Scott Lincoln, Assistant Manager at the University of Richmond

1. **What does an average composting system entail, and is there any factor that would make the rollout different at the University of Richmond?**

   All composting systems are unique to their own environment and what we are trying to figure out now is what works best for UR. We can definitely take best practices from other schools (eg: William and Mary’s composting program) and business, but we also really need to find out what fits us the best and is what we are working through. We have been doing pre-consumer (i.e. generated in kitchens) composting for a while but expanding that into post-consumer composting will impact us uniquely.

   I think there are challenges that we will come across that we don’t even know we will come across yet so we will have some tools under our belt to address those.

2. **How does the composting system impact your division?**

   Composting impacts my department tremendously with logistics as we are still working through what the composting system will look like. We need to keep in the back of our mind who will be transporting the compost from bins to the toters so that the logistics of transporting material will directly impact our department.

   Another factor is the partnership between us and our service provider (as it is funneling through our department. We have worked with NOPE in limited capacity for a few years (eg: ReThink waste games) as they’ve partnered with us on individual events but recently we are trying out a pilot program with them that places them in a larger capacity.

3. **What is the cost structure of the composting system?**

   The three main costs associated with composting are operational, labor, and procurement related. Right now, we are paying per toter tip (i.e. refers to the act of tipping a toter into hauling truck) and the average cost per toter tip is around $12-18. Regarding the composting pilot in November- the total cost of service and material collected ended yielding a ratio of $1,000 dollars per ton. I am interested to see if that ratio remains true through the duration of the year.
4. **What are your concerns or challenges of implementing composting?**

   The main concerns would be contamination and the possibility of losing our contract with our service provider because of it. Those composting will have to correctly sort their items by compostable and non-compostable. The service contract has a cost associated with contamination. Additionally, if too much contamination occurs in collected material the facility will not take the material from the service provider. This could cause a major disruption in service availability and impact our composting program drastically.

5. **What tools in educating students have been successful in the past that we can implement in this initiative?**

   A communication strategy cannot be caught in a one-way communication. It can’t just be “this is what you compost, this is what you do.” There has to be some sort of avenue to receive feedback because the campus community giving us feedback will allow us to pivot when we need to. We can get so used to our own perspective and the logistics so if it isn’t working, we need to know.

   In the different areas I’ve seen that have had successful composting programs, there has been a lot of student involvement. From a student perspective, I think it would be great if students could put together an effective means of receiving feedback and communicating that feedback in a way that is actionable. This program might have a huge benefit if we could solicit feedback and package it in an actionable way so that if or when we need to pivot we would be able to in a better direction.