

# Oct. 21 Warehouse trash audit to gauge recycling efficiency

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The Syracuse University Sustainability Division conducted a trash audit during the morning of Oct. 21 at the Warehouse, 350 W. Fayette St., downtown Syracuse.

As a part of SU's *Climate Action Plan* and recycling campaign, the *Sustainability Division's* trash audit covered all seven floors of the Warehouse in order to identify whether the building's students, faculty and staff are correctly recycling discarded items.

"The purpose of this audit is to bring awareness to the campus community about recycling," says Melissa Cadwell, marketing manager for the Sustainability Division. "Specifically, we want to show people the amount of recyclables that are thrown in the trash and the amount of trash that is mixed in with recyclables."

The Sustainability Division collected a bag of trash and a bag of recyclables from each floor. Three employees from the University's *Physical Plant* will sort and separate the materials into five different categories:

- plastic/glass/metals;
- paper/cardboard;
- styrofoam/plastic cups;
- trash in recyclables; and
- recyclables in the trash.

Once these materials are weighed, and this information is recorded, they will set up a display that students, staff and faculty at the Warehouse will be able to see.

"During the recycling display that was held on campus in September we found a lot of items that were in recycling bins that should not have been," Cadwell adds. "Recycling is not as easy as most people think. Not all plastic items are recyclable. Take, for example, the cups that hold coffee or other drinks. These specific cups may have a #1 or a #5 on the bottom but are not recyclable due to the material used. These items are at the end of their lifecycle and need to be thrown out. A good rule of thumb for plastics is if it cracks when you squeeze it, the item is not recyclable."

When asked about ways that people can help avoid improper disposal of plastic fast-food drink cups, Cadwell says, "We recommend that people use reusable mugs and tumblers at the coffee

shops they visit, instead of using the plastic and Styrofoam cups they serve their beverages in, which typically cannot be recycled.”

Students who would like to become involved with the recycling campaign or this event should contact Hannah Morgan at [hkmorgan@syr.edu](mailto:hkmorgan@syr.edu) or the Sustainability Division at [sustain@syr.edu](mailto:sustain@syr.edu).

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