

## Insight Reflection

### Gateway to Honors

When I first considered sustainability, I mostly thought about energy-saving, compost, recycling, etc. In my household, I was encouraged not to waste. My parents didn't like when I would leave food on my plate, we paid extra for recycling, and we conserved water. My family thinks about sustainability in our daily lives. It was ingrained in our lifestyle, to the point that I was surprised when I learned that not everyone recycled.

What I didn't think about was how much sustainability relates to infrastructure, sewage, building standards, and even business. Through the talk today with Daniel Hart, the sustainability coordinator at UC, I learned about how sustainability is considered in every step in day to day operations.

Some food at the dining halls come from local sources and is composted at some dining halls. Uptown West and East campuses are powered by natural gas. Some of the regional campuses are powered by wind power. An effort is made to divert waste from landfills through recycling stations and move-in waste collection. Students are encouraged to use public transportation through Zipcar and bike rentals. These are what I would consider 'typical' efforts toward sustainability.

However, we also learned some of the things going on behind the scenes. The new Lindner College of Business school is aiming towards a LEED Gold distinction and is being built with sustainability in mind. It will have green roofs and a bioswale that will keep pollutants from going into water sources. Many other buildings are also LEED Gold or Silver, with the goal being to convert all buildings to LEED Gold.

Some problems our campus is currently facing is that the Office of Sustainability isn't highly funded and only has two full-time workers. Because they are restricted in funding, some efforts like putting dual trash and recycle stations in every building on campus cannot be done quickly. We could also say that student apathy could also be a problem, although an increasing number of students have started caring about the environment. Students should also try to get involved at different levels, whether it means actively using a bike to get around instead of keeping a car on campus or just making the conscious effort to throw papers in the recycle instead of a trash can. One more thing to consider is whether UC is doing enough to be sustainable and what we could do better. My next step is to research what other universities are doing.