How To Live More Sustainably as a UCS

By Victoria Penate - November 8, 2018

When it comes to trading common practices for more environmentally friendly alternatives, UC innovation and encouragement which has propelled many students to take a closer look at the

However, even upon making a conscious effort to reduce negative impacts, it can be difficult to either because doing so will challenge deeply-entrenched habits or because it isn’t clear what all

Some of these potential alternatives have been compiled below.

Freshen up the air in your room with clean air plants
Whether it be from living in university residence halls or in I.V., most students will experience sharing a relatively small space at some point during their college years. Anyone who has done so can attest to the reality of the stale, low quality air that such an arrangement can often produce.

The good news is that this problem can be assuaged without taking the common (and not very eco-friendly) option of perpetually running an air conditioning unit or purifier. Instead, a household with low air circulation should consider keeping a clean air plant, many of which are fairly easy to care for (including spider plants and chrysanthemums).

In a 1989 study conducted by NASA, it was concluded that “plants can play a major role in removal of organic chemicals from indoor air.” While this study was prompted by the need to purify the highly-cramped space station workplace, it resulted in a discovery that may help to freshen up any living space and prevent unnecessary use of energy while doing so.

**Consider investing in a reusable container for your coffee**

In the lecture halls and study spaces of UCSB, reusable water bottles are in every direction you look with water filling stations throughout the campus, it is safe to say that single-use water bottles are on their way to obscurity in this community.

However, despite progress made in eliminating waste from water packaging, single-use hot beverage cups remain a common sight. Many mistake their coffee cup for a recyclable item due to its paper-heavy appearance. However, it is not always the case, due to the cup’s composition of plastic and paper.

**Consider trying out a drying rack for your laundry**

While washers and dryers have become ubiquitous fixtures in the modern American household, individuals to consider whether it is necessary to machine-dry their laundry.

In a climate where days often bring adequate sunlight and ventilation, the use of a drying rack can save you money on your utility bill (or domestic stress over whose turn it is to use the dryer).

**Buy in bulk**

One advantage of living in a college town is that most households are made up of anywhere from four to ten residents — the ideal setup for coordinating bulk purchases.
From household necessities to grocery items, there is a variety of opportunities to reduce waste by buying in bulk. Most overtly, the practice reduces the amount of packaging material involved in your consumption of the product. In addition, whether by allowing the product to last you longer or allowing you to share, buying in bulk has the potential to reduce the transportation impact of multiple trips to the store.

This option can become burdensome if attempted with fresh produce or other perishable food items — which are often wasted due to inaccurate planning, and should be purchased with a certain degree of care — but bulk purchasing works well with non-perishables such as canned, dry, or otherwise preserved foods as well as home maintenance supplies.

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