



## Sustainability

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# Reducing Waste on Campus, One Piece of Trash at a Time

## UNH Zero Waste Interns contribute to UNH's efforts to minimize waste on campus

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2021

*Cassie Hollasch '22 | English, Writing and Business Administration*

UNH Sustainability Institute's Zero Waste Intern, Chloe Gross '24 has been working to conduct several waste audits, a detailed analysis of UNH waste samples. In other words, Chloe has been getting her hands dirty uncovering what type of waste UNH students, faculty, and staff have been most likely to throw away.

This research is extremely valuable in creating measures to minimize specific types of waste or recycle specific products more efficiently. For

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example, Chloe has been investigating if electronic waste is something that UNH students frequently throw away to analyze if it would be beneficial for the university to develop a better method for recycling these electronics.

Additionally, the waste audits help the interns determine a plan to educate students regarding recycling. Chloe emphasizes that UNH recycles all tin and aluminum cans as well as paper and glass products, but only accepts plastics marked with #1, #2, or #5. Further complicating the recycling process on campus is contamination. If unaccepted plastics are placed in recycling bins, then the entire bin is deemed contaminated. Not only does this mean that all of those recyclables will end up in the landfill; it means that UNH gets charged extra fees for its waste processing. So, to keep tuition costs from rising and to help the university reduce its waste footprint, it is essential that students on campus don't put anything into the recycling bins that is not recyclable, especially plastic bags, other non-recyclable plastics, and food waste. Chloe plans to collect data through four waste audits scheduled for next semester.



George Anderson '22, also a Zero Waste Intern, has been creating and defining a Waste Hierarchy for UNH. The Waste Hierarchy is a comprehensive graphic that helps students learn more about the waste stream and how they can do their part to reduce the waste they produce and to recycle properly.

George plans to incorporate his design into a Zero Waste Student User Guide to help educate the UNH community more on reducing waste. This document will serve as a central location for information on zero waste opportunities at UNH, such as Trash 2 Treasure.

Learn more about UNH's efforts to [reduce waste](#) and how you can be part of the solution!

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