



# Sustainability Initiatives at the University of Texas

## Division of Housing & Food Service

### Recycling and Resource Conservation

DHFS strives to first reduce the resources we use, encourage the reuse of materials and recycle as much as possible. Student residents have access to in-room recycling and staff are provided with office and break room recycling. Materials are diverted from all DHFS dining locations through recycling and composting.

- Cardboard, paper, aluminum, steel and plastic are recycled in all DHFS residence halls, offices, and kitchens. This has amounted to over 1120 Tons of recyclable material diverted from the landfill.
- Appliances from the graduate apartments are salvaged.
- All register tape used in our retail locations is made of 100% recycled paper.
- Packaging waste is decreased through bulk purchasing of dish machine chemicals and other items.
- All tree limbs at the University apartments are diverted from the landfill by chipping them into mulch that is used in landscape areas.
- All carpet in DHFS facilities is recycled as it is replaced and contains recycled content. Carpet tiles are used to allow for decreased waste when renovations are needed. From 2006 through 2011, we have purchased 19,787 square yards of climate neutral Cool Carpet from InterfaceFLOR, saving the equivalent of 312 tons of greenhouse gas emissions.
- When replaced, old computer equipment is recycled, sold or donated to schools.
- The Campus Environmental Center (CEC) and other local charities collect used, unwanted items from students during move out. They are then donated or sold in a garage sale that supports the CEC.
- E-waste recycling is available at 24 hour desks of the residence halls.
- Our recruitment brochures are printed on Reincarnation Matte paper (FSC), made with 100% recycled fiber and 60% post-consumer waste, processed chlorine free, designated Ancient Forest Friendly and manufactured with electricity that is offset with Green-eR certified renewable energy certificates.
- Remote refrigeration compressor racks have been installed in all dining locations to consolidate the compressors for all refrigeration units into one unit which will decrease the air conditioning need to offset the heat generated from the compressors. These refrigeration units will now cool from the chilled water running through our buildings for air conditioning and will significantly reduce the energy usage in these dining areas.
- New dish machines in Jester and Kinsolving are Energy Star rated and also use significantly less water than the previous machines.
- When able, office printer defaults are set for double-sided printing.
- All residents since Fall 2011 have been given a reusable bottle for discounted soda and tea refills in our retail dining locations.
- DHFS' Administrative office has significantly reduced paper usage by changing housing reservations, billing, newsletters and report generation to electronic forms. All together, these changes save an estimated 300,000 sheets of paper per year.
- DHFS continually retrofits appliances and light fixtures during all renovations and has converted all T12 fixtures to T8.
- Instant hot water generators have been installed in Moore Hill, Blanton, Prather, and Kinsolving residence halls. Energy is saved by not having to keep the water in the storage tanks hot.
- Vending machines use 50% less electricity than typical machines by changing the type of compressor and turning off the lights in the machine.
- Energy conserving occupancy sensor light switches are installed in residence hall and office common areas.

- Air handlers in many residence halls have been updated to more efficient units.
- Resident showerheads and sink faucets have low water use aerators.
- New toilets are low water use models, which require only 1.6 gallons of water compared to 3.5 gallons.
- Dish machines use low-flow rinse nozzles to reduce water usage.
- Rain Sensors on irrigation controllers turn off the watering programs after a rain.
- Renovated landscapes at many residence halls utilize low water use plant materials and also control erosion and water runoff.
- Energy Star rated TV's have been purchased for some residence halls, saving 44% of the energy used in a comparable TV.
- All campus laundry machines have been upgraded to Energy Star, front loading, water conserving models. The washing machines use less water and also spin out more water so the dryers use less energy to dry clothes, saving an estimated 42% total energy use over older models. DHFS received a \$45,000 rebate from the City of Austin for installing these energy and water efficient appliances and an ICI Water Efficiency Achievement (WEA) Award.
- All residence hall MicroFridges are now Energy Star rated models, saving an estimated \$5,000 per month in electricity use.
- Energy Star rated central heat/ac units have been installed at the Gateway and Colorado Apartments.

### Sustainable Food Service

All DHFS kitchens and dining facilities are recycling and composting as well as increasing the amount of local and sustainably produced foods in the dining facilities. A small amount of food is also produced on campus and the Kinsolving Courtyard and Concho Community Gardens.

- An herb and vegetable garden has been planted in the dining room courtyard of Kinsolving Dining Hall. Renovations in summer 2011 have tripled the size of the garden and include a rainwater collection system. Produce from this garden is served across all DHFS locations.
- DHFS maintains three large plots at the UT/ Concho Community Garden. Produce from this garden is served across all DHFS locations.
- DHFS is currently working with UT Gardens on the development of the UT Micro Farm that will source directly to DHFS kitchens.
- Recycle and compost stations are located at all DHFS dining locations. These units are made from 100% recycled plastic milk jugs.
- All pre- and post-consumer food scraps and compostable serviceware items are now being commercially composted at Texas Disposal Systems. This has diverted over 530 tons of waste from the landfill.
- DHFS is currently buying back compost from TDS to use in our garden projects.
- Kitchen exhaust hoods are on timers to automatically shut down when not in use and are cleaned with a pollution-free, non-toxic cleaning system.
- If plastic bags are needed, DHFS provides biodegradable plastic bags for customers at locations where to-go items are available.
- Reusable coffee, soda and water containers are sold and promoted with discounts at retail outlets.
- Dining facilities use 100% recycled napkins and paper towels. Napkin dispensers are designed to create minimal usage of paper products.
- Reusable shopping totes are available at all DHFS markets and can be used for a discount after 5pm.
- The Eco2Go reusable takeout container program has been implemented in all DHFS retail dining locations, allowing customers to decrease waste and save 5% on their meal.
- Eco-2-Go continues to grow and help keep waste out of the landfill. From 2011-2012 there were over 60,000 transactions
- Jester 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor and Kinsolving Dining Halls are Tray Free as of Fall 2009. As a result, there has been a 48% decrease in post-consumer waste since Spring 2007.
- Food waste is pulped to reduce waste volume by 85%.
- Fair Trade coffee is sold in all retail dining locations.
- All fish and seafood is purchased according to Marine Stewardship Council guidelines.
- Used cooking oil is recycled into biodiesel.

- Bi-annual Harvest Dinners feature foods grown and produced within 150 miles of UT.
- Local produce is purchased on a weekly basis through the Farm Direct program of the Sustainable Food Center.
- DHFS C-stores provide many organic, vegetarian and vegan food items daily.
- Prepared food leftovers that are not repurposed on campus are donated to a local soup kitchen.
- Local, Texas food items are featured for a full week during the specific weeks.
- New dish machines in Jester and Kinsolving are Energy Star rated and also use significantly less water than the previous machines.
- All residents since Fall 2011 have been given a reusable bottle for discounted soda and tea refills in our retail dining locations.
- Dish machines use low-flow rinse nozzles to reduce water usage.

## Sustainable Living Environments

Indoor air quality, efficiency, material sourcing, natural lighting and recycled content are a few of the many factors considered for renovations, construction, and procedural changes.

- Microfiber cleaning systems have been implemented in all residence halls to decrease chemical and water use.
- Green Seal certified cleaning chemicals are now being used in the residence halls.
- Natural lighting and adjustable light levels are used to minimize the need for artificial lighting.
- Existing building materials and construction are reused when possible.
- When new building materials are required, items containing recycled content such as wall sheathing and flooring are utilized.
- Regionally manufactured materials such as wall sheathing and laminate products are used when available.
- Rapidly renewable materials such as wood and rubber are used when possible.
- Low VOC products are utilized to support good indoor air quality.
- Mechanical systems are used to increase energy performance.
- Water is conserved through water efficient plumbing products.
- Salvaging and recycling of construction material waste is encouraged.
- Construction site impact is minimized by controlling erosion, sedimentation and storm water runoff.
- Existing trees are preserved when possible.
- Building envelopes and systems are built to maximize energy performance, meeting ASHRAE 90.1 and the State Energy Code.
- Energy efficiency is improved by utilizing the existing campus central plant, using Total Energy Heat Recovery Wheels to recover energy from exhaust air, low pressure loss duct systems, high efficiency motors and variable speed control pumps.
- HVAC equipment uses no CFC refrigerants, water condensate is reused and carbon dioxide monitoring sensors are installed.
- DHFS is committed to employing the most efficient bulbs as appropriate to the lighting application they are used for.
- Occupancy sensors are added to many common rooms to decrease light usage when it is unnecessary.
- Trash collection areas are designed for recyclable collection.
- The majority of interior wall structures, existing millwork, doors, light fixtures and furnishings are reused when possible.
- Lighting and air temperature controls are added in offices to encourage reduced energy consumption when not needed, and to provide increased user control.
- New and existing mechanical units are tested & balanced to optimize performance.
- Compliance with ASHRAE 62 code for acceptable indoor air quality requirements, and ASHRAE 55 code, providing thermally comfortable environments that support the productivity and well-being of building occupants.
- LEED Accredited Professionals are integrated into the project team when possible.
- Water efficient toilets, shower heads and faucets are installed in all restrooms.
- Tile carpeting is used to reduce the amount of construction waste.

## Education, Outreach and Policy

As part of an institution of higher learning, DHFS strives to provide our residents with a living and learning environment. Sustainability events and outreach campaigns help to educate the students about the sustainability initiatives undertaken at DHFS and to provide them with the tools to make sustainable living choices after they leave the residence halls.

- DHFS has passed the Bottled and Canned Beverage Policy, also known as BYOV or Bring Your Own Vessel. The policy reads: In support of the University commitment to sustainability, beverages purchased from Division of Housing and Food Service (DHFS) funds for DHFS sponsored meetings, programs and events are served from bulk containers such as 1 to 5 gallon air voids. Residence hall meeting and event participants are expected to provide their own drinking vessels. Beverages in individual containers such as bottled water, bottled juices, and cans of soda are not provided from DHFS funds.
- DHFS employs a full-time Environmental Specialist to advise and coordinate sustainability projects and initiatives.
- Students are required to use compact fluorescent bulbs for lighting in their rooms.
- A 100 plus years old windmill and educational display entitled, "Harnessing the Wind," is located in Jester Center Residence Hall to educate students about the history of windmills in Texas and our alternative energy/wind power capabilities.
- The DHFS Green Team consists of staff and students who meet monthly to develop and promote sustainability initiatives.
- Community gardens are maintained for use by residents at the DHFS graduate apartment complexes.
- DHFS Student Focus Groups discuss topics ranging from vegetarian dining options, to food waste, to recycling.
- A Student intern works with the DHFS Environmental Specialist each semester to learn about sustainable business practices in housing and food service operations.
- Staff inspect resident rooms to make sure students have turned off and/or unplugged computers and appliances for the holiday break.
- DHFS participates in Earth Day, Campus Sustainability Day, the PMCS Sustainability Fair and the annual UT Sustainability Symposium.
- Table tents, newsletters, videos and signage educate students about sustainability issues.
- DHFS works with Student Government, the University Residence Hall Association, and the Campus Environmental Center to raise student awareness and involvement.

## Recognition

DHFS strives to be a sustainable organization and has been recognized by various local and national organizations.

- Keep Austin Beautiful Awards – Runner up in Recycling and Waste Diversion (2011)
- Sustainability Tracking Assessment & Rating System (STARS) – UT Austin received a Silver rating (2011)
- The College Sustainability Report Card – Received an 'A' in Food & Recycling (2010)
- SWACUHO Frank Cloud Award – Going Green, Sustainability (2009)
- ICI Water Efficiency Achievement (WEA) Award (2008)