



## Zero Waste

### 2018 CHESC Call for Best Practice Award Nominations (California Higher Education Sustainability Conference)

California Higher Education Sustainability Conference (CHESC)

ProposalSpace ID: 849-41501

Status: **Review Pending**

This proposal was submitted for review Sat Feb 17 2018, 12:20am PST.

If you need to make changes to it, please contact Ms. Katie Maynard at .

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## Instructions

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## Proposal Content

### Project Title

Zero Waste Ambassadors Program: Empowering Students to Shift the Norm

### Campus Name(s)

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

### Which campus system did the project occur in?

California State University

### Project Location(s)

San Luis Obispo, CA

### Brief Summary

Cal Poly's Zero Waste Ambassadors Program empowers students to change the norm of the consumer waste stream, successfully engages community members, and consistently diverts 90% of waste to the landfill at select events. With 86 cumulative volunteers to date, the Ambassadors are both environmentally focused student volunteers, and Cal Poly Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities (OSRR) sanctioned students who have reached 7,060 attendees to divert an estimated 2,641.51 lbs from the landfill at 14 events in 3 months.

### Which category best fits your proposal?

Waste Reduction

### Completion date or implementation period

The Zero Waste Ambassadors Program served at it's first event on October 28, 2017 and is ongoing, but the data and information included in this submission covers the implementation period of October 28, 2017 to February 15, 2018 (excluding Cal Poly's Academic Holiday from December 9, 2107 to January 8, 2018).

### Overview/Abstract

The Zero Waste Ambassadors Program successfully supported 14 campus events and diverted an estimated 2,642 lbs of waste to landfill, while educating and engaging 86 volunteers and thousands of campus community members who attended these events over the course of 3 months. Designed, implemented, and managed by an AmeriCorps Volunteer Infrastructure Program service member who is trained in effective volunteer program methods and strategies, the program contains a sustainable structure, is composed of high value volunteers, and maintains a data driven decision model. The role of the Zero Waste Ambassadors, who are trained student volunteers, is to sort the materials produced at an event into the appropriate bins, as well as educate the attendees on proper placement of items in alignment with campus recycling and composting initiatives.

The program utilizes volunteers from both environmentally focused student clubs whose members are devoted to making a difference in their campus community, and students who have been sanctioned community service hours through the disciplinary process of Cal Poly's OSRR. Historically, Cal Poly's environmental dissemination efforts reach community members who opt-in (i.e. visit a booth, attend a sustainability event, follow social media pages, etc.), but this program fosters a unique opportunity to get guaranteed face-time with students and community members who may have otherwise not been reached.

On November 11, 2017 the Zero Waste Ambassadors served 2,500 attendees at the Football BBQ, which traditionally had landfill receptacles. At this event, 25 volunteers (14 of which were OSRR sanctioned students) made up the Ambassadors crew who sorted through 1206.8 pounds of produced material. Of that produced material, 62.2% was composted, 32.6% was recycled, and 5.2% was sent to the landfill, making the Football BBQ a successful zero waste event. Moving forward, the Zero Waste Ambassadors plan to support all campus events with 300+ attendees.

### Relevancy to the Best Practice Program

The Zero Waste Ambassadors Program has proven to be an effective strategy for converting what are historically wasteful events (80-100% to the landfill), into events that meet the zero waste goal of 10% or less to the landfill. In addition to the quantitative achievements, the program provides a positive, non-committal space for attendees to be exposed to and participate in first-hand waste diversion by implementing the Cal Poly motto, "learn by doing," without going out of their way.

While it is likely that many campuses focus on reaching their environmentally minded community, this program offers a low risk, high reward approach to bridge the gap, increasing the likelihood of reaching a higher percentage of the campus population through OSRR sanctioned students, all while meeting the zero waste goals and educating stakeholders on campus placement of items. Every campus has students who need to fulfill service hours (honors students, Greek life, and OSRR sanctioned students). It is imperative to act on this opportunity to engage a more diverse population in the sustainable practices on campuses. Due to the program's success and overflowing praise from stakeholders at Cal Poly, the Zero Waste Ambassadors will soon be paid student intern positions under Facilities.

### Collaborative design and implementation

Since the Zero Waste Ambassadors Program relies on Cal Poly events, many volunteers are assigned through OSRR and campus clubs, and the zero waste diversion goal is almost entirely met by interacting with consumers during trainings and at events, collaboration between campus partners and community members is paramount to the success and implementation of the program. Since late October, the program has served over 14 events ranging in attendance from 50 to 2,500 people, each requiring comprehensive logistical planning and evaluation, a zero waste consultation for procurement of materials, and continuous communication with stakeholders.

Following an event, debrief meetings are held so that stakeholders can evaluate, reflect and increase event effectiveness. On two occasions these meetings led to notable improved project performance. One addressed the placement of zero waste stations, which led to a more appropriate layout design at the next event. On another occasion, the Zero Waste Ambassadors addressed the number of one-use plastic cups at a Football BBQ, and have since been working with Cal Poly's Athletics Special Event Coordinator on a feasibility business model to provide and sell reusable cups at athletic events in the 2018/19 school year.

### Education and Outreach

In 2017, 80% of consumer waste at Cal Poly was sent to the landfill. This statistic can largely be attributed to a lack of outreach that educates the community in an engaging way, and since disposing an item is generally a passive action. A strategy of the Zero Waste Ambassadors Program is to change the passive action to an intentional placement by inspiring consumers to change their habits through intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This is done by engaging with our audience in a relatable way to explain that they have the power to change the statistical outcome, to inform them of the implications a contaminated consumer waste stream has on our campus sustainability and environment, and to give them the resources, tools, and motivation to succeed.

Specifically, the program provides interactive trainings that include fun relay races, waste audits in high exposure areas, and captivating presentations that are based on the 5E Model of Instruction, which promotes the construction of new ideas. These sessions include sensory appeal and an open space for exploration and discovery. The program has presented to countless classes, clubs, colleges within Cal Poly, planning committees and departments, and have been invited guests at advisory meetings.

### Total project cost

Total project cost: \$5,038.33. Breakdown: \$4,333.33 for AmeriCorps VIP time (1/3 of total time, from September to July), \$450 for industrial scale to weigh waste, \$200 for promotional table cloth for information desk, \$25 for buckets, and \$30 for gloves

### Total Incentives Received (If applicable)

no answer

## Quantitative Savings and Benefits

Strong proposals will have quantitative savings in at least one of the following areas. Most proposals will only submit savings in one to three metric areas below. That said, please respond to any areas below where metrics are available.

### Number of people reached by your program

We reached a total of 7,282 people through the Zero Waste Ambassadors Program.

- o We reached 113 students, staff, and faculty through zero waste educational presentations to college's within Cal Poly, departments, classes, and clubs
- o We reached 86 students who have served as Zero Waste Ambassadors
  - Of those 86 student volunteers, 45 were sanctioned through OSRR and 41 were recruited separately from environmentally focused groups on campus

- o We reached 7,060 attendees at our zero waste events (based on event coordinator estimates and sign-ins)
- o We reached 23 campus partners through planning and procurement meetings with event planning committees and event coordinators
- o We reached 32 students, staff and faculty through attending meetings that we were invited guests at

**Learning Outcomes**

no answer

**Measured annual energy savings in kWh**

no answer

**Measured annual energy savings in therms**

no answer

**Estimated greenhouse gas emission reductions in metric tons CO2e**

TBD

**Measured annual water savings in gallons**

no answer

**Estimated annual waste reduction in pounds**

At least 6,792.45 lbs during the 9 month Cal Poly school year

**Actual or estimated annual cost savings**

no answer

**For the energy efficiency categories as well as overall sustainable design category, provide estimated annual energy savings as compared to Title 24 Energy Code in percent better than baseline.**

no answer

**Percentage of total food and beverage purchases that is local (under 250 miles) in origin and/or meets one or more third party-certified sustainability criteria (e.g. USDA certified organic). List the third party-certified sustainability criteria included**

no answer

**List any green business or green restaurant certifications that this project achieved**

no answer

**Additional environmental, social, and/or economic sustainability benefits**

One of the most valuable outcomes of developing this program has been the impact it has had on the OSRR sanctioned students. While the students themselves are aware that they have been sanctioned service hours, the Zero Waste Ambassadors Program Manager never mentions this to avoid the stigma that may surround that information amongst their peers who are serving as club members, and rather create an open space for the diverse group of students to serve together with a common goal. In doing this, the OSRR students give back to their community while also feeling welcomed, which turns into excitement, involvement, and a behavior change.

By the end of an event, these students who previously were not environmentally conscious now care about living a more sustainable lifestyle, have become friends with environmental club leaders, and are excited to make a change. These students request to be involved in future Zero Waste Ambassador opportunities and some have joined environmental clubs on campus. This outcome is exceptionally valuable because not only did we reach and educate these students, but we inspired them to become environmental activists on our campus.

The positive feedback from attendees and campus partners has been astonishing. Attendees have reciprocated interest, asked questions, requested more information on how they can live more sustainably, and even donated \$1000 to the Zero Waste Ambassadors Program. Campus partners have appreciated and enjoyed our service so much, that they have all requested that we continue to support their events in the future.

**Photograph of Project**

osrr\_ambassadors\_at\_football\_bbq.jpg

<https://proposalspace.com/proposals/41501>

**Second Photograph of Project**

sort\_it\_relay\_race.jpg

**Third Photograph of Project**

waste\_audit\_with\_an\_english\_class.jpg

**Supporting document**

student\_feedback\_after\_waste\_audit-relay-and\_presentation.pdf

**Second supporting document**

zero\_waste\_event\_flyer.png

## Equipment/Space Needs for Presentation if Selected

**Please describe any media needs you anticipate having**

- PC Laptop
- MAC laptop (we request that you use the PC laptop available unless you really need a MAC)
- Need to use your own laptop (we prefer that you use ours, but can accommodate this if need be)
- Projector and Screen
- Sound from the laptop
- Ability to play videos on the laptop
- Other needs for high speed internet (not just going to a webpage)
- Quiet people speaking (might need microphones where those aren't always needed)
- Flipcharts and markers
- Index cards and Pens
- Paper and Pens
- Ability for audience members to be seated at tables facing each other
- Ability for audience members to move their chairs, but tables are not needed
- Other
- None

**Other Space/Media Needs**

no answer

## Permissions and Confirmations - Please Read Carefully

Please read the following section carefully as it includes critical information and relevant CHESC policies that you will be expected to adhere to.

**Speaker Changes**

All changes to the proposed speakers listed in your original abstract must be reviewed and approved by CHESC. CHESC reserves the right to cancel a talk based on a change to the speaker list (though we will usually work with the submitters to identify alternate speakers first). A loss of one of the speakers within the session may also result in the canceling of a talk, even if one of the selected speakers can still attend. If you significantly change your topic, scope, or speakers you must seek approval from CHESC.

## Closing and Submission

Please let us know if you have any other comments or concerns before submitting your nomination. Please note that you must hit "submit" for the proposal to move onto the review committee. If you need to make changes after you hit submit, please contact CHESC Staff, Katie Maynard [kmaynard@geog.ucsb.edu](mailto:kmaynard@geog.ucsb.edu) and we can release the proposal back to you. This can be done until the submittal deadline. Please also make sure that you have linked all the speaker(s) for your session to this proposal.

**Additional Comments and Clarifications**

no answer

# Speakers

Your proposal must include at least 1 but not more than 2 speakers.

**Name**

Colleen Trostle

**Campus/Institution/Company**

Cal Poly

**Department, Division, or Organization within your Campus/Institution/Company**

Energy, Utilities, and Sustainability

**Title Line**

AmeriCorps VIP Service Member

**Which best describes you?**

Representative of a non-profit

**Post-nominal titles**

no answer

**Office Phone**

805-756-7207

**Cell Phone (Only to be used if there are problems onsite)**

717-576-3173

**Email**

[ctrostle@calpoly.edu](mailto:ctrostle@calpoly.edu)

**Biography**

Colleen joined the Cal Poly Sustainability Supervising Team as an AmeriCorps Service Member. She graduated in 2014 with a BS in Biology, a focus in Ecology and Conservation, and a teaching certificate in Secondary Biology. Prior to her service term, she spent 2.5 years at Pacific Northwest National Laboratory's Marine Science Lab where she focused on eelgrass monitoring and restoration in Puget Sound, juvenile salmon habitat monitoring on the Lower Columbia River, environmental toxicology, and environmental monitoring around marine renewable energies. In addition to Colleen's exposure to ecosystems research and education, her recreational enjoyment and respect for the outdoors has fostered an environmental ethic and awareness of responsible citizenship through sustainability efforts. Drawn to giving back to her community, and her keen interest in sustainability efforts, Cal Poly's Energy, Utilities and Sustainability group was a perfect fit.

**Project Role**

Colleen managed and implemented this project with support, feedback, and mentorship from her Energy, Utilities, and Sustainability team members; Kylee Singh (supervisor), Dennis Elliot, and Eric Veium.

**Confirmation of Speaking**

Should this proposal be accepted, I (Colleen Trostle) am committed to speak.

**Disclaimer of Commercial Interests**

I do not have any commercial interests or associations related to the material I am presenting on.

**Confirmation of Speaker Registration Fees. Please Read Carefully.**

I understand there is a speaker fee, but plan to apply for a fee waiver based on limited support from my institution or other financial need related reasons. Selection of this option will in no way affect whether your proposal is accepted.

**Permission for Photography**

Yes

**Speaker Content Guidelines**

Speakers may neither promote nor denigrate a specific product or proprietary service during a presentation. Logos from campuses, non-profits, and companies may only be used on the first slide of the presentation regardless of whether the speaker represents that group. Institutions can be mentioned as affiliations of the author, but promotional information about those institutions cannot be included. Advertisements cannot be used anywhere in a presentation or in hand-out materials for a talk. Photos used in presentations should not include proprietary services or products. If you need assistance editing out a logo from a photograph, please contact us; we are happy to assist you. We do not accept sales pitches or marketing presentations. All presenters must be directly involved in the project/research being discussed. It is not appropriate for someone from the same program, campus, or department who did not directly work on the project/research to present. All presenters must discuss their work on the project. Representatives of private companies and non-profit organizations may only present if they are co-speaking with a campus. The campus presenter must talk about their work on the project and may not act simply as an endorsement for the company presenter. Government (non-campus) representatives may speak without a campus co-presenter if they are discussing legislation or codes that affect campuses; or resources directed towards campuses such as grants or technical assistance programs. Government representatives must co-speak with a campus on all other presentations. Presenters should not infer that the conference, UC Santa Barbara, CCC, CSU, UC, or the IOUs approve or endorse any product, software, service, or system for any reason. The logos and names of UCSB, CCC, CSU, UC, and the IOUs may not be used without prior and explicit permission from the owner of that logo. The speaker is responsible for confirming that they have the right to use/acquiring the licenses needed for any copyrighted material used in the presentation. We ask speakers to be especially careful of the use of photographs.

**Additional Comments/Clarifications**

no answer

## Administrative Supports For Applicant

Your proposal may include any number of administrative supports for applicant.

No administrative supports for applicant were added to this proposal.

## Non-Speaking Project Team Members

Your proposal may include any number of non-speaking project team members.

No non-speaking project team members were added to this proposal.