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Molly Bressers
Program and Outreach Coordinator
Campus Sustainability Office
Portland State University

Dear Ms. Bressers,

Having spent nearly two decades in the waste management field, I can definitely affirm that Portland State University's Mug Runners is indeed an innovative and effective waste reduction program. As a student-originated initiative, PSU's Mug Runners is also an excellent example of how students can identify a dilemma on campus and design a solution by building partnerships and organizing volunteers to meet the challenge. The Mug Runners program was conceived to rescue abandoned water bottles and coffee mugs that are left in holding bins in campus computer labs. Student volunteers collect, sanitize, sticker, and redistribute the rescued containers through the university's Reuse Room. Prior to the program, the unclaimed containers were being thrown out.

From October 2013 to June 2014, Mug Runners has prevented 369 containers from being sent to the landfill. Considering that the majority of these containers were designed for years of use, unlike single-use, disposal mugs and cups, the overall impact of the Mug Runners in one year's time is astounding. The program is quite unique to Portland State, however, representatives from Mug Runners have done an amazing job throughout the year speaking about the program at conferences and workshops in the hopes of inspiring similar projects at other universities.

In addition, the Mug Runners program aligns with the material management goals outlined in the university's Climate Action Plan. The Mug Runners program is one small step closer to PSU's goal of achieving zero waste.

Sincerely,

Anthony D. Hair
Waste Management Coordinator
Portland State University