



CASE STUDY

NYSP21 Supports Bard College with a Compost Assessment

Bard College (Bard), located in Annandale-On-Hudson, New York, is a liberal arts and science college with close to 2,000 undergraduate students at the main campus. With Bard's commitment to cultivating the link between higher education and civic participation, sustainability related practices and goals are prominent on Bard's campus. This commitment is apparent in Bard's dining facilities, which, since 2008 have implemented many sustainable food practices including increasing local food purchasing, going 'trayless' in their dining halls, starting the Bard College Farm, and collecting food scraps from its main dining hall to process through composting.¹

Challenge

Bard has a compost site on campus, which currently accepts the food scraps collected from the main college dining hall. However, the school recognized that food waste collection and compost site operation would benefit from improvements to avoid attracting pests and addressing the underutilization of the finished compost.

Solution

Bard requested assistance of the New York State Pollution Prevention Institute (NYSP21) to improve the school's compost operations as well as provide opportunities to improve the on-campus composting process and end use. NYSP21 contracted with Cornell Waste Management Institute at Cornell University (Cornell), an industry leader in compost management, to execute this project. Work performed included: an assessment of Bard's process, an evaluation of the gap between current state and desired future state, including a stakeholder roundtable meeting, and a summary of opportunities to close the gap.

Results

There are opportunities to improve Bard's compost process from collection to end use. Many of the ideas presented were initiated by Bard students, faculty or staff, all of whom were very engaged throughout this project. Additionally, testing results demonstrated that Bard's compost is high quality and may be useful throughout campus. Key areas of opportunity for Bard's composting process include:

- Increasing student engagement and ongoing education
- Reconfiguring of plate return area in the main dining hall
- Making small, but impactful, changes to compost pile layout and processing practices

CHALLENGE

- Bard recognized that organics collection and compost site operations would benefit from improvements to avoid attracting pests and addressing the underutilization of the finished compost

SOLUTION

- NYSP21 worked with Cornell to assist Bard with understanding the key barriers to improvement through stakeholder engagement, lab testing, and process observations

RESULTS

- NYSP21 and Cornell documented several improvement opportunities within food waste collection, processing, and end use
- Taking steps to implement some of these practices may help enable Bard to achieve its food waste and composting goals

Bard
A Place to Think

NYSP21 PARTNERS

R·I·T  **Rensselaer**

UB
University at Buffalo
The State University of New York

Clarkson
UNIVERSITY

New York Manufacturing Extension Partnership

Funding provided by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.

© 2018 Rochester Institute of Technology Any opinions, results, findings, and/or interpretations of data contained herein are the responsibility of Rochester Institute of Technology and its NYS Pollution Prevention Institute and do not represent the opinions, interpretation or policy of the State.

111 Lomb Memorial Drive, Bldg. 78
Rochester, NY 14623

Tel: 585-475-2512
Web: nysp2i.rit.edu
E-mail: nysp2i@rit.edu

¹ <http://www.bard.edu/about/>