

Sustainable CU Proposal

Williams Village Sustainable Hydration Project

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1. Summary

a. Background

In the spring semester of 2010, the Baker Residential Academic program collaborated with the Baker Hall Council to fund 500 stainless steel water bottles for the residents and staff of Baker Hall. The intentions were to promote the installation of the hall's brand new water purifier and to educate residents on the importance on zero waste, all the while providing the Baker residents with a unifying patronage to their residence hall.

Just as Baker had the goal of becoming a residence hall more focused upon environmental sustainability, the Williams Village resident halls now have the same intentions. As a resident advisor in Williams Village, I wish to implement a program similar to the one Baker implemented in 2010 by purchasing unique insulated Polar Bottles and a new water filter for the entire area. We (a team of RAs under the supervision of the area coordinator's assistant, Mackenzie Peschka) would then distribute the bottles to the residents who attend sustainability programs in the spring semester of 2012 and a few of the semesters following. To fund this purchase, **we ask for \$10,000 in funding from the Sustainable CU grant. \$5,000 would purchase 1,000 Polar Bottles while the other \$5,000 would go towards CU Housing Facilities so that they may install a new water filter station in Williams Village.**

This will be mentioned later in the feasibility section, but it is important to be emphasized here as well. All other groups involved in this project are aware of this proposal. The distribution of the Polar Bottles is supported by the Hall Directors of Williams Village. In addition, Amin Gheysar (head of CU Housing and Facilities) stated in a meeting that he was looking to install a new water filter in Williams Village, but do so he had to look into funding.

b. Purpose of project

We wish to do this for multiple reasons. These water bottles would be another incentive for Dining Services to remove the plastic single-use water bottles from the Darley Grab-n-Go (Lauren Heising, sustainability director of Dining Services, is aware of this proposal. She says that if it passes, Dining would almost certainly remove the plastic water bottles from the 213 Grab-n-Go).

This project would also promote awareness of the water filters in Darley commons and Williams Village North, as well as complement the future installation of a water purifier in the Stearns complex that is also to be funded as part of this proposal.

The bottles would even encourage residents to attend certain educational programs held in Williams Village, since this is primarily how they will be distributed. We want to do this because it is important to educate residents on the negative externalities of single-use plastic water bottles, as well as topics such as environmental justice and energy reduction. We would use the Environmental Center as a primary resource for these means of education, sharing the goals of the Ecenter with members of Residential Life.

Making the actual shift from disposable water bottles toward filling reusable ones is a visible goal. However, on top of that it is important to shift entire mindsets towards sustainable behavior in this living and learning community. **Mainly, Williams Village's intentions of being an environmentally-themed living community would be supported by the provision of these water bottles, helping to put all residents in the proper environmental consciousness.**

c. Innovation

While water bottles have been distributed to resident halls in past years (Baker, Libby) never before has such a program been implemented at such a large scale, nor with such unique and high-quality water bottles. In addition, I have not heard from any Williams Village staff member who can recall a water bottle program to occur in that area.

Williams Village is seeking to be a sustainable living community consisting of almost 2,000 residents living among four resident halls. This program appropriately impacts residents of the entire community, being one of the most large-scale sustainability programs in recent years among CU resident halls.

2. Project Layout

a. When the projects would take place

The water bottles would begin to be distributed early in the spring 2012 semester.

As for the water filter, it is unknown from CU Housing and Facilities of when they will be able to do the installation. Since all costs would be paid for through this grant, it is expected that the installation would feasibly take place in a time period that would make the filter **usable before the end of the Spring 2012 semester**. At its earliest, the installation could occur over the upcoming winter break. This is only an estimate, as the time of installation has not been clarified with Amin Gheysar (head of CU Housing and Facilities) since he hasn't yet obtained funding for the project.

b. Layout

If granted the money, I will do a custom design for the Polar Bottles that incorporates Williams Village. I would receive a sample water bottle to ensure it is proper, and then I would order the rest of the Polar Bottles before the semester's end. The design would likely state "I heart Will Vill", except with an upside down leaf in place of the heart. The design is not finalized.

In the upcoming Spring semester we would plan events at which the Williams Village RAs may distribute the Polar Bottles. Events would consist of educational or interactive programs oriented towards sustainability or social justice and would be arranged by teams of RAs across Will Vill, as part of every RA's job title is to plan such programs. To keep track of the bottles, sheets listing every Williams Village resident will be kept to check off those who have already received their Polar Bottle.

I would like to clarify that the RAs won't be giving the educational presentations. We will utilize the availability of professionals from the University colleges, Environmental Center, and from other companies such as Eco-Cycle.

c. Feasibility

This project is easily possible due to the committed staff of resident advisors and hall directors in Williams Village. A team of sustainability liaisons from each hall meets biweekly to plan sustainability projects in the community, and this team would help manage the bottles and help coordinate sustainability programs.

The installation of the water filter is also feasible. Amin Gheysar stated that he is looking into installing new filters in Williams Village, and that it was only a matter of funding the project.

This project is fully supported by the staff of Residential Life and of Environmental Services, allowing it to follow up without objections.

3. Student Involvement

This entire program would be focused around student involvement, as a primary goal in any resident hall is to educate the students about sustainable behavior.

a. What makes Williams Village ideal for student involvement

Williams Village is by far the most inclusive area of CU resident halls, housing 1/3 of the freshman class who all use the same facilities (dining hall, rec center, buff bus). Being such a close-knit community, this gives promotion of sustainability much more potential than any other living community. In addition, the newly constructed Williams Village North is a Platinum LEED certified resident hall that also adds feasibility due to the awareness and resources it provides.

b. How the students are already involved

The Stearns West and Stearns East hall councils have stated that they would love for a triple-filter water station to be installed in Stearns Central. Members of these hall councils also stated that they would like to see the single-use water bottles go, but acknowledge the convenience they may provide for some residents. However, all agreed that the provision of free Polar Bottles, as well as raising awareness of the currently available water filters in WVN and Darley Commons, would be ideal.

c. How students will be involved during the program

Students are the focus of this program. They will help implement it as well as be educated by it. The Hall Council Eco-Chairs of Stearns East and Williams Village North, Marelle Davey and Jessie Stanek, respectively, have agreed to plan programs to help promote this program. This could be through the funds of the hall council as well, or through funds of RAs. Students will also be involved by receiving their Polar Bottles at educational programs on sustainability.

d. Social equity

CU Residential Life's does everything it can to create a comfortable learning and living community for every resident regardless of gender, sexual affiliation, race, ethnicity, beliefs and physical ability. This program will be no different. In fact, part of this program will seek to educate the residents on the facts of environmental injustice.

4. Budget

a. Price of Polar Bottles

For the upcoming NACURH 2012 conference (NACURH stands for National Association of College and University Resident Halls), the Polar Bottle company agreed to provide 2000 to 3000 of their 24 oz. custom design, insulated bottles for five dollars each. The original price for these bottles, when ordered in large quantity, was \$6.50 per bottle.

Adnan Gazibara, sales manager of Polar Bottle, said that they would be willing sell the bottles for the Williams Village program for the same price of five dollars each. These bottles would be a co-brand, meaning that one side will be the custom logo and the other side will be the Polar Bottle logo.

This purchase will be tax exempt since it will be made through one of Res Life's A Cards. In addition, we will save money on shipping costs by picking up the bottles at the Polar Bottle headquarters (5637 Arapahoe Avenue in Boulder) rather than sending them through the mail. As such, purchasing 1,000 24 oz., custom insulated polar bottles would come down to \$5,000 exactly. (I did not include a spreadsheet for the budgets since they were so simple)

1 custom, 24oz. insulated Polar Bottle	\$5.00
Tax	\$0.00
Shipping	\$0.00
Total price for 1,000 bottles	<u>\$5,000</u>

Source: Adnan Gazibara (head sales manager of Polar Bottle), adnan@polarbottle.com.

b. Price of water filter

Amin Gheysar claimed that he was looking into providing funding for new water filters in Williams Village, but to aid this process I am applying a section of this grant towards that cause. This money would go directly to CU Housing and Facilities so that they may use it to install a triple-filter water station (like the one in Darley Commons and next to the Farrand Grab-n-Go) in the proper location in Williams Village, ideally Stearns Central.

As for the cost of the water station, I am using the information provided in a 2008 Sustainable CU proposal by CU Housing and Dining Services titled “Filtered Water Stations for Grab-n-Go operations”. In that report, the approximate cost for one water station was as follows;

Water Filtration System	\$1,000
Water Filters	\$500
Fabrication of Cabinets	\$2,000
3 Faucets/Spouts	\$360
Plumbing Changes	\$500
Installation	\$500
Total Cost for One Station	<u>\$4,860</u>

Source: Proposal: Filtered Water Stations for Grab-n-Go operations, CU Housing and Dining Services, January 20, 2008, <http://ecenter-old.colorado.edu/files/b060e95bac74efce3280006eb5f4836f63bafd1a.pdf>

c. Total Budget –

1,000 Polar Bottles	\$5,000
One triple-filter water station	\$4,860
Total Cost of Project	<u>\$9,860</u>

d. Matching Funds

Both the Stearns East and Stearns West Hall Councils have agreed to grant \$100 each to help fund some extra water bottles. This comes down to \$200, which would be enough to help cover any change in costs for the newly installed water filter. This would include future maintenance costs.

5. Environmental Impacts

a. Bottled water reduction

It is commonly known that bottled water is an unsustainable, costly and unhealthy method of hydration. Though bottled water is more often recycled than not, at least at CU, it is better to avoid consumption completely. For this reason, many parties here at CU are moving to support a campus free of bottled water.

213 (the Grab-n-Go in Darley Commons in Williams Village) is the only CU Grab-n-Go that still provides bottled water. As a rough experiment on Thursday, November 3rd, I sat and watched thirty customers receive meals at the 213. Out of these thirty customers, six chose a bottled water as their side (customers are allowed 3 sides per swipe, and a drink counts as a side). The employee at the register was asked how many customers are served per day, and she answered 600 on a slow day and 800 on a crowded day (the employee is able to calculate this number upon closing). This makes it probable that **about 100 water bottles are distributed (on a slow day) per day at the 213 Grab-n-Go.** In addition, according to Dan Baril (Environmental Center Recycling Program Manager), campus wide

recycling has approximately 40% diversion rates while residential trends are half of that.

To remedy this problem, I seek to provide residents with high-quality, reusable water bottles to Will Vill residents who may not have one. In addition, much of the program involves education of the negative qualities of bottled water as well as promotion of water filter stations. Residents would be encouraged to fill their bottles at the two water filters in Will Vill, one being in Darley Commons near the 213 and the other in Williams Village North. Ideally, residents would shift away from using disposable bottles.

I mentioned this proposal to Lauren Heising, the sustainability director of Dining Services. She asked me to write a separate proposal to Dining Services to request that, if I am granted this Sustainable CU funding, the 213 and the Village Market remove bottled water from retail. Lauren mentioned that Dining would definitely consider this. As such, **if this proposal passes and if Dining Services agrees, bottled water will almost entirely be eliminated from Williams Village.** CU would be another step towards having a campus that does not support the mass retail of bottled water.

Note that Polar Bottles are free of Bisphenol A. and Phthalate, and are also sold and manufactured locally in Boulder. Because of the company's close proximity, **Polar Bottles may literally be the lowest impact water bottle that can be purchased by CU.**

Also, while I'm unable determine the exact impact, we know that if students choose reusables and utilize the water refill station, CU saves money on shipping, packaging, waste collection, waste disposal, maintenance of bins, and other variables that use petroleum and increase campus emissions.

b. Education

Since resident halls seek to educate students of issues revolved around sustainability and social justice, this program will help integrate the goals of both the Ecenter and Residential Life.

In 2010 in Baker Hall, Dr. Lisa Barlow of the Baker Residential Academic Program gave a presentation to inform of the externalities of bottled water

consumption. This program had an enormous turnout at more than 50 residents who received stainless steel water bottles afterwards. Modeling this program, Williams Village wishes to do a series of educational programs.

As an incentive, the Polar Bottles will be handed out to residents who attend sustainability or social justice programs at Williams Village. Professors from the University as well as professional workers from the Environmental Center will be asked to present at programs in the main lobby of Williams Village North and in Stearns Central covering topics such as zero waste, energy reduction and environmental justice (all subjects affiliated with bottled water). These programs will be heavily advertised across Williams Village. Programs already in planning for next semester are asking Dr. Barlow to do another presentation, as well as asking Dale Ekart of Eco-Cycle to do a presentation on composting.

6. Longevity

a. Bottles

It is expected that less than a third of the Polar Bottles will be distributed in the Spring 2012 semester while the rest will be distributed in years following. This is based on the fact that Baker hadn't handed out its last steel water bottle until the Fall semester of 2011, a year and a half after the program began. I would ensure that the bottles are not handed out randomly so that only those who need or want the bottles will receive them, and no resident will receive more than one bottle. This allows us to continue the program into oncoming semesters, adding to the longevity of the program. Beginning with Spring 2012, **the Polar Bottles are predicted to be distributed for four semesters, impacting three generations of Will Vill residents.**

b. Water filter station

The **water filter is expected to function for 10-15 years.** This is according to the 2008 "Filtered Water Stations for Grab-n-Go operations"

Sustainable CU proposal by Housing and Dining. (<http://ecenter-old.colorado.edu/files/b060e95bac74efce3280006eb5f4836f63bafd1a.pdf>)

c. Longevity of educational effect

However, the true effect of longevity will show through education. Education is extremely important because it may raise awareness towards issues that a majority of students would not come into contact with during their college career, even at CU. These presentations bring residents to reconsider their actions not only in waste reduction, but in every area of sustainability. This type of awareness slowly increases over time, and stays with individuals for years to come.

For example, prior to Baker's program my freshman year, most of my peers and I were not aware of the harm of bottled water. The overall immensity of Baker's new water filter, and the message sent across by the steel water bottles and Dr. Barlow's presentation, affected me as the largest impact of all. Now because of that program, I seek to spread it to oncoming generations of CU freshmen. Residents will realize that bottled water isn't any healthier than tap water, and that it is harmful towards the environment. They will realize that changing this is an easy habit to get into by utilizing reusable water bottles. These behavior and lifestyle changes make a significant impact, especially when we start young in a student's college career.