

Street Waste

A case study of the correlation between students and street waste

By: Akemi Fujii and Josh Ludden

Table of Contents:

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Statement of Need
- 1.2 Issue
- 1.3 Necessary Action
- 1.4 Case Studies
- 2.0 Our Research
 - 2.1 Survey
 - 2.2 Preliminary Results
 - 2.3 Possible Solutions
- 3.0 Stakeholders
 - 3.1 Anitra Accetturo
 - 3.2 Gene Meyers
 - 3.3 Carmen Rasmussen
 - 3.4 Kate Nichols
 - 3.5 Carla Stellwagen
 - 3.6 Eric Osterkamp
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Sources

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Statement of Need

The issue with Street waste is just as it sounds; there's too much waste on the streets. Being the sustainable community that Bellingham is, this issue does not cope well with the community. The issue of street waste makes our community and our campus look bad, as well as causing relation issues with the members of WWU and the rest of the community. Not only is this causing frustration in the community, but the street waste is causing mass amounts of furniture to get sent to the landfill where it will sit for years.

1.2 Issue

Things like couches, mattresses, desks and cabinets can easily be found on the streets near the end of spring and summer quarter. All of which are much too large to be taken by the Sanitary Services, especially in such large amounts when students are moving in and out. There seems to be a correlation between the end of spring and summer quarter, and the amount of waste that accumulates in the streets. So the issue is how are we going to combat this problem and keep our streets clean?

1.3 Necessary Action

We see it as necessary to develop some type of program to reduce this issue of waste in the streets. We've brainstormed a few different options that should help limit the amount of waste being left on curbs. Now it's just a matter of refining them and creating one comprehensive program that will hopefully incorporate bits and pieces of all our

ideas. Initially we were thinking that the program would be a campaign of sorts to educate the students on how to properly dispose of items. After a handful of students were interviewed on campus we came to find many of them would prefer a service that would come to them. So at the moment it seems like the most sensible thing to do would be to provide a service that makes it as easy as possible on the students to dispose of their unwanted items.

1.4 Case Studies

University of Michigan

(http://www.recycle.umich.edu/grounds/recycle/student_move-out.php)

- Have students donate any unwanted items or items that they can't take with them
- Working together with Waste Management Services
- They will pick up, sort and donated to local Non-Profit

This case study was a good starting point for us when it came to gathering ideas. We really liked that the Waste Management Services were able to link up with the University and get a program together. Once all the data has been gathered and evaluated, we are hoping that it will point in a direction that would make a program between WWU and the Sanitary Services of Bellingham available in the future.

University of Minnesota Duluth

(<https://umdsustain.wp.d.umn.edu/campusinitiatives/waste/move-out/>)

- Promote student recycling of unwanted items
- Uses Facebook for student accessible info
- Provides information about local Goodwill's
- Have dumpster-like containers both on campus and off campus
- **Offer scheduled pick-up service for large items**

This study was also very helpful in the early stages of our project. Initially we were leaning more towards an education program in which we would find the best way to inform students about their options. The University of Minnesota Duluth created not only had information posted on their school website but also created a Facebook page that the students could access. This seemed very relevant to us because Facebook is something many students use and would more probably be utilized more than a page on the school website. They also did something that Western has done in the past with Move Out Madness; they provided dumpsters in certain locations where items could be taken and sorted. To ensure that everyone's demands were being met they topped off their program with a call-in scheduled pick-up service for large items that the students couldn't transport themselves. If we had to base our program off of a previous one, the University of Minnesota Duluth would probably be the one to frame it after.

University of Missouri

(<http://www.aashe.org/resources/case-studies/making-large-scale-campus-rummage-sale-happen-17-days>)

- Diverting as much unwanted items as possible from the local landfill
- Raising money for the University YMCA to send underprivileged children in Colombia to a summer camp
- Allows folks from lower income areas to buy goods at a reasonable price

- E-mails were sent to all students on campus to let students know about the rummage sale and where to donate, along with yard signs, and posters.
- Using big roll away dumpsters, students could dump their items for the sale
- Wanted to make the rummage sale happen in 17 days
- Diverted 20 tons from the landfill
- Raised \$10,000 for the University YMCA for the children in Colombia

This study provided an interesting spin on things in the sense that they were doing this for a greater purpose; to send underprivileged children to summer camp. To get the word out the students simply put fliers up all around the dorms, and all over campus, put yard signs along intersections, posters, emails etc. This was nice to see because this is how we planned on getting the word out to the students of WWU. The success of this rummage sale was the \$10,000 raised for the children and the amount of waste that was diverted from the local landfill.

2.0 Our Research

2.1 Survey

To ensure that the program will offer services of proper need to the target population we have created a survey in order to collect the necessary data. The questions we ask in the survey have been carefully selected and geared towards finding what works best for the students. Without surveying the population there would be a larger chance that the program created would be a flop which we cannot afford to have happen.

2.2 Preliminary Results

After the preliminary data was evaluated it was found that more than half (65%) of the students would prefer a cheap, pay-to-use service of some kind. We found that the majority of them have cars or access to pick-up trucks but for some reason they do not dispose of the furniture in a proper manner. Our results showed that 25% of the population was guilty of placing items on the curb and surprisingly 55% of the people had taken goods off the curb for their own use. Using this data it's rather clear that people expect their goods to be picked up by others in the community for use elsewhere. That is where the problem lies; people thoroughly believe that this is acceptable behavior because of past experiences which will make it very difficult to change.

2.3 Possible Solutions

The jury is still out when it comes to deciding on a final solution. There is still much more data needed before we even begin to develop a final program. The current data points towards a pick-up service where the students schedule a time for someone to stop by and pick-up their unwanted items. The cost and function of the service is yet to be determined but as more data is collected the overall picture of a service becomes clearer.

3.0 Stakeholders

3.1 Anitra Accetturo- Water Conservation Specialist (CoB)

Assisted in clarifying ideas and approach to student survey

3.2 Gene Meyers- WWU Huxley Professor

Assisted in crafting a proper student survey

3.3 Carmen Rasmussen- Campus Community Coalition

Assisted in guiding early stage data from previous years of M.O.M.

3.4 Kate Nichols- Happy Valley Neighborhood Representative

Provided necessary information about Happy Valley street waste issues

3.5 Carla Stellwagen- Sehome Neighborhood Representative

Provided necessary information about Sehome street waste issues

3.6 Eric Osterkamp- Neighborhood Police Officer (BPD)

Provided information about the issues in different communities as well as common problem areas

4.0 Conclusion

Western Washington University is in dire need of an effective program to address the street waste issue coming from renters. For being a “sustainable campus” this issue does not help our university’s reputation, nor does it make our city or the community look good. By implementing a program, we could be saving the city thousands of dollars from having to clean up the waste, diverting tons of unwanted items from going to the landfill, and overall keeping our city cleaner. To address this issue, we need to locate the source and from there find out why it is happening and what we can do to prevent it from happening. We have found that this issue is primarily coming from student renters during the spring and summer move out times with Sehome, York, and Happy Valley getting the most complaints. From our stakeholders, we gathered a solid background of why they felt this issue was happening, and by whom, and from there assessed a survey to get a better understanding from the students. Therefore, to find an effective solution, we asked the students via surveys why this problem was happening, and what program they would prefer that would allow them to dispose of their waste properly.

5.0 Sources

- University of Minnesota Duluth
(<https://umdsustain.wp.d.umn.edu/campusinitiatives/waste/move-out/>)
- University of Michigan
(http://www.recycle.umich.edu/grounds/recycle/student_move-out.php)
- University of Missouri
(<http://www.aashe.org/resources/case-studies/making-large-scale-campus-rummage-sale-happen-17-days>)
- *Interviews:*
 - Anitra Accetturo
 - Gene Meyers
 - Kate Nichols
 - Carmen Rasmussen
 - Carla Stellwagen
 - Eric Osterkamp