

DISCARDED RESOURCE AND MATERIAL MANAGEMENT POLICY

College of the Atlantic

Last Updated: February 28th, 2017; Approved: March 1, 2017

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1. INTRODUCTION

College of the Atlantic (COA) recognizes human activities have altered Earth's systems and acknowledges that the effect of our resource consumption on the planet is greater than we can sustain. In 2015, the European Environmental Agency pointed out that humans' "use of material resources has increased ten-fold since 1900 and is set to double again by 2030"¹ and that the "escalating demand may jeopardize access to some essential resources and cause environmental harm." The problem of overconsumption and uneven distribution of resources is fundamentally rooted in the increase of resource wastage and pollution. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 2012 report shows that 42% of our nation's greenhouse gas emissions are a result of our unsustainable production, consumption, and disposal of resources² and is therefore a core issue of the 21st century.

COA's educational philosophy is human ecology: a field that seeks to "understand and improve upon the complexities that connect human beings to their built, social, and natural environments"³ In this vein, COA has carried out sustainability policies and initiatives to reduce wastage and align the school's practices with its educational philosophy. These efforts have involved, but are not limited to, a zero waste graduation in 2005, a non-packaged water policy, and the Earth Charter. However, as of 2017, COA has a long way to go to become zero waste, as defined in the Principles and Definitions section of this policy.

COA recognizes its roles and responsibilities as a member of the local community, the state of Maine, and the world. Chief among those responsibilities is environmental and social stewardship. The College acknowledges the need to discard resources in order to function, but at the same time, recognizes that those materials should not be wasted, but recovered. The College will also take responsibility to reduce its overall resource consumption. This document sets out COA's vision and guiding principles in regard to Material Management; the end goal is minimizing discarded materials produced by the operations, maintenance, and daily activities of the College.

2. AIM OF POLICY

The aim of this policy is to support and improve College of the Atlantic's discarded resources and material management, which affects all campus operations and COA-sponsored events. It will address the College's resource consumption and disposal by guiding the community in improving its reduction and diversion rates of discarded resources.

¹ European Environment Agency. (2015). Waste Prevention In Europe - The Status In 2014. Retrieved from http://bookshop.europa.eu/is-bin/INTERSHOP.enfinity/WFS/EU-Bookshop-Site/en_GB/-/EUR/ViewPublication-Start?PublicationKey=THAL15006

² "Sustainable Materials Management." (2012): n. pag. Sustainable Material Management: The Road Ahead. US EPA, 2009. Web. 2016.

³ <https://www.coa.edu/about/administration/president/>, accessed Jan 2017.

COA is committed to sustainability and environmental stewardship, and will implement sound Material Management and Zero Waste practices through resource conservation, reduced resource consumption, environmentally and socially responsible purchasing, and discarded resource diversion practices and opportunities in accordance with a Zero Waste framework and the College's observed needs.

3. PRINCIPLES AND DEFINITIONS

Zero Waste is defined by the Global Anti-Incinerator Alliance (2011) as a goal for social, environmental, and economic justice.

A goal that is both pragmatic and visionary, to guide people to emulate sustainable natural cycles, where all discarded materials are resources for others to use. Zero Waste means designing and managing products and processes to reduce the volume and toxicity of waste and materials, conserve and recover all resources, and not burn or bury them. Implementing Zero Waste will eliminate all discharges to land, water, or air that may be a threat to planetary, human, animal or plant health.⁴

COA's twelve Zero Waste principles are: reduce, reuse, repair, redesign, repurpose, replenish, research, reach-out, refuse, reconsider, remember, and recycle.⁵ The prefix "re-" implies involved and continued action, and emphasizes COA's position as a dynamic institution which has the power to engage with the world. These principles will guide the COA community in recognizing and reconsidering our consumption and disposal of resources as interactions with the world around us, and changing our actions accordingly.

"Waste" is a word that carries associations of loss, excess, disposability, and valuelessness. In this policy, waste is not used to describe the physical resources discarded on campus, but as a verb. This is similar to the Zero Waste Movement's use of the term "to waste": to unnecessarily discard a resource so that its value is not realized. All materials that are discarded on campus are defined as Discarded Resources--both divertible materials, such as redeemable bottles and apple cores, and currently non-divertible materials, such as petroleum-based dental floss.

For the purpose of this policy document, "Discarded Resource Management" and "Material Management" will refer to the procedures and practices designed to achieve a reduction in resource consumption and wastage, an increase in resource reuse, and a mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions. Material Management (MM) is a term that attempts to capture the full lifecycle of materials--from raw resources to products, to end disposal. Discarded Resource Management (DRM) is a term specific for the management of disposed materials, and

⁴ZW Business Principles." *Zero Waste International Alliance*. <http://zwia.org/standards/zw-business-principles/>, accessed May 19 2016

⁵ The 12Rs are inspired by the 9Rs developed by [Chintan, Environmental Action and Research Group](#)

combines all forms of reduction, reuse, and diversion. Together, MM and DRM, establish a holistic approach to resource production, consumption, and disposal.

4. SCOPE

This policy applies to all College activities, infrastructure, and operations. This includes College-owned facilities and land, as well as College-sponsored activities. The College has limited control of what individuals bring onto campus or what faculty, staff, and students consume off-campus, but will inform and promote resource stewardship and Zero Waste principles.

Off-campus College activities will follow Zero Waste principles, but the College also acknowledges its interconnectedness to the global economy and local communities and recognizes the limits of local infrastructure and customs.

5. GOAL

This policy sets a goal of 90% diversion of discarded materials by 2025 based on the weight of the College's discarded resources in 2015. The interim goal is 70% diversion by 2020, with additional efforts to reach 100% diversion beyond 2025 as further commitment, infrastructure, and knowledge advance.

6. ACTION

College of the Atlantic commits to taking the following steps in pursuit of diverting 90% of campus-associated discarded materials from landfill and incineration by 2025:

- Follow the Zero Waste business principles developed by the Zero Waste International Alliance.⁶
- Establish a Zero Waste culture on campus by integrating it into the curriculum and other activities on campus, so members of the campus community will leave as Zero Waste leaders.

6.1. Infrastructure:

While needs vary among buildings and facilities, this policy shall be applied, at the minimum, in the following ways to new and existing buildings:

- Development of infrastructure will be grounded in Material Management and Zero Waste principles.
- COA's outdoor campus will remain a carry-in-carry-out landscape without any public "trash" receptacles. Access to discarded resource stations will at all times be available to guests.

⁶ZW Business Principles." *Zero Waste International Alliance*. <http://zwia.org/standards/zw-business-principles/>

- All College-owned buildings must have recycling and composting receptacles, signage, and discarded resource information; no recycling and composting receptacles should be farther than the closest bathroom.
- Within College-owned buildings, no single non-diverted “trash” receptacle may exist without accompanying composting and recycling receptacles, and signage of where to find other receptacles.
- All kitchens must have composting and recycling receptacles.
- The campus must dedicate a space for reuse, repair, and storage of discarded resources.
- All individual offices and dormitory bedrooms are private spaces in which the policy infrastructure does not apply.

6.2. Management:

Building a Zero Waste culture necessitates reduced consumption and disposal, sustainable purchasing, analyses of entire material lifecycles, encouragement of extended producer responsibility, material reuse, product repair, and disposal diversion. COA shall, at a minimum, continue at the 2016 level of discarded resource and material management efforts such as facilitating move-in and move-out support for each academic year and having compost available across campus for all community members. Each office and facility will take responsibility in developing its respective commitments to the above.

6.3. Planning:

A framework for discarded resource and material management will be created by the Administrative Dean and Director of Buildings and Grounds in collaboration with staff, students, and faculty. The framework will guide the efforts of each office and facility, as well as the faculty and student body, toward implementing this policy and meeting its goals. COA’s strategic planning efforts, both the campus plan and institutional plan, must comply with the Discarded Resource and Material Management Policy. Any new building space or renovation to existing spaces must follow the Sustainable Building Policy Zero Waste specifications. Specifically, building plans must align with reduction goals and diversion rates.

6.4. Assessment:

COA will track its Material Management as well as progress on goals and actions laid out in this policy by:

- Conducting a yearly audit and data collection of discarded materials, following standards of privacy and hygiene;
- Making this policy and subsequent progress reports available to the public;
- Revising this policy every three years.

6.5. Reporting:

The reporting on this policy will be a collaborative effort among students, staff, and faculty, but will be under the ultimate responsibility of the College President. COA will collect

and report on the weight of non-diverted and diverted discarded materials. There should be appropriate categorization of these discarded materials, such as: (1) hazardous materials, (2) building renovation debris, (3) recyclables, (4) donated materials, (5) organic materials, (6) discarded electronics, and (7) universal goods.

The Director of Buildings and Grounds will report data relating to COA's discarded resource and material management practices, policy, and data to the Association for the Advancement in Higher Education (AASHE) every year using the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Reporting System (STARS) or an equivalent standardized tracking tool. The Administrative Dean, Director of Buildings and Grounds, CPBC, Director of Energy Education and Management, and other staff working on sustainability issues, as appropriate, will report policy concerns and progress to CCS every year. In addition to the AASHE reporting, CCS will report every three years to ACM/Steering as part of the review of the policy, stating the progress toward Zero Waste and explaining any updates to this policy.

7. RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

The president of the College is the ultimate responsible party of implementing and updating this policy with specific areas of responsibility toward staff and governance committees on campus:

- The Administrative Dean is responsible for supervising the policy and reporting compliance to the COA community, as well as creating the Discarded Resource and Material Management Framework.
 - The Director of Buildings and Grounds is responsible for daily operations, discarded resource management at school events, and data collection. The Director is responsible for providing information on Zero Waste procedures to community members. The Director is also responsible for organizing a yearly Discarded Resources Orientation for students, staff, and faculty which will cover how the Material Management and Zero Waste systems work at COA.
 - Campus Committee for Sustainability (CCS) is responsible for reviewing policy and campus-wide education. In accordance with the Earth Day Policy, CCS is responsible for sponsoring an annual Earth Day information session to give an update on the status of community material management. This includes working with administrators on the development of policies related to sustainable material management, and advising, meeting with, and being a resource for individual community members and groups engaging in material management and discarded resource disposal.
 - Campus Planning and Building Committee (CPBC) is responsible for the planning and implementation of discarded resource infrastructure.
 - Summer Programs is responsible for educating summer guests and staff about the policy's implications on their activities on campus, as well as supporting with adequate infrastructure and management.
 - Student Life is responsible for informing and following this policy within student activities.
 - The Buildings and Grounds Discarded Resources Work-Study staff will play a supporting role in the fulfillment of all the aforementioned responsibilities.
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