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HDH STUDENT EMPLOYEE CREATES COMPOST COLLECTION PILOT PROGRAM

Campus composting is an example of exceptional sustainable resource management that reduces overall waste generation, waste exports and UC San Diego's footprint. Students and the campus community, including HDH, remain passionate about tackling food waste and expanding composting, on and off campus.



This enthusiasm prompted the advent of creative pilot programs to replace ones that have previously sunsetted. A compost collection program was started by HDH student employee Julianne Luong at Seventh Market. Julianne had dreamed of expanding the composting of pre-consumer waste, similar to what HDH Dining has done for years, but for students. Pre-consumer waste consists of fruits, vegetables, eggshells, nutshells, uncoated paper, cardboard, yard

trimmings, plants, and hair/fur. Julianne worked with the HDH Dining and Sustainability teams to obtain support and approval, determine logistics, establish best practices, and ultimately, promote the pilot.

Several large collection bins were placed in front of Seventh Market where participating students can dispose of their pre-consumer waste. The full bins, about 35 pounds total, are collected weekly and emptied by volunteers at participating campus community gardens. The waste is then sorted to remove contaminants - items that cannot be composted - and turned into usable compost for the gardens. Since its launch in October 2022, the Seventh Market composting pilot program has successfully diverted more than 40 bins of food waste from the landfill to local campus gardens and educated student residents about composting in the process.

About 200 people contribute waste to the program. Due to the program's success, there are high hopes of establishing similar compost collection in other areas to maximize pre-consumer composting throughout the campus.