Green Events Guide

Purpose:

Events at Whitman College are highly visible, and are a potentially valuable way to educate a wide array of people about sustainable living, in accordance with the 2016 Climate Action Plan’s call for Whitman to "become a beacon of sustainability and climate action in the region". The combined disposed material from all the different events at Whitman makes a significant contribution to net school waste; the purpose of this Sustainable Events Guide is to advise WEB on potential routes to minimize waste production. This guide will help reduce event costs and environmental impacts across the board. In accordance with ASWC and Administrative sustainability goals, this guide falls in line with the Zero Waste Plan, the Climate Action Plan, and Whitman’s core environmental principles. As of 2016, Whitman produced a staggering 201 pounds of waste per student per year. This guide aims to contribute toward reducing this number, in accordance with the Zero Waste Plan, through planning, purchasing, and educational pathways.

Goals of Green Event Guidelines:

Use of this guide should help WEB plan and conduct events in an environmentally and socially responsible manner by reducing waste and greenhouse gas production, minimizing energy and water use, utilizing local and ethical products, and educating attendees about ways to continue sustainable practices outside the bounds of the event.

Guiding questions for planning:

This guide should prompt a more sustainable mentality, which includes asking questions about what variables can be changed to a more environmentally friendly alternative. It’s important to think about the different components of the event, and how they can at once be less wasteful, more cost effective, and have less of an impact on the environment.

- **Materials** - are materials necessary? What goals will they help achieve? Are they durable/reusable?
- **Waste** - what types of waste can be disposed?
- **Food** - where is the food provided at the event sourced from? Where will it be disposed?
- **Transportation** - Can more efficient event transportation be provided?
- **Communication** - Can the event be advertised electronically to the same effect? Is the use of physical materials necessary?
## Materials:

- Focus on advertising electronically rather than with paper
- Strategically place posters in high visibility areas rather than putting flyers on all bulletin boards
- When decorations are necessary, use reusable decorations (e.g. tablecloths, potted plants, or bowls with water and flowers).
- Consider the sourcing of materials, including giveaways. Reusable options are ideal. Aim for products that are locally and USA-made, fair trade, made from recycled materials, and organic.

## Food:

- Gauge the size of the event so as to not over-buy supplies and food
- Eliminate styrofoam packaging
- Encourage attendees to bring reusable napkins. When napkins are provided, ensure they are made from recycled content paper.
- Encourage people to bring their own beverage container. If using disposable cups, provide a marker so that individuals can label their cups for reuse.
- If you provide drinks, avoid single-serving beverages by offering drinks in two-liter bottles or pitchers.
- Put out surplus food for students and colleagues and/or remind individuals ahead of time to bring containers to take food home with them. Alert students of excess food via listserv as an alternative
- If clean-up is necessary, use green cleaners to clean up event space.
- Select a caterer who follows sustainable practices such as local and/or organic food, a serving dish reuse program, eco-friendly dishes, and has a good selection of vegetarian options.
- Choose hors d’oeuvres that can be consumed without utensils or bowls (e.g. finger food).
- Offer primarily vegetarian food. Avoid red meat or unsustainably-sourced seafood.

## Waste:

- Make sure there are recycling bins clearly visible in the room. Label bins with the correct recycling standards, what materials are currently recyclable in Walla Walla.

## Communication:

- Brief all volunteers and staff about eco-friendly aspects of your event so that they explain them to others. Make sure they know where the recycling bins are located in the event space.
- Advertise event as ASWC Green Event Certified and share with attendees actions taken