

## **UWO finishes 14th in nation in RecycleMania**

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/11180/uwo-finishes-14th-in-nation-in-recyclemania-challenge/>

When it comes to reducing waste, there aren't many institutions better than the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.

UW Oshkosh finished 1<sup>st</sup> in Wisconsin and 14th in the United States out of 288 colleges and universities in the Grand Champion competition of "RecycleMania." The 10-week, waste reduction challenge annually pits campuses big and small against one another in a test of their campus recycling and waste-reduction efforts.

The university's 2011 RecycleMania finish represents another large step forward after its 25th place spot in the competition's "Grand Champion" category last year.

"Our move up the rankings reflects an improvement in recycling rate from 44 percent to over 60 percent," said Michael Lizotte, director of sustainability at UW Oshkosh.

The 11-year-old, international RecycleMania competition pushes campus communities to limit waste and simultaneously strengthen awareness of waste management programs.

RecycleMania's rules require each institution competing in the Grand Champion category to combine trash and core recyclable materials to determine its "recycling rate" as a percentage of its overall waste generation. Total weight of recyclables collected were divided by the total weight of trash and recyclables combined to determine the key result. Participating schools logged and reported their data, generating overall and per capita totals from early February through April 2.

During this year's RecycleMania contest, the average person at UW Oshkosh produced 0.7 lbs of trash per day and 1.1 lbs of recyclables per day, according to the results.

The peak, UW Oshkosh recycling week in RecycleMania's larger-school "Gorilla Prize" category yielded more than 17,600 pounds of combined paper, cardboard and bottle and cans for recycling. That resulted in a 1.55-pounds-per-person average during Week Five, UW Oshkosh's highest over the contest's duration, the data show.

Lizotte credited this year's success to a campus-wide culture of not only recycling but waste minimization. Residence halls now lean on "eco reps" -- recycling ambassadors who help students see the potential to intercept recyclable material before it enters the waste stream, he said. Students also are simply challenging themselves to, daily, produce less waste.

"RecycleMania is all about behavior change," Lizotte said. "We didn't put out more recycling bins or anything like that. We tried to do some more education. We tried to do some more fun things."

**RecycleMania Grand Champion category rankings for Wisconsin colleges, universities (recycling rate percentages):**

- University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh: 60.66 percent
- University of Wisconsin-Platteville: 39.36 percent
- University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee: 35.01 percent
- Saint Norbert College: 32.49 percent
- University of Wisconsin-River Falls: 32.19 percent
- Western Technical College: 29.51 percent
- Northland College: 29.19 percent
- University of Wisconsin-La Crosse: 29.03 percent
- University of Wisconsin-Madison: 27.23 percent
- University of Wisconsin-Whitewater: 25.50 percent
- University of Wisconsin-Stout: 24.84 percent
- University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire: 17.98 percent
- Lawrence University: 17.02 percent

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