

Resolution for Supporting Campus Waste Reduction Efforts at the University of Chicago



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WHEREAS the University of Chicago is committed to reducing its environmental impact and promoting sustainability on campus, as evidenced by the funding of the [Green Fund](#), the formation of [UChicago Eco](#), and the introduction of the [2030 Emissions Reduction Plan](#);

WHEREAS [Phoenix Sustainability Initiative's Campus Composting](#) and [Campus Waste Reduction](#) project teams have made significant strides in promoting campus waste reduction on campus. Campus Composting has worked to expand composting access, and Campus Waste Reduction recently established a temporary thrift store on campus;

BE IT RESOLVED Undergraduate Student Government supports and celebrates the student groups working to reduce waste on campus.

Part 1: Supporting reSTORE, UChicago's First On-Campus Thrift Store

WHEREAS the Campus Waste Reduction project team had a successful pop-up thrift store event last year in collaboration with MODA, UChicago's fashion and design organization. The event "won [Outstanding Collaboration Award](#)" in the 2022 UChicago RSO Awards;

WHEREAS Phoenix Sustainability Initiative has worked with administrators to forge a space for a spring quarter thrift store in the basement of Stuart, reSTORE, which officially opened in early April 2023;

WHEREAS in the first three days of its operations, reSTORE collected nearly \$5,000 and 1,000 pounds of clothes, which was featured on the University of Chicago's [Campus and Student Life website](#). The opening of the thrift store was also featured in [the Chicago Maroon](#).

WHEREAS as of April 21st, 2023, reSTORE has had over a thousand attendees, 609 transactions, and 1,278 items sold, according to PSI coordinators;

WHEREAS the majority of the items on sale at reSTORE cost less than five dollars, making the space one of the few places in Hyde Park to buy cost-effective clothing, which is beneficial for low-income students;

WHEREAS all profits from reSTORE go to three environmental justice organizations based in Chicago: Blacks in Green, Openlands, and the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization.

WHEREAS reSTORE is open to community members, helping to foster a more collaborative relationship between the University of Chicago and South Side community members;

WHEREAS reSTORE receives funding through a grant from the Green Fund and through money from Climate and Energy Careers to pay employees;

WHEREAS reSTORE is currently only designated as a temporary thrift store, and has only been formally assigned its spot in the basement of Stuart through the end of this quarter;

BE IT RESOLVED through Student Centers, the University of Chicago should provide additional institutional support to reSTORE and allocate the space in the basement of Stuart to reSTORE through the 2023-2024 academic year;

BE IT RESOLVED that annual funding through Student Centers should be allocated to assist with paying employees and other operational costs for the upcoming school year.

Part 2: Campus Composting

WHEREAS the Campus Composting Team within Phoenix Sustainability Initiative has worked to pilot composting across campus, which has received acclaim on [UChicago News](#), [Planet Forward](#), and [the Chicago Maroon](#);

WHEREAS the Campus Composting project team has developed a program for coordinating composting at major events on campus. The team successfully diverted over [1,200 lbs. of organic waste](#) during UChicago's 2022 Orientation week. They also coordinated composting for five other events over the last year, diverting 350 additional pounds;

WHEREAS the Campus Composting project team has partnered with Ex Libris, a student-run café, to divest 2,693 pounds of waste as of April 2023. Parker McWatters, Program Manager for Student Retail, has expressed interest in funding their project and expanding to other cafés, according to Campus Composting members;

WHEREAS the Campus Composting team has implemented pilot composting programs in [Renee Granville-Grossman Residential Commons](#) and in [off-campus apartments](#), where they subsidize 50% of the cost of a composting service for students. 105 students were involved in this program.

WHEREAS in order to get academic departments and RSOs to participate in composting during their events, the Campus Composting team has had to often subsidize the departments to purchase compostable supplies like silverware and to pay for hauling and staffing costs. The coordinators of Orientation Week and Alumni Weekend paid for composting costs, but otherwise the burden to pay for compostable supplied at events often falls onto the project team, where they have to use funds from their Green Fund grant or allocations for Phoenix Sustainability Initiative;

WHEREAS organizational units of the University often do not have a part of their budget allocated to sustainability efforts like composting. The Campus Composting team has gotten some departments to make individual commitments, but they have had challenges working with some organizational units due to the lack of specific sustainability allocations by the University;

WHEREAS the Campus Composting team would like to expand to composting in the dining halls by working with Chartwells, the current dining provider. Another team in Phoenix Sustainability Initiative, the Green Data project team, is making a presentation to present to Chartwells about the benefits of composting;

BE IT RESOLVED the Office of Sustainability should allocate funds for a composting service to operate in University-affiliated buildings;

BE IT RESOLVED the Office of Sustainability and Student Centers should advocate for academic departments and other event coordinators to move away from single-use plastics;

BE IT RESOLVED the University of Chicago administration should provide funds to academic departments and other organizational units per quarter for the purchasing of environmentally-friendly materials for events. The amount that it funds should be dependent on the size of the department and how many events they hold;

BE IT RESOLVED the University of Chicago administration should coordinate additional meetings with Chartwells, working with the provider to coordinate pilot programs across the dining halls;

BE IT RESOLVED the University of Chicago is encouraged to explore additional waste reduction initiatives.