

WasteNot Project Report

Our Green Fund Stipend sponsored the beginning stages of a soft plastics recycling program with WasteNot. We chose to invest in this initiative because of the significant amount of waste generated across campus— particularly in high-traffic areas like dining halls. By introducing more sustainable practices in these spaces, we aim to reduce the university's environmental impact in a tangible way. Recycling soft plastic comes with many environmental benefits: not only does it reduce long-term pollution in landfills since soft plastics aren't easily biodegradable, it also reduces carbon emissions by reducing the demand for new plastic and the amount of fossil fuels required to produce it.

Implementation: We initiated the project by reaching out to the dining halls and placing residential buildings to put one WasteNot soft plastic bin in each location. Each soft plastic bin is easily filled by the time the WasteNot truck comes by once a week to collect the recycled plastic. One of the strengths of this program is how easily it integrates into existing waste disposal systems— staff and students were able to adopt the new bins without major disruptions to their routines.

To encourage proper use, we also placed flyers in the residential hall locations in order to educate students about what items should be added to the soft plastic bin so they can also be participants in the project.

Outcomes: Although the project is still in its beginning phases, we have already made a significant impact. So far we have 335 lbs diverted, saved 15 gallons of gas, and offset 332 miles offset through this project according to our WasteNot portal. These results highlight the potential of the program as it reaches new heights.

Future Goals: Moving forward, we hope to secure additional funding to increase the number of WasteNot bins across campus, with a particular focus on dining halls where waste output is highest. Expanding the program will allow us to significantly increase the volume of recycled materials collected each week. We are also exploring the possibility of introducing the program to new campus locations, depending on available resources and continued support.