



0209J Stamp Student Union
College Park, MD 20740
omgutin@terpmail.umd.edu

Dear Ms. Grandner,

The SGA Student Sustainability Committee recently concluded its “What Will You(MD) Do?” Sustainability Pledge that got students all across campus to commit to environmentally friendly personal behaviors for a month. To commemorate the achievement of participants, we asked students to submit essays about why they signed up for the pledge, why sustainability is important to them, and what specific suggestions they had for sustainable changes they’d like to see on campus. The committee selected 18 to include in a book, *Student Essays, Opinions, and Other Insights on a Sustainable UMD*. You can see the e-book at this link: <http://tinyurl.com/UMDstudentsustainability>

It is important to note that there were several recurring suggestions throughout all of the submitted essays, with one specifically that we would like to bring to your attention. A significant number of students supported expanding composting from the diners and Stamp into the residence halls. One issue that was identified in particular was that a majority of the to-go containers are compostable, though there is no compost in the dorms so these containers end up being thrown away. Beyond this reason, students were generally very excited and eager to bring composting to the residence halls in order to reduce our campus waste stream.

We understand that this is a multifaceted, complicated request and will require cooperation between Resident Life, Residential Facilities, and Facilities Management. Though, because there is such strong student interest in this goal, and such a great potential for environmental benefit, we believe it is important to begin planning for how to achieve this goal within the next few years. **As such, we would like to propose a one-year pilot program of composting in a few residence halls for the 2015 – 2016 academic year.**

A pilot program, tested for a year in several different kinds of residence halls could provide essential practice and insight into full-scale implementation later on. For example, it could be brought to one dorm on North Campus, one dorm on South Campus, and perhaps one of the Commons. This would show whether underclassmen or upperclassmen are more receptive to the idea of such a program, and whether it would be more successful in a high-rise style dorm or a smaller dorm. One possibility in deciding which dorm(s) to implement this pilot program is to choose a hall that has environmentally conscious residents. For instance, the students in Centreville who participate in the Science and Global Change, or Environment, Technology and Economy scholars programs may be very eager to pioneer a composting program.

However the program would be implemented, it should be done in a way that both receives student input and garners campus-wide attention. Advertising the pilot in a way that creates excitement among the students would be advantageous. For instance, Resident Life could host a competition between dorms to have their hall be selected as the first on campus to include compost bins. Additionally, to maximize student input on this idea, Resident Life could conduct a survey in the upcoming academic year to gauge overall student opinions, concerns, etc.

Again, we realize that this is a complicated issue and thus would love to hear your response to what we have stated in this letter, and to learn of any discussions that Resident Life has already had regarding this initiative. We would be available to meet during the summer to discuss this topic if you're willing. We look forward to hearing from you and to working with you towards this goal.

Sincerely,

Ori Gutin
Director of Sustainability

Annie Rice
Assistant Director of Sustainability



CC: Coordinator of University Recycling and Solid Waste Program, Bill Guididas
Director of Office of Sustainability, Scott Lupin
Director of Dining Services, Colleen Wright-Riva
Executive Administrative Assistant to Director of Resident Life, Janet Archer