

Continual Cleanup: A Brave New World in Waste Minimization!

Annual Campus Clean Up events have been a part of the Stanford community for many years, providing a seasonal opportunity for buildings to purge excess equipment and other resources that gathers throughout the year. However, as the campus continually evolves both geographically and technologically, our activities and practices must evolve with it. To more effectively manage our resources and encourage an ongoing practice of reuse, the university is ceasing these campus clean up events to explore alternative means that maximize efficiency and sustainability in the disposition of equipment and material.

Rather than encouraging the wholesale disposal of items in massive 'dump' events that foster a culture of waste, we will encourage much more regular reutilization, recycling, and timely disposition practices. The Excess Request application for Department Property Administrators provides a simple, efficient means for the removal of equipment and materials from a department. With some exceptions for furniture and large bulky items, Surplus Sales performs this activity at no cost to departments. Land, Buildings & Real Estate (LBRE), Surplus Property Sales a division of the Property Management Office (PMO), and Peninsula Sanitary Service (PSSI) will continue to partner with the campus community to provide assistance and support for periodic 'deep cleaning' to remove clutter and free up badly needed space. We will be piloting new approaches, such as targeting specific buildings or areas, increasing opportunities for reutilization, and encouraging new ideas and concepts for handling our disposal activities.

Many of these new approaches are already under way, with the launch of the new and improved web site ReUse This site is available to all faculty and permanent staff to post items no longer needed for use in schools and departments, or to post requests for sought items. Surplus Property Sales is proactively keeping items out of the landfill by offering items to other non-profits if no one from Stanford can use the item.

The Sustainability Office is holding semiannual lab-share events to encourage research areas to swap lab supplies with one another in order to maximize reutilization and reduce costs (fall date TBD). The university continues a comprehensive review of disposal processes to find new efficiencies and opportunities for improvement.

While change is often intimidating and worrying, it is also exciting and fresh, so we look forward to exploring new options and prospects as we move forward. More outreach and communications will be forthcoming, so watch this space!