EcoReps Coordinator Annual Report 2018-19

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During the Fall 2018 semester, my primary projects consisted of designing and ordering uniforms for the EcoReps and creating a newsletter for students interested in becoming involved with the program. For our uniforms, I created a spreadsheet to compare the costs of ordering different styles of clothes from different companies, including local businesses such as Yooper Shirts as well as national companies like Custom Ink. Once I had designed a sufficient variety of shirts, vests, and jackets, I had the EcoReps vote for their favorite style. We ultimately decided on forest green fleece vests from Getz’s with our logo and “Northern Michigan University” embroidered on it. Before I could place the order, I drafted a budget proposal and requested approval from Christine Greer. Once she passed the budget, I created a second spreadsheet of clothing sizes and asked members of both EcoReps and the Sustainability Advisory Committee for their orders. In total, I ordered 31 vests, for Sustainability Advisory Council members and 27 for the EcoReps including myself and Olivia. While the order was successful, there were several problems along the way. When I originally placed the order with Getz’s, there was a miscommunication regarding what I wanted embroidered on our vests. Over the phone I requested that in addition to embroidering our logo on the vests we needed “Northern Michigan University” embroidered on them as well, but the vendor I was speaking with didn’t hear me. Later, the vests were delivered with only our logo on them, so I had to drop them off with Marquette Embroidery and pay an additional fee for “Northern Michigan University” to be added. Our total expenditure amounted to $1,350.88. In addition to the embroidery, another way the order can go more smoothly next year would be to order the male and female styles of the vests. When we received our order of unisex style vests, we realized that the sizing was different and were larger than expected, leading to a less comfortable fit. Even with some struggles, the vests were successful in allowing EcoReps to be identifiable at our events so our attendees knew who to approach if they had questions or wanted more information.

I also started our EcoReps interest newsletter last semester. I frequently corresponded with students interested in joining the EcoReps and thought a more effective mode of communication would lead to more involvement and interest in the program. On Canva, a graphic design website, I developed a newsletter with sections dedicated to explaining what the EcoReps program is and how to get in touch with us, as well as what upcoming events students can attend, tips for living sustainably, and in the Winter semester information on how to apply to join. Throughout the year, our mailing list grew to 347 students, several of whom applied and were accepted into the program in April.

In the Winter 2019 semester, my main projects included planning the annual Zero Waste Game and designing and ordering EcoReps promotional stainless steel straws. In the Fall semester I agreed to take the lead in coordinating the Zero Waste Game and began attending meetings with Sustainability Advisory Council members, as well as Waste Management and Dining Services. We agreed to host the event at the Friday, February 1st hockey game versus Bowling Green. I worked with Waste Management to determine the number and placement of waste sorting stations throughout the Berry Events Center, which helped determine the ideal number of volunteers for each shift. Eight sorting stations were decided upon with one information table to be run by myself and Olivia. Our goal was to have two volunteers per station per shift, each shift running from 6:30-8:30pm and 8:30-10:30pm respectively. When I filled out our Skillbuilder registration form for the volunteers, I set the maximum number of volunteers to 28 people in accordance with the registration forms for last year’s event. At the event, we had roughly 33 people attend, although not everyone stayed for both shifts. In addition to organizing volunteers and waste stations, I worked with Marina Dupler in Dining Services to print our “10 Ways to Go Green” fliers, as well as worked on promotional materials. I created a Facebook event, worked with Promotional Services to design a poster, and publicized the event through the EcoReps newsletter. I also was interviewed by TV6, the Mining Journal, and the North Wind in the weeks leading up to the event. After the event, Waste Management sent me a spreadsheet with the results of the Zero Waste Game, which I also shared with the news outlets interested in our results. I have included the chart below.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Material** | **Pounds** | **Tons** | **Percentage** |
| Rigid | 55 | 0.027 | 26.00% |
| Fiber | 10 | 0.005 | 5.00% |
| Compost | 132 | 0.066 | 62.00% |
| Waste | 15 | 0.0075 | 7.00% |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Total** | 212 | 0.11 | 100.00% |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Diversion Rate** |  |  |  |
| Total Material | 212 lbs |  |  |
| Recycle/Compost | 197 lbs |  |  |
| % Landfill Diversion | 93% |  |  |

In order to improve the Zero Waste Game, I would recommend publicizing the event earlier, and creating a better incentive to motivate students to volunteer, especially for the second shift. For example, a gift bag using a tote bag screen printed with the EcoReps logo filled with gifts such as an EcoReps branded straw kit, reusable water bottle, and other similar reusable promotional materials.

This semester I did order reusable stainless steel straws for EcoReps to use as promotional materials, participation incentives, and for each of the graduating EcoReps as well as a welcome gift for the new cohort. To order the straws, I followed the same strategy I used to order the EcoReps vests. First, I worked with Promotional Services to develop a vector image of our logo with our email and “Northern Michigan University” that would be able to be engraved onto a straw. I then compiled a spreadsheet with the different options and quotes from various promotional product companies. Jon, Olivia, and I all agreed on an option offered by Eco Promotional Products, Inc. that included a pouch and cleaning wand for as well as a straw. I placed an order for 500, costing a total of $1,647.40.

Although those were the largest projects I worked on, I also assisted Olivia and the interns with their projects. I had one on one meetings with Megan and Marley to help them plan their workshops and events, and frequently went shopping with Megan for products she and her committee needed for their workshops. I also helped design posters for different activities, corresponded with interested students and reporters, and helped connect people interested in cohosting events with the EcoReps with the appropriate committee for their event.