

Johns Hopkins University: Green Events Task Force Implementation Plan

Vision

The goal of the Green Events Task Force was to collaboratively define sustainable event planning for the Johns Hopkins University Homewood campus, and identify best practices for consistent coordination across campuses and event type. Together we defined what a sustainable event at Johns Hopkins can and should mean; evaluated unique and shared opportunities for event planning and promotion; considered ways to leverage their collective efforts to achieve a greater impact, and assessed how to measure progress. The group reached consensus on a **goal of zero waste university-hosted events by 2020**. A green event is one that is planned in a way that minimizes waste, uses resources responsibly, and considers environmental sustainability from procurement to attendee engagement. A zero-waste event is one in which all of the waste generated is either recycled or composted – zero goes to the incinerator. In order to achieve a goal of zero waste university hosted events there are a number of actions and strategies to implement, in key areas and stages.

This implementation plan is the combination of outcomes and actions developed by three working groups, each focusing on various areas along the strategy spectrum. These various steps were assimilated into this cumulative strategic implementation plan, to provide guidance and structure for continuing years of work toward a goal of consistent and robust green events.

1. The **Resources & Infrastructure working group** identified the resources and systematic opportunities beneficial for hosting consistent, sustainable events of any scale or format, on the Homewood campus, including logistical considerations, additional or new infrastructure, and research and strategic leadership on planning components, such as sustainable vendor choices.
2. The **Planning & Education working group** identified needs and opportunities relating to the event coordination of various scales and formats. They will consider the shared challenges, as well as unique components, materials or mechanisms that would streamline planning to align with sustainability goals, including identifying guides that aid in caterer, venue or product selection, and integrating sustainability into existing resources, trainings or workshops.
3. The **Marketing & Outreach working group** identified needs and opportunities relating to the awareness of the campus community on how to plan sustainable events, as well as promoting the collective efforts of individuals or departments in hosting lower impact activities of all scales. This will involve promoting planning resources, branding and marketing of green events, and recognizing key players and partners for their commitment, making green events recognizable by the campus community at large.

Desired Outcomes

Encourage use of more sustainable products for programming: From pre-planning to hosting, foster the required relationships and facilitate the necessary conversations on options and incentives in order to shift purchases to products made of more sustainable materials, sourced and produced more sustainably, and/or of more practical long-term use, such as t-shirts, branded items or giveaways, event materials like programs or signage.

Streamline success through inventory and infrastructure: Compile a list of needs for a green events library, to consist of physical items to be borrowed or deployed in identified locations (such as equipping frequently used spaces with diversion receptacles) to make logistical coordination easier.

Develop a Robust Library of Resources and Guides: Identify various needs, and either develop new or refine existing sustainability guides, webpages, workshops, trainings or other items to create a

comprehensive toolkit that aids any event planner in any aspect of planning or coordination.

Establish Consistency: Develop a concise, but comprehensive definition of green events. Outline best practices and expectations for event planners, and identify criteria for classifying green events. Longer-term this could be developed into a green event certification program to encourage participation.

Brand Green Events for Easy Recognition: Develop branding and associated marketing materials to help advertise and recognize green events. Cohesive branding will create a sense of community around planning, hosting and attending green events.

Foster a New Norm: Include information about planning or participating in green events within existing resources or platforms,

such as workshops or trainings. In time, integrating into these practices with help establish green events as the standard, conventional process.

Educate the Campus Community: Construct a communications plan and develop materials to promote green events and green event planning resources to support campus-wide and department level understanding and participation. Set an example that can be emulated, and provide tools and support for replicating green event planning practices across the board.

Create Shared Value: Incorporate recognition of green events or green event planners into existing award ceremonies or recognition programs, to put it on par with other values and achievements acknowledged at the department or university level.

Action Plan

The table on the following pages lists the initial actions that can be taken over the next five years to move toward the vision for zero waste university hosted events on the Homewood campus, by 2025, at Johns Hopkins. This list of actions aims to serve as a platform for working groups as they begin to outline necessary steps and in turn, implement the vision. This list can be modified over time. Progress toward these actions will be evaluated periodically through the Task Force.

Outcome	Action
Establish consistency	1. Define criteria for a qualifying green event.
Foster a new norm	1. Integrate into existing web platforms. 2. Incorporate search feature or filter on main university events calendar. 3. Integrate green event planning information into workshops and trainings. 3a. Identify general event planner venues in which green components can be incorporated/highlighted. 3b. Develop and execute an interactive lunch presentation to demonstrate a green event
Green event branding	1. Develop branding for green events for promotion and recognition.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Develop process and mechanisms for green event recognition. 3. Identify social media strategy for green event recognition.
Create shared value	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Integrate recognition of green events/event planners at existing awards programs. 2. Highlight green events/event planners through other university channels when and where possible, to encourage greater awareness of these contributions.
Educate the campus community	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop stock language and materials for event planners. 2. Identify and develop materials for marketing green events: prior to. 3. Identify and develop materials for marketing green events: at event. 4. Develop communications plan for promotion of green events planning resources.

Encourage use of more sustainable products for programming	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify categories of frequently used services that offer green alternatives 2. Research sustainable vendors for select services 3. Set up a meeting with Supply Chain Shared Services to determine the process for negotiating preferred pricing with selected vendors
Streamline success through inventory and infrastructure	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify additional locations for permanent event bins 2. Identify commonly used resources/services that have green alternatives and could be promoted or shared (e.g. water coolers, vendors, event waste monitors, etc.) 3. Determine what the green alternative is for each and what information needs to be acquired and action steps executed to utilize/share said resources 4. Compile resources and contact information into a green event resource library
Develop a Robust Library of Resources and Guides	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revise the Green Event Planning (condense) and Green Caterers Guide (expand) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1a. Re-examine existing criteria for preferred green caterers and amend as needed based on current sustainability goals 1b. Develop an online survey to send to existing and potential caterers 1c. Research additional caterers in the area that have not been contacted

	<p>regarding green catering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">1d. Send survey link to caterers and compile results to establish a new preferred green caterer list1e. Design a "JHU Green Caterer" certificate to give to caterers that meet criteria2. Develop additional resources to provide guidance on other planning components, like local vendors who provide sustainable options for printing, t-shirts, and other event needs3. Unify web presence to have all resources co-located on OoS website