

# QUARTERLY REPORT

PHOENIX SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVE | WINTER '22



# OUR MISSION

*To promote environmental awareness and integrate sustainable practices throughout UChicago and surrounding communities .*

PSI aims to:

- Expand our network to enhance partnerships and collaborative opportunities
- Build an open, inclusive, and inviting community
- Promote project productivity through workshops, leadership trainings, and accountability measures
- Provide members with necessary skills to accomplish tangible outcomes in project work
- Encourage creativity in addressing issues and designing solutions to environmental problems

# OUR PROJECT GROUPS

*Centered upon a project group structure and partnership model, we create lasting change and impact by getting directly involved in planning, directing, and executing initiatives. Our project groups address issues of specific interest to our members and are relevant to local sustainability needs.*

This quarter, PSI has 8 project groups:

1. Campus Composting
2. Campus Waste Reduction
3. Green Data
4. Environmental Education
5. Hyde Park Business Partnerships
6. Public Engagement
7. Science, Art, and Sustainability
8. Service

# EXECUTIVE BOARD

## PROJECTS

- Connected with other student-lead **environmental organizations** in Chicago.
- Developed a working group for a **case competition** that will take place in spring quarter.
- Created a new board position: **Professional Development and Outreach Coordinator**.
- Organized an **Earth Week** working group for Earth Day programming.

## OUTCOMES

- Planned and raised funds a month-long sustainability **case competition** in partnership with **Ørsted**, a Danish green energy company, and the Energy Policy Institute at Chicago (**EPIC**).
- Connected with **Harris Sustainability Initiative** at the Harris School of Public Policy and **Student Environmental Alliance** at Loyola with aims of future collaboration and site tours.
- Held **2 PSI Member Talks**: "Eco-Terrorism" by Emilio Levins and "UChicago's Campus Forest" by Hannah Ritcher and Alex Torres.
- Hosted guest speaker Ken Foreman from the Marine Biological Laboratory to discuss wastewater research and study away options for PSI members.
- Held **3 study breaks** throughout the quarter.
- Organized a **"PSI Trivia"** social with environmental and RSO-history-themed questions.
- Created Earth Week programming supporting the **Midway Plaisance Advisory Council** (MPAC) and encouraging the University to **divest** from fossil fuels.

# CAMPUS COMPOSTING

*Campus Composting works to reduce organic waste produced by the University community through public education about waste sorting and the implementation of composting infrastructure on and off-campus.*

## PROJECTS

- Expanding our **off-campus subsidy program** through our partnership with The Urban Canopy. We signed up new residents and planned an in-person **information session** for the beginning of Spring Quarter to increase reach for second years moving off-campus in June. The session will cover our **waste sorting best practices curriculum** and educate students about the **environmental benefits of composting**.
- Implementing an **opt-in dorm composting initiative**. We received a Green Fund Grant and administrative approval to implement our program in collaboration with Urban Canopy, and we are on track to begin composting services in **Renee Granville Grossman Residential Commons** in the first weeks of spring quarter.

## OUTCOMES

- Have **30 off-campus residences** enrolled in our off-campus subsidy program.
- Formally met with Chartwells, The Office of Sustainability, UChicago Dining, Facilities Services, and Housing to finalize logistics and receive official go-ahead for on-campus pilot program.
- Produced **promotional materials** to publicize the off-campus program and on-campus pilot initiative to garner interest and encourage participation.
- Walked through the loading dock with UChicago Dining and Chartwells representatives to finalize composting receptacle handoff logistics.
- Connected with **Phoenix Farms** to consider the possibility of placing a communal composting receptacle in their community garden.
- Produced **educational stickers** for on-campus initiative buckets to prevent contamination.

# CAMPUS WASTE REDUCTION

*Campus Waste Reduction reduces different forms of waste campus-wide. The group works with campus administrators, campus facilities, residential houses, and the student population to raise awareness about sustainability and take actionable steps to reduce waste.*

## PROJECTS

**PSI X Moda Mag Pop-Up Thrift Shop:** a 3-day pop-up thrift shop fundraiser for **People for Community Recovery**, a local environmental justice organization, in collaboration with **MODA Magazine**, March 3rd-5th.

- Organized clothing collection over 6th Week in Reynolds club to collect **second-hand clothing inventory**.
- Created materials to **educate shoppers** on sustainable fashion.
- Donated excess clothing to **Brown Elephant**, where all proceeds go towards Howard Brown Health, which supports health and fund-care for uninsured and under-insured, notably **uplifting LGBTQ+ communities**.

**Single-use plastic reduction in campus dining and cafes**

- Worked with UChicago Dining and Student-run coffee shops (through Student Centers) to promote **compostable plastic alternatives** and **reusable drink containers**.

## OUTCOMES

- Educated shoppers on sustainable fashion through a detailed **Google Maps QR link** organizing various **locations of thrift and vintage stores** in Chicago, promoting and streaming the **documentary *The True Cost***, and graphics displaying statistics on the **environmental and social cost of mass creating clothing**.
- **MODA magazine** helped with graphic design for social media, event promotion, and styling display outfits
- **Success:** starting March 1, 2022, UChicago Dining transitioned plastic utensils and bags in Hutchinson Commons, Maroon Market, and Midway Market, and cafes operated by dining to **compostable cutlery and compostable plastic bags**.
- Continued communication with **Parker McWatters** of student-run coffee shops.
- Researched and proposed compostable **plastic cup alternatives** for student-run coffee shops; wrote up proposal for reinstatement of **reusable mug program**.

<b>1,020</b>	lbs. of clothes collected
<b>539</b>	Transactions
<b>1,441</b>	Items sold
<b>\$4,808</b>	Raised
<b>130</b>	Person line on opening day

# ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

*Environmental Education engages with students in the Chicago Public School system and spreads knowledge about various topics related to the environment, our relationship with it, and sustainability as a whole. The goal is to enlighten students about ways that they can interact with and help our planet.*

## PROJECTS

- Creating new **presentations and learning materials weekly** on a range of topics surrounding sustainability. We integrated **hands-on activities** into the curriculum to facilitate learning and engagement with the week's topic. Each presentation is tailored to several different age groups, reflective of goals such as **environmental careers** for high school students and a more general overview for middle and elementary aged students.
- Teaching **weekly lessons** to groups in Ray Elementary and Gary Comer Youth Center. In Ray Elementary, a pair of groups members taught a 6th grade class of **25 students** while in Gary Comer Youth Center, a pair taught a group of **10 high school students**.
- Developing a platform to distribute our learning materials and presentations to a larger audience through a **webpage and social media**.

## OUTCOMES

- Collected a pool of 10+ presentations tailored to audiences in elementary, middle, and high school, and are creating/modifying new presentations every week.
- Taught weekly lessons at both Ray Elementary School and Gary Comer Youth Center.

# GREEN DATA

*The overall mission of Green Data is to merge student's passions for environmentalism with their interest in data science in order to cultivate a new perspective in students as they embark to tackle issues of sustainability in their professional or personal lives. Along the way, we will produce results that have a tangible effect on UChicago and the community at large.*

## PROJECTS

Collaborating with the **Environmental Frontiers Project** from the Mansueto Institute of Innovation to improve the university's **data transparency** by producing a centralized **energy dashboard**.

Analyzing 10 years of **Divvy usage data** within Hyde Park to highlight the potential areas for improvement and explore possible implementation of a more **comprehensive Divvy program** at UChicago

Established a partnership with **Urban Rivers**, a Chicago-based nonprofit working to build the **Wild Mile** (a conversion of unused industrial canals into ecological sanctuaries). Our ongoing project will create **data visualizations** for scientific and public audiences and provide **data organization recommendations**.

## OUTCOMES

### Environmental Frontiers Data Transparency

- Compiled a **spreadsheet** on 23 higher education institutions' energy dashboards and qualitatively **evaluated** dashboards.
- Produced a **rubric** based on our research that evaluates an institution's dashboard, and our next step is to produce a **survey** to gather the university community's thoughts on UChicago's current sustainability data
- Met with **Cheslea Pauga**, one of the leaders of EF, to organize steps going forward. We plan to meet with **Facilities** during Week 2 of Spring Quarter to showcase the rubric and the survey data from the previous week.

### Divvy Data Analysis

- Found and cleaned public-use data on **Divvy bike rides**, weather data, and Chicago car rideshare.
- Produced several analyses of Divvy ridership in **Hyde Park** in 2021, including ride volume, times of day and weather conditions, by membership and bike type.

### Urban Rivers

- **Visited** the Wild Mile in-person and met with the Urban Rivers **Director of Research**.
- Received **four data sets**, ranging from fish counts to qualitative bird watching logs, that span a timeline of five years. We are preparing to conduct preliminary analyses of these data sets.

# HYDE PARK BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

*HPBP aims to support and partner with businesses in Hyde Park in order to promote sustainable practices.*

## PROJECTS

### Collaboration with Saucy Porka

- Drafted and submitted the **Amber Grant** application for **Saucy Porka** based on the materials from their past grant applications
- Researched **sustainable utensils and soup containers** for Saucy Porka

### Student Plant-Based Discount Week

- Reached out to **~20 local restaurants** to partner in a **student discount week** to promote sustainable dining choices in Hyde Park

### Environmental Consulting with Hyde Park Salons

- Compiled a comprehensive list of Hyde Park salons and reached out to **~10**
- Researched and compiled **sustainable swaps/practices** salons can implement

## OUTCOMES

### Collaboration with Saucy Porka

- Saucy Porka's owner **submitted the Amber Grant application** using our draft.
- Sent over a list of **sustainable utensils options**; Saucy Porka's owner said that she would review it with her managers

### Student Plant-Based Discount Week

- Partnered with **5 restaurants** (Cafe 53, Snail Thai, Litehouse Grill, True North, and Saucy Porka) to provide **discounts from 10-20%**.
- Created a **raffle** where people could upload their receipts and be one of 5 winners to choose an item up to **\$20** from the Packagefreeshop

### Environmental Consulting with Hyde Park Salons

- Partnered with **The UpScale Salon**: brainstormed and began researching **sustainable swaps** for cleaning and hair products, and funding **composting** of hair clippings and other waste
- Brainstormed a potential Spring Quarter collaboration with **MODA Magazine**, where models wear thrifted or sustainable clothing and HPBP's partnered **salons** style the models' hair.





# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

*Public Engagement aims to corral greater interest in general environmental news and concerns. By introducing more students to climate change news and stories of the wonders of life, Public Engagement can infuse widespread appreciation for the natural world and for the paramount importance of our current environmental crisis to the daily lives of more UChicago students.*

## PROJECTS


This quarter, we focused on spreading awareness of the **divestment movement** at UChicago. We partnered with the **Environmental Justice Task Force** to learn more about divestment, and helped them create graphics for Valentine's Day. Our main goal with divestment was to create a **speaker event**, showcasing what divestment is, how divestment has worked at other institutions, and how it could be implemented at UChicago. We also **created posters** to put around campus in order to further awareness on campus to those students who may not be aware of the petition thus far.

We also began posting '**Meet a Member Mondays**' on Instagram, designed to attract more followers to our Instagram page to further sustainability awareness on campus.

## OUTCOMES

**Donuts and Divestment** reached **119 people** on Facebook and got 46 registered. In attendance we had around **20-30 people**, as people kept filtering in and out.

With **5 virtual panelists** (Rutgers University, UW Madison, Responsible Alpha, Stanford) and a PSI + EJTF moderator, the attendees learned more about **divestment at other universities** and gained encouragement and tips on divestment at UChicago! Our panelists were very supportive of the campaign efforts so far and knowledgeable, and ranged in terms of fields (professors, students, financial advisors) allowing for a varied perspective.



# SCIENCE, ART, AND SUSTAINABILITY

*SAS aims to find creative ways to engage with Hyde Park and the UChicago community by combining science with artistic projects to create meaningful discussions and reflections on our role in current sustainable practices.*

## PROJECTS

### Logan Center Art Installation

- We applied for and were awarded the **Logan Center Collaboration Grant** to create a nature-themed **art installation** using materials recycled from student waste. Logan Center will showcase the installation in Spring Quarter, and it will depict an underwater scene made from **repurposed student recyclables transformed into marine organisms**, such as plastic utensils into fish skeletons and plastic bottles into jellyfish.

### MODA Collaboration

- We are working with **MODA designer Khadijat Durojaiye** to create sustainable fashion pieces for the **MODA spring show**. The pieces will utilize biodegradable fabrics, natural dyes, rug tufting techniques, and have a unifying mushroom theme.

## OUTCOMES

- Created a working group to write an **Op-Ed for The Maroon**, titled "**Composting Must Be UChicago's Next Green Step.**" The article was in the Maroon's February Sustainability Issue
- Awarded the **\$300 to \$500** Logan Center Collaboration Grant for Spring Quarter
- Sketched an ocean-themed art installation, created a timeline, and began collecting waste products to craft with from Woodlawn and apartment recycling bins
- Designed **3 sustainable fashion pieces** for the MODA fashion show in spring quarter
- **Researched** sustainable fashion practices to implement for the project, including natural dyes, wool yarn, thrifting sources, and sewing/tufting methods

# SERVICE

*The mission of the service group is to get students excited about sustainability-focused volunteer opportunities on campus and in the surrounding community. The service group can provide simple and enjoyable events to demonstrate to students that small actions can contribute to sustainability in their neighborhoods, and that serving others is more accessible than they might think and can become a regular part of their lives.*

## PROJECTS

### Love the Earth Chocolate Fundraiser

- Organized a chocolate sale on February 24th-25th to raise funds in order to buy the book, **“Love the Earth,”** for local schools. We received chocolate donations from two **sustainably produced chocolate** brands, Moka Origins and Katherine-Anne Confections, to sell at the Reynolds Club. We also purchased chocolate in bulk from Evolve Chocolate.

### Splash! Sustainable Agriculture Lesson

- We taught a lesson on sustainable agriculture for **Splash! UChicago**, a program that brings **middle and high school students** to UChicago to learn about key topics and ideas.

## OUTCOMES

### Love the Earth Chocolate Fundraiser

- We raised about **\$250** with which to buy the “Love the Earth” book for local schools. This book focuses on environmentalism and the role women can play in initiating environment change. We will be able to buy roughly **25 books** with the money raised from the sale.

### Splash! Sustainable Agriculture Lesson

- Taught class which introduced Chicago high schoolers to the **history of industrial agriculture** and methods to improve and **enhance the sustainability of modern agricultural systems.**