

260313 Meeting Minutes

Attendees: Alyssa Player, Jaasiel Alvarez, Kate Malecek, Tasha Cammidge, Chris Kalaw, Tuyako Khristoforova, Luisa Segovia, Annie Lam, Linda Mondaca, Chiara Berruto, Vijaya Kumar, Max Christman, Raj Mukkamala, Allen Lee, Emily Shu, Xiaohu Li

- This month, [RSVP here](#) to order catered food from [Palmita!](#) (**please RSVP by Wednesday 9am!**) **Please remember to bring your laptops and bring your biodegradable/compostable items for our test.** For bonus sustainability: folks can bring their own cups and/or utensils and/or plates as an alternative to our usual compostable ones!

Will update [Restaurant Guide](#) and our [Coffee, Breakfast, and Dessert Guide](#)

Introductions ...

[Million Advocates for Sustainable Science](#) Petition

- International Institute for Sustainable Laboratories (I2SL) along with My Green Lab are petitioning to change funding granting agency policy to promote sustainable research
- By signing the letter you can help transform how science funding organizations set expectations for efficiency, resiliency, and sustainability in the way scientific research is conducted
- Reached 1100+ signatures!

UPDATE: Green Labs Monthly Tip: The Straw Test

- Anyone have an update?
- Let me know how it goes, and what else you notice you're refusing!
 - **There will be prizes**
 - A different lab will be highlighted on our website every quarter
 - **Submit to greenlabsinfo@caltech.edu by April 1**

Green Labs Monthly Tip: Spring Clean!

- Freezer defrosts
- Incubator cleanouts
- Organize shelving
- Waste or protocol audit
- Fume hood cleanout
- Chemical inventory
- Donate items to ReStore!
- [Website has lots of tips and tricks](#), and we have some great prizes as well as a free lunch for any lab that participates!
- Inventory your freezer to make it easier to find things, meaning your lab spend fewer minutes with the door open (and reducing the number of defrosts you have to do every year!)
 - Green Labs has [digitally fillable inventory sheets](#) or [blank printable inventory sheets](#) if your lab needs (both for an entire freezer on page one or just for a shelf full of racks on page two).

Learning opportunity – Lightning Talks

- Lightning Talks: Do you want to present on a sustainable initiative? Do you want to attend?
 - [RSVP now for our 2026 Lightning Talks From 1230-3 \(talks start at 1\) in Chen 100 April 15!](#)

- Student showcase: Interns are competing in the April Student Showcase ([Register](#) to watch the Student Showcase April 17)

Updates

- **32 Certified labs!! WHOOOOO**
 - Please get CERTIFIED TODAY! To get certified, finish the easy, 30-minute [Green Labs Certification](#) and submit it to sustainability@caltech.edu.
 - Certified Labs-exclusive event planned for April!
 - We have a FREE LAB RECYCLING PROGRAM STARTING IN NOVEMBER!! – you can recycle pipette tips, conical tubes, and more!
 - So far our first month diverted 40.5 kg clear plastic and 6 kg coloured plastic

Updates on our Student Interns

- Does anyone want an energy assessment or fume hood sensor? Reach out to us!
- Writing both projects up as white papers before the summer
- Hosting a clothing swap with WiBBE March 16-April 22
- I2SL Conference Abstracts:
 - ReStore
 - Tasha Cammidge
 - Energy and Fume Hood Projects
 - Ansh Tiwari
 - Rohan Bhattarai
 - Competing in the April Student Showcase ([Register](#) to watch the Student Showcase April 17)
- I2SL Lab Program Awards
 - ReStore



Reporting

- Preparing the 2025 Annual Report
- Starting the 2025 Scope 1-3 emissions analysis now
- NEED PHOTOS!

Updates – Pilot Programs

- FUNDING IS AVAILABLE – SEE PILOT PROGRAMS WEBSITE
- April 1– Styrofoam recycling day
 - 40 YARD BIN ALMOST FULL!
 - [Sign the petition!](#)
 - [Technical bulletin from I2SL](#)
 - [LCA of Styrofoam](#)
 - [Do you want a location added? LET US KNOW!](#)
 - [How to do LCAs](#)
- Pipette tip pilot is now a Caltech-run program
 - Now accepting all brands!
 - Over 1 dumpster full the first 2 weeks!
 - 2,775+ pounds of plastic waste diverted total!

- 9cubic yards of waste!
- See random bins – check if it is on the list!
- Update from Chris?
- Do you want a location added? LET US KNOW!
- Lomi
 - Moving to giving dirt to Catalina Compost
 - 1,055 lbs of dirt (or 5,276 lbs food waste)
- -70°C/-80°C Comparison Pilot
 - 5 labs involved, collaborating with NIH and UVA + Norway labs collaboration
- Investigating animal bedding composting... more to come on that soon!
- PolyCarbin
 - Initial order replaced 31 pounds of crude oil and reduced 122 pounds of CO2E via sustainable procurement
 - 21 labs have bins installed!
 - So far our first month diverted 40.5 kg clear plastic and 6 kg coloured plastic
- Fume hood sensor project
 - Around \$1,300 savings per fume hood on average!! GG writing up now for our 21 fume hoods
- **Grenova pipette tip washer:** looking into funding options!
 - [Survey](#) for pipette tip types, cost per year, etc. to gather data
 - Looking into funding options
- [Follow us on Instagram](#) →

Browne Dining Hall – Zero Waste Space and Other Updates

- Hiring a zero waste associate 5-10 hrs/week
 - Serve as student ambassador for zero waste initiatives across campus
 - Participate in meetings with stakeholders to advocate for student priorities
 - Design and conduct peer education surveys in residence halls, dining areas, and high-traffic campus locations where staff access is limited
 - Develop and deliver presentations at tabling events
 - Create engaging social media content to promote campus sustainability news
 - Help maintain campus composting program
 - Coordinate peer-to-peer zero waste challenges
 - Assist with scheduled zero waste audits, sorting, and events
- All about waste
 - Zero waste consultant x facilities
 - Modifying Browne to be zero waste (90% of waste diverted from landfill)
 - conducting whole day audit to start
 - browne food waste
 - Front of house and back of house
 - Collecting and analyzing waste from 7:30am-9:30pm
 - See if people bring in waste (ie things that are not purchased at Browne) or mostly in-house, and how to deal with that
 - Goal: make browne zero waste facility, includes modifications of what we purchase, how the facility is laid out, how food prep occurs, what utensils are offered etc
- Surplus Store
 - \$52k+ value diverted from landfill
 - donation partner: Habitat for humanity

- internal reuse options
 - \$190k+ restore
- Earth Month Events
 - earth walks
 - trivia night
 - plant based cook-off?
 - plant based food fair
 - earth week resource fair
 - movie screening
 - orchestral performance
 - mach 33 play lunch reading
 - clothing swap
 - scavenger hunt
 - composting resource



Animal Bedding Composting

- All of these items are compostable: Bedding (wood chips), tissue, food waste (pellets) but we don't compost them right now
- Working with Republic
 - MUCH easier than anticipated - can be considered "food waste"
- Recycling team helping to aggregate waste in Chen for pickup (4 locations: Chen, BBB, Braun, Alles)
- Melissa and OLAR are doing waste audit to determine weights/volumes of waste
- Pickups start TODAY!!
- TC shared preliminary signage with group
- I've been working on our animal bedding composting initiative we were discussing before the holidays and found that there is a [good video on how CU Boulder did theirs](#) and a good [slide deck from UAB about their program](#). To access the video/slides you may have to sign up for I2SL's listserv to view the video, but it's completely worth it and they have a ton of great sustainability tips and tricks or other videos that may be of interest, too. I am also going to a meeting where the CUB talk will be discussed further with a Q&A so I can share any insights from that as well, and perhaps start reaching out to other universities on their composting programs, too.

Sustainable Purchasing Vendor Vetting

- TC shared update on this program and asked for feedback on the questions in this Form
- [Link here](#)
- TC will make a new list and have it formatted with 3 primary questions, then 5 follow-up then 10 extra questions for vendors

Next meeting March 13