

2022 Sustainable Solutions Challenge

Stakeholder Interview Summaries – Prepared by Suraya Souidi

SCOTT LINCOLN

Scott Lincoln is the Associate Director of Custodial and Environmental Services, and has been an important touchpoint for sustainability-related initiatives during his time in this role. All of his staff members are trained on proper waste management techniques for items that are recycled, composted, or placed in landfill, and he works closely with the Office for Sustainability in initiatives such as Rethink Waste athletic events, and most recently, his department runs the operational Rethink Waste Team, which is led by David Donaldson.

Some things that Lincoln is working on include the communication of Rethink Waste initiatives, which he believes are important in order to increase awareness about the importance of Rethink Waste on campus. The new Rethink Waste Team's student employees, called Rethink Waste Reps, have assisted in bridging communication by launching an Instagram page and educating students when composting is launched at a new location.

Some of his favorite achievements include the Rethink Waste rooms in Residence Halls (the green doors students are familiar with to dispose of waste), the rollout of the composting initiative, and the TREX bench that allowed students to recycle their plastic bags to be made into a bench on campus.

From these achievements, Lincoln believes that there is robust support within the University to push sustainable initiatives on campus. He also understands that when introducing any new initiative on campus, both reactivity (i.e.: using compostable materials to *combat* the increase of waste) and proactivity (i.e.; giving students reusable materials to *prevent* the increase of waste) are equally important.

However, he states what is most important, and what can be most challenging, is the “follow through”, or the continued and consistent support, what he calls buy-in, for an idea. Ideas can have buy-in from the student level and the larger University level to move forward. He believes that student buy-in is the most important for this competition, since students will likely have the most face interaction with a suggested proposal. Additionally, while an idea can seem great at first glance, Lincoln suggests that when students are coming up with an idea to first pause and look elsewhere on campus to see if it's unintentionally doubling efforts. He states, “For example, if someone is collecting plastic bags on campus, and someone else tries to start a separate program to collect plastic bags, it's going to create confusion. Confusion does not help with buy-in [for sustainability on campus], and we need to make sure we're aligned in our thinking.”

While Lincoln has looked at many other Universities for sustainability initiatives, he values our University's Office for Sustainability and its strategic goals, which commit the University of Richmond to a sustainable agenda. From his previous experience in working with the SSC, he suggests to “Try not to get frustrated! It's easy to come up with an idea and feel that it's not moving [forward as quickly as you would like it to]. Instead, try to see it from different perspectives, see what's holding it back, and what you can help it do to move past any obstacles. By focusing on the faults of your project, you end up losing that buy-in, and it's tough to move it to the next stage.”