

Corrugated Plastic Recycling Containers

Basic Organizational Information

The CU Recycling Program operates as a partnership between USCU, Facilities Management, and the Housing department. The organization's main mission is to divert as many recyclable materials from the landfill in a cost effective manner, while providing meaningful involvement for students. A combination of full time staff and paid student staff make this program effective through its day to day operations, as well as in its long term goals.

Primary Contact Person

Dan Baril
CU Recycling Program Manager
baril@colorado.edu
303-492-4330

Project Description

The two week time period the beginning of the academic year when students living on campus move into their rooms, known as "Move In", is a time when excessive amounts of cardboard and Styrofoam are collected for recycling. These amounts of cardboard are so excessive that the materials overflow the existing containers. Also, when the Styrofoam is not collected for recycling, it overflows the trash dumpsters, making an unsightly appearance for the first year students and their parents. This overflow also creates additional collection stops, which costs more money and creates more traffic during an already busy time of year.

Normally, CU Recycling adds containers known as "Gaylords", which are extremely large, heavy-duty boxes. These gaylords are provided by EcoCycle and are used to collect this overflow of materials generated during Move In. However, EcoCycle does not have enough gaylords to provide cardboard and Styrofoam collection at each residence hall. Also, many of the gaylords that EcoCycle provides are ripped up, torn, and unsightly. Each year, several of the gaylords end up thrown in the cardboard recycling because they look so bad and cannot function as containers any longer.

The three main goals of this project is to provide a reusable container that will be functional for years to come, provide a visually pleasing recycling program to the incoming students and parents, and provide access for Styrofoam and cardboard recycling for each residence hall dock during move in. To meet these goals, CU Recycling would like to use Coroplast Gaylord recycling containers. Coroplast is a company that creates a corrugated plastic product that looks much like corrugated cardboard, but is made of plastic. Coroplast is rigid, strong, and will last for many years of use. It can be created to our desired specifications, so it can be custom built to resemble the cardboard gaylords that are normally used.

Along with Move In, these Coroplast Gaylords can also be used during our “Reusable Items Drive” during student Move Out.

Project Scope & Timeline

To provide cardboard and Styrofoam collections at each residence hall recycling area (at the dock), 40 coroplast gaylords would be needed. The size of each Gaylord is about 4’x4’x4’ and would have flaps the close the bottom, while leaving to top completely open. The total cost for 40 coroplast gaylords is \$3,300, which is the amount of funding requested from Sustainable CU.

The implementation timeline is expected to be as follows:

- November
 - Prototype requested
 - Prototype approved or denied
 - Second prototype requested (if needed)
 - Second prototype approved for production

- December
 - Production of 40 coroplast gaylords

- January
 - Completion of production
 - Coroplast gaylords put into storage at IPF
 - Coroplast gaylords will be ready for use during Move Out

This project should only take one person to implement. This “Project Manger”, who will either be Dan Baril or Angela Banducci, will be responsible for assessing the prototypes for their functionality and appearance. Once approved, the project manager will make sure production goes as scheduled. The coroplast gaylords will have the ability to fold down and can be stored at the Intermediate Processing Facility (IPF).

Detailed Project Budget

Corrugated Plastic Gaylords	
Item	Cost
4’x4’x4’ Corrugated Plastic Gaylord	\$ 75 each
40 total gaylords	\$ 3,000
Shipping and Handling (%10)	\$ 300
Total	\$ 3,300

Environmental Impact

The coroplast gaylords will provide increased capacity for collecting cardboard and Styrofoam during Student Move In. Through this added collection capacity, CU Recycling will be able to divert even more materials from entering the landfill. Along with putting these materials back into use, there will also be energy savings of recycling these materials rather than producing cardboard and Styrofoam from virgin sources. These energy savings translate in a reduction in carbon emissions, which ties into the President’s Climate Commitment signed by Chancellor Peterson that commits CU to reducing its carbon footprint.

During Student Move Out, these coroplast gaylords will provide more visibility for the Reusable Items Drive. This should increase the participation within the drive, thus diverting more materials from the landfill. These reusable items will be put back into use and sold at the Habitat for Humanity thrift store.

Quality of Life

The quality of life for the CU community is enhanced in a few ways through this project. First, the appearance of the coroplast gaylords will be far more pleasing than the torn up cardboard gaylords that are currently used. The recycling stations at the residence hall docks is often the first thing that students and parents see when they are moving in. By providing a permanent and professional look to recycling, the students and parents will see that recycling is standard and commonplace on the CU campus.

Second, by providing the students at each residence hall with the option to recycle cardboard and Styrofoam, we are not only increase our volumes of recyclables collected, but we are educating these students (and parents) that recycling is the best option for disposing their waste. Many people do not even know that Styrofoam is recyclable, so this opens up their mindset on how they treat all of their other waste.

Saving Money

As an increased collection of recyclable materials leads to a decrease in the amount of trash that needs to be collected, there is a potential savings in the avoided trash disposal cost. However, this avoided trash disposal cost would only be seen if the collection frequency of the trash in the residence halls was also decreased. Since Move In is a time when the campus needs to maintain its pristine visual appearance, it may not be possible to reduce the collection frequency of the trash dumpsters in the residence halls. Trash and recycling totals will be monitored during the first year of implementation of this project to analyze the potential to reduce the collection frequency of the trash.

Project Longevity

It is estimated that the Coroplast Gaylords will last for 5-10 years. This estimate is based on the wear and tear that the gaylords will receive during Move In and Move Out. Since they are only planned to be used twice a year, they should have minimal exposure to the outdoor elements and will remain safe in storage when they are not in use.

These Coroplast Gaylords will be a crucial component on Move In and Move Out and will remain so as long as CU Recycling collects materials during these times. Procedures for use of these gaylords will be passed along to whoever holds the position of Recycling Program Manager.