



# Watch Your Waste

A campaign created by RIT's Student Environmental Action League (SEAL):

A creative brief written

By

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## OVERVIEW

Last year, 2015, SEAL launched the “watch your waste” campaign on the RIT campus with the goal to reduce energy use throughout RIT’s on-campus housing. They ran into some problems with getting the message out to students. This creative brief was prepared in efforts to assist the SEAL team with increasing their campaigns awareness and create change on campus.

To get students to change their behaviors and break old habits, first I must know how much energy they’re currently using and where there is an opportunity to decrease that usage. In order to determine some of the reasons for the large usage of energy by students, I created a survey that questions energy usage and habits at home and whether students would be willing to learn about decreasing their energy usage if given the opportunity.

## SURVEY

During the first week of February 2016, I sent out a message to students via email, as well as a Facebook post on a few different RIT pages asking them to participate in the short survey I created.

The questions I asked in this survey are:

- 1) Gender
  - a) Male
  - b) Female
- 2) Year in school
  - a) Freshman
  - b) Sophomore
  - c) Junior
  - d) Senior
  - e) Other, explain
- 3) Major
- 4) Do you live in RIT housing?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) If yes, what building?
- 5) Do you care about how much electricity you are using?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Somewhat
- 6) Do you use a mini fridge?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- 7) Do you turn off the lights when you leave a room?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Sometimes
- 8) Do you leave your laptop plugged in, even after it's fully charged?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Sometimes
- 9) Do you open windows to adjust the room temperature?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Sometimes
- 10) Would you be willing to attend a seminar on how to reduce your energy use?
  - a) Yes, if it's free
  - b) No
  - c) Yes, and I would be willing to pay a small fee

According to the 8 respondents so far, 75% of the respondents' care "somewhat" about how much electricity they are using. This says to me, that either they don't care because they aren't paying the bill or because they are just uneducated about electricity usage in general but this is something I plan to look more in depth to, later on.

Further results indicated 50% of respondents use a mini fridge, leave their laptop plugged in, even at a full charge, and will open windows to adjust room temperature.

Although, this is still a small sample size so results may change. These results indicate that there is a lot of place for opportunity to decrease energy usage. 50% of respondents indicate that they find themselves opening the windows to adjust temperature, which is extremely inefficient. By providing students with more control over the temperature of their rooms, energy usage could be greatly decreased.

When asked if they would be willing to attend a seminar on how to decrease energy usage, even if it's free only 25% of respondents said they would. This data raises another issue with decreasing energy usage, if only a limited number of students are willing to attend a learning session on how to be more efficient, SEAL must reach the remaining students using other tactics. Last year SEAL had tried to reach students with visual prompts throughout residents halls which they stated didn't seem to be effective. With additional research, I plan to find the best way to reach the students that don't care about their energy usage and help to change their minds.

I plan on using some of the same tactics that SEAL has already tried, such as posters but I will also use additional strategies to effectively impact the students. The strategies that I use will depend on the results of the research that I conduct, to find the most effective way to get the attentions of RIT students and effectively change their behavior.

## BACKGROUND

The campaign “Watch Your Waste” was created by two members of SEAL, with the goal to reduce energy use on campus. After seeing other college campuses successful reduce their energy use, SEAL member Sarah Quirk and President Cassidy Putney, decided that with a little effort from students and faculty, RIT can become a more sustainable campus as well.

## OUTSIDE EFFORTS

Sarah and Cassidy proposed the “Watch Your Waste” campaign to FMS, the Sustainability Department and ResLife last year, with their focus being, UCSF succeeded, therefore, we can too. According to an email sent by Sarah, UCSF campaign was called “Conservation is Contagious,” and ended up saving the University \$800,000 due to decreased energy use on campus. This campaign was successful with signs posted across campus, educating students about reducing energy use, as well as retrofits to some facilities. Additionally, some other colleges that I have found were successful in reducing energy use were Dartmouth, Worcester Polytechnic Institute and Bentley University.

At Dartmouth, the school created a “green-themed” dorm, which is designed to help encourage students to live healthy lives as well as live in a healthy world. They provide students with the opportunity to learn and participate in programs geared to sustainability. Some of the programs offered included activities exploring the issue of sustainability, carbon footprint and community service. (Campus Sustainability, 2016) On average, students in the green-themed dorm use 60 percent less energy than the other dorms on campus. Dartmouth plans for this dorm to be waste-free and energy neutral. (Miners, 1)

At Worcester Polytechnic Institute, they held a competition, which had two freshman residence halls participate in a 1--day event to conserve energy. (Miners, 3) This got a lot of students motivated in a fun way to reduce their energy use. Similarly, Bentley University also held a competition challenging students to reduce their electricity use. This is held the entire of month of February called “Blackout Challenge.” The student-run Green Society hosts the campus wide competition between all the dorm room, to see who can reduce their energy use the most. They also put on other events, including game nights, and the screenings of *Wall-E* and *Planet Earth*. (Miners, 3)

## SEALS EFFORTS

This past Spring semester (2015) at RIT, Sarah and Cassidy started to do something similar to what is going on across other campuses. They wanted to test the energy use and the effectiveness of their campaign by measuring the energy use in two similar residence halls. One dorm had four different types of signs put around the residence hall, while the other residence hall had no signs. With the exact results unsure, Sarah believes that there may be a more effective way to reach students and encourage them to reduce energy.

## BEHAVIOR AND TARGET MARKET

In order to effectively change the minds of the RIT students, we must first understand their behaviors. The results from the survey I conducted, indicate that of the 34 respondents, close to half said that they only somewhat or don't care at all about their energy use. The key challenge is to understand why RIT students don't care about reducing energy use and how we can change their minds. Some additional information I gathered is that only 34 percent of students unplug their laptop when it's done charging and 75 percent of students will open their windows to adjust room temperature. These are two behaviors that with the correct education, could easily be changed.

## THE PLAN

Even though the previous efforts from SEAL may not have been as effective as they would have liked, I believe that with a few corrections to the signs and more hype about this campaign, big changes can be made on campus. We have seen the efforts that worked well at other schools were both exposure and competition, these efforts could also have a similar effect on RIT's campus. With catchy ads, educational events and dorm competitions, RIT students may start to care about their energy use and ultimately the campus will become more sustainable.

According to Sarah, nearly every year the cost of housing will increase because the cost of sustaining the buildings is increasing. This may be one strategy to use in the ads. Since money is one thing that everyone has in common and everyone wants more of. Along with advertising, having dorm competitions may also show to be successful, as it was at both Worcester Polytechnic Institute and Bentley University. By having students compete for who can save the most energy, it is both educating them on the best ways to achieve this, while at the same time it is breaking old habits.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

In order to achieve the goal of reducing energy consumption in the dorms on RIT's campus, the target of the campaign will be students living in these dorms. There are currently 1,748 rooms in the Residence Halls, which can house about 3,519 students. Students living in these dorms currently pay \$6,954 a year to live in a double occupancy room in any of the Residence Halls. (RIT in Brief) Per SEAL representative, Sarah Quirk the price of housing cost increases each year due to a significant increase in the consumption of energy in the dorms. This may be helpful information to give to students and parents, although I don't believe it is the most important thing to focus on. To get people to really change their habits, they need to feel a sense of community. At Cardiff University, a study was conducted to compare what factors influence people to recycle. One group was taught about the financial benefits of carpooling, others about the environmental benefits. The results concluded that the group that learned about the financial benefits, recycled less than the control group, while 89% of the people that learned about the environmental benefits, recycles the unrelated papers they were given (Keim, 2012). This is an important concept to expand on because it demonstrates that people are more likely to act in self-transcendent way than for their own selfish needs, such as money. RIT students are likely to respond in a similar way. Educating students about the environmental benefits of reducing their energy use, will likely show to be more successful than telling them it will save money.

The challenge we may face is how will we educate the current and incoming students about the negative impact RIT is having on the environment? We must first understand these students, their daily routines, energy usage and habits. The survey I conducted, provided some insight on the energy usage and appliances being used by some RIT students. On a larger scale, a survey was done of 664 adults aged 18-24 with internet access to see how reliant they are on technology. Of the group surveyed, 57% said they prefer to spend their leisure time online, while only 48% of the group said they prefer to spend their time actively. This means, when trying to reach the target audience, online may be successful in reaching most RIT students. Additional data from the same survey group, stated that 59% of adults 18-24 said they are actively on social networks such as Facebook and Twitter (Mintell). This could also be helpful to the campaign, because similarly, most RIT students are likely to be on social media sites.

## RIT PERSONA

Brianna Durante 19 years old and is a first year RIT student. She is originally from Hilton, NY and now lives in a double room in Kate Gleason Hall. She has a job on campus, working at the field house. Brianna says she never really thought about how much energy she is using, she just uses the appliances she needs to use and goes on with her day. As for her frequency, she is on her laptop a few hours every day, doing



mostly homework. Brianna says she does have a Twitter and Facebook that she checks daily, but keeps up to date with RIT activities by checking her emails and occasionally checks RIT news. She says that she would not be opposed to taking steps to reduce her energy consumption, but is unsure with how to do it. Brianna would be willing to learn about reducing energy use and said it would be cool to do a competition between all the Residence Halls.

### WHY RIT STUDENTS SHOULD CARE

1. Leaving your laptop plugged in for an extensive time can overheat it, causing damage to the battery life. (Lourenceo, 2015)
2. Reduce the cost of on-campus housing, can lower housing prices or leave more money in the budget for RIT to spend on other things.
3. Taking steps to be more efficient now can develop into a habit. This will be helpful in lowering your electric bill, keeping more money for yourself.
4. Energy efficiency requires improvements to infrastructures and buildings, therefore it's creating jobs; that you or children may need someday. (Alliance to Save Energy)
5. Energy is produced by fossil fuels, which are non-renewable. When they are gone, they're gone forever. Which means future generations will have less resources to use.
6. Increased energy efficiency requires new lines of products and innovation. As well as a need for new products to be manufactured. (Alliance to Save Energy)
7. Burning fossil fuels can be releasing harmful emissions into the environment. Burning less fossil fuels, reduces pollution, leaving cleaner, fresh air. (Alliance to Save Energy)
8. Nobody is in the room to use the lights, why keep them on?

## MESSAGE

The goal of this campaign is to reduce energy consumption in the dorms. The key message I will be focusing on is to increase efficiency and sustainability on RIT's campus.

## STRATEGY

The strategy I have created to successfully reduce energy use on campus includes multiple techniques such as, social media, traditional advertisements and events to get students actively involved. Research, has shown, students work well in competitive environments, so friendly student competition will help to get students involved in the campaign. Other universities, as mentioned in the secondary research successfully reduce energy use by having dorm competitions. RIT can use the same strategy by having dorms compete to see who can use the least amount of energy. The competition event, to be called "Watch Your Waste" will be held at the beginning of Fall 2016 semester and will last three weeks. During this time, it may be helpful to students to be able to monitor how well they are doing. This can be shown by a board at the entrance of each dorm, showing how many kilowatts of energy they have used so far versus the how much they have previously been using (the year prior). Incentive, such as a pizza party or free t-shirts, will be provided to the top two dorms that have the lowest energy use during the time frame.

## EVENTS

During the three weeks, various themed events will take place in the dorms and around campus. One dorm event being "Day in the Dark" where all the lights are turned off in the halls, and "Movie Night," where the dorms could have a movie playing in the lobby for everyone to come down and watch together. This will reduce individual energy use as well as help encourage students to meet new people. There could also be a "Go Green Day," where everyone is encouraged to wear green in support of reducing energy use, snacks and drinks could be served in the lobby and around campus throughout the week to keep up the morale. Educational seminars, with guest speakers, such as Enid Cardinal to teach students about the harms of over consumption. Although, the competition is only set to last three weeks, the idea is to get students into the habit of saving electricity. This event can become an annual dorm event on campus and will also help to enhance school spirit. Along with the dorm competition, other elements will also help to trigger a change in attitudes and habits on campus.



## BRANDING

Although the Watch Your Waste campaign has a specific goal to reduce energy consumption in the dorms, it will be necessary for the entire RIT community to be engaged and participate to make RIT a more sustainable campus. Watch Your Waste will be a campus wide campaign, which will include educational seminars, posters, social media attention and various events. The campaign will be recognized with a logo and slogan that will continue to reinforce the goal of making RIT more sustainable. “Every Watt Counts” will be the slogan for this campaign.

# DAY IN THE DARK



## EVERY WATT COUNTS

on September 8, 2016, all the lights will be turned off in the dorms to support RIT and SEAL in fight to save energy.

Come join us in the lobby, at 8pm for a movie and snacks.

The campaign was created and will be hosted by The Student Environmental Action League (SEAL). SEAL, already has a logo, which is green paw print. For this campaign, it might be beneficial to change the logo and use the recycling symbol with “watch your

waste” through the middle. Changing the logo, gives the school something new and exciting to see and can also be reused in future years, to always represent the watch your waste campaign. The slogan will appear on posters around campus, informing students of the event.

Additionally, RIT magazine, The Reporter could have a page about the campaign. The page will feature the logo and give more information about the campaign for students that may not know.

### **SAMPLE REPORTER SPREAD**

Starting Fall 2016, RIT is launching the annual Watch Your Waste event. The event will be put on by the Student Environmental Action League and there will be a lot of fun events and prizes for everyone. The Watch Your Waste event was created to help RIT students reduce their energy consumption and to also educate everyone on the negative effect overuse has on the environment and our sustainability.

The event will start on September 5th and will go for three weeks. There will be various events, food and games throughout this time. The main goal is to reduce your energy consumption and the two dorms with the least amount of energy use, win! Don't live in the dorms, no worries! There are activities for you, too. Each event will be posted in The Reporter and will also be posted on flyers around campus.

Get ready to go green RIT, every watt counts!

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

The campaign will be broadcasted on all platforms of social media, including Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and the SEAL website. SEAL has a Twitter and Facebook page already, but does not use an Instagram. Facebook is the platform that is currently being used to get information out to students, as it is posted on frequently about the most current events. Since, Facebook is already being used to inform students it will continue to be used to broadcast the campaign. Twitter and Instagram should also be taken advantage of to widen the people who see the posts. From the looks of the Facebook page, it seems that only the students that are in SEAL or students that already care about sustainability are liking and posting, so by using Twitter and Instagram we can target the audience, SEAL may not have been getting attention from before.



Join RIT SEAL during GO Green Day! Visit us in your dorm lobby for fun games and food. Don't forget to wear green and remember #everywattcounts #WatchYourWaste2016

← Reply ↩ Retweet ★ Favorite ⋮ More

2:04 PM - 1 Apr 16 · Embed this Tweet

Twitter should be used to announce and advertise each of the events that are happening during the three-week dorm competition. Similar messages can be posted on Instagram and Facebook, to get everyone excited and involved. To get more people to see these tweets and posts, a member from SEAL will need to take control of the social media sites and follow and add as many RIT students as they can find. This will bring attention to those students and will likely cause people to follow back. SEAL already has a website, but it's directly connected to rit.edu. SEAL and the campaign would likely get more attention and traffic, if they had their own URL to a website. This way, it would come up in search engine searches and would have more traffic, while attached to rit.edu, it is more difficult to find the website.

All the events, posters and social media posts need to work together to fully engage and change the minds of the students. While it may be easy to get, activists involved, the challenge is to get everyone involved, even those students that don't care about sustainability. With the large amount of advertising and school spirit, it will be hard to turn away from the events and students will start to participate and care. With a big launch of the campaign this year, it will not only help to create a more sustainable RIT but will create a more sustainable future.

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# EVERY WATT

Download more graphics at [www.psdgraphics.com](http://www.psdgraphics.com)



# COUNTS



# Save heat, drink coffee





# WATCH YOUR WASTE



you know what we mean

