

NWSA helps Pacific University “green” its office practices!

Laura Fieselman, an innovative NWSA member serving on Pacific University’s Resource Conservation team, used a community-based social marketing campaign to measurably increase Pacific University staff and faculty’s use of commingled recycling and environmentally preferred purchasing (EPP), and reduce paper consumption.

Laura first determined the baseline of Pacific’s practices by administering a pre-post survey to 227 respondents to assess current knowledge and behaviors; tracking reports of office product purchasing to assess consideration of environmental preferred products; and observing waste and recycling containers to assess volume and contamination of waste stream. Laura then focused on outreach efforts that included campaign branding, administering a “sustainable office pledge”, and organizing a Green Team who would serve as environmental liaisons to students and faculty. Laura also developed a website, created signage, obtained more than 500 additional recycling containers for Pacific University through a partnership with Washington County Recycle at Work program, hosted “Greening Pacific” information meetings, and led 280 college students in volunteer projects (1,015 total student hours) to develop awareness.

Laura’s efforts directly contributed to a deliberate cultural shift by Pacific University towards environmental awareness and minimizing waste. Some student and community education initiatives generated by these efforts produced the First Annual Greening Pacific Fair where vendors demonstrated environmentally friendly products. This event drew over 300 attendees (staff, students, faculty, and Forest Grove community members). Follow-on surveys conducted by Pacific University revealed that 93% of students, faculty, and staff are recycling, which is a significant increase. Additionally, EPP grew exponentially. Although there is still room for improvement regarding waste reduction, Laura left behind several recommendations for improvement including a cost savings analysis, ideas for composting, continued education, and a waste prevention campaign. Laura’s successful service experience and contribution to Pacific University was made possible by the dedication and superior direction from her sponsor, Elaine Jane Cole.

NWSA congratulates Laura for securing a full-time position with Pacific University as the Sustainability Coordinator!