# Transcript

**00:00:11 - 00:01:38 (Asser)**

What is up Waterloo? Welcome to WAT's Sustainable, the official podcast of the University of Waterloo Sustainability Office. My name is Asser, and I'm the host of this episode. On episode 11, we chatted with Arianna and Eurus, the amazing co-leaders of the University of Waterloo Campus Compost. Campus Compost is a student group established to improve waste management system on campus. The group also raises awareness around composting and low waste practices. As October is waste Reduction Month, we talked about things related to zero waste, why it's important, how campus compost is doing to promote zero waste, and how you can do your part to reduce waste in your day-to-day life. Before we get into the episode. Make sure to follow us on social media @uwsustainable on Instagram and Twitter. And if you haven't already, a reminder to subscribe to our podcast, so you know whenever we release a new episode. If you have any ideas for future podcasts or guests, feel free to email us at sustainability@uwaterloo.ca. Without further ado, let's get into the conversation with UW Campus compost. Welcome to our podcast, which is WAT is zero waste week for our WAT's sustainable podcast, and we have here with me—Eurus, Ariana, and Aleks. Would you mind introducing yourselves for the audience?

**00:01:39 - 00:02:17 (Ariana)**

Hi everyone, I'm Ariana. I'm a third-year student at the University of Waterloo and I'm currently studying Science and Business and I'm one of the co-managers for Campus Compost this term. I started volunteering with Campus Compost back in my first year. Here, being in like a non-environment program, I'm in the Faculty of Science. So being in a non-environment program, I felt sort of left out 'cause I am passionate about sustainability, so I thought that joining a sustainability focused group would be a great way for me to get involved.

**00:02:18 - 00:03:21 (Eurus)**

Yeah, awesome, I guess I will go next. Hi everyone, my name is Eurus. I'm the other co-manager for UWCC, and I'm currently a 3A student at Planning, and the reason why I joined Campus Compost is because I just saw the ad, the job posting on Leads, the website that we use to find opportunities within our campus. So I saw that, I was like "oh damn like it sounds pretty cool" 'cause in my first year I kind of like have the introduction to the Campus Compost Club before. I was always interested in wanting to join them and I never really got a chance to volunteer with them before. There's just like job posting for co-manager, I was like “let's just do it.” This is really interesting, so yeah, and I have been with UWCC ever since.

**00:03:22 - 00:03:53 (Aleksandra)**

So hello everyone, my name is Aleks. I am the sustainability engagement coordinator for the Sustainability Office and I work closely with Asser to deliver initiatives for both staff and students related to sustainability and a lot of our work actually involved waste management and looking at ways to repurpose things on campus so that we're just a little bit more conscious about what we're doing and how we're integrating everything back into the world. So it's really nice to meet everyone and I'm excited to have this conversation with you.

**00:03:54 - 00:04:01 (Asser)**

Awesome, thanks for being here and can you give us a bit of background on what Campus Compost is and how it sort of began?

**00:04:02 - 00:05:31 (Ariana)**

So campus compost started as like a student-run service in 2014. This was back when the University of Waterloo didn't have their own composting program. So this group of students noticed that you know everyone is generating a lot of organic waste, dump campus, and it's not really going anywhere that's useful. I think at the time it was just going in a regular garbage bin. So they took the initiative and they installed a composting drum and recruited some volunteers who collected organics on-campus and that's sort of how it all started. Since then, we've grown, and now we take on a more advocacy approach and just like promoting sustainability, we still have a composting program which is now suspended due to COVID, but is probably going to come back in the next couple of terms. But the university also has their own composting program now, which is great 'cause it makes composting more accessible to everyone. Give us and so alongside our program we help to manage organic waste, which is really great. We have a blog website in social media, so we really like spreading the word about ways that people can be more sustainable in their day-to-day life. We're also completely volunteer based, so our volunteers have been such a huge help over the last few years. So, shout out to them. But yeah, that's just a little bit of background on campus compost.

**00:05:32 - 00:05:57 (Asser)**

Yeah, I remember volunteering for Campus Compost. In first year, I remember working with Ariana just working on writing blog posts for Campus Compost. And yeah, that was really a fun experience and also a rewarding experience 'cause I got to use it as a reflection for one of my courses so I really owe a lot to Campus Compost

**00:05:58 - 00:06:00 (Ariana)**

Yeah, it's a great way to meet people that are like-minded as well.

**00:06:01 - 00:06:10 (Asser)**

Yeah, I'm also wondering since the pandemic started, what kind of projects have you taken on in the past or even like pre-COVID?

**00:06:11 - 00:08:20 (Eurus)**

That is a really great question, 'cause it's time for us to talk about the wonderful projects that our team have been working on. So pre-COVID, our club or our team are mostly concentrating on the compost connection. Basically working on the awareness side and also raising advocacy about compost and also across the community about sustainability and compost. So we kind of keep the advocacy side up after COVID hits and campus kind of closed down and we don't really have much opportunity in collecting our compost, but fortunately we are starting to collect. Our compost again this term, so that was really exciting and on the side we also have this wonderful project going on called the “Community Garden”. So our wonderful operational exec, Lucy, has been taking on the garden project for a while now and we are looking for some harvest for the vegetables and fruits that we have been growing in the garden, and we're also looking for position and collaboration with some of the other clubs and other services that is in the UW Campus, and yeah, it's just been a really exciting time. And there's also some like little tiny projects on the side, like for example the national photo contest that we did. I think in last term, that went pretty well too. A lot of people kind of sending their submission about all these wonderful photos that they talk about the nature about bio life and stuff like that. And yeah, we have been pretty active. I would say in terms of the advocacy side of sustainability, we also have some weekly series going on to just promote advocacy and yeah, just trying to raise awareness and sustainability.

**00:08:21 - 00:08:26 (Asser)**

Yeah, I mean, that's pretty great that considering like during pandemic you were able to like organize fun activities for students.

**00:08:27 - 00:09:04 (Eurus)**

Yeah, it's pretty great to kind of connect with the community again, even though it's like online everything and again I'll be just trying to keep this promotion and awareness going on, especially during this crucial time, right? With climate change and everything, I think. I guess UWCC is just trying to do its own part as best as we can 'cause you know? Yeah, but thank you for inviting us today. I think like this is really helpful for the advocacy side too.

**00:09:05 - 00:09:29 (Asser)**

And moving up to zero waste. Considering October is zero waste month and the Sustainability Office is organizing Zero Waste Week challenge in like a couple of weeks and I'm curious on like what's your take on zero waste week or zero waste in general from a student perspective or from the perspective of the organization as a whole?

**00:09:30 - 00:10:55 (Ariana)**

Yeah, I might be a little bit biased, but I love zero waste week. I think it's a really great event for students to get involved with sustainability, especially if, well, I think this is a similar experience for all of us, but zero waste is such like a daunting concept. It's so like, oh, you can't produce any waste or like that's sort of the consumption that you have before you participate. So for me I participated in the zero waste week in first year and prior to that, I was always super interested in it, but I didn't know how or when to start. For me, I thought it was something that required a lot of commitment but this event that was hosted by the Sustainability Office I thought it was really well done but it just forced me to, you know, just get started, right? Like I didn't think about it, so it forced me to take that first step and just try it out for a week. I had a lot of fun actually and I got to talk to all my friends about it, so that's spread the word even more and I think was pretty successful if I remember. I just got to like under a jar of waste, which at the time was really impressive for me 'cause I generated a lot of waste in first year, especially food wrappers and things like that.

**00:10:55 – 00:11:32 (Asser)**

Yeah, definitely definitely encourages you to think about your waste and also like how much waste you've generated within a week. So yeah, zero waste really forces you to reflect on your actions toward waste and how you can do that to make sure that the next time you're minimizing the waste you generate, making sure that less waste are ending up in landfills. What's your take on zero waste week or zero waste in general?

**00:11:33 (Aleksandra)**

I think it's such an interesting idea to like expose so many people to it 'cause just like Ariana said, it's such a daunting and intimidating, you know, idea, especially when you know you walk into a grocery store and all the fruits are covered in plastic like it's hard to even imagine what we you know could do in in today's world, but it gives me so much hope that you know so many people can reduce that much waste. And I don't know, I always want you know waste week to actually have like a further outlook. Like I want more people to rather than just taking it as a challenge for the week. Like how can we make it further like how can groups and people think? Oh, I can do this like a lot like I don't have to just do this during waste week. So I think it's just such a motivating thing to me to see so many people like want change. And it's hard, but it's it's such a cool idea and I love it so much. Again, I'm a little biased just because I'm a sustainability nut, but I think it's, you know, it helps people realize that they can do this. This is not hard and it's little steps at a time.

**00:12:40 - 00:13:35 (Asser)**

Yeah, I definitely “under-valued” zero waste week before and so like I found out how, how much waste we've generated as humans like for example like in my recent blog post that I posted through the Sustainability Office, like I found out that in the UK, they produced like I think 10 million pumpkins and 95 of those pumpkins are like end up in landfills because of like just for Halloween. So yeah, that was really frustrating to learn and also like it also made me realize how important the zero-waste movement is, and I'm also curious, like with the uptake of education around zero waste. Are you seeing an increase in students like becoming interested in waste on campus or like reducing waste on campus?

**00:13:36 - 00:14:39 (Ariana)**

Yeah, so actually in the past year we have seen an increase in student interest on waste. Even though for the last couple of years or so, we've suspended our on-campus operations, we're still seeing a lot of people reach out to us to find out more about our composting system. As I said this term, we're actually planning on resuming our operations and we might be expanding to some student residences as well, and we've seen a lot of interest from our volunteers, about half of them were interested in the operation side, which is really great to hear. In previous years we've had maybe 6 or 7 volunteers for our operations every term. So, seeing this increase is definitely a positive sign for us and for sustainability in general. A lot of these students are first and second years, so that sort of gives us a little peace of mind about like the longevity of campus compost and just interest in general.

**00:14:40 - 00:14:52 (Asser)**

Yeah, I know the sustainability Office is also having like an organics collection program, which is still in the planning process for now. But would you like to talk more about that Alex?

**00:14:53 - 00:16:21 (Aleksandra)**

 So we have, we work with students and residences. There was such an outcry for like wanting to have organics in residences and so it really got started because the students really wanted to see some change in how we managed our waste and the residents. So this program was created just to, you know, support students and and we have about like 10 volunteers every semester and it did get impacted quite a lot by the pandemic. But it's amazing to see that students still want to see this change and are still willing to participate in this program because they see value and they see that it's important, and I think there's a massive outcry for students. We're seeing a lot more like different students coming from different parts of the campus interested in managing their waste. For example, some CLV students who are graduate students noticed that they don't have any organics up north and they want to create a program similar to green residence. And I think that's just super motivating to see you know young people everywhere wanting to take action, even if it's just like as little as an organic spin like I think that's huge. It's really motivating and I'm always interested to see you know people's ideas and working together to how can we better manage our waste 'cause it's such a thing, you know we give less value to when we think about it, but it's super important.

**00:16:21 - 00:16:40 (Asser)**

Yeah, for sure, and I'm also interested to know if UW Campus Compost has ran waste-focused events in the past not just in the past or maybe in the coming weeks or months. And how did they go and what were the outcomes like?

**00:16:41 - 00:18:47 (Eurus)**

Uh, for I guess I could take out this question. For the waste focus events that we did in the past, I would say it actually have a pretty good encouragement from the public. So, for example we did a seed paper-making event from a collaboration with the ecology lab that we did. It's actually, there's more people that show up than we expect because it's a spring term. But yeah, like for example, that one. We have learned a lot of different fascinating facts about like biodiversity in terms of like the gardens that we have in our home, and also, you know, reducing ways on like paper products and, the environmental impacts behind of paper products of all these years in the industry. And another thing we did for the waste focus events, I believe it will be, you know, the composting, like the collection of the compost across campus, I would say there's a lot a lot of different students—doesn't matter if you're a science student or like an engineering student or or a Health service student right—like you can all get involved by doing your own part in the campus to, you know, learn what kind of ways it goes, that where and how do you divide them and you know going encourage in the whole wasted collection project, I think that is just a really great thing that we have going on in the past and right now too. So, I think those are the things that we kind of did in the past that I think are pretty successful.

**00:18:48 - 00:18:58 (Asser)**

Yeah, that's pretty exciting to hear. I'm also interested in knowing if you think that zero waste week is something that really moves us toward zero waste.

**00:18:59 - 00:22:02 (Eurus)**

I feel like zero waste week and also like Earth Day and stuff like that. I think they are important and crucial to raise awareness. So for example, like Earth Day, right? It's a long history and actually initiated by, you know, the hippie culture that was occurring, I think, in like the 60s or 70s. So, it's really interesting when we're looking at how we have all these different weeks. Like for example, zero waste week. It never really occurred before, you know, like there's this century before, it didn't even have this week, but now we do have these weeks. We have these different awareness campaigns that we see online. We have different environmental justice and justice topics that's focused on by, you know, the UN and countries. And it is really addressing the political stage as a crucial problem. And that also kind of gives back the feedback to the public to write of all these different events that are going on, so I think it will help us to move towards zero waste in the sense that it does waste public awareness in terms of why the zero waste has to be created and what is the reason behind zero waste or the concept of zero waste and the concept of sustainability. So, I think, yes, to that extent, but at the same time we also kind of have a concern about, you know, the marketing side, right? The marketing side behind all these awareness campaigns that is going on in the past years like, for example, greenwashing. It's no strange feeling towards the world of greenwashing. It's been done by corporations since like 1965, like with the whole recycling thing, right? Like the “Make America Beautiful Again” like that. That campaign in the US, it's been going on for decades, for years. And I guess like we just have to educate the public enough or to raise awareness enough to the point where everyone understands. Understanding the marketing aspect with these kinds of events and trying to distinguish what is the message behind zero waste week and how you can take initiative in the individual level too. Basically, do your part as a community too to rescue the world. In a way, yeah, that's kind of my opinion on zero waste week and its impact.

**00:22:03 - 00:23:09 (Asser)**

Yeah, absolutely. Like for me, I think zero waste week does move us towards zero waste 'cause I think it really raises awareness about how important are reducing waste is and just making sure people are involved and actually like taking action. It is also important to make sure that they learn something from what they did during that week and zero waste week should not be like a weekly thing but also like an everyday thing that we should do. Even it's just like, you know, using a digital copy of something instead of using paper, or I don't know like making sure that you've put your your organics into the organics bin, that you're making sure that you're sorting waste right. And yeah those actions are just, you know, even though they are little things but overtime, they'll make a bigger impact to us and on our planet as well. So yeah, that next question, which is: How have you been integrating zero waste actions in your day-to-day life?

**00:23:10 - 00:24:31 (Ariana)**

I would consider myself a very like old school, I don't know. I don't want to say old school but like I stick to like the classics when it comes to zero waste or sustainability. Like for example, I buy things that come in less packaging. For example, when I lived in my apartment in Waterloo, I was really close by to the store called Wholesale Club and it's basically like a Costco where you can get food in bulk, and it comes in a lot less packaging. So, I loved to go there, and it was inexpensive as well. I find that a lot of times sustainability if you're trying to be more sustainable, you also save money along the way, which is just a nice plus, and another thing is I try to use reusable everything, so I think a lot of us do this but like reusable bags, water bottles, utensils and even like hygiene product. I think that over time, it makes a big difference and I think the last thing for me is just refusing waste. So, if you have the option to like not take a receipt at the store or to refuse a plastic bag. I think that's just areally easy way to immediately reduce your waste.

**00:24:32 - 00:28:15 (Eurus)**

I totally agree with Ariana on the old school style of zero waste, so I feel, maybe, it's just because of my household that I grew up in. We have been doing zero ways actions throughout my whole life without even knowing that “oh this is like something you do for zero waste”. For example, like my parents, they love, love, love using jars. We use containers that they bought from like stores and stuff and like our house basically have like a corner they just stack with empty containers and jars that my mom collects from groceries. And we all use those jars to store, for example, some of those soup ingredients that my mom likes to make and use it to make soup and stuff. And we also love to use reusable bags. Like my mom, she’s just obsessed with them like we have I think 10 different reusable bags just for like groceries. It's really convenient, and it doesn't really tear up as easily as a plastic bag. You also just make it last longer and stuff like that. And also, another thing we do in our household is that we have plants everywhere, I really have like 5 plants beside me right now by the window like it's all green and stuff. We don't have any flowers in our house, but my mom just loved growing her own vegetables in the garden, growing different plants in the house and stuff, and we use like rice water—I don't know if you guys do that. So, when we cook rice like we just save the rice water to either to wash vegetables or soak dishes or just water the plants like it gives them some nutrition too, right? I just feel kind of sad because of the whole pandemic, like all of us are actually having to use a one-time stuff like masks and plastic gloves, right? Like, especially for people who work in recycling facilities, they have to use those to protect themselves and unfortunately I kind of don't use that as much because I just am an introvert like I just don't go out at all. Like this is like my life. I like to stay home, but every time I go out, it is just annoying in the sense that we have to put on the mask and it's just like a one-time thing. And then this study, it's been going on that reusable mask are not as effective and stuff like that like I think it's even studied by University of Waterloo. I think some of the science departments did the tests and stuff. It's really interesting study if you guys are interested. It is totally off track, but yeah. So these are the things that we do in household to, you know, do zero waste actions and stuff. Oh, another thing, I really want to bring up is fast fashion. But one thing I realized a lot is that I'm still wearing the same T shirt. Like literally right now, I'm still wearing the same T shirt I got from Grade 9 gym. Ariana, do you remember the gym shorts? I wear those to sleep all the time.

**00:28:16 (Ariana)**

Oh my God.

**00:28:17 - 00:29:45 (Eurus)**

Yes, like personally, I just don't buy pajamas. I don't see the sense of that. I just use my old clothes as my pajamas. It’s kind of weird when I see people kind of buy fast fashion clothes that they probably only were like this year and never wear them again because it's either made from really bad material or not in style anymore in the next year, so that’s another thing to address. I like to wear old clothes mostly because they still fit me. Not jeans, so jeans like you have to buy it every like year or whatever but here's why you have got to just choose sweatpants if you're updating your closet outfits and stuff, but yeah, that's another issue that's been going on. I think is crucial to adjust, especially in zero waste week, the smart choice in clothing and also smart choice in food, right? The food you're going to eat for the week. Trying to reduce food waste is another thing that I think is really important to address in zero waste week.Yeah, that's all from me, yeah?

**00:29:46 - 00:31:19 (Aleksandra)**

So, there's a lot of popular clothing brands that just like mass produce like these really cheap shirts and stuff like that. And are you pressured as young people? This is now off topic, but do you feel pressure as young people to stay current with trends and then for sustainability? Because I'm the same way I have clothes from my elementary school even though, like sweaters that I can't, in my good conscience, get rid of this stuff because it's still good clothing. I'm saying it's a sweater like what sweater can you throw out? That seems so wasteful. I'm honest with you, my parents still have my baby clothes for some reason. Yeah, do you guys also have the same problem? I have a corner in a closet in one of the rooms that we have in our house like it's just baby clothes. I was like “what am I going to wear?” I'm so confused. Yeah, my mom is of the mindset that she's saving it for her grandchildren, which is cute to think about, but yeah, I have a bunch of baby clothes that I used to wear that. I can understand why my mom doesn't want to get rid of them, right? She spent money on them like they're still wearable, if you're a baby.

**00:31:19 - 00:33:43 (Eurus)**

Yeah, I get it. It's like mom. But yeah, just to answer your question, I think it's a great question, I feel like I just don't care what people think. I think it's good that as an environmental student, I think oftentimes people are more focused on other people. I want to think of that I just like to wear whatever clothes are comfortable on me. Like for example, I love to use this example that a billionaire can wear a $5 slipper. But he's still a billionaire, he just doesn't care about how his shoes look like right? Like he might care about the technology that he used for work like his computer, his laptop, cars or whatever. But everyone has their own things they care about, and some people just don't really care about fashion and stuff like that. I still care about how I think it’s really important to have a mindset of just being you or like be comfortable in your own body and stuff like I feel like you should wear whatever you want, as long as you feel beautiful when you're wearing it, or as long as you feel comfortable when you're wearing it, you shouldn't really let people to judge you based on how you look like or based on how you talk. I mean, I think someone Stephen Hawking he couldn't even talk man, but he's like a billionaire scientist, right? He is awesome right? Like it's just that that we should have this mindset of “Hey you should just be yourself if you believe that you can wear your clothes from Grade 6. Aleks, I will wear with you. I will go back to my closet and bring all my clothes. I will wear it with you.

**00:33:44 - 00:33:45 (Aleks)**

Early 2000s are back. I don't see why not.

**00:33:46 - 00:35:02 (Eurus)**

I wear like a tank top over a sweater or T shirt or whatever and then the bell or whatever, like I can wear all of those if I'm comfortable with it. That's just my opinion on trends and everything, but I think it's a great question because I know a lot of, for example, Youtubers are doing that, like the Shein Haul, can we say brand names? They're very simple, like the fast fashion trend haul. I bought like this is a $500 haul on like a fast fashion brand that I will never wear any of those clothes again, but I will just do because of views and popularity and likes or whatever, I think it's just the culture is weird. It’s not really about like the mindset of people. Sometimes it's just the cultural sphere and I guess that's why we are trying to do here, right? Like having the podcast called zero waste, trying to get people thinking like hey, these are wrong. This culture is wrong, right? How about you guys?

**00:35:03 - 00:35:10 (Ariana)**

I just have to say I like how this conversation has turned from sustainability to body positivity.

**00:35:11 - 00:35:12 (Aleksandra)**

It's all connected actually.

**00:35:13 - 00:35:14 (Asser)**

Yeah, everything's connected right now.

**00:35:15 - 00:36:21 (Ariana)**

OK, well, I might have an unpopular opinion, but I really like fashion as an outlet to express yourself, but I also love thrifting. I swear those stores are my second home, I'm always there and I sort of treated it as a treasure hunt and like sort of a challenge for myself to find pieces that I really love, and I'm actually going to wear a lot so and I do agree that fast fashion is definitely not good for the environment, but there are some people who rely on it, especially if you know they have a lower income or buying secondhand isn't accessible. So I think that's also a narrative that we also need to discuss when we're talking about this, but for sure on the broad spectrum. Yeah, definitely reducing the amount of clothing items and things in general that you're consuming is an important part in the movement.

**00:36:22 - 00:37:27 (Asser)**

Yeah, definitely. There's definitely issues in terms of fast fashion, and I think that if you can afford to buy sustainable fashion, I think you should do that since you have the money to do it, but I don't think it's not rational as a person who is well off to buy fast fashion because you're just perpetuating the problem of the waste that is produced from fast fashion and I think for me I had to be honest I used to be like a fast fashion hoarder before, but since learning all about the waste that comes from fast fashion I started reflecting on my choices and also started going to thrift stores a lot. For me I think fashion really plays an important role for me 'cause when I like what I wear, it makes me feel confident and it's not just to make people like me.

**00:37:28 - 00:37:51 (Aleksandra)**

People have choices. It's not just cut or dry and there's a lot of different ways to achieve sustainability through just reducing our clothing waste. I think that's a great point, and especially with Ariana’s point on supporting the economy because there's a lot of people in the world and it would be horrible just to cut out an entire industry when people need it.

**00:37:52 - 00:40:13 (Eurus)**

I definitely agree with all those points. I just feel like the critique on fast fashion and how is mostly because there are those people that are unable to afford sustainable clothes. They're just buying all these fast fashion clothes, for example, $500 or $600 like they're just buying it for views and is not creating a positive tone in terms of zero waste, right? Like don't buy clothes that you don't need or like too much clothes, like for example, 60 different T shirts. Do you really need that much 60 different clothes in 1 purchase and also I feel like a lot of times we kind of ignore from a perspective of a lot of those low income families or people that are not able to afford. They usually wear the clothes like multiple times like they when they buy clothes from thrift stores, for example. They're not necessarily going to buy 500 brand news shorts. They just go buy like three T shirts in a year and they will just wear it until like it's not wearable anymore and then they will go back and buy it. So in this way the prices it's accessible, but at the same time we kind of want to understand why the price is so low in both fashion brands, right? Because they're not necessarily ethically sourced. They're not necessarily, you know, have ethical pay in their labor. Maybe there's sweatshops, and all those things like that, we need to consider from the supply chain perspective and also the marketing and also you know the customer, the target audience that they're trying to reach out to. So I guess like I, I love all the points that we bring up here. I agree. Out with all of them, and I think it really brings up the different perspectives that we need to perceive on this issue.

**00:40:14 - 00:40:19 (Asser)**

What advice would you give to other students who are thinking about zero waste?

**00:40:19 - 00:40:54 (Ariana)**

For me, the advice that I would give to other students is just to just go for it. You don't need to, well, yes, obviously think about it, but you don't need to put too much pressure on yourself to be perfect. I think as long as you're trying your hardest and if you want to keep learning along the way, I think you're going to do just great. Also, it's important to make friends with people who are like minded so you have people to encourage you or if your family is really interested in zero waste I think that's a great source of motivation.

**00:40:54 - 00:41:13 (Asser)**

Yeah, for sure. I like that point about having friends that always hold you accountable. On social media I follow social media accounts that promote zero waste and zero waste cooking so that also inspires me to do the same. That's a really helpful point.

**00:41:14 - 00:42:01 (Eurus)**

I will say the same thing. I agree with what Ariana said. You dont need to like force yourself to be full on go on zero waste. You know it's like workout. You don't go on like run the marathon on 13 kilometer at once, right? You practice. I'm gonna run 1 kilometer today and I'm gonna add on it like maybe next week or next month. Do it in your own pace as long as you're doing something, is all it matters. One advice that I also found helpful.

**00:42:01 - 00:42:10 (Asser)**

I know for sure. You know Michelle and that advice she gave is just use things that you currently have. Using what you have is enough.

**00:42:10 - 00:43:25 (Aleksandra)**

Yeah, I mean we always say like progress over perfection because I I don't think you know reducing our waste should be that stressful and I I think the argument is: Why we should? It's just also easier not having to deal with all this waste. It should be easier and I and I think that everyone says that you know, companies, they they're the ones who have all this power to change things and stuff like that. And as people, we're taking little steps forward, but like 1 little step forward as a group is such a massive step forward for waste week and just reducing our waste overall. So I think that it can seem daunting, but you know you're not alone. You have support like you can reach out to Campus Compost or us at the Sustainability Office and you know we're more than happy to share our experiences and our barriers ourselves and stuff like that. And it's just important just to talk about it, and I think that's what's really nice to talk to you all about this because we have our own barriers for sustainability and how we can become less wasteful because we're not perfect ourselves, so it's nice that we're highlighting that.

**00:43:25 - 00:43:44 (Asser)**

 I know on social media you share all kinds of tips on zero waste or how to compost and such. I'm wondering what are some of the most common things that your followers get wrong or ask about.

**00:43:44 - 00:44:43 (Ariana)**

I wouldn't know exactly like what the most common thing that they will get wrong is, but I can share a tip that I have for myself and for other people. But I think we all know that when paper products like pizza boxes, they're soiled with oil things—you can't recycle it. So people just assume that it goes in the garbage, but if it doesn't have a plastic liner, or if it says it's compostable, you can actually just throw it in with your organics. Just make sure you break it up a little bit so it can actually biodegrade, but a lot of things, well, more than you would expect, are actually compostable, so you can do your research on that. Also, I think Waterloo has a great recycling program for e-waste. In first year, when I had batteries for like the slight thing that I had, I could just drop them off at the little box on campus, which was really convenient for me, so I didn’t need to throw them in the garbage and feel bad.

**00:44:44 - 00:48:59 (Eurus)**

I agree with the whole piece-of-box situation. I actually actually start composing a few months ago, it went really bad, let’s just say that, I think a lot of times that people sort of get wrong is with the plastics. So for example, we all know the recycling design like the three little arrows, forming the triangle. Guess what? It does not necessarily mean that the plastic is recyclable. So I feel like a lot of people were shocked when they heard about this because they think they're a universal sign for recycling, but it's not. It's actually indicates what type of plastic it is. So for example, you know when you buy, I don't know like bubble tea or like you're buying a Starbucks or something and then like you look at the plastic cup like maybe at the bottom of it, you see a little recycling sign.But guess what? It's just telling you what type of plastic is using in the creation of this plastic bottle, so I feel like a lot of people should be looking more into that because it is actually like a sorting system of like the different classification of plastics was used in the cup or the product. Trying to understand what type of plastic is recyclable or what type of product is recyclable is very difficult. Even for me. I just try to Google things like when I saw something, I was like it's recyclable, I just Google things. Yeah, last time, it is really confusing in a lot of ways about what kind of things we can recycle, but I think like 1 tip I will give is to know your product. So for example, when you're buying something before you're buying it, try to understand the package, trying to understand the process of picking it. For example, let's say I'm buying a jar of strawberry, right? Trying to understand what kind of jar it’s using, is it using glass jar? Can I reuse a glass jar? What kind of things I can do with the glass jar, right? Is the recycling program in my local municipality allowed to recycle this type of glasses? And I feel like the government a pretty good job especially the municipal government in doing a good job in helping people to store stuff before they put their garbage or their waste into the garbage bin or the recycling bin, so for example, I live in Markham. And I actually went on the Markham website and see what kind of things I can recycle there because every municipality has different sorting system and I realize like we actually supposed to put like the use mask like the surgical masks or the N95 masks, and we're supposed to put those in a separate bag, in a clear plastic bag beside the blue recycle bin. Because this way, it is actually helping to protect the people who's working at the recycling facility to avoid them like directly touching the masks and potentially get affected. So I feel like trying to educate yourself about the sorting system of the place that you're living at, it will be a great tip that applies to anyone. So that is the tip from me about recycling.

**00:49:00 - 00:49:30 (Asser)**

Yeah, that's the great stuff 'cause I know it's different waste management policies from municipality to municipality. So yeah, it's really important to check with where you at, so either checking the website or maybe going to City Hall and ask about their waste management system. And yeah, that's a great tip as well and before we end the call, what does the future look like for campus compost?.

**00:49:31 - 00:51:04 (Eurus)**

I guess I can take that question. For UWCC right now, we are more focusing on just raising awareness, letting people know what sustainability is, what composting is, and hy they should care about it. I think this is the main point of connecting the bridge between sustainability and the public is to let them understand why we need to care about sustainability 'cause we all are environmental student here, and obviously everyone is really passionate about sustainability, so we have some knowledge by self-educating or being educated by friends. But people who are not really involved in environmental stuff or sustainability activities they don’t necessarily understand why some composting is important or why sustainability is important, and you know UWCC is playing a role that is not only promoting or answering the question about “why” to everyone in the campus, but also we're trying to do the advocacy side from the more community-based perspective. We are trying to get the awareness out there not only to the students on campus, but also the members in the local community that we're living in. And I think that will be the future for UW CC right now.

**00:51:05 - 00:51:12 (Asser)**

That is pretty exciting and how can students get involved and volunteer?

**00:51:17 - 00:51:52 (Ariana)**

For students, if you have like any questions or you want to talk to us about anything, you can reach out to us on social media, so we're active on Instagram and Facebook at UW Campus Compost. You can also send us an email which you can probably find from the WUSA website. Unfortunately for this term, we're not accepting any more volunteers. We have a large group of volunteers this term, which is great to see, but eventually you reach a point where it's like too many, which is a good thing.

**00:51:53 - 00:52:01 (Eurus)**

We're not complaining, so please join us next time. You are always welcome. We are a big family.

**00:52:02 - 00:52:21 (Ariana)**

Yeah, keep an eye out for next time if you want to volunteer with us. But as for this term, if you still want to get involved, all of our events including our upcoming events and future events next term, they're always open to everyone on campus, whether or not you volunteer with us, or whether or not you're an environment student, so you can always connect with us that way as well.

**00:52:22 - 00:52:24 (Asser)**

Yeah, and what's your social media handle on Instagram?

**00:52:25 - 00:52:29 (Ariana)**

It's UW campus compost, so it's the same for Instagram and Facebook.

**00:52:30 - 00:52:35 (Asser)**

Awesome, well thank you for being here on the podcast for WAT’s Sustainable.

**00:52:36 (Ariana)**

Thanks for having us.

**00:52:36 - 00:52:40 (Asser)**

And I hope you you enjoyed the conversation.

**00:52:40 (Ariana)**

Yeah, it's been really fun.

**00:52:42 - 00:52:54 (Asser)**

That is all for this episode. I hope you enjoyed learning about what is zero waste week. If you did, make sure to subscribe to our podcast to make sure you know when a new episode is released. Thanks for tuning in and we will see you in the next episode.