



Middlebury College

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Dear STARS,

I am writing to support the innovation credit that Middlebury College is seeking for its Green Panther Challenge program which engages all the college's athletics teams and fans at high attendance sports events in sustainability actions. The program is unique particularly for the extent to which members of athletic teams attend sports events to encourage and interact with fans in pro environmental behaviors. Additionally, each athletic team at Middlebury is encouraged to select two Sustainability Liaisons to represent the team and be responsible for assuring that the teams adopt, practice and report new sustainability measures they carry out during the season. Every team is encouraged to participate and adopt goals for themselves related to a theme for the year.

This past year's theme was waste, recycling and composting. Working with the College's Office of Sustainability Integration and with Facilities Services athletes attended football, and men's and women's hockey games staffed stations around the stadiums to help fans properly recycle and compost their wastes. The Facilities staff and the Office of Sustainability Integration established baseline sorting rates at prior events with a goal of significantly improving fan recycling rates and reinforcing such behavior with accolades and reinforcement for properly sorting. We saw significant increases in the percentages of properly sorted materials in the bins at these games thus easing the burden on our facilities staff and giving fans another point of pride for their sports participation.

We have also teamed up to implement new ideas from our department staff to raise the bar. This past year we designed and equipped our team travel buses with kits that were placed around the buses to make it easier for traveling teams to properly sort their wastes as they went to and from away games. This year we will be standardizing the process. Our team sustainability liaisons will work with our sustainability office and facilities services to assemble kits and stations for all away travel on buses to minimize waste and recycle and compost all their waste.

I do not know of any other similar efforts in our athletic conference and believe that this program can be considered innovative for STARS purposes.

Sincerely,

Erin Quinn