

Eco-Representative FY16 Program Summary

Introduction

This Fiscal Year 2016 (FY16) summary provides an overview, summary statistics, successes and challenges of Oregon State University's Eco-Representatives (Eco-Reps) program. In years past the OSU Sustainability Office has provided a more detailed program report for each year of Eco-Reps operation. The format for FY16 will be a more concise format that references information specific to one year, while providing links to previous reports. For a more detailed program background and purpose, please see the [FY15 Program Report](#). The FY15 report contains information specific to program purpose, scope and history.

Eco-Rep Scope of Work

While supervision and primary program support comes from the OSU Sustainability Office, the Eco-Reps program is a partnership between Campus Recycling, University Housing and Dining Services, the Student Sustainability Initiative and the Sustainability Office. Together, these stakeholders developed the Eco-Rep position description and provide ongoing funding to support the program. A brief description of the Eco-Rep position is below:

Eco-Reps are responsible for advancing and institutionalizing a culture of sustainability in the residence halls in which they live. Overall, this position is responsible for (1) educating residents about sustainable lifestyles and resources, (2) assisting with marketing and outreach efforts for OSU sustainability programs, and (3) planning and executing sustainability-focused events.

For FY16, five halls had paid Eco-Reps: McNary, Poling, Sackett, West and Wilson. These halls were selected based the most-qualified applicants from an applicant pool that spanned all residence halls.

A work plan document is updated each year and serves as a general guide for the positions. It includes a list of events, campaigns, programs and projects that Eco-Reps support over the academic year. The FY16 Work Plan document is attached to the end of this summary.

Orientation, Training and Support

Compared to previous years, Eco-Rep training and orientation was spread to a greater extent throughout the year. The Eco-Rep Lesson Book, created and maintained by the Sustainability Office exclusively for the Eco-Reps program, serves as the primary capacity building resource. It is a compilation of articles, videos and other material from vetted sustainability sources. The lesson book provides an introduction to sustainability principles and aligns subject matter within the context of Oregon State University so that Eco-Reps are equipped with information, facts and the vocabulary to communicate effectively. Eco-Reps repeatedly indicate how key the Lesson Book is in their work, and report increasing satisfaction with its contents, as the Sustainability Office, Campus Recycling and SSI have attempted to broaden and diversify the subject matter. Eco-Reps each year provide valuable feedback that informs the next year's Lesson Book version.

Additional support in FY16 and in years past has come Eco-Rep "alumni" who, as continuing OSU students, volunteer their time to come to a few meetings to support their successors. At the end of

each year, it is common for Eco-Reps to speak passionately about wanting to see the program continue and improve, and specifically offer to come to future meetings to help orient newcomers. Other orientation activities include recycling how-to training, warehouse tours, attending SSI and Sustainability Office team meetings/social gatherings and other activities.

Budget and Wages

The budget and actual wage expenses for FY16 wages are below.

Department	FY16 Budgeted	% cost share	FY16 Actual
Sustainability Office	\$821.50	14%	\$622.14
Pepsi Sustainability Fund, via Campus Recycling	\$3,141.90	52%	\$2,310.79
UHDS	\$1,043.25	17%	\$755.45
SSI	\$1,043.25	17%	\$755.45
Total	\$6,050		\$4,443.83

Table 2. Budget and Wage Expense, FY16

Eco-Reps are compensated at minimum wage, and able to accomplish a surprising amount with very few hours. Eco-Rep average hours worked per week in FY16 varied from person to person, as it has in past years, with a low of 1.3 hrs./week to a high of 5.3 hrs./week. FY16 included approximately 27 weeks of paid work, contrasted with 23 weeks for FY15. An ambitious hiring timeline allowed for an earlier start for FY16, but no fewer applications; there were 14 applicants for FY16 and 13 applicants for FY15. The trend in average hours worked per week is shown in the chart below.

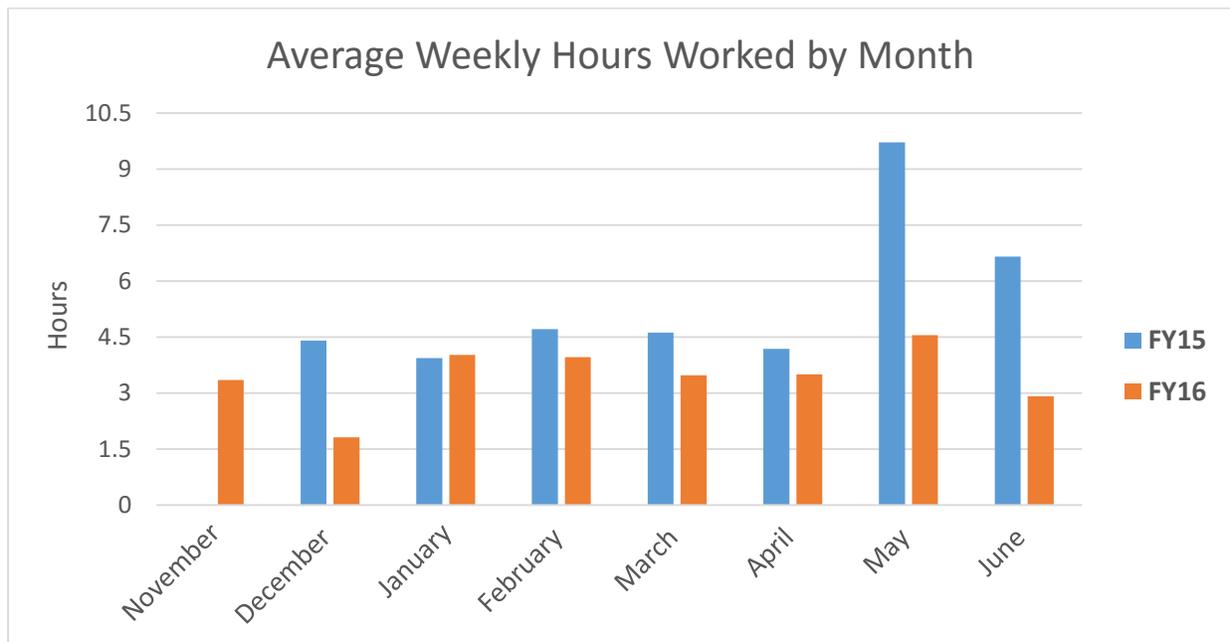


Figure 1. Average (per Eco-Rep) Hours Worked per Week by Month, FY15-FY16

In addition to the actual wage expense, printing, supplies and miscellaneous other materials were provided at each department’s discretion. During the academic year, other staff and faculty support for

the program included training; one on one consultation, coaching and problem solving; meeting attendance; payroll and hiring. Tasks typically conducted in the summer include budgeting, program planning, assessment, reporting and recruitment.

Outcomes, Successes and Challenges

Outreach Totals and Methods

Peer to peer outreach is a core element of Eco-Rep work. While some outreach methods vary from Rep to Rep, a large core of tactics are standard and required for all Eco-Reps. Communication vehicles include “Eco-Rep boards,” personalized door markers, social media presence (particularly Facebook), poster, tabling, flyering, door to door contact, impromptu interaction with fellow residents, business cards, nametags and attendance at hall staff and hall council meetings.

The chart below shows the count of the six most frequently reported types of constituent contact between the two years for which data are available. For a more detailed discussion of outreach methods, please see the relevant section of the [FY15 Report](#).

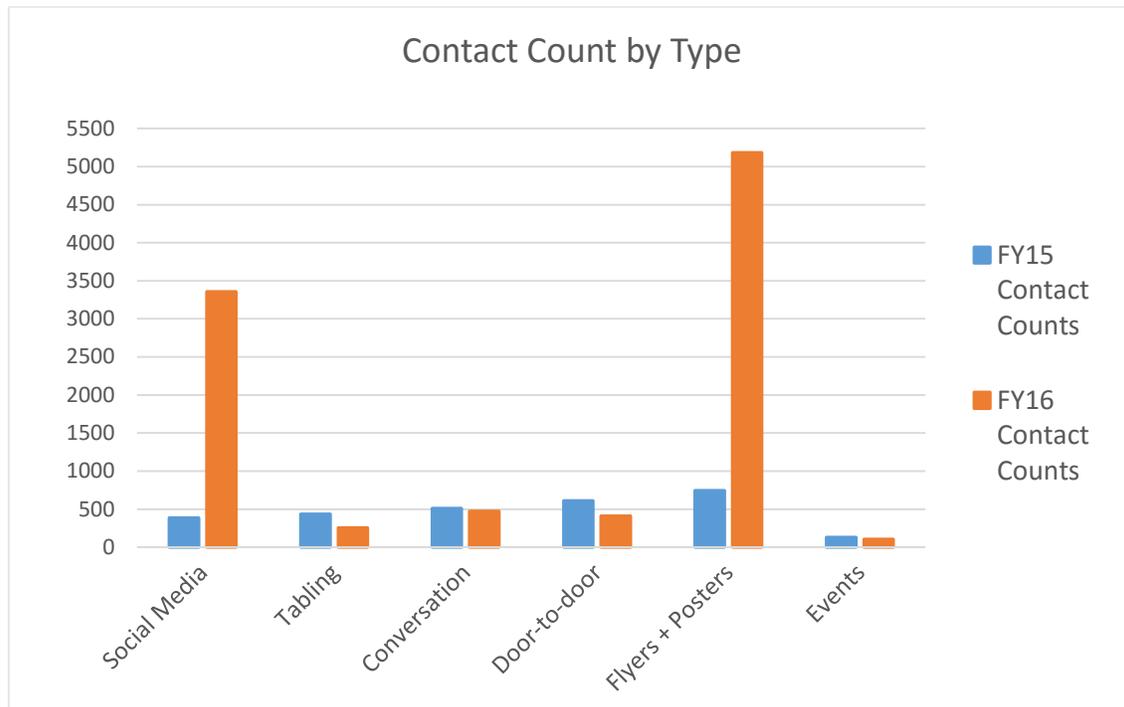


Figure 2. Contact Count by Type Trend, FY15-FY16

To produce the trends above and help track individual as well as program success, Eco-Reps are required to maintain an Outreach Log. The Log tracks contact counts, notable results and “takeaways.” The Outreach Log is useful for assessment purposes but also helped Eco-Reps identify patterns of effectiveness to improve outreach and share information between themselves. Effective use and tracking results within the Log typically varies between Eco-Reps. During FY16 the program experienced the most success ever with tracking work activities. This is in part due to repeated reminders, positive encouragement/feedback and consequence reminders from the advising team to the Eco-Reps.

Below is a table listing contact counts. Contacts were mostly resident students, but also include some staff, faculty and community member contact.

Eco-Rep building	Contact types with largest reach (listed in decreasing magnitude)	Contact count (regardless of contact type)
McNary	Facebook, door to door contact	1,222
Poling	Facebook, posters/flyers, whiteboards, sign-up sheets	4,726
Sackett	Flyers, posters, tabling	832
West	Facebook, tabling, flyers	526
Wilson	Facebook, posters/flyers, whiteboards	2,479
	TOTAL	9,785

Table 1. Contact Type Count, FY16

Of note is that the Eco-Rep for Sackett didn't have a Facebook account and did not use this medium to conduct any work related tasks. Since Facebook is an important outreach tool for this type of work, applicant screening in the future may include some discussion of social media tool availability.

Composting

As with any similar program, quantitative assessment can be a challenge. Quantitative results were tracked for the composting program and via Outreach Logs. Qualitative findings were derived from feedback and discussion from the Eco-Reps and other stakeholders. Quantitative results are available from the composting program, summarized below.

	FY16	McNary	Poling	Sackett	West	Wilson	Total
Hall info	Floors	6	5	3	5	6	
	Residents (as of 1/21/2016)	356	306	296	200	326	1484
	Rooms (not necessarily occupied)	182	141	160	118	197	798
	Participating rooms (# pails issued, max point)	25	35	30	45	18	153
Weights	Compost weight - winter & spring break (lb.)	133.6	159.4	155.4	236.9	380.2	1065.5
	Compost weight - spring (lb.)	70.4	86.7	87.5	168.6	262.8	676.0
	Total weight (lb.)	204.0	246.1	242.9	405.5	643.0	1741.5
Averages	Avg. weight/week (lb.)	9.3	11.7	11.6	19.3	29.2	81.1
	Avg. weight/participating room/week (lb.)	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.4	1.6	0.5

Combined, the five halls composted **1,741.5 lbs** of material in winter and spring quarters. This is up from the program total for FY15 of 1,243 lbs. These are both down from the FY14 high of 2,797 lbs.

Total weight collected per hall is lower than FY15's two participating halls each collected, with the exception of Wilson. One potential reason for the differing results were more accurate digital scales being used this year, but it is likely a minor impact. The trend is in the chart below.

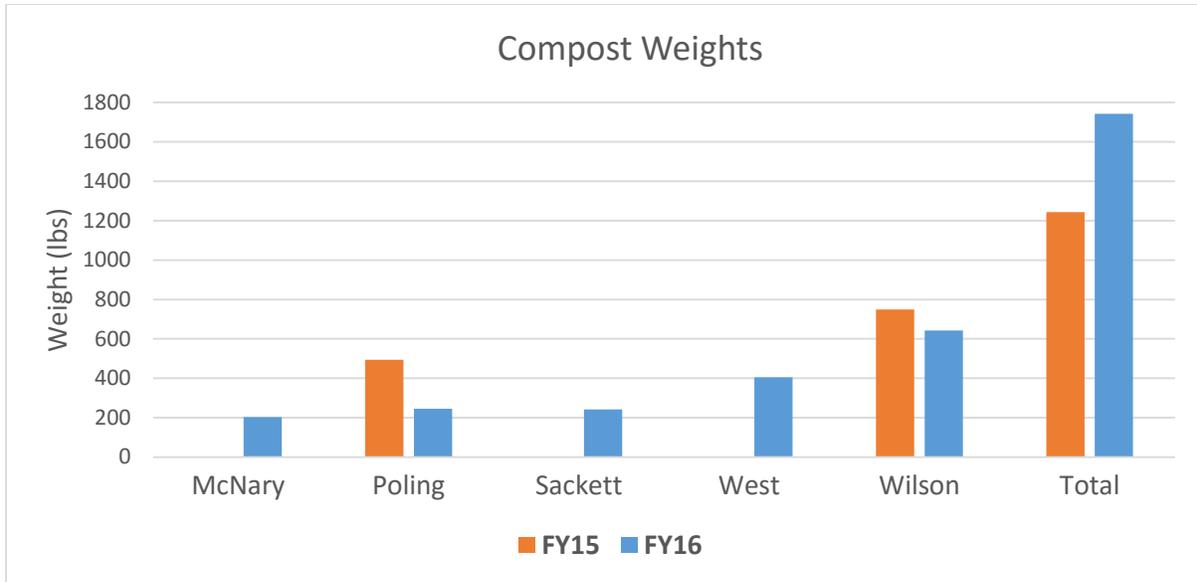


Figure 3. Compost Pounds Collected, FY15-FY16

The number of compost-participating rooms was down in FY16, on average (FY16 averaged 30.6 rooms whereas Poling and Wilson had 56 and 32, respectively, in FY15). These results and the weights noted above demonstrate that in most halls residents did not participate at rates as high as last year. The reasons for this are unknown. The following table shows the trend.

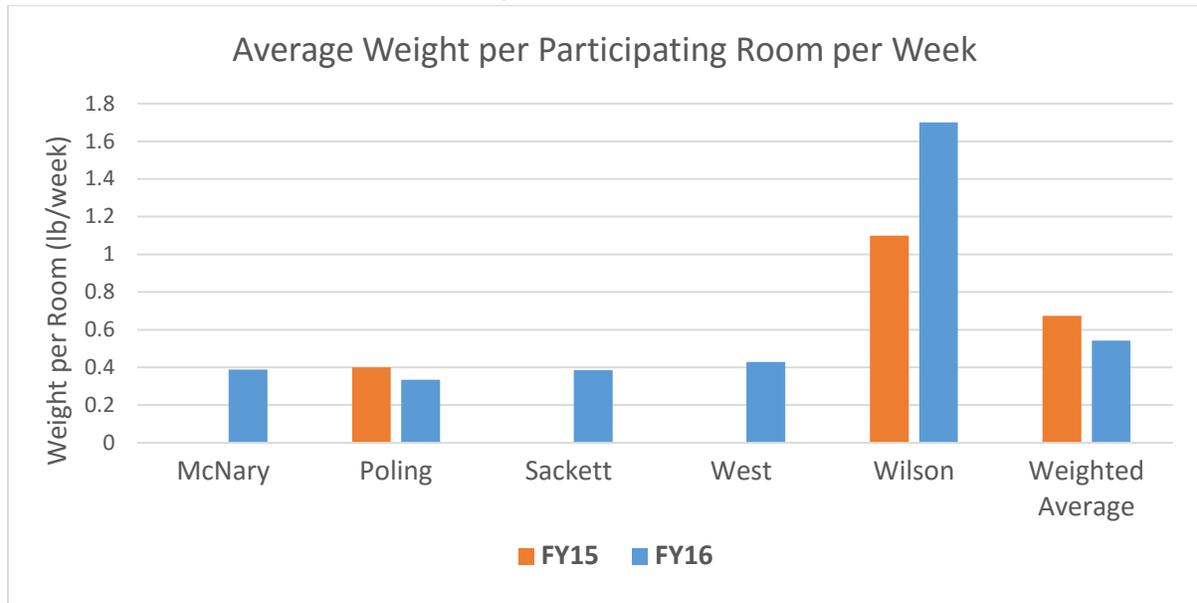


Figure 4. Average Compost Weight per Participating Room per Week, FY15-FY16

In each building, compost weights declined in spring quarter, relative to winter. The decrease is large enough that the inclusion of finals week and spring break don't seem to account for the difference. This may be an area of potential growth next year: finding new ways to encourage active participation throughout the year.

For more discussion and detail on the compost program management, benefits and opportunities, please see the [FY15 Annual Report](#). It should be noted that due to pest, odor and other potential compost management issues – and regardless of numeric outcomes – the compost program would not be possible without a paid workforce in each building each day.

Pizza box collection

One major new initiative for FY16 was the collection of used pizza boxes for composting. Rather than collect very bulky pizza boxes with other denser compost, boxes were collected separately in bins at two halls: Sackett (indoor collection) and West (outdoor collection). **Over 300 pizza boxes were composted** over the 10 weeks of spring term (an average of **30 per week**). Sackett, which offered an indoor cart for residents to deposit pizza boxes, composted an estimated 296 boxes! McNary Hall was used as a comparator for analytical purposes and no active box collection was offered but observations of pizza box disposal methods and issues were observed and tallied.

In McNary, where no pizza box composting option or outreach program existed, 37% of observed pizza boxes were located inside the hall in lounges, kitchens, and recycle rooms, where they can lead to issues such as bin overflow, fire hazards and pest attractants. Assuming the twice-per-week spot checks done in McNary were representative of daily presence of pizza boxes, an estimated 34 pizza boxes were disposed of in indoor locations per week. Another 42% were observed in the cardboard dumpster outdoors; based on their likelihood to contain food residue, this constitutes contamination of valuable cardboard recycling. Only 22% of observed boxes were found in the dumpster, which is considered the most appropriate disposal location when composting is not available.

Unfortunately, missing data from West Hall makes data analysis of the outdoor compost cart model impractical. Also, missing data for pizza counts in Sackett indoor trash bins makes comparisons to McNary's model impossible. Eco-Reps may embark on future pilots on this topic, since the potential benefit to UHDS is significant, particularly with the pizza delivery service available from Dining Services.

Other program outcomes, success and challenges

With the presence of a UHDS employee at many Eco-Rep weekly meetings, UHDS provided more program support during FY16 than in years past. The positive benefits to the Eco-Reps and support team included fast response times during trouble shooting, improved access to resident directors and streamlined communications amongst all parties. The continued presence of UHDS professional staff is critical to program success, and appreciated by program partners.

More detailed information about program outcomes, successes and challenges can be found in the [FY15 report](#) and for brevity are not repeated here. Additionally, while a high level summary of Eco-Rep work is available in the Work Plan, detailed notes were kept during each weekly Eco-Rep meeting in a Google doc that can be made available by request.

Summary highlights of Eco-Rep programming from FY16 is below.

- Pizza box collection spring quarter (discussed above)
- Marketing for and working at the Move-Out Donation Drive

- Major effort by Campus Recycling, Surplus and UHDS at the end of each academic year to provide non-landfill ways to dispose of items residents don't want after leaving residence halls.
- Composting (discussed above)
- Energy competition between five halls in May
 - Engaged several hundred residents in social media and other events like short film viewings, coloring events with snacks and pizza parties for both kickoff events and the completion winner.
 - Saved a small amount of electricity and money for UHDS operations.
- Ongoing event support and information sharing
 - Included outreach for events like Adventure-Service weekend at the Oregon Coast from Center for Civic Engagement, Repair Fairs, Beyond Earth Day, hiring and recruitment opportunities for on campus sustainability related student employment, Waste Watchers and RecycleMania.
 - Funded from an SSI professional development grant, three Eco-Reps attended the [Oregon Higher Education Sustainability Conference](#), an outstanding opportunity to connect with professionals and other students around sustainability topics and training.

During FY15, Eco-Reps produced a [video](#) highlighting what the job entails, what an average day looks like, why they chose to be Eco-Reps, their favorite parts of the job, what challenges they face and how their work impacts their residence halls.

Conclusion and Summary

In its fourth year, the Eco-Reps program shows increased performance on some key indicators (like a 247% increase in individual contact counts) while stagnating a bit in others (like pounds of compost recovered). Based on feedback from constituents of the FY16 Eco-Reps, and the Reps themselves, the program clearly continues to assist in the institutionalization of sustainable practices in the residence halls and beyond. Below is a list that highlights some of the outcomes of the program, featuring direct feedback from Eco-Reps.

- Institutionalization and support for the Eco-Rep position in the West Hall constitution is evidence of strong tie in for this hall.
- Positive experience having discussions with residents after watching videos during movie nights. The discussions were great and helped facilitate connections with fellow residents.
- Kickoff events for energy competition were fun.
- Graphic design support was good.
- Eco-Reps reported high levels of satisfaction with the amount and type of training and orientation resources provided.
- Lesson Books were great and could try to implement these with residents in the future.

The FY16 Eco-Reps provided the following ideas for possible future program changes:

- Having events and outreach be separated into different Eco-Rep positions to allow more specialization and focus for individual reps.
- Having Eco-Reps focus more on educating residents on a regular basis, including ongoing informational tips.

- Having a message to give to residents each week
- Less outreach focused on competitions and events, and more outreach on weekly basis.
- Themes could be around Energy, Composting, Water, Recycling... perhaps one theme per term with educational messages provided.
- Approach more from a social norming standpoint, not just a specific event
- Having sustainability based evaluations as the year goes. Begin the year with an assessment of how sustainable each hall is.
- Provide Eco-Reps with information they can share and give them the choice on what to focus on.
- Trying to use less paper for outreach.
 - Having events that are done every year to reuse printed material
 - Using stencils for signage and chalking for programs or events that repeat
 - Challenging eco-reps to come up with their own ways to use less paper

Suggested changes from FY15 included the following, all of which were implemented for FY16.

- Refinement and reorganization of the Lesson Book
- Creation of a volunteer Eco-Reps “alumni” position to help train new Eco-Reps
- Expand the Eco-Rep program to more (5) residence halls.

Eco-Reps fulfill an important and unique need at OSU by working in the same place as they live and play and therefore reaching peers more effectively than posters, handouts and other methods. Living on-site provides understanding of ideal timing and culture unique to their hall.

Keeping the Eco-Reps as paid positions is critical to the quality of the program. Years prior to the Eco-Rep program have not produced similar levels of participation or quantifiable data in support of sustainability programming in the residence halls. The relatively very small financial investment in this program furthers important and shared goals amongst Eco-Rep partners and beyond.

Eco-Rep Work Plan FY16

Training and Orientation

- Attend General Assembly meeting to introduce Eco-Reps to rest of RHA – late Oct. or early Nov.
- Campus Recycling and Surplus Property Training – late Oct. or early Nov.
- Sustainability Office Training (Northwest Earth Institute modules, general student employment orientation, etc) – ongoing throughout the year
- SSI Training -

Fall

- Focus on training and orientation
- Energy Civil War outreach – late Nov (SSI)
- Planning and volunteer recruitment for compost pilot – timing TBA (Campus Recycling and SSI)
- Possible end of term Drive Less Connect and Transportation Options outreach (Brandon, Sustainability Office)
- Other projects and outreach, as needed

Winter

- Winter Repair Fair outreach – TBA (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- RecycleMania – All term long plus hall competitions – late Jan., 10 weeks long, Res Halls competition 3 week period (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- Campuses Take Charge (tentative) (SSI and Sustainability Office)
- Earth Week Planning – Actual events April ~17-23 (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- Composting Pilot – Ongoing (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- Farm to Table Dinner – (tentative) March (SSI)
- SSI Open Spaces - TBA
- Other projects and outreach, as needed

Spring

- Earth Week - April ~17-23 (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- Spring Repair Fair outreach - TBA (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- Move-Out Donation Drive – May (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- Composting Pilot – Ongoing (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- Transportation Extravaganza – TBA (SSI Transportation Coordinator and Transportation Services)
- SSI Open Spaces – TBA
- SSI End of Year Celebration – TBA
- Other projects and outreach, as needed

Meetings

Aug.28, 2015

- Weekly Eco-Rep meetings with Brandon, Andrea and other necessary staff
- Meet with RD (at least once per month)
- Attend weekly Res Hall Council meetings
- UHDS Sustainability Meetings – as needed
- RHA General Assembly meetings as needed or desired, but likely at least once per quarter

Ongoing Projects

- Recruit volunteers
- Social media updates and Eco-rep Message Board updates
 - Res Hall FB page, Recycling FB Page, SO FB page, Twitter
- Weekly Reports
- 1 Ecologue post per month
- 1 Facebook post per week
- Recycling projects/compost in the halls