

Supported by the
Sustainable Stanford
Internship Program

2016-17 PARTY WASTE REPORT

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Supervised by Sea Gill



INTERNSHIP DATES

4 Oct 2016 (orientation) -

5 Jun 2017 (report submission)

AVERAGE TIME COMMITMENT

1-3 hrs/wk

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

RSC

Red Solo cup (or equivalent alternatives like the Kirkland Signature Chinet Big Red Cup), some of which are blue and all of which are made of plastic #6 a.k.a. polystyrene

OAPE

The Stanford Office of Alcohol Policy and Education

OAPE cup

Clear reusable cup with red lines for alcohol portioning. OAPE purchased 5,000 from Eco Promotional Products at \$0.44 each, originally intending on giving 100 to each of 37 houses. They chose this particular cup for its compatibility with drinking games.

PROJECT SUMMARY

The problem of waste in fraternity parties is twofold: first, most houses use RSCs, which are not recyclable; second, clean-up after parties is often sorely insufficient, including problems like poorly-sorted waste, overflowing dumpsters, and messes left unaddressed in and around the house. The latter problem also places undue burden on housing building managers, cleaning staff, and PSSI waste corral pick-up crews.

The goal of this project was to find an alternative cup that worked within the behavioral and budgetary constraints of fraternities open to change. We partnered with Sigma Nu and OAPE to pilot OAPE cups in major parties and casual settings. The broad conclusion: the OAPE cups work in place of RSCs and the residents really like them. But: they have a limited lifespan, we still need more usage data, and other houses – all of which have their own nuances – are yet to be addressed.

CURRENT STATUS

- Our partnership with OAPE is sealed

Joe Kaczorowski agreed to distribute flyers with cup deliveries and is still happy offering extra cups to houses like Sigma Nu for testing.

- Sigma Nu responded well

They've been using the cups and they really like them. They also haven't needed any extra dumpster pick-ups, which is great. The chapter has also created a new position, Sustainability Chair, to which the enthusiastic Andrew Quirk was elected. However, they continue to have problem like overflowing trash inside the house, poor sorting, and reversion back to RSCs.

- Other houses are interested, too

Multiple other houses including Sigma Chi have reached out to Sea on their own volition, interested in sustainability. This is promising! I think they'll need some hand-holding, though.

KEY TAKEAWAY: Frats are not committed to using RSCs but rather are willing to use good, functional alternatives like the OAPE cups. Convenience is huge because customs and behaviors are strongly ingrained.

NEXT STEPS

- Go to Ernie's Liquor (3870 El Camino Real)

Ernie's Liquor is the go-to source for kegs and for cups. The problem is they're selling RSCs. Because Ernie's is easy, local, convenient, and baked into the party planning process, frats will buy whatever cups they're supplying. Change the source and we'll change the waste! Talk to whoever is in charge and see if we can get them to sell recyclable cups instead. If they're concerned about price increase, suggest making up for any extra cost by raising the price of the kegs.

- Follow up on flyer distribution

Make sure they get printed and sent with cups in the fall when OAPE delivers cups to houses. Catching houses early in the year would go a long way toward changing behavior since staff and residents are still figuring out how to run things.

- Extend reach to other houses

Continue pursuing sustainability with all housed frats (Kappa Alpha, Kappa Sigma, Phi Kappa Psi, Sigma Chi, Sigma Nu, and Theta Delta Chi). Reach out to Carter if you need help working with them or want to bring them all together for a meeting. You can also extend efforts to self-ops and co-ops that regularly host parties (EBF (happy hour), Kairos (wine & cheese), Haus Mitt (beer & pretzels), Terra (happy hour), French House (crepe night), Casa (pizzeria), etc.).

- Create a sustainable party planning resource

This could be a flyer, a video (see Nick Peters's video in the Supporting Materials section), a website, or whatever is going to be easiest to use. Try to make it general to all possible party contexts but include very specific tips like Amazon links to good recyclable and compostable cups to buy and their price points at different quantities. You could also include cost/benefit comparisons and environmental footprints.

- Measure parties better

Some ideas: photos of corral bins before and after the party, a dedicated bin for just used OAPE cups (with signage), # people at the party, # cups set out, # cups broken, # cups found the next morning, time it took for clean-up, weight and/or volume of waste, sources and types of waste, ideas for mitigating that waste...

- Rally houses together

Explain to them that they could all pitch in for a large bulk order at the beginning of the year, possibly in conjunction with OAPE, to save money. They could collectively buy extra and individually refill their stocks as they break/disappear. To extend life of cups, suggest washing by hand instead of repeatedly subjecting cups to the intense heat of Hobart.

PROJECT TIMELINE

October

Orientation to SSIP and to the landscape of party waste at Stanford
Met with Joe Kaczorowski (Operations Manager at OAPE)
Met with Michael Kim, resident and sustainability champion at Sigma Nu

November

Moved forward with OAPE cups as a possible solution
Met with Joe again for details about the cups

December

Winter break

January

Coordinated the first pilot party with Sigma Nu

February

Officially tried out the cups at Sigma Zoo, Sigma Nu's first all-campus of the year (~500 people)
Made a first draft of the OAPE cup flyer to distribute with the cups

March

Debriefed the party and planned for spring
Spring Break

April

Planned detailed metrics for trying the cups at a large, all-campus spring party
Attempted to coordinate said party
Finalized OAPE cup flyer

May

Wrapped things up
Wrote final report

MEASUREABLE OUTCOMES

- Produced 1 flyer that will reach all houses that OAPE delivers cups to next year (up to 35, counting all Greek houses, cooperative houses, and self-operated houses) to encourage sustainable party planning
- Developed 1 final report with detailed next steps for effective project transition
- Distributed 200 OAPE cups to 1 house to use in place of red solo cups for the last 4.5 months of the academic year, diverting hundreds of RSCs from landfill
- Coordinated 1 pilot party to try out OAPE cups in an all-campus setting with estimated attendance of 500 people
- Met with 5 project stakeholders
 - o Joe Kaczorowski, Operations Manager at OAPE
 - o Sigma Nu's Michael Kim, house sustainability advocate of the past few years ('17)
 - o Sigma Nu's Keyur Mehta, Social Chair i.e. one of the party planners ('17)
 - o Sigma Nu's Andrew Quirk, Sustainability Chair ('19)
 - o Chris Carter, Program Manager for housed fraternities and FSL (Interfraternity Council and the Multicultural Greek Council)

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Teaming up with Joe at OAPE was awesome. It was really cool having his support and perspective and this project wouldn't have gotten nearly as far without his help.

Meeting with Carter was also fun and fascinating. He has a wonderful, very grounded, and very critical perspective of Greek life that was incredibly helpful for me as someone who knows almost nothing about their world.

Overall, my favorite moments were talking with people in fraternities who genuinely seemed to care and wanted to see positive change happen. My first conversation like this was with Michael Kim but I also had similar exchanges with a few friends in TDX that fed me energy.

CHALLENGES & LESSONS

Communication with Sigma Nu was one of the biggest challenges. It was hard to get responses and hard to set meetings, especially toward the end of the year when I was pushing for a second trial party.

It was also difficult to try and capture data about the parties. Parties are not particularly easy to quantify, but it was made even more challenging because the members of Sigma Nu were uncomfortable with me coming to their parties to take notes and photos. They eventually conceded to letting me come take more data in exchange for a refill of free OAPE cups, but never responded to my organizational efforts.

My two biggest lessons:

- 1) Talking to people in person is unbelievably more effective and fun than any other efforts. I really can't encourage this heartily enough. You'll make so much progress this way.
- 2) Behavior change is the biggest obstacle in this project.

RESOURCES & CONTACTS

Me (Cecily Foote)

Feel very free to contact me with any questions or advice about the project
(512) 922-9713

Joe Kaczorowski

He's your go-to for everything OAPE-related, including the cups!
jkacz@stanford.edu

Chris Carter

Reach out to Carter with any fraternity-related troubles or questions
(650) 206-3871 (text is best)

Nick Peters

He heads the house kitchens and has a ton of knowledge about custodial-related issues
nick.peters@stanfordalumni.org / (650) 520-0673

Julie Muir

All-knowing PSSI waste wizard!
juliem@pssi.stanford.edu

Matt Geenen

Row housing building manager and on-the-ground expert of waste statuses at houses
mgeenen@stanford.edu

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

All important documents can be found in this Google Drive folder:

<http://bit.ly/2qW2Ibe>

This includes this report, the OAPE cup flyer, assets like photos and logos, details about the February pilot party, Julie Muir's sustainably party planning flyer for inspiration, and Nick Peters's kitchen cleanliness video, also for inspiration.

I also found an interesting presentation from George Washington University estimating the impact of RSCs. There are no citations or real credibility but it was an interesting find:

<https://prezi.com/j5uc6pwagxki/infamous-red-solo-cup/>