



Two New York Colleges Receive Recycling Grants

ALBANY – Two New York state colleges, Wells College of Aurora and Colgate University of Hamilton, were each recipients of a \$2,500 “College Council Grant” from the New York State Association for Reduction, Reuse and Recycling (NYSAR³), the professional recyclers’ association for New York State. Both schools will use the award to purchase heavy duty, permanent recycling (or combination trash and recycling) bins to enhance current recycling efforts on campus.

The award to Wells College will go toward new color-coordinated blue recycling containers to stand alongside existing (black) trash containers. If funds are available, they will also purchase combined trash/recycling containers for placement in other high traffic outdoor areas on campus. The need for outdoor recycling bins was based upon research in a 2017 Littering Team Project in the *Psychology of Environmental Sustainability* course.

“While we have done a good job of providing waste separation support within our buildings, we have noted issues with our outdoor trash and recycling practices,” according to the application from Wells College. “The school currently has only three, black metal outdoor trash containers, and no outdoor recycling collection bins.”

Wells College has established an effective waste management system inside each academic/office and residential building on campus; developed a scheme to color-code and place trash and recycling containers in convenient areas on campus; and continually offers community education on proper recycling, reduction and reuse.

Colgate University’s award will go toward improving the recycling infrastructure in Alumni Hall (a carry-in, carry-out academic building), by purchasing and installing two centrally located, customized Colgate recycling stations. The customized Colgate recycling stations are sturdy enough that they are unlikely to be removed and are not easily damaged, and will also house all three waste streams available in Madison County: landfill waste, paper recycling, and plastics/glass/aluminum recycling.

The Office of Sustainability conducted four waste audits over the 2017-2018 academic year to examine if Colgate’s recent investment in recycling stations increased recycling rates and minimized waste contamination of the recycling streams. The Bryan Complex residence halls were some of the first to receive customized recycling stations, including clear signage indicating what is and is not recyclable. The results showed that the Bryan Complex did have significantly higher recycling rates and less waste contamination when using well marked custom bins. This suggests that students are willing, and more likely, to follow recycling guidelines when proper signage is present.

“This round of grants went to two state schools, for a total of \$5,000,” noted Kelli Timbrook, president of NYSAR³. “The purchase of permanent, heavy-duty recycling receptacles should help boost recycling efforts on campuses, promoting NYSAR³’s mission of environmental sustainability.”

NYSAR³ established a grant program for New York State colleges and universities several years ago for the purpose of providing up to \$5,000 for seed, or start-up money for recycling/waste reduction/composting programs in public and private colleges and universities. A number of recipients have benefitted financially from the program, to say nothing of the environmental benefits achieved by instituting recycling/waste reduction programs in schools.

The College Council provides a forum for New York's colleges and universities to exchange information on common challenges and best practices. In addition to the grant program, members receive a newsletter, access to a series of college-oriented environmental webinars, the opportunity to participate in regional and statewide meetings both in person and via conference call, and reduced conference registration fees, among other benefits.

NYSAR³, the premiere recycling organization in New York State, provides members with expertise and education on waste reduction, reuse and recycling issues and practices to improve the environment. The group advocates for policies and programs that support environmental sustainability in the Empire State and provides access to a network of individuals and organizations that share ideas about starting and improving reduction, reuse, and recycling programs, as well as information on education and funding. More details are available on their website: www.NYSAR3.org.