**Project Title:** Developing Packing Material Reuse Sites on Campus

**Project Description:** Identify viable sites on campus for a packing material reuse site. Contact sites, pick one, and work with them to develop a site to accept used packing material and framework for doing so.

**Background Information:** According to a Collier County, Florida, report on Styrofoam and packing waste, approximately one-third of an average landfill’s waste is made up of packaging material. Styrofoam products, despite increasing calls to find alternatives and reduce waste, remain a surprisingly large source of waste and can take 500 years to decompose, according to some analyses. Reducing the amount of plastic and Styrofoam that goes straight into the landfill through reuse would reduce the burden on waste management and mitigate environmental harm.

To address the issue on campus, the Seamans Center for the Engineering Arts and Sciences and Tippie College of Business have established packing material reuse receptacles and sites on campus in the buildings’ respective recycling centers. These sites were created to reduce the volume of landfill waste from shipments that contained packing peanuts, bubble wrap and other packing material made of plastics or Styrofoam. Instead of being waste, the products are repurposed for other use.

The Seamans Center and Tippie College of Business are two large buildings, but there are more buildings on campus that regularly receive shipments containing packing material. First, think of buildings on campus with large procurement capacity and/or frequent shipment delivery activity. It is recommended that you contact a few different buildings to get a sense of which facilities managers are most receptive to the project at the time and how effective your solution would be. Leverage the fact that two other campus buildings have already established programs in approaching your solution.

In the past, the College of Public Health Building has expressed interest in packaging material disposal solutions. Student Housing buildings have adopted widespread recycling and compost programs, and are hubs for packages, presenting a potential major opportunity with UI Housing and Dining to establish a system for students to dispose of their packing waste.

Once you have established one or more buildings on campus, created a template for action facilitated by managers at Tippie and the Seamans Center, present the action plan to managers at your chosen building. Although it may not be realistic that the building managers adopt your plan right away, presenting them with the tools necessary to take the next steps and set goals/timelines on setting up the site will help accelerate the process. If you are not able to present to the staff of the buildings, prepare materials (presentation and proposal document.)

**Desired Outcomes:**

* Develop an action plan for your chosen/potential campus building(s), identifying the location within the building, supporting infrastructure, the need (perhaps data based on the number of packages received, etc.), and steps to establish a packing material reuse system. Present the plan to the building managerial staff, or prepare a PowerPoint that reflects how to set up a packing material collection and reuse system tailored to the facility of choice.

**Target Audience:**

* Building Managers at UI

**Collaborators/Stakeholders:**

* Beth MacKenzie, UI Recycling Coordinator
* Blake Rupe, Office of Sustainability and the Environment
* Building Staff
* Mailboxes of Iowa City

**Resources:**

Packaging Material Recycling in Seamans Center Article - <https://dailyiowan.com/2017/11/29/seamans-new-program-to-recycle-packaging-material/>

A Group in IC that Provides Recycling Services for Packing Material - <https://www.mailboxesic.com/Additional-Services/Recycling-Services>

**Goals:** Identify viable sites for packing material collection and reuse on campus. Research, study, and utilize the Seamans Center and Tippie packing material reuse systems to advise what needs to be done. Analyze expected environmental impacts from implementing this procedure. Explain why you chose your site relative to others. Write a paper and/or create a presentation that could be delivered to and used by a building manager.

**Evaluation:**

* Does the guide adequately address the steps needed to establish a packing waste collection and reuse site? Does the guide justify its choice of building(s)? Does the guide provide realistic expectations on timeline, costs, etc.? Does the presentation cover this material? Is the presentation appropriate to be presented to a facilities manager, hypothetical or real?

**Course Relevance:**

* ENVS 1080: Introduction to Environmental Science
* GEOG 2013: Introduction to Sustainability
* EES 1085: Fundamentals of Environmental Science

**Keywords Tags:**

* Topics: Waste Management, Sustainability, Recycling, Reuse-Repurpose, Packaging, Sustainable Material Management, Communication, Strategy