

The UO Zero Waste Program was officially institutionalized in March 1991. The Program was created from a student grassroots effort through the Survival Center. The Survival Center is a student environmental action and education group on the University of Oregon campus.

From 1975-1991, the University of Oregon recycled all the paper from the Campus Printing operations. This was done through an outside contractor. Additionally, a volunteer program called Project Intercept was established to collect newspapers in several public locations on campus. This program slowly disappeared as being a volunteer program, there was a problem with consistent pickups, overflowing sites and a lack of accountability to maintain this project. The Fire Marshall shut the newspaper collection down due to fire hazards from overflowing containers.

In 1989, a special needs workshop, approached the University to take on its existing recycling collection while proposing to boost it. One person and a van, performed the collections. Additionally, each office was visited and offered recycling collection containers. Jon Davis, the workshop representative, immediately boosted the collections from the Print Shop to over 150 office collection and public paper collection sites. At this time, a student coordinator was hired on a stipend, to catalyze recycling at the University of Oregon.

In 1989-90, the Survival Center Recycling Coordinator, approached an Introduction to Environmental Studies class and recruited a small group of students to work on the recycling issue on campus. Each of these classes require a project or a research paper as 30% of the grade. About 10 students volunteered. The students met weekly throughout the term. When the term was over, the students were immersed in the success of the project and the group continued to meet on a volunteer basis for the remainder of the academic year. Thanks to the hard work of Aaron, Brian, Kristen, Jeff, Alexandra, Christine, Priscilla, Stephanie, the Survival Center and OSPIRG, the UO Zero Waste Program became a seed. During that year, the group became the hub for recycling at the University of Oregon. Through working with Jon Davis on the collection end, the group became the campus contact for all recycling issues. In that year, the group accomplished amazing things:

- Creation and distribution of a Paper Recycling guidelines poster
- Work with LAW students, OSPIRG and Campus Printing, to acquire and promote the use of 100% unbleached recycled paper
- Development of a proposal for a Campus Environmental Issues Committee (which was actualized in 1991 being officially created through the President's Office)
- Worked with Housing to get disposable cups eliminated from the Residence Halls, with refillable mugs being distributed to all new Residence Hall students

beginning in Fall 1990 (\*This saves over \$30,000 annually in disposable cup costs alone!)

- Created an education campaign for waste reduction in all Housing food service areas (by using table tents to demonstrate waste from overuse of napkins, napkin use was cut in half in one month's time after campaign began!)
- Worked to create the UO Zero Waste Program

In May 1990, the Special Needs Workshop approached the University for some funding to continue the paper recycling operation. While this was pending, the Survival Center Student Group, in cooperation with Campus Printing, sent out a recycling survey to the faculty, staff and administration at the University of Oregon. The response was overwhelming. Not only did people support the recycling effort, but they were emphatic about expanding it. The survey results were presented to the student paper, the editor of the student paper wrote a positive editorial regarding this issue and the Survival Center Recycling Coordinator also wrote a commentary to the student paper. The ripple effects of the survey found the public taking the time to contact the University administration. Thus, the Special Needs Workshop discontinued their service and Facilities Services took on the recycling effort on a 6-month trial basis in June 1990. A Paper Recycling Coordinator and a Recycling Education Coordinator were hired on a temporary basis. The Coordinator performed an analysis and submitted a report on the history of UO recycling, current status of recycling at UO, waste trends while making recommendations. Facilities likewise contracted a graduate student to write an evaluation of the situation. These things were taken seriously and the UO Zero Waste Program was institutionalized in March 1991.

The UO Zero Waste Program has continued to grow and employ countless numbers of students while influencing the practices of 1000's of people. Academic credit is now available as well. Currently, the Program employs ~45 student recyclers plus countless student interns for academic credit. There are 6 full time staff including 3 Managers and 4 Coordinators. The Program has grown to develop and implement projects and systems, while continuing to demonstrate economic viability. The Campus Recycling Program was re-branded as the UO Zero Waste Program in 2012.

The most exciting part of this journey has been the perseverance of students. Students have a tremendous opportunity to apply their education directly on a college campus. The UO Zero Waste Program is a direct result of the hard work of many students, who cared enough to put themselves aside, be proactive and determined in working towards the future. And the future is now. The success and longevity of the UO Zero Waste Program is a direct result of the passion, inspiration and focus of students who worked hard to make a difference. I hope all of you who have participated in this program over the years, can feel the success of your contributions. Every small effort

has built this program. This web site and the Program itself are dedicated to all the students around the world who care enough to work for a better world.