Implementing Standardized Collection Bins
University of Michigan

- Ann Arbor, MI

- 46,000 students

- Public research institution

$1.48B in research expenditures (2017)

Number one public research university in U.S.
National Science Foundation (2016)
Go From This…

To This!
Background

● 2015: Committees convened to identify projects to further UM along towards 2025 sustainability goals.

● 2016: Committee convened to establish bin standards:
  ● Bins
  ● Colors
  ● Signs
  ● Nomenclature
  ● Locations
The Process

- Relied on other schools and best practices research for decisions on standards
- Consensus among students, faculty and staff
- State fire marshal approval
- Small pilot
- Creating rollout team
- Engaging facility managers
- Roll out new bins!
Challenges

● Departmental reorganization after standards set but before roll outs began

● Differing fire marshal/code enforcement opinions

● Balancing upper administrative pressure to “just get the bins out” with need for stakeholder engagement

● Retrofitting existing bins and built-ins

● Difference between spaces and how they are used (e.g. classrooms, breakrooms, athletic facilities, labs, exam rooms, child care, etc.)
Current Status

● 340 buildings rolled out
● 5,200 new bins placed
● 1,000 bins/cabinets retrofitted
● 40 buildings left to roll out
● Anticipated completion: June 2019
● Phase II rollouts occurring as well
Current Results

- **Sustainability culture**: Difficult to measure, achieving goal of project

- **Waste Reduction**: Early results show an overall 2.2% increase in diversion. More accurate, reliable data 1 year+ from rollout

- **Contamination**: Contamination rate in new recycling bins down to 7.74% (from 22.13%).

![Image of recycling bin contents]
Want to learn more? Contact me!

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