

Zero Waste at UC Santa Cruz

Sustainability Office

The Context - an International Market Collapse

In 2017, China enacted the National Sword policy to stop accepting contaminated recycling (recycling mixed with lots of trash & food waste). This resulted in the essential collapse of the US recycling market.



This market collapse has significantly impacted the City of Santa Cruz's ability to sell bulk recyclables.



UC Santa Cruz is one of the City's largest customers; the mixed recycling campus is sending the Dimeo Lane facility has unacceptably high levels of contamination and, thus, is being landfilled.

By the numbers - Part 1



Contamination occurs when non-recyclable items such as food scraps or trash are placed in recycling bins.

Acceptable Contamination Rates:

The City of Santa Cruz will accept recycling loads with contamination rates **below 15%**.

Current Contamination Rates:

Although we have not done a comprehensive waste audit since 2014, our colleagues at the City of Santa Cruz report that **recycling loads originating from residential halls are 50-70% contaminated.**

By the numbers - Part 2

Waste



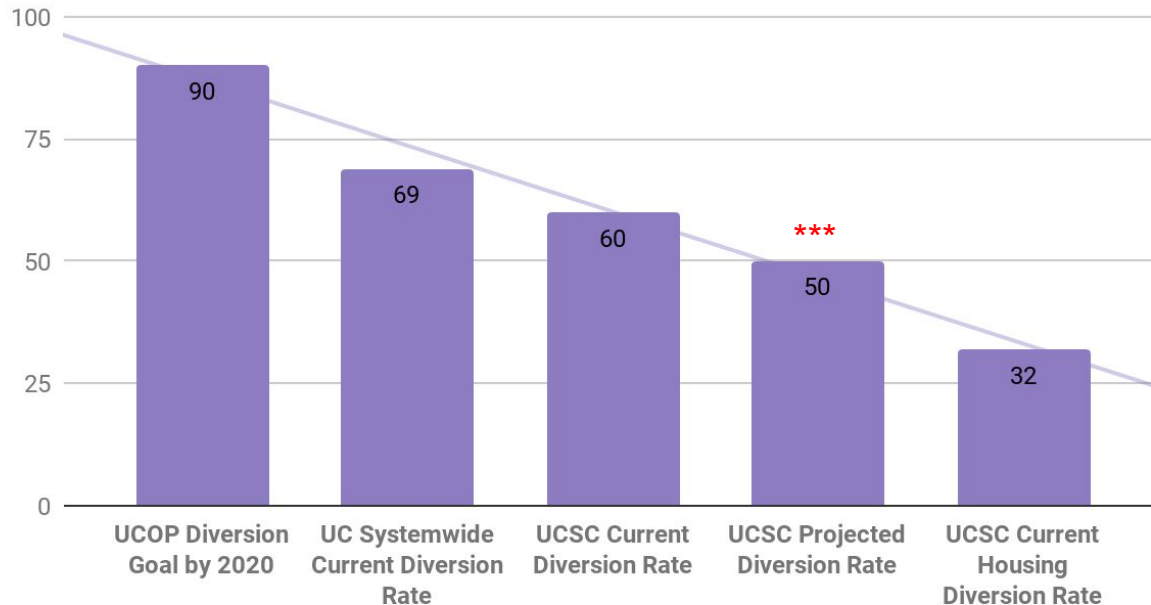
GOAL

Zero waste
by 2020

PROGRESS

69% of campus waste was diverted from landfills
in 2017-18.

UCOP, Systemwide, and UCSC Diversion Breakdown



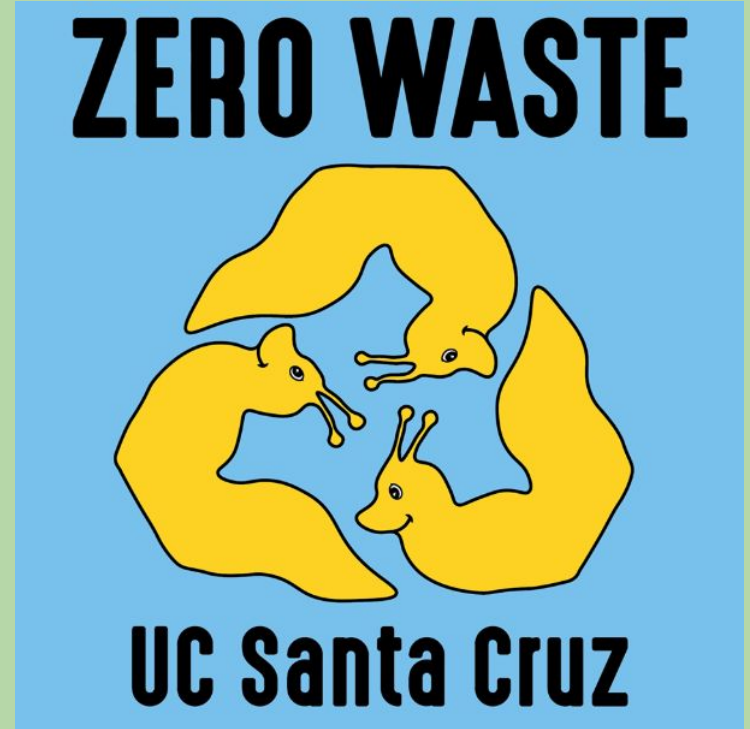
UCOP systemwide
Zero Waste goal:

**90% diversion from
landfill by 2020.**

The 2020 Zero Waste Goal

Unfortunately, no UC campus will hit Zero Waste by 2020 (90% diversion from landfill). UC Irvine is the closest to reaching the goal with a diversion rate of **83% in 2017-18**.

UCOP Sustainability Director, Matt St. Clair, told City on a Hill Press: “This year the UC systemwide working group is **preparing future zero waste goals beyond the 2020 mark**...those goals for 2025 or 2030 will draw on lessons learned over the past 10 years.”



A Cohesive Response - Part 1

Since November, the Sustainability Office has convened **monthly recycling contamination meetings** with key campus partners like Grounds, Dining, CHES Facilities, Custodial, CHES Marketing & Communications, and the student Zero Waste Team;

The Sustainability Office, with support from CHES, sent out an **informational email** to College Student Life and CHES Facilities staff to share with RAs.

Campus Mixed Recycling Landfilled Since November

By **Laretta Johnson** - March 1, 2019

UC to Miss 2020 Zero Waste Goal

By **Shinae Lee** - March 1, 2019

Striving to Reduce Food Waste

Students call for food donation program

By **Elena Neale** - March 1, 2019

A Cohesive Response - Part 2

USE CLEAR BAGS	USE LAS BOLSAS CLAROS
Soy and rice milk boxes	Botes de leche-arroz y -soya
Plastic-lined cartons and plastic-lined bags <i>(i.e. liquid egg cartons and french fry bags)</i>	Botes y bolsas lineadas de plástico <i>(por ejemplo las botes de huevos líquidos y las bolsas de papas fritas)</i>
MFG cream container	MFG contenedores de crema
Dirty foil	Aluminio sucio
Dirty plastic wrap	Film plástico sucio
Clamshell containers	Caja de plástico transparente
Hard plastic buckets	Botes duras de plástico
Waxed cardboard	Cartón encerado
Waxed paper	Papel encerado
Parchment paper	Papel pergamino
Used scrub pads, gloves	Fibras usadas, guantes
Hairnets, blue "chix" towels	Redecillas, toallas "chix" azul
Plastic aprons	Mandiles de plástico
Tea wrappers	Envoltorios de té

Dining has already re-trained staff and updated signage reduce contamination in their recycling stream;

Campus staff from Dining, Housing, Grounds, and the Sustainability Office are working closely with the City of Santa Cruz staff to take **frequent loads of recyclables to the recycling facility floor to be audited** with the goal of receiving feedback, reducing contamination and ultimately to have loads accepted.

A load is being hauled to Dimeo Lane next Wednesday to audit contamination.

A Cohesive Response - Part 3

The Sustainability Office in collaboration with CHES Marketing & Communications & Grounds Services is updating **informational signage** on what can/cannot be recycled and commonly misplaced items/common contaminants **for residence halls**;

Grounds Services is piloting educational and infrastructural improvements in two locations to measure shifts in diversion and contamination rates.



Wish-cycling: an easy trap to fall into when recycling!

Wish-cycling

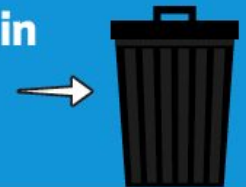
When we put anything into the recycling bin that we *guess, hope, or wish* is recyclable, it is called wish-cycling.

Wish-cycling is a major source of recycling contamination!



NOT SURE IT'S RECYCLABLE?

It's better to throw it in
the landfill than
to "wish-cycle"



UC Santa Cruz's Zero Waste Plan

Beginning summer 2019, Physical Planning, Development, & Operations (PPDO) and the Sustainability Office will engage a consultant to help develop a UCOP-required Zero Waste Plan and take advantage of this critical juncture for the campus to:

Evaluate current campus waste management practices & operations

Focused on identifying ways to improve efficiency and contribute to zero waste goals;

Identify short-term feasible actions

To make progress toward zero waste goals while staying within available resource.

Identify long-term actions to achieve the UCOP zero waste goals

Focused on staffing, resources, and time commitments.

Next Steps

- Pursuing more information about TRUE Zero Waste certification applicability for residence halls/SHW
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