



USC Sustainability

USC Sustainability 2020

“USC’s new Sustainability 2020 plan will provide the framework for the university’s ongoing efforts over the next five years to integrate sustainability into all facets of the university.” – *Sustainability 2020*

View the entire report:
sustainable.usc.edu



*“A university should be
nothing short of the
great crucible in which
our freedom to
think—and therefore
our ability to change
the world—is forged.”*

President C.L. Max Nikias

Client Goals

- USC strives to integrate sustainability initiatives into all aspects of the University
- Gain a better understanding of how students, faculty and staff perceive USC sustainability efforts
- Learn about the community's current level of sustainability awareness
- Evaluate how they perceive the 2020 plan, specifically pertaining to the various waste diversion programs on campus

Sustainability 2020 Goals through Waste Diversion Programs

Strengthen awareness of USC sustainability waste diversion programs among USC student, faculty and staff population by 20% by 2020.

Increase education on waste reduction and recycling, and expand diversion and recycling programs.



Research Objectives



Objectives For Phase Two Research

1. Determine target audiences' current views, habits and interests in sustainable living.
2. Evaluate target audiences' current level of awareness and participation in USC sustainability programs.
3. Examine current communication methods used by USC sustainability department.
4. Determine demographic information about population that are more likely to care about sustainability.
5. Find out better approaches for USC sustainability department to engage the target audiences.

Research UP-TO-DATE



PHASE ONE – HYDRATION STATION PROGRAM

- Identified opportunities for USC Sustainability student programming initiatives that could result in positively modifying the current consumption rate of single-use plastic water bottles on campus.
- However → Several communication issues within USC Sustainability's environmental programming came to light.
- After we found out the awareness of USC Sustainability Department is low, we decided to shift and broad our research focus on to raise awareness on USC Sustainability Programs.

ADDITIONAL SECONDARY RESEARCH



Looked into current communication methods the USC sustainability department uses to engage target audiences.

Investigated sustainability efforts of similar universities in California -- ALL had a social media presence on Facebook and Twitter, however ALL lacked engagement.

Possible that social media does not engage the desired audience for sustainability department?

Description of Survey Research



- 30-question online survey targeting at USC students, faculty and staff – administered online
- 42 usable & completed responses
- 38 students, three staffs and one faculty member
- 29 Women, 13 Men
- On average, took three minutes to complete
- Survey was active for about 48 hours
- Offered treats to encourage participation and a USC gift card to draw from the response pool

Findings Summary



Findings

1. Participants generally consider USC a sustainable campus, however they are not aware of the Sustainability department.

- 65% Agreed that USC is a sustainable campus
- Yet, 85% are only slightly or NOT AT ALL familiar with the USC Sustainability department
- Only 8 participants heard of the 2020 plan

Strongly agree Agree Somewhat agree Neither agree nor disagree Somewhat disagree
Disagree Strongly disagree

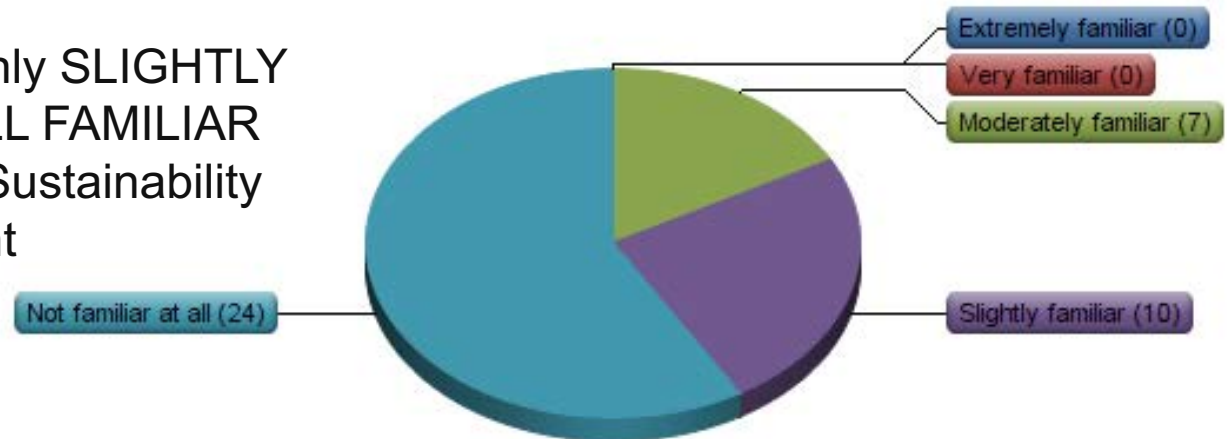
USC is a sustainable campus

65% agree USC is a sustainable campus.



How familiar are you with the USC Sustainability Department?

85% are only SLIGHTLY NOT AT ALL FAMILIAR with USC Sustainability Department

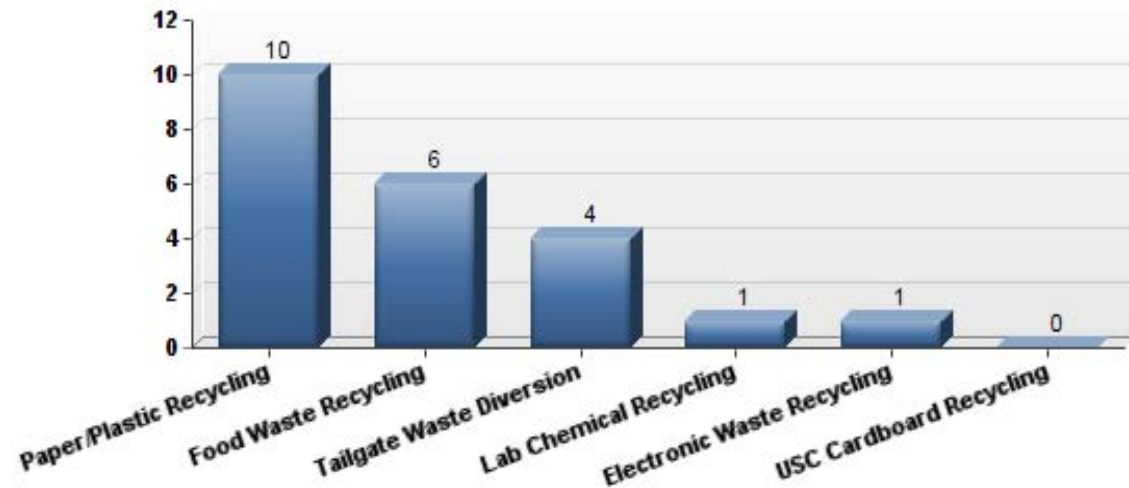


Findings

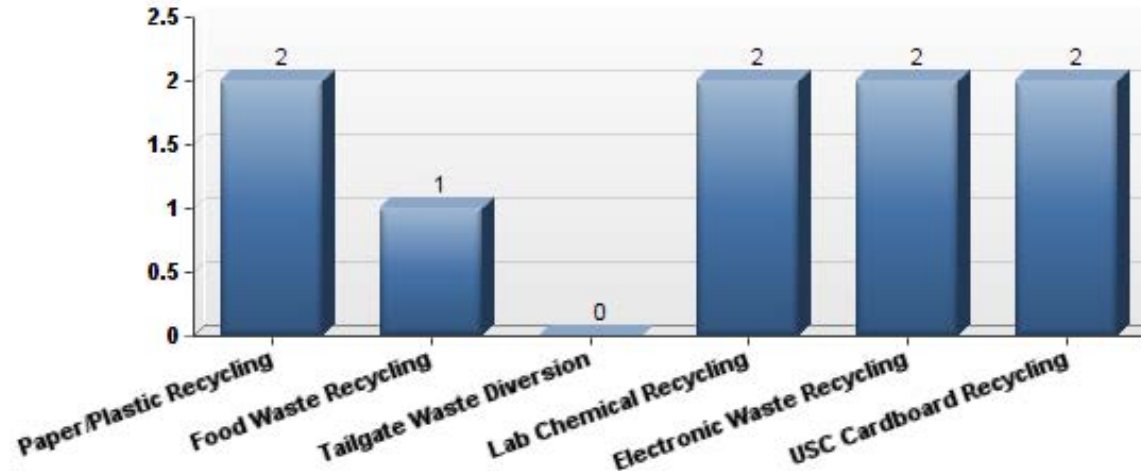
2. Participants do not associate waste diversion programs with USC Sustainability efforts or the department.

- Staff/Faculty are more aware or the wide scope/range of waste diversion programs
- However the majority of Staff/Faculty were unfamiliar with the USC Sustainability department or the 2020 plan

Which of the following waste diversion programs have you seen on campus?
(Students only)



(Staff only)



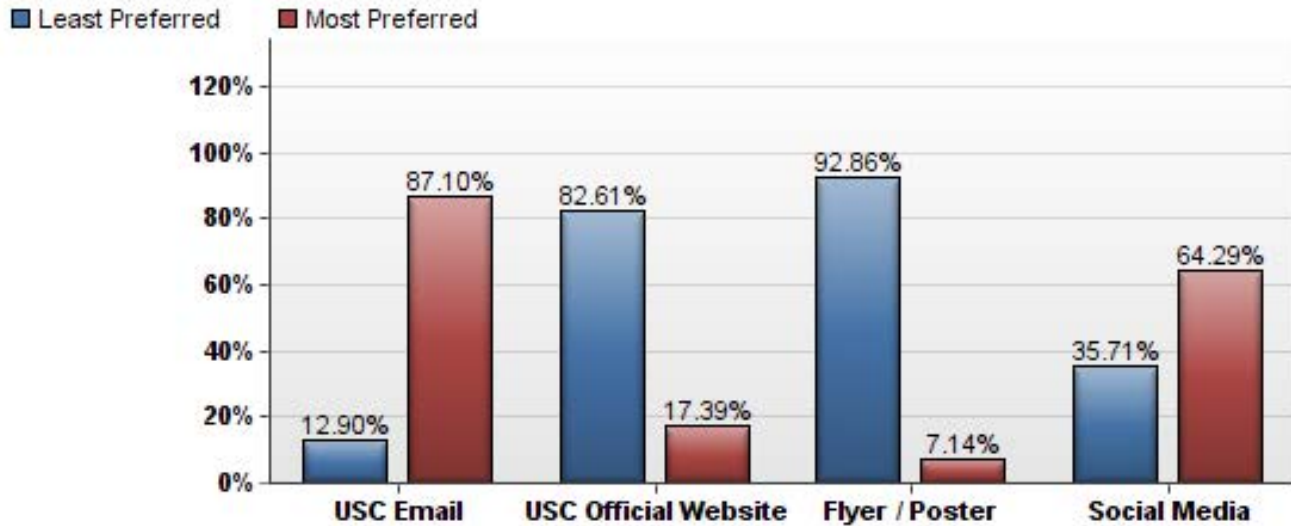
Findings

3. Most preferred method of communication is USC Email.

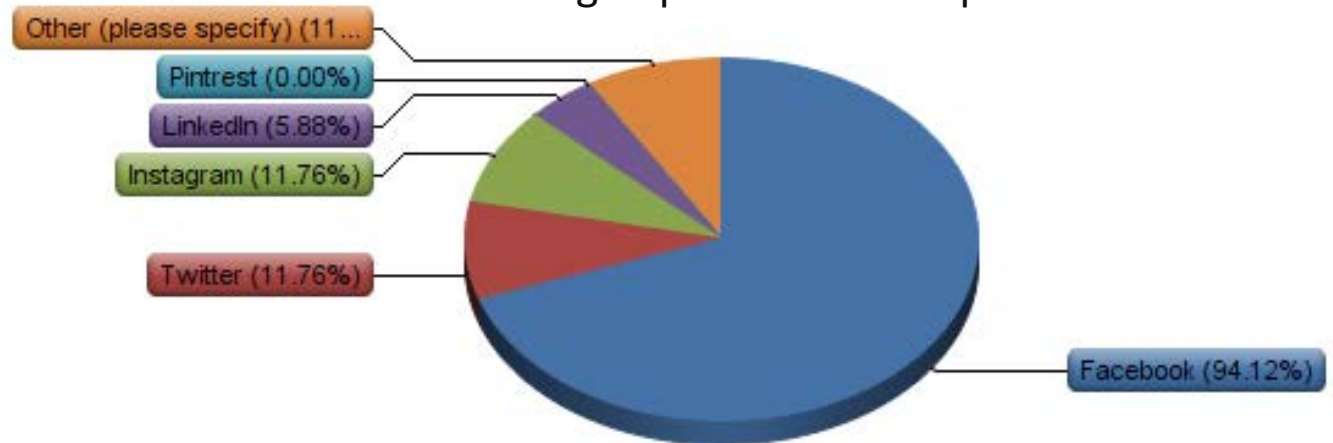
4. Among those who learn about important events (and programs) on campus from social media channels, Facebook is the most popular platform.

5. No participant has heard of sustainability department or 2020 plan from social media.

Which is your most and least preferred method of communication with any USC department?



Which Social Media site(s) did you learn about something important on campus?



Implications



Implications

1. USC sustainability can be more effective when using owned communication channels and email to reach target audiences, rather than social media.
2. USC students, staff and faculty do not connect recycling and other waste diversion programs with USC sustainability efforts or the department.
3. Although the Majority of respondents generally consider USC as a sustainable campus, they do not recognize the specific programs and do not know about USC Sustainability Department or the 2020 plan.

Limitations



Quantitative survey limitations

1. Findings are difficult to generalize to the entire study population
2. Hard to provide detailed information to the complex issue

Sampling limitations

1. Could have larger representative sample
2. Not enough samples to represent different demographic groups fully

Questions design

1. Some options should be dissected in order to collect precise results (for example, flyers/posters could be two separate options rather than one).
2. “Neither disagree or agree option” (even/odd scale points)



THANK YOU!