

# FY18 Eco-Representative Program Summary

## Introduction

This Fiscal Year 2018 (FY18) summary provides an overview and summary of Oregon State University's Eco-Representatives (Eco-Reps) program, a leadership development cohort-based program. Eco-Reps are paid student employees who deliver sustainability programming to the residence hall in which they live. This annual summary references information specific to one year, while providing links to previous reports. For 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 (SSI) and the Sustainability Office. Together, these stakeholders develop the Eco-Rep position description, review the program curriculum, and provide ongoing funding for 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 FY18, seven Eco-Reps were hired in fall but due to three Eco-Rep leaving the position at end of spring quarter, programming was carried out in four halls for the rest of the academic year: Cauthorn, Finley, Hawley, McNary, Sackett, West, and Wilson. These locations were the result of selecting the most-qualified applicants from an applicant pool that spanned all residence halls.

A work plan serves as a general guide for programming. It includes a list of events, campaigns, programs and projects that Eco-Reps support over the academic year. The FY18 Work Plan document is attached to the end of this summary.

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.

## Orientation, Training and Support

The Eco-Rep cohort training and orientation maximizes depth of learning and retention by being spread throughout the year, rather than occur in one concentrated timeframe at the beginning of the year. The Eco-Rep Lesson Book, created and maintained by the Sustainability Office specifically for the Eco-Reps program, serves as the primary capacity building and learning 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 higher education context so that Eco-Reps

are equipped with information, facts and the vocabulary to develop as leaders, become global citizens and communicate effectively to fellow residents. At each weekly meeting, readings or videos from the Lesson Book are assigned and the cohort discusses the relevance of the material in a facilitated discussion at the next meeting. Eco-Reps repeatedly indicate how key the Lesson Book is in their work, and report increasing satisfaction with its content, as the Sustainability Office, Campus Recycling and the Student Sustainability Initiative have attempted to broaden and diversify the subject matter. Eco-Reps each year provide valuable feedback that informs the next Lesson Book version.

Additional support in FY18 and in years past has come from Eco-Rep “alumni” who, as continuing OSU students, volunteer their time 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, expand and improve, and specifically offer to come to future meetings to help orient the next cohort. Other orientation activities include recycling how-to training, campus tours, attending SSI and Sustainability Office team meetings/social gatherings and other activities.

## Budget and Wages

The wage budget and actual wage expenses for FY18 wages are below.

Department	FY18 Budgeted	% cost share	FY18 Actual
Sustainability Office	\$1,100.00	16.54%	\$770.76
Pepsi Sustainability Fund, via Campus Recycling	\$3,350.00	50.38%	\$2487.21
UHDS	\$1,100.00	16.54%	\$766.00
SSI	\$1,100.00	16.54%	\$766.49
Federal Work Study	-	-	\$832.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,650.00</b>		<b>\$5,623.26</b>

Table 1. Wage Budget and Wage Expense, FY18

As with every previous year, the program ended under budget. Several factors contributed to the underspend of \$1,026.74: the mid-year departure from OSU of three Eco-Reps, unexpected access to Federal Work Study funding and the usual trend of individual Eco-Reps working fewer hours than available. Because underspending has been consistent each year of the program, it is likely the same budget will support a cohort of eight paid positions.

Eco-Reps are compensated just above minimum wage, and able to accomplish a surprising amount with very few hours. Eco-Rep average hours worked per week in FY18 varied from person to person, as it has in past years, with a low of 1.45 hrs./week to a high of 4.22 hrs./week. FY18 included approximately 27 weeks of paid work, about the same duration as FY17. The hiring timeline allowed for a similar start date for FY18, with 32 applications for FY18. The trend in average hours worked per week is shown in the chart below.

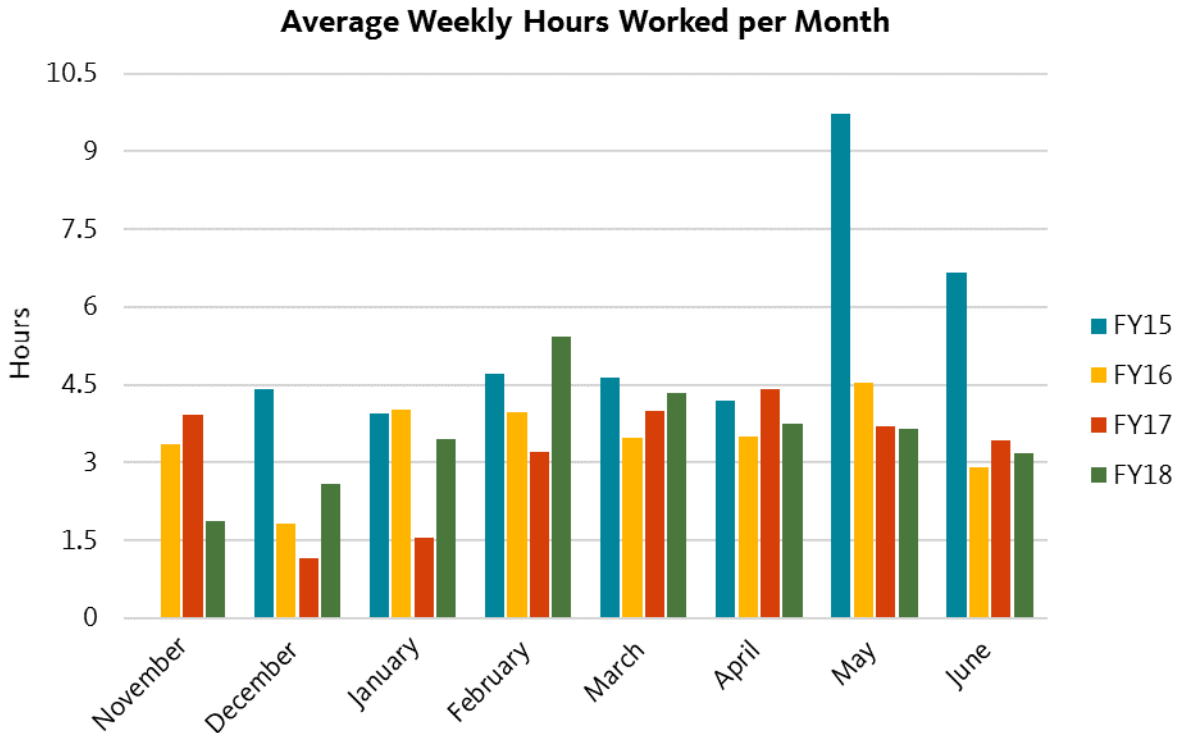


Figure 1. Average (per Eco-Rep) Hours Worked per Week by Month, FY15-FY18

In addition to the 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

In addition to developing students as sustainability leaders, peer-to-peer outreach is a key outcome 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, posters, tabling, flyers, 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 most frequently reported types of constituent contact between the four years for which data are available. For a more detailed discussion of outreach methods, please see the relevant section of the [FY15 Report](#).

### Contact Count by Type

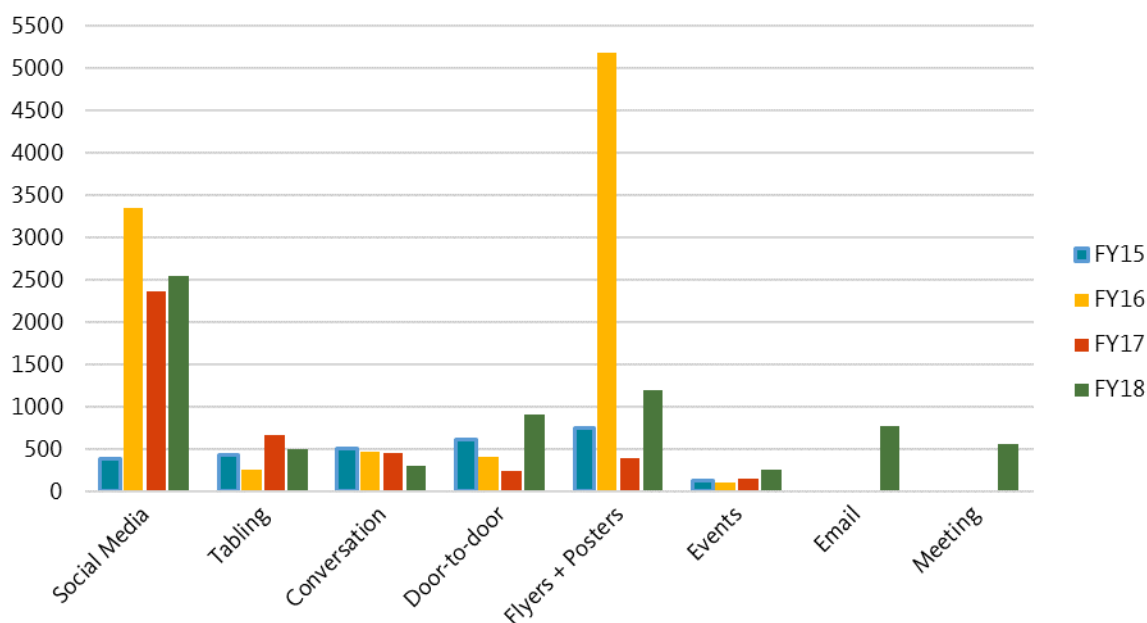


Figure 2. Contact Count by Type Trend, FY15-FY18

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 is particularly necessary since the cohort does not work in an office environment and the position requires the ability to succeed working independently. The Log tracks contact counts, notable results and “takeaways.” It 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 FY18, the program produced more contact than FY17 by 39%. This increase was largely due to having 7 Eco-Reps for Fall and Winter terms. Social media continues to be a strong outreach method for the program.

Below is a table listing contact counts. Contacts were mostly resident students, but also include some staff, faculty and community member contact. Please note the Eco-Reps for Cauthorn Hall, Finley Hall, and Hawley Hall dropped out of the program at the end of Winter term.

Eco-Rep building	Contact types with largest reach (listed in decreasing magnitude)	Contact count (regardless of contact type)
<b>Cauthorn</b>	Email, meetings	154
<b>Finley</b>	Social media, door-to-door	865
<b>Hawley</b>	Social media, tabling	162
<b>McNary</b>	Flyers/posters, door-to-door	1,433
<b>Sackett</b>	Social media, email	2,208
<b>West</b>	Social media, flyers/posters	1,222
<b>Wilson</b>	Door-to-door, social media	995
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,039</b>

Table 2. Contact Type Count, FY18

## Recycle Right

With the significant changes occurring to recycling markets that impact what materials are acceptable for placing in recycling bins on campus, the Recycle Right program was added to the Eco-Rep programming. The objectives of the Recycle Right program were:

- Test different outreach methods of influencing recycling behavior and assess the outreach methods' impact on actual levels of contamination in residence hall recycling carts.
- Determine ways to improve residents' understanding about the acceptability of waste items in mixed recycling that results in behavior change.
- Achieve a measurable reduction in contamination in mixed recycling carts.
- Provide meaningful work for Eco-Reps that provides consistent hours.

The procedures and tactics used to reach the program objectives included planning and implementing new programs, conducting physical waste audits, conducting visual waste audits and conducting resident surveys. A description of these procedures and tactics is shown in the next table.

Procedure/Tactic	Description
<b>Plan and Implement New Programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eco-Reps trialed a tactic for half of a term at a time to determine if it was effective in reducing contamination. Three tactics were conducted and lasted 3 to 4 weeks – weeks 1-4 and 6-9 of Winter term, and weeks 5-7 of Spring term</li> <li>• In order to determine if tactics are effective in different halls, same tactics were trialed in at least two halls</li> <li>• Audits and surveys were conducted to assess the tactics' effectiveness</li> </ul>
<b>Physical Waste Audits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical waste audits of the commingle/mixed recycle carts were conducted to track contamination rates. They were conducted once as a baseline and then after each tactic</li> <li>• 25% of carts in each hall were audited</li> <li>• Collection and sorting of material was conducted on the day before carts were serviced for the week</li> <li>• The contents of randomly sampled carts were weighed and sorted into 1) accepted recyclables and 2) contamination</li> <li>• Results were recorded for each cart</li> </ul>
<b>Visual Waste Audits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual waste audits were conducted halfway through a tactic to continue to track progress, and on the day before carts were serviced for the week</li> <li>• One randomly chosen cart was selected in each recycle room. Eco-Reps viewed the cart from the top, and counted how many items there were total and how many of those were contaminants</li> <li>• The results were recorded for each cart</li> <li>• A top-down photo was taken of each cart and filed</li> </ul>
<b>Resident Surveys</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys were conducted once as a baseline and then after each tactic to gauge residents' understating of recycling guidelines and barriers to recycling</li> </ul>

Table 3. Recycle Right Program Procedures and Tactics, FY18

The chart below shows the contamination rate observed after the implementation of each trial.

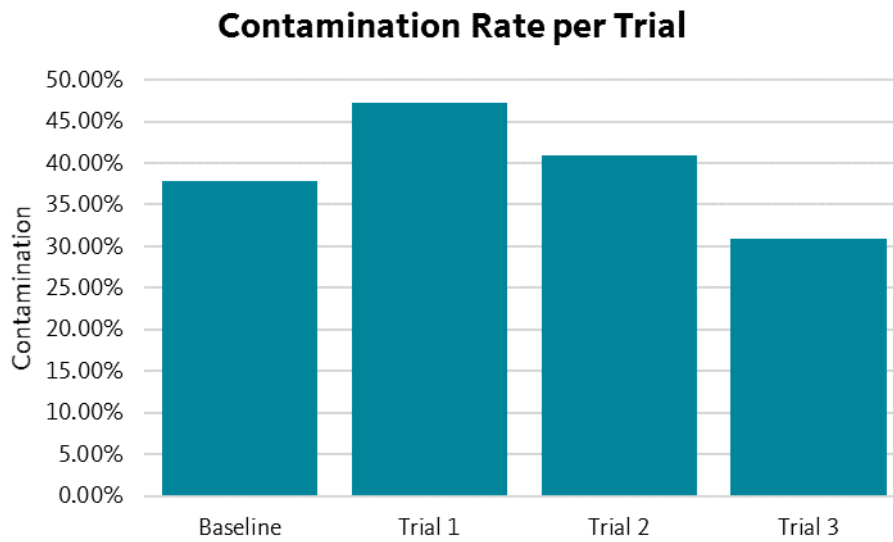


Figure 3. Contamination Rate per Trial, FY18

The chart below shows the contamination rate observed after the implementation of each of the outreach tactics.

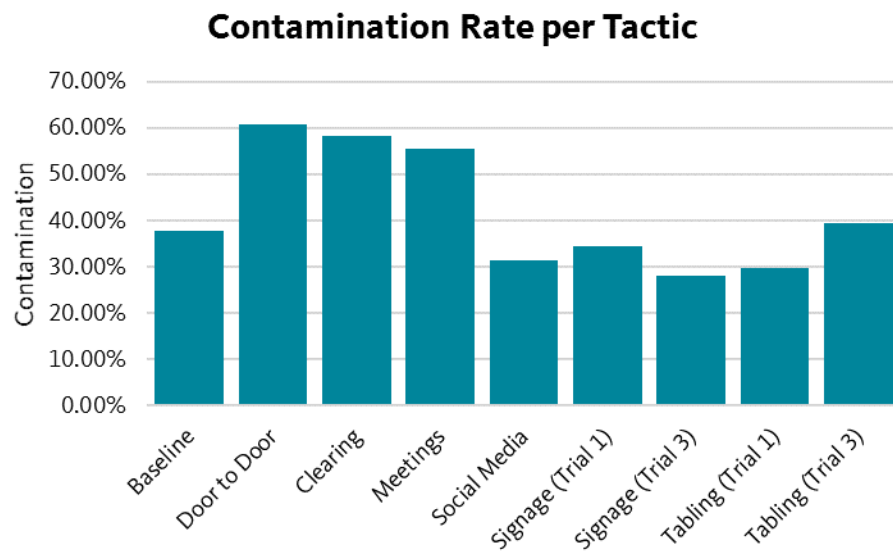


Figure 4. Contamination Rate per Tactic, FY18

The results obtained from the surveys demonstrate that the percentage of correct answers usually increased after the implementation of the tactics. The following table shows the trend.

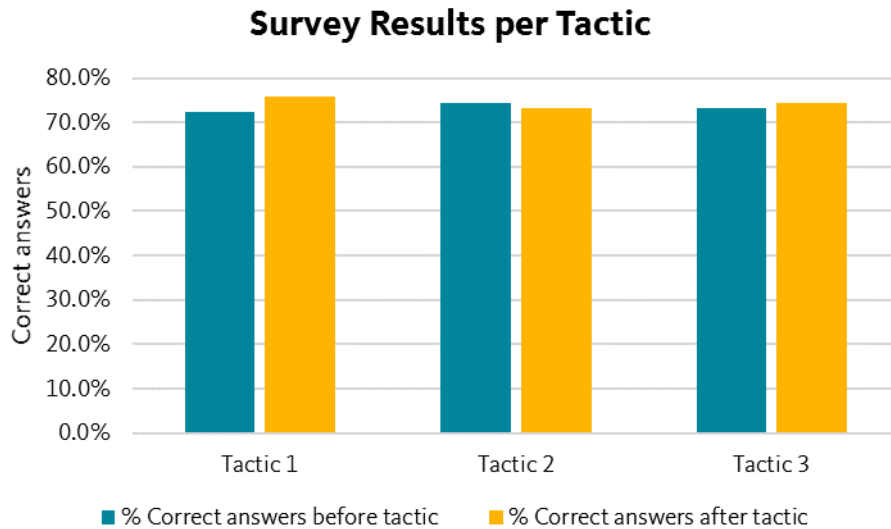


Figure 5. Recycling Survey Results, FY18

### Composting

As with any similar program, quantitative assessment is critical but it is sometimes difficult to ensure accuracy. 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 summarized below.

	FY18	Cauthorn	West	McNary
Hall info	Floors	5	5	6
	Residents (mid Fall term 2017)	342	207	394
	Rooms (nearly all occupied)	156	118	182
	Participating rooms (# pails issued, highest point)	0	49	8
	% of rooms with pails	0%	42%	4%
Weights	Compost weight - winter & spring break (lb.)	140.9	190.5	243.7
	Compost weight - spring (lb.)	N/A	127.0	338.2
	Total weight (lb.)	140.9	317.4	581.9
Averages	Avg. weight/week - winter & spring break (lb.)	11.7	15.9	20.3
	Avg. weight/week - spring (lb.)	0.0	14.1	37.6
	Avg. weight/week - entire program (lb.)	11.7	15.1	27.7
	Avg. weight/participating room/week (lb.)	N/A	0.31	3.46

Table 4. Composting Totals, FY18

Combined, the three halls composted **1040 lbs.** of material in winter and spring quarters. Total weight was up from the program total for FY17 of 993 lbs., at which time three halls participated. Note that in FY18, only West Hall and McNary Hall had the compost program for both winter and spring terms. Cauthorn Hall had the compost program for only winter term due to the Eco-Rep stepping down from the position.

### Average Compost Weights per Hall

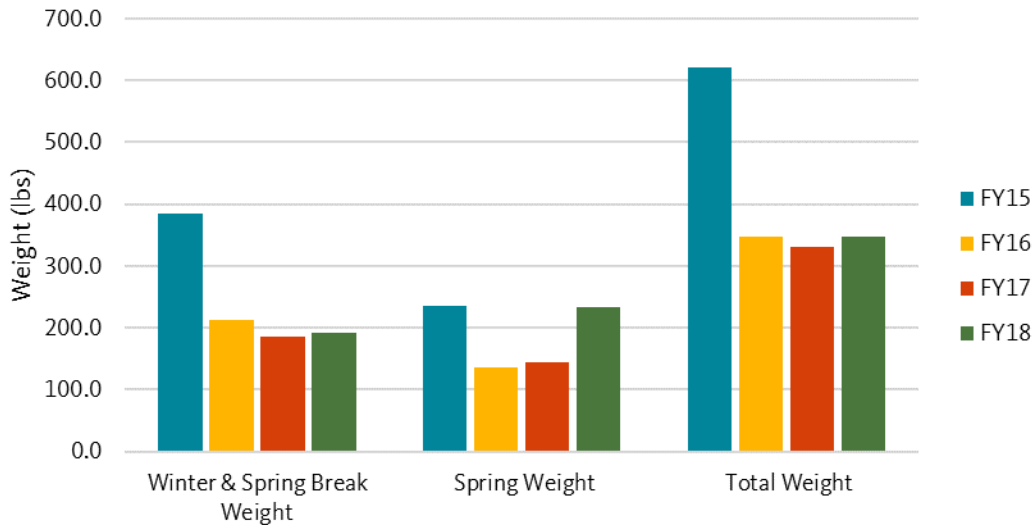


Figure 6. Average Compost Weight per Hall, FY15-FY18

The percentage of rooms participating was up slightly in FY18, averaging 23 percent vs FY17’s 19 percent. These results and the weights noted above demonstrate that in most halls residents participated in total at a slightly higher rate than last year. The following table shows the trend.

### Average Weight Per Week

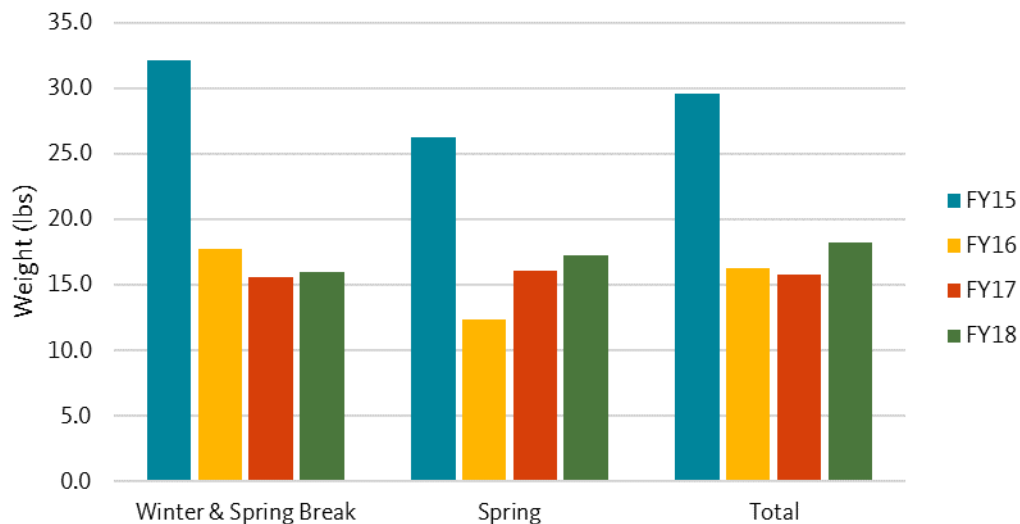


Figure 7. Average Compost Weight per Week, FY15-FY18



Compost weights increased by about one pound per week from winter to spring quarter. In comparison to FY17, the compost weight during winter and spring terms increased by about one pound.

For more discussion and detail on 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.

### **Other program outcomes, success and challenges**

With the presence of a UHDS employee at most Eco-Rep weekly meetings, UHDS provided more program support during FY18 than in the earlier years of the program. The continued presence of professional staff from partner units is critical to program success. Given that the goals of the program include developing students into sustainability leaders and global citizens, deeper engagement from UHDS's Residential Education unit would strengthen the institutional support of the Eco-Reps program, and better connect the cohort to relevant development opportunities.

To further formalize the program and maximize development opportunities both for the cohort and program broadly, the Sustainability Office and partners will for FY18 develop program and/or learning outcomes that reflect the missions of the partner organizations and ensure a long term vision for student success. More detailed information about existing outcomes, successes and challenges can be found in [past reports](#) 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 FY17 is below.

- Marketing for and working at the Move-Out Donation Drive
  - Major effort by Campus Recycling, Surplus Property and UHDS at the end of each academic year to collect items residents don't want after leaving res halls and redirect them to local non-profits.
- Composting (discussed above)
- Recycling (discussed above)
- Kilowatt Crackdown energy competition between four halls in April
  - 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 competition winner.
  - Saved UHDS operations approximately \$336.41, or 5,306 kilowatt hours, in one month.
- Outreach for events like Repair Fairs, Beyond Earth Day, hiring and recruitment opportunities for on campus sustainability related student employment, Waste Watchers and RecycleMania.

## **Conclusion and Summary**

In its sixth year, the Eco-Reps program shows steady performance for most indicators. Based on feedback from the FY18 cohort and their constituents, the program clearly continues to assist in the institutionalization of sustainable practices in the residence halls and beyond. It also has resulted in developing Eco-Reps as individual leaders and high performers. At least six students from previous

cohorts have gone on to deepen their involvement in OSU sustainability programming. Many have become employees of the Eco-Rep partner departments; others have become advisory board members within an institutional governing body – all as the result of their initial introduction and development through the Eco-Reps program. The FY18 Eco-Reps provided extensive ideas for future program changes. Below are some highlights:

- Make sustainability orgs tours more robust
- Have more info on what's going on around campus. Maybe attend Waste Watchers meetings
- Hosting ER all hall meeting (~1/term) to talk about ER programming
- Connect ERs to other hall staff members, so that they can be seen as staff members who are part of the team
- Push more programming during winter term such as carbon FOODprint and bike clinics. Some of these could be done in Fall and Winter.
- Create monthly meetings with residents with food so that residents know the programming happening. Open discussion to residents, maybe invite speakers, add lesson book discussion.

At the end of the year, Eco-Reps were asked to share, in one or very few words, what they got out of the experience. The responses were:

- Feeling of courage/responsibility to change people's habits
- Learning how to respectfully call people out on bad habits
- Bridging the gap and letting other people have the opportunity to be more sustainable
- Being role models and encouraging others, even if it wasn't the easiest thing to do

Similarly, the Eco-Reps were asked what they saw as their biggest contribution:

- Knew a lot of people in the hall and was able to connect and engage with residents
- Passion. Centralize passion in individual life and community
- Background in issues regarding environment and conservation, and connecting to residents regarding social issues

Suggested changes from FY17 included the following, which were implemented for FY18.

- Update the Lesson Book with more current articles and different "levels" of sustainability awareness/competence such as understanding, achieving, influence, etc. Have ER bring an article for discussion in addition to or in lieu of Lesson Book
- Work beyond the res halls (maybe on things like Eco2Go)

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. Understanding this culture, which varies from hall to hall, is critical to any programming delivery. Additionally, it helps further develop the Eco-Reps' individual skills as adaptive, responsive student leaders who care about sustainability and know how to appropriately share their passion with others.

## Eco-Rep Work Plan FY18

### Training and Orientation

- (Tentative) Attend General Assembly meeting to introduce Eco-Reps to rest of RHA – late Oct. or early Nov.
- Campus Recycling and Surplus Property Training – 1 hour in late Oct. or early Nov.
- Sustainability Office Training
  - Tour of campus sustainability features, 1-2 hours in late Oct. or early Nov.
  - Lesson Book weekly readings built on Northwest Earth Institute articles
  - General student employment orientation – ongoing
- SSI Training - Fall
  - Tour of SEC Food Forest
  - Invitation to hang out in SSI office

### Fall

Themes for this quarter include sustainability basics, recycling, composting, waste reduction, transportation

- Focus on training and orientation, global need for sustainability
- Fall Repair Fair outreach - late Oct. or Nov. (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- Planning and outreach for compost program – Nov. (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- (Tentative) In-hall America Recycles Day activities - Nov. (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- (Tentative) Bicycle repair clinic (Sarah Bronstein, Transportation Services )
- (Tentative) End of quarter transportation options outreach (Sarah Bronstein, Transportation Services )
- Other projects and outreach, as needed

### Winter

Themes for this quarter include waste reduction, food waste, embodied energy, energy conservation

- Outreach for compost program – Jan. (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- (Tentative) Outreach and/or activities for wasted food campaign - Jan. - March (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- Winter Repair Fair outreach – Jan. - Feb. (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- RecycleMania – Feb. - March (8 weeks), may include 3-week inter-hall competition in early Feb. (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- Kilowatt Crackdown outreach and planning (Lety, Sustainability Office)
- (Tentative) Bicycle repair clinic (Sarah Bronstein, Transportation Services )
- Beyond Earth Day Planning – planning Feb - March for April events (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- Run composting program – Ongoing (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- (Tentative) Farm to Table Dinner – March (SSI)
- Other projects and outreach, as needed

### Spring

Themes for this quarter include climate change, human health, water, systems thinking

- Beyond Earth Day marketing and activities - April (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- Kilowatt Crackdown, possibly April (Lety, Sustainability Office)
- (Tentative) Outreach and/or activities for wasted food campaign - April - May (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- Spring Repair Fair outreach - April - May (Andrea, Campus Recycling)

- Move-Out Donation Drive marketing – May (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- Run composting program – Ongoing (Andrea, Campus Recycling)
- (Tentative) Mary's Peak trip (SSI)
- (Tentative) Spring Work Party focused on Eco-Rep bonding
- (Tentative) Bicycle repair clinic (Sarah Bronstein, Transportation Services)
- (Tentative) Transportation Extravaganza – (SSI and Transportation Services)
- (Tentative) Bio-Swale Work Parties - when? (SSI)
- End of Year Celebration – TBD
- Other projects and outreach, as needed

### **Meetings**

- Early year meeting with RD and Eco-rep leadership
- Weekly Eco-Rep meetings with Andrea Norris, Lety Cavazos, Brian Stroup, Brandon Trelstad (when needed) and others
- Meet with RD (at least once per month)
- Attend weekly Res Hall Council meetings (at least once per month, but ideally every other week)
- Attend a portion of weekly Hall staff meetings (at least once per month, but ideally every other week)
- RHA General Assembly meetings as needed or desired, but likely at least once per quarter

### **Ongoing Activities (in priority order)**

1. Attend meetings listed above
2. Outreach log entries twice per week
3. Timesheet entry at least twice per week
4. Weekly readings from Lesson Book
5. Social media updates and Eco-Rep message board updates
  - a. Res Hall FB page, and/or personal FB page - 1 post per week MINIMUM
  - b. Eco-Reps shared Instagram - 1 post per person per week average
  - c. Recycling FB and SO FB are also available to post