

## Exploring Waste Reduction Solutions for Colleges

In February 2025, Sydney Eiselt, Area 3 Resource Specialist with the Iowa Waste Exchange (IWE), was invited to speak at the Dubuque College Sustainability Coalition meeting. The coalition comprises seven colleges in the Dubuque area, along with three partner organizations ([Participating Institutions](#)). The coalition meets monthly to discuss various sustainability issues across college campuses.

Ashley Noonan, Stewardship and Sustainability Coordinator at the University of Dubuque, led and facilitated the discussion.

Sydney provided a detailed overview of how colleges can work with their Area Resource Specialist to manage hard-to-recycle items such as old technology, furniture, and other materials that are still functional but no longer needed. She walked through the process, typical timeline, and discussed additional resources including IWE's searchable online database used by Area Resource Specialists to list and exchange items that might otherwise end up in landfills thus offering a valuable opportunity to extend the life of items and reduce waste on campus.

Additionally, she explained how colleges can schedule waste audits to assess the effectiveness of their recycling and composting programs. These audits provide essential data to help improve waste diversion efforts and inform educational and outreach programs. IWE can guide participants on how to use audit results to shape more impactful sustainability initiatives.

On March 26, 2025, IWE collaborated with the University of Dubuque to conduct a waste sort at the university's Science Building. In preparation, the custodial team collected 24 hours' worth of waste from the building. Ashley, who mentors student leaders in evaluating campus sustainability efforts, played a key role in the project. She joined another faculty member and two students to assist with the sorting process. The building has separate setups for recycling, compost and trash, and the team sorted through the waste to assess the effectiveness of these systems. The findings from the waste sort will help inform



improvements to signage and educational efforts, with the goal of reducing contamination across all waste streams.

For more information on IWE, or to host a similar event or activity at your school or organization, visit [www.iowawasteexchange.org](http://www.iowawasteexchange.org) to contact your Area Resource Specialist.