

# Ready, set, recycle

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## Recyclemania ad

UW-Milwaukee is set to participate in the 12<sup>th</sup> annual international RecycleMania competition, which runs from Feb. 5 to March 31. Over 600 universities will be vying to increase their campus's recycling efforts in the eight week period.

2012 will be the fourth year UWM has competed in the program. During last year's competition, the university was able to recycle over a half-million pounds, with a final recycling rate of 35 percent. The national average was 32

percent.

Kate Nelson, who graduated from UWM with a degree in conservation and environmental science, is the school's first ever environmental sustainability coordinator. She has set the bar high with a 60 percent recycling goal this year.

"In 2011, we accelerated in the academic buildings with a 48 percent recycling rate. Unfortunately our rate was 21 percent in housing. That seems to be where we could make the most headway," Nelson said.

Nelson has collaborated with the Student Housing Administrative Council in an attempt to increase the sector's recycling percentages. Melanie Heindl is the SHAC assistant complex coordinator.

"We're really trying to increase communication with students and get them interested, especially this year," Heindl said.

There are no prizes for the winners, but Nelson said for her, RecycleMania is all about the pride.

"We can't manage what we can't measure, and this gives us an opportunity to do that," Nelson said. "And of course, it's an international competition, so we can see how we stack up against the other schools."

Throughout the competition, the UWM Office of Sustainability, Veolia and Waste Management will be tracking the campus's waste and recycling extensively. Every pickup will be monitored to determine accurate statistics.

UWM offers a wide range of recycling options for students, including compost, computers, cell phones, pallets, carpet, metals, plastics and more.

"We actually offer more recycling than people are used to," Nelson said. "We recycle all plastics, one through seven. That's very unusual."

For Nelson, understanding recycling is comprehending the greater meaning of environmental sustainability.

"When you get recycling, you get the bigger picture. You can think beyond yourself and your daily operations," Nelson said.

In addition to the RecycleMania program, Heindl and Nelson are planning a recycled art competition in the housing department.

“You’ve got to get the basics right, and recycling is the basics. It saves a lot of energy and a lot of money to recycle,” Nelson said. “It puts the environmental responsibility of this campus into everyone’s hands.”