

For Immediate Release

University of Washington First to Implement Coca Cola's Compostable Lid
Dining on Campus Nears Zero-Solid Waste Goal

SEATTLE, Wash., Oct. 01, 2009 – Students returning to the University of Washington campus have one more lesson on their plates this fall; they'll be learning to compost the whole soda, not just the cup and straw.

In October the UW, in partnership with International Paper and Coca-Cola, becomes the first company in the world to begin use of a compostable fountain-drink lid for the compostable Coca-Cola ecotainer cup. The new plant-based 100 percent-compostable lid will be in use by October 6 and augments the compostable cups and straws already in use on the UW's Seattle campus. Straws have been in use across the campus for more than two years. The compostable paper- and plant-based coated cold-beverage cups went into test use in November 2008, with the Coca-Cola ecotainer introduced to all restaurants on campus in January of this year. Introduction of the lid is pushing dining at the UW to near 100 percent compostability.

For members of UW's SEED—Students Expressing Environmental Dedication—the new lid is a major win.

“The way to get students to compost is to make it easy,” says senior Krysta Yousoufian, Webmaster for SEED. “The lid is small. It doesn't generate that much waste, but having a compostable lid makes it that much easier. Removing that extra step—having to take the lid off the cup—is just one less excuse they can make for not composting.”

Now, just three years after the University of Washington Department of Housing & Food Services began its drive for 100 percent compostability, it is just one piece away. With the exception of hot-cup lids for soups, all HFS cutlery, hot-food containers, napkins, salad bar containers and sandwich wraps are compostable. In March 2010, the UW expects to introduce a compostable lid for hot foods—such as soups—to campus. Once in place, campus dining facilities should be almost entirely solid-waste free.

Already the UW is seeing a tremendous impact on their sustainability efforts. From June of 2005 through July of 2006, the UW shipped 140 tons of compostable materials to Cedar Grove Composting. Last year the UW shipped 540 tons of compost materials to Cedar Grove, up 34 tons over June of 2007 through June of 2008.

“This is the future of composting,” says Yousoufian. “We are pioneering something here with the hope that someday composting will be like recycling. It will go from the fringes to mainstream; everyone will be doing it.”

Sophomore Martin Su, SEED's Resident Hall Student Association representative, agrees. “This shows that anything is possible if humans just put their minds to it. This is proof that it's one small step to something greater in the future.”

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