

Environment benefits from campus competition

by Shane Arman - Monday, March 02, 2009

<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/1727/environment-benefits-from-campus-competition/>

Gather up spare paper, empty bottles and excess cardboard to help the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh trash the competition in RecycleMania.

Over a 10-week period, colleges across the nation will engage in the friendly contest aimed at promoting waste reduction by measuring the amount each school recycles weekly.

This year, 514 colleges are participating, with many of the schools' results to be officially posted and eligible to win in specific categories.

UW Oshkosh is registered in the whole-campus competition division and per capita classic event. Reports will be taken on weekly weights of recycled paper, cardboard, cans and bottles from the entire campus and then stacked up against the national competition.

"The intent is to reach out to the campus community and get people thinking about recycling," Director of Facilities Steven Arndt said.

In 2008, UW Oshkosh finished first in Wisconsin and 45th nationally, recycling 22.68 pounds of garbage per person.

After four weeks, UW Oshkosh ranked third in Wisconsin's competition division in cumulative recyclable pounds per person — behind UW-Whitewater and UW-River Falls — and second in cumulative recyclables pounds, behind UW-Whitewater.

UW Oshkosh receives its recycling totals from its waste hauler Veolia Environmental Services, which Arndt tracks on a weekly basis. In the near future, he hopes that students will take over management of RecycleMania and extend its presence on the UW Oshkosh campus.

Arndt currently co-teaches a sustainability class that involves projects in support of RecycleMania and has seen increased student participation in the competition in 2009.

"We have banners up around campus, and students speak to classrooms about how RecycleMania works and why it's important," Arndt said.

Besides engaging students, the competition also seems to have a lasting effect on recycling habits.

"Based on feedback from other campuses, the increase in recycling during the competition continues even after the 10-week competition," Arndt said.

The total amount of trash recycled nationally has grown from 41.3 million pounds in 2007 to 58.6 million

in 2008, a nearly 30 percent increase.

Arndt hopes recycling at UW Oshkosh continues to increase and that RecycleMania becomes an exciting, annual event that educates the campus about the environment.

“It’s an easy, fun thing to do that gets students thinking about campus sustainability,” Arndt said.

For more information about the competition and results visit, www.recyclemaniacs.org/results09.aspx.