




6-17-2019

Waste Bin Systems: An Informed Systems Co-Design Project

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Recommended Citation

Somerville, M. M. (2019). Waste Bin Systems: An Informed Systems Co-Design Project. *ICDL2019*, ,
<https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/libraries-articles/112>

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ICDL2019

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November 6–8, 2019 | New Delhi



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STORY TELLING



Waste Bin Systems: An Informed Systems Co-Design Project



Mary M. Somerville | University Librarian | University Libraries, University of the Pacific, Stockton, California, USA | 17 Jun 2019



University of the Pacific's Green Building Policy requires that Commercial Interiors in renovated facilities meet United States Green Building Council (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) "Silver" certification requirements or its equivalent. This collaborative design success story recognizes the important of associated behaviors, throughout the campus ecosystem, to promote sustainability practices. Following three months of planning meetings, discussions, and tours which explored the entire waste life cycle at University of the Pacific, University Libraries received \$25,000 USD from the University's Sustainability Project Investment Fund for waste bin systems. This project supports three goals: 1) reduce resource use, energy consumption, and waste; 2) produce measurable economic, social, and environmental benefits; and 3) further sustainability education, engagement, and outreach activities.

The proposed three-bin system would introduce compost waste collection, centralize waste collection, and establish system standards. More specifically, this project supports three goals: 1) reduce resource use, energy consumption, and waste; 2) produce measurable economic, social, and environmental benefits; and 3) further sustainability education, engagement, and outreach activities. These outcomes necessarily require that custodial staff work with grounds staff to ensure transport of compost – additional to landfill and recycle waste – to a designated campus location. Then sustainability staff and library staff will conduct waste audits, augmented by observation studies, to generate best practices for other campus implementations and educational outreach. Because this is an action research study, modifications will be made throughout 2020, following re-opening of the renovated campus library facility, to continuously refine sustainable high impact outcomes. To ensure continuous learning among the co-design team, University Librarian Somerville will convene quarterly meetings of the campus facilities and sustainability planning group throughout the year, to progressively evolve educational messaging and outreach strategies with associated bin system waste removal and recycle workflows. A final report will recommend campus standards for bin systems and educational practices, fortified by workflow processes.

In addition to generating enduring campus learning outcomes, this waste bin systems project will contribute to organizational learning within University Libraries, the project site. Since 2016, University Libraries has used an evidence-based action research approach, Informed Systems, which combines systems thinking methodologies and informed learning theories for using information to learn. Through inclusive co-design processes, organizational members have built workplace information sharing and knowledge transfer systems, exercised during conceptual, schematic, and construction phases of the facilities' renovation. The waste bin systems initiative, therefore, affords rich opportunities to exercise informed learning to further sustainability, within the local context of repurposed spaces and reinvented services within University Libraries and within the global context of growing awareness and heightened concerns around the world.

For further information, read:

Somerville, M. M. (2015). *Informed Systems: Organizational design for learning in action*. Oxford, England: Chandos Publishing, a subsidiary of Elsevier. ISBN 978-0081001752

Somerville, M. M., Chaudhary, N., Mirijamdotter, A., & Sayyad-Abdi, E. (2019). Informed Systems: 'Designing Together' for 'Learning Together', *Journal of Library Administration*, 59(1), 1-17. doi:10.1080/01930826.2018.1549403

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