

Recycling in Labs – January 19, 2022 (via Microsoft Teams)
36 Attendees

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In-house green labs certification program

Sustainability.wisc.edu -> Students in Sustainability -> Intern Program -> [Green Labs](#)

- General Interest Form (very short!)
- 8-12 week timeframe
- Checklist
- ~week 9-11, Green Lab comes for final lab walkthrough
- Lab certification is for ~1-2 years

Currently looking at 3rd party National Green Lab certification ([My Green Lab](#)) as a possible pilot program.

Better to go through this program than sending messages asking if something is recyclable, etc. This program looks at all areas from energy use, water consumption, recycling, etc.

No cost with UW's Green Lab Certification, but there is a cost with the My Green Lab certification (pilot labs may get cost covered by Office of Sustainability).

Older labs at a disadvantage? Not necessarily, it is more about behavior in the lab.

Physical science research lab application? Checklists are currently tailored to wet labs, but ability to tailor to a dry/physical science lab is definitely something that the Green Lab team would do for these types of lab (such a large variety of labs on campus make this quite common).

Green Lab goal is to certify every lab on campus.

In-house certification is geared more toward people and behaviors (they are aware that structural fixes come from higher ups and a lab may not have as much control). Green Lab group will reach out to labs for recertification after a period of time (note: this is a newer program so no recertifications have been done at this time).

Example of what Green Lab has been doing:

- How can I recycle more material?
 - o Ex. Falcon tubes
 - Purchase green product
 - Way to recycle?
 - Green Lab is looking at outside vendors (i.e. Polycarbin.com)

Tracking of metrics to reach goals: unfortunately, most buildings are not metered down to a specific laboratory. My Green Labs DOES have some ways to do this at the lab level.

(<https://www.mygreenlab.org/green-lab-certification.html>)

Green Lab Team IS interested in the metrics and how the Green Lab “intervention” has impacted the university, etc.

My Green Lab has reached out to the Green Lab Team and is interested in working with the UW. The Green Lab Team wants to get a list of potential labs to pilot this program, and then possibly go back to My Green Lab to get pricing, and then perhaps have the Office of Sustainability help to cover the cost to the initial set of labs.

Who pays the Utility Bill? At home we pay our bill, but at the University is there an incentive to labs who are helping to save money by reducing their consumption, etc.? Right now building cost split by square footage, only an estimation however. Green Lab Team is interested in how individual labs could potentially benefit from being certified. Much of the costs at the university at a higher level, vs. building/college/department specific.

Green Lab Team has good building-level data (electricity is very reliable). Trickier when multiple departments are located in a single building, but there are ways to work with the data.

Research project to add meters/sensors to a lab would be a good way to determine if estimations are accurate.

What can we do – different information from campus, building managers, custodial staff, etc. – not sure what we can/cannot do to recycle specifically.

- Where does this go? Look at dumpster located outside your building (this tells you the options for where things will go).
- Recycling markets changed considerably in 2016
- Green Lab Team is looking at infrastructure on how to change things
- Issue is that there is **ZERO consistency across campus**

Pilot study at Ingram Hall – blue and black bins inside the building with IR sensors to measure volume and weight as part of Green Fund project to see if this helps/decreases use, etc. (Doing the same with dumpster labeling.)

Recycling is a good thing, but the amount of impact is limited (and cost is marginal). **Procurement** is where we could benefit more so than on the end of life of a product (ex. PolyCarbin).

- Do not put plastic bags into the recycling stream (only places in area that takes plastics bags are local grocery stores)

Other Questions

- What is the Green Lab Team relationship with the Custodial services team on campus? Travis leads the Zero Waste Initiative, also housed in FP&M building.
- Community sharing of excess supplies? Good idea, Green Lab could explore in future.
- Electronic waste? Depends on type of material, some can be added to scrap metal but others need to be evaluated (contact person would be building managers, who can then work with Physical Plant Waste & Recycling) [Multiple attendees commented that they send these types of waste and electronics in general, to SWAP. One said they return to vendor as some can recycle their own electronics.]

- Leaking Faucets? If the Green Lab Team comes to your lab, and the team identifies this is a problem, they can document to determine if a campus-wide or high number of labs are having this issue across campus

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