



People and Nature: Our Future is in the Balance

National Wildlife Federation

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Clemson University
Clemson, South Carolina
Spring 2002, Waste Management
“Lighten Your Load” Student Move-Out Recycle Program

BACKGROUND

Campus Profile

Clemson is a public land-grant and research university located in a rural area in the northwest corner of South Carolina. It has an enrollment of approximately 17,000 students, served by approximately 1,200 faculty and 4,500 staff. Bachelors through Ph.D. degrees are offered in a number of disciplines. The University emphasizes agriculture, architecture, business, education, engineering, natural resources, science and technology.

Group Profile

The project was organized by the staffs of University Housing in collaboration with Facilities Management, with cooperation from students.

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GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Short-Term Goals

The goals of the project were to reduce the amount of material landfilled at the end of the school year as students moved out of residence halls, to put usable materials into the hands of local charities and to help students understand that some of their old belongings can be recycled instead of being trashed.

Long-Term Goals

Same as above, with decreases in the amount of usable material landfilled in each succeeding year and continued support for a more sustainable environment at the university.

Accomplishments

Approximately 11,500 pounds of food, clothing, wooden loft materials and household items were donated by students and distributed to the Salvation Army, Clemson Community Care and Habitat for Humanity. This is the second year of the program, with a significant improvement over last year's collections. Improvements are due to promotional and operational changes to heighten the students' awareness of the program and make it more convenient for students to participate.

**Clemson University
Lighten the Load 2002**

Food:	3,500 lbs
Clothes:	6,500 lbs
Lofts:	700 lbs
Household Items	800 lbs
Total	11,500 lbs

Challenges and Responses

As is always the case, spreading the word and encouraging/enforcing cooperation were significant challenges. As the program becomes institutionalized, students will become more used to the routine, and proper disposition of unwanted but usable materials will become ingrained. On a more profound level, convincing students not to even think about discarding new or nearly new items is a huge challenge in this age of "affluenza."

ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

Stakeholder Engagement

President Barker made his support for the initiative clear from the beginning. This made it easy to secure support from key personnel in Housing and Facilities Management (who would have been supportive regardless). Support from community agencies was also crucial to success. Graduate student Nick Cina from Monterey, CA, coordinated the program as his practicum for his counseling and guidance major, which was a significant help as well.

Funding and Staffing

Although final figures are not available, the project did cost the university money to run. However, personnel were redirected to cover the operational needs of the program rather than adding staff to provide for the additional work that was involved. The educational, humanitarian and environmental impacts of the program far outweigh the additional cost.

OUTREACH, EDUCATION AND PRESS

Press releases were sent to local media outlets, generating television coverage, as well as newspaper coverage. It is expected that other printed coverage will follow.

REVIEW AND REPORTING

The staffs of Housing and Facilities Management will continue to assess the project, planning improvements for next year. An extensive evaluation process was undertaken by Housing.

CLOSING REMARKS

Program coordinator Nick Cina said that clothing is the most commonly donated item but that he has seen students give away everything from television sets to brand-new sleeping bags. "When you have more than 6,500 people living on campus, it creates a lot of waste when they leave," Cina said.

