Maryland Day Sustainability Suggestions – UMD SGA

Maryland Day serves as an opportunity to open our incredible campus to 80,000 guests, including student families, prospective students, alumni and community members. On this day we have the opportunity to show these visitors the vast sustainability efforts of our campus and to demonstrate that it is integral to our university's activities. We are already doing a lot for sustainability on Maryland Day, but there is still a much more that can be accomplished. In this document I have outlined 5 specific issues that the SGA Sustainability Committee has identified within Maryland Day, and possible solutions to each one.

- 1. **Issue:** Roughly 5,000 volunteers received lunches for Maryland Day, and they all received a sandwich wrapped in plastic along with a plastic single use water bottle. This creates an unnecessary amount of waste.
 - a. **Solution:** Buffet lunches. For 2 hours on Maryland Day, open up a buffet lunch in a specific location where volunteers can come and dine without having to use single use plastic products.
- 2. **Issue:** We are already doing a great deal in regards to sustainability on Maryland Day, but we are not sufficiently advertising this message
 - a. Solutions:
 - i. Information on MD Day website about sustainability efforts
 - ii. Clear signage next to water filling stations and all waste sort stations explaining why we have them and why they are important
 - iii. Include information regarding sustainability in the printedpaper programs
 - iv. Sustainability information at every station/table
- 3. **Issue:** Giveaways from the different stations/tables at Maryland Day are excessive and create a great deal of waste, as many of these giveaways end up being thrown away later on.
 - a. Solutions:
 - i. When considering a giveaway, ask the following questions:
 - 1. Is it functional?
 - 2. Is it durable?
 - 3. Is it in any way related to the message your office/dept is trying to send? Will it teach people something?
 - 4. Is it fun and engaging over time? Will people want to use it or just stash it in a drawer? These sorts of products can be more expensive.

- 5. Is it made of renewable/more sustainable materials? These sorts of products can be more expensive too.
- ii. Consider raffles instead of giveaways. This would allow a higher quality prize to be given away and would incentivize greater participation in the booth's activities.
- iii. Instead of giveaway, consider more interactive exciting activities to garner interest
- **4. Issue:** Waste created through distribution of printed programs and the sale of single use plastic water bottles.
 - a. Solution:
 - **i.** Printed programs:
 - 1. Depend on website more, so use less programs
 - 2. Print on lighter weight paper
 - **3.** Print on 100% recycled paper
 - **ii.** Water bottle sales
 - 1. Increase the number of water filling stations around campus with compostable cups
 - **2.** Encourage the sale of the new UMD reusable water bottles
 - **3.** Encourage attendees to bring their own reusable water bottles through website advertisement
 - **4.** Have all food sales locations have water filling stations and ask customers if they'd prefer a compostable cup with water, or if they'd like their reusable water bottle filled.
- **5. Issue:** Each of the 5,000 volunteers at Maryland Day receives a cotton tshirt. Unfortunately cotton is one of the most notably unsustainable crops to grow. Specifically, cotton is known as a very "thirsty" crop, and uses a disproportionate amount of water to produce a single cotton t-shirt.
 - **a. Solution:** Consider more sustainable alternative materials for the t-shirts, such as organic cotton, bamboo, hemp, or recycled plastics.