

Proposal

SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM: OWL CHEST

Submitted To:

OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

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HOWARD GITTIS STUDENT CENTER

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Temple University's Office of Sustainability should start a new sustainability program to properly dispose of students' furniture at the end of the semester and to aid the large population of students who experience housing insecurities. Proper furniture disposal has been a prevalent issue in recent years as Temple housing has begun to expand. Furthermore, over one-third of students at Temple University struggle with housing insecurities. Creating a furniture exchange sustainability program will alleviate these issues and result in:

- Improved relations with the North Philadelphia community
- More volunteer opportunities for students
- Improvement in student performance

Owl Chest can be established within six months. Owl Chest will need \$600 for start-up expenses to provide for the transportation of furniture during the exchange event at the end of the 2020 Spring semester. These costs can be fulfilled through organized fundraising events. If Temple's Office of Sustainability does not implement this program, it risks the opportunity to alleviate the growing issue of financial distress among students, as well as the issue of improper furniture disposal.

PROBLEM

Owl Chest seeks to alleviate two prominent issues at Temple University: (1) financial stress among college students and (2) improper furniture disposal during move-out day at the end of the semester. The need for this service addresses the issue of financial stress among college students. A study conducted by researchers at Temple University and the Wisconsin HOPE Lab found that 34% of students at Temple University are housing insecure (Goldrick-Rab, 2018). Meanwhile, students not properly disposing of their trash and furniture when they move out of their off-campus apartments has been a prevalent issue at Temple University, specifically from Norris Street to Dauphin Street and 18th Street to Broad Street (Lochrie, 2018). A study conducted among 60 students at Temple University found that 60% of students are aware of the issue of students improperly disposing of their trash and furniture at the end of the semester and recognize it as a growing concern (Mattia, 2019) (see Exhibit 1). The study also found that of the 46.7% of surveyed students who live in off-campus housing, 85.7% do not have a plan to dispose of their furniture after they move out (Mattia, 2019) (see Exhibit 2). Other universities have implemented sustainability programs that seek to diminish students' financial burdens, while also appropriately discarding furniture (see Exhibit 3). However, the sustainability issue at Temple University is unique due to Temple's location; while many universities are focused on either alleviating students' financial distress *or* disposing of furniture, Temple University must focus on both.

PROPOSAL: CREATE A FURNITURE EXCHANGE SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM

The Office of Sustainability at Temple University should create a furniture sustainability program called Owl Chest. This will allow students to properly dispose of their furniture, appliances, and unused school supplies on move-out day at the end of the semester, while also giving other students the opportunity to obtain free furniture and school supplies.

The solution for this issue is to hold annual Fall and Spring donation periods at the end of each semester in which furniture can be picked up and transported. Owl Chest Volunteers will advertise these donation periods through paper flyers, social media posts, and a page on the Office of Sustainability website. Students who need furniture and appliances can sign up online, listing specific items they need. These will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. Students looking to dispose of their furniture can sign up to get their furniture and appliances collected on the official Temple move-out day. Volunteers and program directors will rent U-Haul trucks to pick up the furniture and transport it to the location requested by student receivers. These locations must be within a 10-mile radius of Temple University's campus.

Owl Chest will need volunteers to organize fundraising events for the program. Monetary donations, as well as unused school supplies and small appliances, will be accepted throughout the school year. There will also be organized events throughout the school year, such as a garbage clean-up day, to promote the program and attract more volunteers. To eliminate the possibility of inequality and an unbalanced distribution of furniture and supplies, items collected and donated will be separated into categories, and each student will have a limit on how many items they may obtain per semester from each category.

Items will be classified as either Tier 1 or Tier 2.

- Tier 1 items will include bigger items such as couches, tables, and dressers.
- Tier 2 items will include smaller items such as notebooks, pens, and hangers.

Students can obtain up to two Tier 1 items per school year and up to five Tier 2 items per semester.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (see Exhibit 4)

Owl Chest should begin recruiting volunteers to organize events and fundraise to establish the program and execute its first event by the end of the Spring 2020 semester. The proposed six-month plan is shown below.

November-December

- Recruit 15-20 volunteers
- Create mission statement, vision statement, and core values
- Connect with members of the Sustainability Advisory Group
- Appoint a faculty advisor

January-February

- Garbage clean-up event in the North Philadelphia community (from Norris Street to Dauphin Street and 18th Street to Broad Street)
- Plan fundraisers (Chipotle fundraiser, bake sales)
- Recruit volunteers outside of the student center (Pieing fundraiser)
- Connect with Claire McGlinchey, Marketing Intern for the Office of Sustainability, to create effective marketing strategies for Owl Chest

March-April

- Present the program to Connor Caruso, Sustainability Outreach Assistant
- Market Owl Chest to Temple students
- Organize the Spring move-out event
- Present the program to Caroline Burkholder and Jason Levy to officially establish Owl Chest as a sustainability program

BUDGET (see Exhibit 5)

The initial cost of \$600 includes:

- U-Haul fees include: truck rental - \$120 (\$39.95 flat rate + \$1.89/mile)
- Meeting room fees include: room rental fees - \$300 (Student Center Room 205 - \$25; 2 meetings per month)

- Advertising fees include: paper flyers - \$100
- Garbage clean up fee includes: trash bags and gloves - \$100

Fundraising events will cover the \$620 start-up cost.

BENEFITS OF PROPOSAL

Owl Chest will encourage a sustainable method of disposing of furniture, while also giving students who experience housing insecurities the opportunity to obtain free furniture. Additionally, Owl Chest will provide students with the opportunity to connect with the North Philadelphia community.

- **Improved Relations with the North Philadelphia Community:** Owl Chest aims to dispose of students' furniture that litters the streets of North Philadelphia. As Temple University expands its campus, the need to establish a respectful relationship with fellow North Philadelphia residents grows.
- **More volunteer opportunities for students:** Owl Chest will allow students to actively participate in the community, establishing positive relationships with community members, while also becoming more aware of sustainability issues.
- **Improvement in student performance:** Students who experience financial distress are likely to experience depressive symptoms and a low GPA (Koppes-Chicago, 2015). Owl Chest aims to alleviate financial discomfort, allowing students to focus on their education.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Temple University's Office of Sustainability should implement Owl Chest as a furniture exchange sustainability program. Over one third of Temple students are housing insecure. Owl Chest will alleviate this issue by giving students the opportunity to obtain free furniture for their apartments. Additionally, the improper disposal of furniture and trash has become a major concern at Temple University. Owl Chest will promote a sustainable method of discarding furniture. **The total cost to start this sustainability program is \$600 over a six-month period.**

Creating this program will raise awareness of the issues of housing insecurities and improper furniture and trash disposal at Temple University. The program aims to aid students who struggle financially by giving them the opportunity to eliminate major furniture costs. Owl Chest will also establish a more positive relationship with the North Philadelphia community. If this program is approved, Owl Chest will carry out its first event on move-out day—May 8, 2020—and will host more events in Fall 2020.

References

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APPENDIX

EXHIBIT 1 - SUSTAINABILITY AT TEMPLE UNIVERSITY SURVEY RESULTS

Are you aware of the issue of students improperly disposing of their furniture when they move out at the end of the semester?

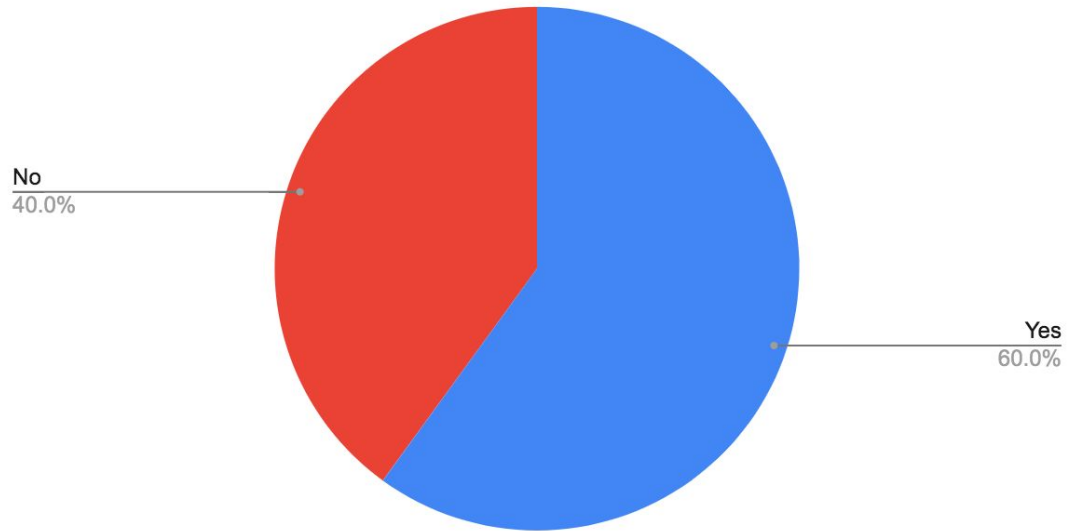
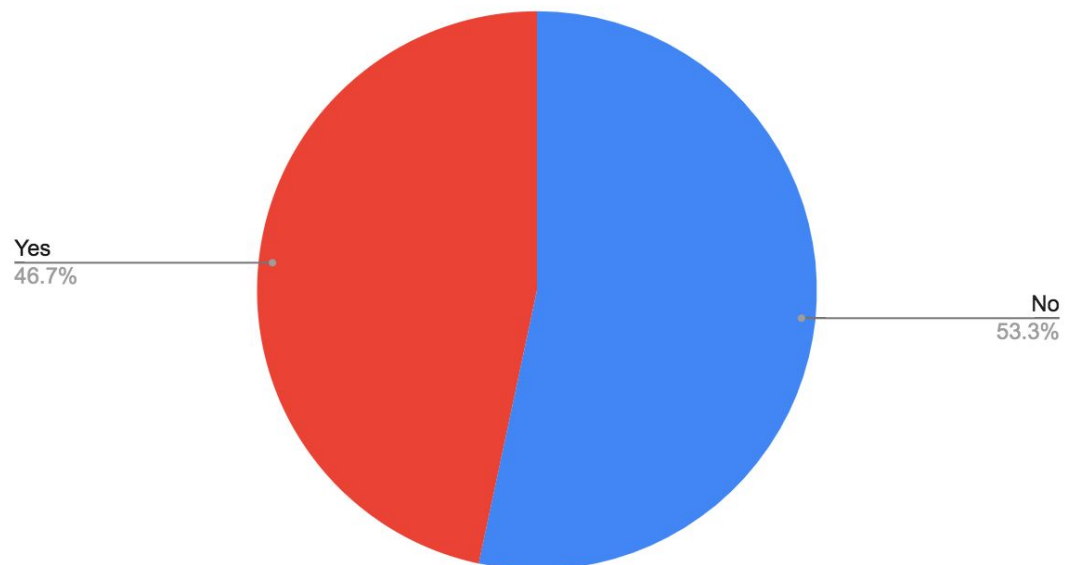


EXHIBIT 2 - SUSTAINABILITY AT TEMPLE UNIVERSITY SURVEY RESULTS (CONT.)

Do you live in off-campus housing?



If yes, do you have a plan to dispose of your furniture when you move out?

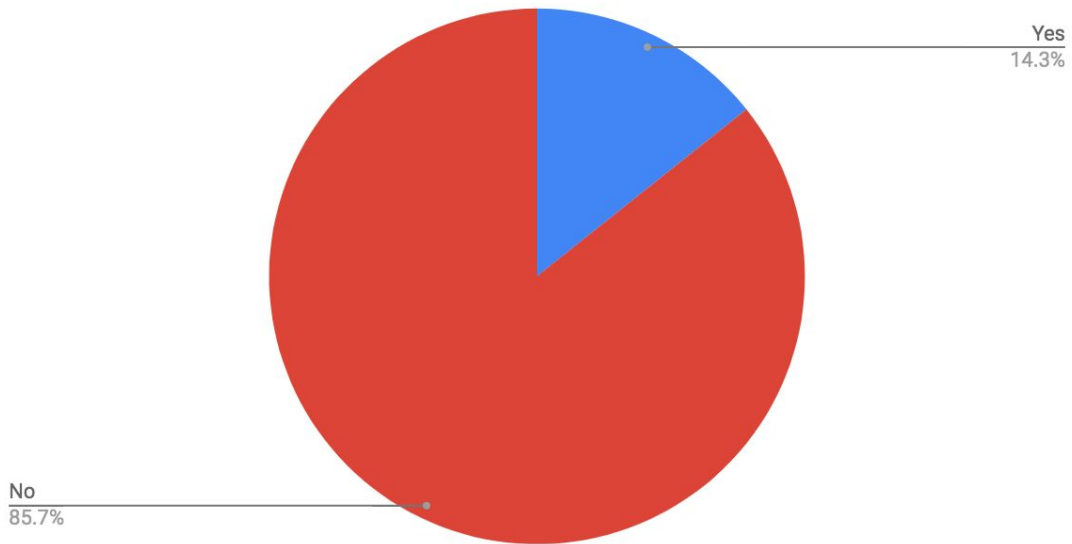



EXHIBIT 3 - UNIVERSITIES WITH FURNITURE SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMS


UNIVERSITIES WITH FURNITURE SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAMS

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA PennMOVES at the University of Pennsylvania collects students' furniture and appliances that they cannot take with them when they move out and donates them to Goodwill.	ST. LAWRENCE UNIVERSITY ReUse at St. Lawrence University operates a student-run thrift store and holds two major events throughout the school year—a Fall sale and a Spring move-out donation.
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EXHIBIT 4 - OWL CHEST IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE



EXHIBIT 5 - OWL CHEST BUDGET

Owl Chest Expenses	Total
U-Haul Fee	\$120
Meeting Room Fee	\$300
Advertising	\$100
Clean-up event	\$100
Total Cost	\$620