last resort, as should hopefully be WWU's in the future.

2.3 Insider Interviews

Interviewer: Kerry Julvezan

Interviewee: Theresa Seyfreid

Position: Manager of Surplus Inventory for UW

The University of Washington has had a Surplus Inventory Program for 30 years with revenue generating store that is open to the public, for 10 years. The program manages 50,000 university surplus items yearly, and sells/donates these items to other on-campus departments, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and general public. The department accomplishes this by running a Surplus Store, which hold public auctions every Saturday, with the help of three full-time staff and students.

The Surplus Store is a very successful way for UW to increase its revenue, turn inventory over more frequently, and appeal to the casual buyer. It is open Monday through Friday for three to six hours. UW incurs no additional labor costs for running the store, and the 15,000 square-foot warehouse used was an already available UW property at the time of the project's implementation. Opening a surplus store only minimally changed the way UW's Surplus Inventory Department sorts items. Two cashiers run the store, as well as a doorman that answers questions, checks receipts, and loads items (these people were already full-time employees before the store operation began). Every item is pre-priced and is not up for negotiation. UW abides by WAC's to create a competitive, first-come-first-serve basis through

their store. Items are marked with two tags, so that a customer may reserve a large piece (and still browse) by tearing off the bottom portion of the tag.

Surplus items that are not successfully sold are recycled when possible. Materials recycled include electronics, hard plastics, metals, and wood. Theresa says departments do a good job of sending surplus items through the inventory department to be accounted for and recycled (This is similar to how Western's surplus department operates, in that all surplus items must go through the Inventory Reduction Department for management).

UW also manages surplus items through an auction every Saturday. This auction is open to any prospective buyer. The auction successfully facilitates the sale of bulk/palette items, however can be an intimidating avenue for the casual buyer (but the store creates the alternative).

Theresa specified some areas of the department that could be improved. This mainly included increasing their marketing through online mediums such as Facebook, however are currently on Twitter. Additionally, the department sends e-mails to 8,000 recipients notifying them of events, and upcoming auctions.

Space and lack of manpower are always issues, Theresa says. The inventory turnover rate is variable and can cause items to accumulate quickly. She says more items need to be sorted and placed on the sales floor, but they do not have enough staff.

Interviewer: Matthew Lang

Interviewee: Pete

Position: RDS Manager

When I talked with Pete Edwards, manager of RDS, Bellingham's local dump and recycling center, he outlined the economics behind such a project. Green boards, motherboards, power supplies, and precious metal are all worth different amounts depending upon the market. Right now scrapped electronics are worth decent money, and if you break down your profit to time, you end up making about \$10 dollars off each recycled computer. Each computer takes about 10 to 15 minutes to disassemble. If the university decides it is not economical to scrap the computers they can pay WMMFA (Washington Materials Management and Financing Authority) to pick them up and have them scrapped.

Ultimately, from having found many universities that *do* practice surplus property recycling, it seems undoubtedly doable on Western's campus. We should expect numerous challenges to occur in the process of creating a successful surplus property recycling program, however if other campuses have been operating successfully for the past 10 years, we can follow their footsteps.

2.4 Contacts & Meetings

Scott Stilts (WWU Facilities Management, Electrical Supervisor)

P: 360-650-3208; E: Scott.Stilts@wwu.edu

Theresa Seyfreid (University of Washington Surplus Services)

P: 206-543-3676

John Zuzarte (Manager, BFA Support Services)

P: 360-650-2678; E: John.Zuzarte@wwu.edu

Gordon Turman (WWU Surplus & Equipment Inventory)

P: 360-650-3566; E: Gordon.Turman@wwu.edu

Rich Neyer (Manager, WWU Recycling Center)

P: 360-650-3088; E: Rich.Neyer@wwu.edu

Jason Darling (Bellingham ReStore Education & Marketing Coordinator)

P: 360-733-8307

Tim Wynn (Director, WWU Facilities Management)

P: 360-650-3496

Seth Vidana (WWU Campus Sustainability Coordinator)

P: 360-650-2491; E: seth.vidana@wwu.edu

Marjorie Leone (Bellingham ReStore Field Manager)

P: 360-815-4339; E: marjl@re-store.org

Pete Edwards (General Manager of RDS)

P: (360) 384-8011; E: pete@RDSdisposal.com

2.5 Program Development

Internet research, in addition to our numerous contacts, have proved to us that a student/staff run surplus store would be the most ideal way to increase Western's sustainability through efficiently managing surplus property. In order to implement this sort of facility, careful long-term planning, state and university department approval, sufficient funding, and space would be required. Currently, the Armory, a property of Western's, is underutilized and serves as a large storage space for excess furniture, and campus equipment. Space Administration, Facilities Management, and the Surplus Inventory Department each manage a certain section of this property. In past years, it has been proposed to re-structure this space as a multipurpose facility.

Re-purposing the Armory for public access would involve leasing the space to a developer who would ultimately create multiple spaces within the facility for various businesses. Example businesses that have been proposed are restaurants, retail stores, a theater, etc. Our goal would be to have a portion of the Armory set aside as a surplus property sales warehouse. We have learned from our stakeholders that there is limited university-owned space available for such a store. The Armory is a historical and beautiful building that should be treated as a property asset, not an attic for campus equipment/junk. The location of the

Armory is also appealing. Right between downtown Bellingham and Fairhaven, this heavily traveled area to and from, promise frequent business for the Armory.

Undoubtedly with our current financial status, and budget cuts, we understand there is a lack of resources for such a facility to instantly take shape. However, the Armory recently underwent an \$8,000,000 dollar stabilization project, meaning it is now safe for entry. At the least, the building could be cleared, re-organized and partially re-purposed as surplus store. Western students could be given the opportunity to run the store along with the Surplus Inventory Department.

As for now, the only sale of excess equipment is through Western's Surplus Inventory Department online auction. Generally, it is only economically practical to place bulk, palette items, electronics, or high-valued furniture items on the website. These items are available for purchase to any interested party across the nation. Western departments from which the item originates receive all sales over \$500, while Surplus Inventory Reduction retains all sales up to \$500. At the end of 2010, the department had a surplus budget of \$6,000, however the previous year experienced a small deficit. The online auction *is* a great way for Western to sell excess equipment and generate income, however even more sales could be created through a surplus store open to the local Bellingham community, state agencies, and non-profit organizations.

Another aspect of this project is to not only re-sell excess (intact) items, but prevent slightly damaged, yet salvageable, and recyclable items from being thrown out. This will involve more communication between university departments (Facilities Management, Transport Services, Space Administration, Inventory Reduction, and the Recycling Center), as well as greater incentive and resources for sorting and recycling materials.

3.0 Research & Analysis

The main issue preventing Western from reducing our equipment waste is the lack of resources and space. In general, the logistics required to re-purpose intact a slightly damaged items is in place, however many improvements could be made.

When a department identifies an item(s) no longer of use, they must first submit the Surplus Equipment Pickup Request form provided by the Inventory Reduction Department. Typically, items managed through this department will have come from a palette originally purchased by the university, where each item contains a serial number or tag.

https://esign.wvu.edu/admcs/process/forms/Equipment%20Inventory%20Control/surplus_equip_pickup3.aspx

Depending on the route specified for the item on the form, the property is either taken to the dumpster at Facilities Management, directly recycled, or given to Inventory Reduction. If departments follow this process appropriately, most items must go through Inventory Reduction for further management. It is then this department's responsibility to determine whether the item(s) be placed in long-term storage (usually in the Armory). Short-term storage items such as desks or chairs that be missing a wheel will be quickly fixed, and either placed on the auction website, or stored in the Commissary where Inventory Reduction is located. All

other items are recycled, or thrown in the dumpster. The department does a great job of managing items this way, yet lacks the resources to make the process run efficiently. The key components lacking in Inventory Reduction:

- Staff- only one person is in charge of managing surplus items once delivered by Transport Services. This employee is also responsible for completing annual physical inventories around campus. Additionally, items that require small fixes accumulate due to lack of hands and time. Also, one person (Gordon Turman) manages the entire online auction.
- Space- the Commissary is often full of equipment waiting to be re-directed and increasing amounts of space are needed by the department during high inflow periods. Currently more space is set aside for equipment that is to be placed in the new Buchanan Towers. The Armory is chalked full of equipment mainly set aside for long-term storage and needs to be cleared.

If the Armory were to be re-purposed as a surplus store, a higher turnover rate of property could be maintained, enabling the Inventory Reduction Department to run more smoothly with such little staff.

We discovered a major issue separate from the Inventory Reduction Department. Any item picked up by Transport Services that has not been specifically destined for Inventory Reduction Department's further management, will generally be thrown out if not easily recyclable. As a result, many items that could be re-purposed, repaired, or recycled such as couches, desks, scrap wood and metal are thrown in the dumpster at Facilities Management. Once in the dumpster, no person is legally allowed to touch any item. It is highly variable what type of item ends up in the dumpster. Yet, there is undoubtedly a guarantee that unnecessary waste will accumulate due to improper management and lack of resources. If it is not clearly directed, time efficient, or especially economically appealing, the university has no incentive to sort these materials before they end up in the dumpster.

We, along with Facilities Management, find it illogical that highly appealing equipment, furniture, and materials are repeatedly thrown into the garbage where they are then permanently irretrievable. Taking these items home or placing them on the curb was once allowed, however inevitably a small portion of people abused this system, therefore regulations have been created that prohibit this from occurring.

To prevent items from being thrown in the trash, we need to facilitate an easier means of sorting, scrapping, and recycling larger items. This may include more staff (possibly student volunteers, although liabilities exist), signs on dumpsters, stricter requirements for what is allowed to be dumped, and overall better communication between Transport Services, Facilities Management, the Inventory Reduction Department, and the Recycling Center. Currently the recycling center is limited to taking scrap wood and cardboard; glass is too expensive to recycle, and metals are recycled through Facilities Management.

We have talked to the Bellingham ReStore, who has showed interest in potentially buying/receiving items from Western if we were able to showcase/set-aside generally preferred goods. The ReStore has provided us with a list of items they generally accept. These include: doors, windows, cabinets, lighting fixtures, plumbing fixtures, hardware, framing and finish lumber, molding, flooring, stone, and much more. The director of Facilities Management,

Tim Wynn was on board with this idea, yet explained that a dry storage space would be needed to do this, as well as system that would work under state regulations. Under WAC-236, the 4th designated party as a priority to receive/buy surplus property is “public benefit nonprofit corporations”. Items could also be potentially donated to Goodwill this way.

4.0 Conclusion

We would like to see the overall efficiency increase throughout departments that manage surplus property. In order to reach these goals, we must invest resources that will gain us long-term benefits. Although proposed in years past, creating a surplus store is obviously not financially viable now due to reduced funding. We want to see this change by possibly utilizing funds from Inventory Reduction when there is a surplus budget to re-purpose a portion of the Armory to create a mostly student-run store. This would greatly improve our surplus management by reducing waste, creating jobs, internships, volunteer positions, work-study programs, and by giving back to the community.

5.0 Future Works

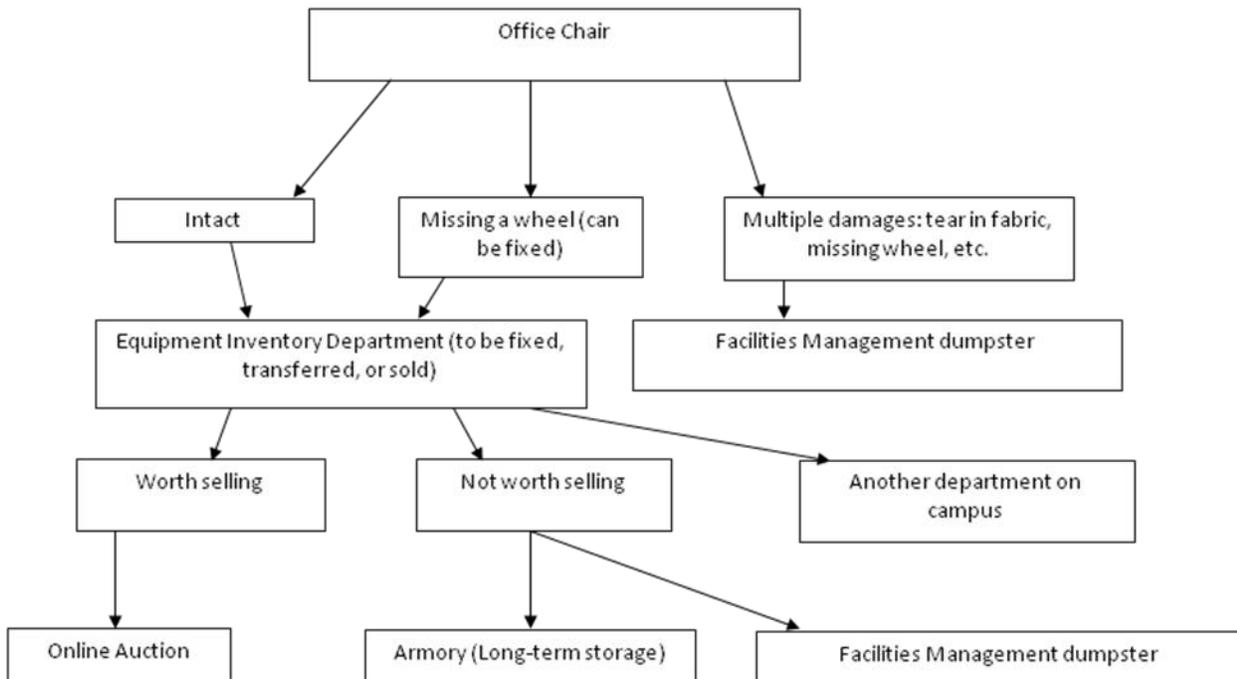
This project will not be completed in a quarter, or a year for that matter. Our goal in compiling this report is to illustrate what we’ve learned about university surplus management thus far and propose solutions that will be continued to be worked on in the future by ourselves, other students, and departments on campus. Overall, such a program will move Western towards being as sustainable of a campus as possible, and will prove to universities, students, and the public that such a goal is possible with devoted time and dedication.

Future projects to work on:

- Get inside Armory to see building and possible space for store
- Talk with Space Administration about potential dry storage space
- How much would creating a store really cost?
- Increase online auction (talk to Gordon Turman)
- Create website solely for university departments to see what surplus items are available to be transferred between one another
- Figure out exactly how Transport services operates, how often they pick up surplus items, etc.

6.0 Appendices

6.1 Flowchart of surplus item



7.0 Works Cited

What is RecycleMania? <http://recyclemaniacs.org/overview> 4-13-2001

<http://www.uwsp.edu/Surplus?AboutSurplus.aspx>

The Best Little Warehouse off Campus

http://www.vanderbilt.edu/News.register/sept5_00/story13.html Skip Anderson 4-13-2011

University Surplus Program <http://www.stores.uconn.edu/surplus.html> 4-13-2011

Welcome to Terrapin Trader (The University of Maryland's Surplus Property Operation)

<http://www.purchase.umd.edu/ttrader/geninfo.html>

Surplus Management Procurement and Contracts

<http://www.american.edu/finance/controller/Surplus-Management.cfm>

University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (Surplus Property Office)

<http://www.uwsp.edu/Surplus/AboutSurplus.aspx>

University of Connecticut (University Surplus Program)

<http://www.stores.uconn.edu/surplus.html>