Stakeholder Interviews

University of Richmond Students

Andre Eanes, Green UR Club President

Since transferring to UR in 2018, Eanes has seen various sustainability efforts on campus, whether student-driven or administration-driven, succeed or just fade away. During his time in Green UR, the group has championed several initiatives, such as distributing reusable water bottles to decrease SPB usage and petitioning Eight-Fifteen at Boatwright (8:15) to stop providing plastic straws for cold beverages. He thinks what can make sustainability endeavors successful is confronting consumers with a viable choice towards a more sustainable option—like asking customers in Passport if they want their drink “for here” or “to-go”—to spur their consciousness. Other examples of this method are implementing a negative incentive for discouraged behavior (like an upcharge for using a non-reusable cup) rather than a positive one for encouraged behavior (like a discount for using a reusable cup).

Eanes believes that a solution to challenges in sustainability should be rooted in the three tenets of waste hierarchy—reduce, reuse, recycle—in that order.1 “Reduce the amount of plastic you have to sell in the first place,” Eanes affirms. “Encourage people to buy reusable cups or mugs or other things—either mugs that they own and take with them, or...dishes if they’re eating in Passport.” Eanes understands that certain retail spaces on campus like 8:15 or Lou’s Cafe might not have the infrastructure necessary to wash large volumes of reusable dishes, but he advocates for all locations to do their part in diverting whichever disposable items they do offer from the landfill. That way, when customers do purchase single-use materials, he says, “I don’t think we have any excuse to not make all of them recyclable or compostable.”

Eanes is optimistic about gaining student support, as he has seen the number of students passionate about sustainability-related issues rise in recent years. He believes that education about environmental issues and their applicability to students is

1 https://www.conserve-energy-future.com/reduce-reuse-recycle.php
paramount in keeping this conscious spirit alive on campus. Eanes cited tabling and interacting with students in public spaces as ways that Green UR can get a sense of the climate of support for new initiatives like composting, in order to then pass on that information to the administration. He’s seen retail locations on campus be receptive to student suggestions (like 8:15 offering metal straws for purchase), but feels that “there’s more to be done, and a lot of progress to be made still.”