

## Procurement

### Introduction

College and university campuses represent a microcosm of the world around us: they contain citizens, employees, food and health services, as well as green space. Given this unique situation, the responsibility of a campus becomes not only to educate and care for those involved, but in addition to set an example for society. One concrete way to demonstrate such leadership is through campus procurement policies. A commitment to environmentally preferable purchasing not only sets an example for other institutions, but also has the ability to drive the market for such goods with an estimated annual operating budget of \$54 million. In addition, environmentally preferable purchasing may save a college money.

According to the Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Guide, EPP involves “goods and services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with other goods and services that serve the same purpose.”<sup>1</sup> Given this standard, they define six considerations of EPP:

- Is it less hazardous?
- Is it reusable or more durable?
- Is it made from recycled materials? Do we really need to buy a virgin product when the recycled version is just as good?
- What happens to it at the end of its life? Can it be recycled? Will the manufacturer take it back? Will it need special disposal?
- Does it conserve energy or water?
- Is it made from plant-based raw materials?

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<sup>1</sup> The Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Guide, Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance. Available Online at: <http://www.swmcb.org/EPPG/default.asp>

These considerations for EPP exemplify the type of policy that campuses with a commitment to the environment should develop. According to the State of the Campus Environment, 49% of campuses have programs in place to encourage environmentally sound purchasing, although it is unknown how successful these programs are.

### **Successes at Macalester**

Macalester College signed on to the Talloires Declaration in 2000, signifying their commitment to sustainable development. This commitment included plans for the adoption of a formal procurement policy within a year, including a “formal codification of ‘green purchasing’ practices currently being implemented on campus as well as guidance on additional practices where environmental factors are important.”<sup>2</sup> Although informally Macalester has made decisions involving specific types of procurement (paper use, light bulbs, lab chemicals), no formal procurement policy exists.

It is important to note that Macalester has previously made a commitment to a socially responsible purchasing. The Apparel Purchasing Code of Conduct, developed by the Social Responsibility Committee in 2000, is designed to take labor and environmental actions of companies supplying Macalester-licensed clothing. This sets a precedent for how socially acceptable wording can be used when contracting vendors.

### **Data Gaps and Recommendations for Data Gathering**

The greatest data gap is the lack of information regarding environmental impacts of products purchased by Macalester and alternatives to environmentally damaging products. A student worker in each department could develop this information. Or, a student worker for RPA or the CEIC could be appointed research this issue.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.macalester.edu/environmentalstudies/tallories.htm>

Another possible area of research could look at the ACTC vendors that are coming up for renewal on their contract. Information on alternative vendors, or on specific products offered by vendors could be provided to Danise Dembouski, Director of Requisitioning, Purchasing, and Accounts Payable (RPA), who meets with ACTC directors monthly.

### **Problems and Weaknesses**

The main problem with procurement at Macalester is that there has been no formal statement regarding EPP since the signing of the Talliores Declaration. In the Policies Related to RPA, the policy involving the evaluation of vendors includes states: “Evaluation factors other than cost that may affect vendor selection include, but are not limited to: time of delivery after receipt of order, direct delivery to the work site, return policy, length of time a price will be guaranteed, electronic order capability, and adequacy of invoicing.”<sup>3</sup> This statement, although not limiting, does not currently include any mention of socially responsible practices or EPP.

Currently, all procurement is run through RPA, and with a staff of two they do not have much time to research alternatives to the purchase orders they place. They rely heavily on departments and academic department coordinators to make decisions regarding their orders. Faculty members are also multi-tasking and have little time to research EPP. There appears to be a general lack of understanding of EPP on the departmental level.

With over 1,200 vendors that were paid in 2003, there exists no data on which goods could be replaced by environmentally preferable alternatives.

Although the clothing vendor situation provides a positive example of what can be done through the implementation of a policy, the specific evaluative measures are unclear. Clothing is also far easier to evaluate than all purchases at Macalester because of its limited sale on campus. There are only a few clothing vendors in comparison to the number of total vendors.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.macalester.edu/BusinessServices/manual/rpa.pdf>

Another weakness at Macalester has been the lack of green building construction. Although the most recent additions to the campus (campus center, Kagin remodeling) have made an effort to use green building techniques, the construction did not make green building a priority.

### **Best practices of other colleges and universities**

Other approaches to procurement and the campus exist nationally and worldwide. Most frequently, colleges make a vague statement regarding their commitment to EPP. Tufts University, also a signatory to the Talloires Declaration, “will strive to purchase renewable, reusable, recyclable and recycled materials.”<sup>4</sup> Specific initiatives have been developed focusing on paper, paint, sustainably harvested wood, and art materials.

Trent University in Canada has developed an environmental procurement policy stating that “supplies, equipment, and services procured by the University shall support the 3 Rs of waste management, namely Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle, and the conservation of energy and water.”<sup>5</sup> (See also Appendix 1a.) The college delegated the implementation of the policy to the University’s Purchasing Office and University departments.

The University of Northumbria in the United Kingdom developed a policy with specific measures for minimizing consumption, promoting environmental awareness of the environmental policy, and specific recommendations of environmentally friendly products. (Appendix 1b.)

In addition, purchasing has been used to save money and invest it in alternative energy sources. The alma mater of Rachel Carson, Chatham College, developed a Toxic Reduction & Alternatives on Campus (TRAC) initiative, focusing on cleaning supplies, indoor and outdoor paint. TRAC was able to save money to be invested in wind-energy. They found after testing and developing cost-benefit analysis on non-toxic industrial cleaning product that the college would save

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<sup>4</sup> [www.tufts.edu](http://www.tufts.edu)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.iisd.org/educate/policybank.asp?pid=3&detail=Yes>

an estimated \$10,000 a year. This savings, in turn, was used to buy 10% of the college's energy from wind-generated sources, second among colleges in the country. The campaign was able to negotiate with a producer of paint that emits zero volatile organic compounds, certified by Green Seal. The producer donated indoor paint for a campus renovation project and offered a lower price per gallon than the current college brand.

Middlebury College developed a plan to work with architects for a new commons and science center. They specified new guidelines for using sustainably harvested and local wood. They paid a "small premium above the going rate," but it appears that the college was involved with every step of the building process and demonstrated a high commitment to using sustainably harvested and local wood.

Finally, Pratt Institute developed a 13-page booklet outlining the health hazards linked with art materials, also including alternative products. Their future plans are to include a faculty and student training.

## **Recommendations**

Most importantly, Macalester needs to develop a procurement policy in accordance with the Talloires Declaration. In addition, this policy should be integrated into the policies already existing in each department. Following this, or perhaps concurrent with the passing of a procurement policy, specific research should be completed to maximize the effectiveness of this policy. Which purchases cause the most harm, and which purchases does Macalester make most frequently? This analysis should yield a few key areas, wherein alternatives could be evaluated and proposed to the purchasing department and individual academic departments. This research could be undertaken by the hiring of an additional student worker in RPA, or by the student workers in individual departments.

Recommendations could then be made to those who are placing purchasing orders: the staff and faculty. Staff and faculty must themselves be educated on EPP because they are the ones requesting specific goods and services to be ordered by RPA. The President and Provost should encourage EPP education, not only for administrative assistants, but also for faculty and staff.

EPP must also be placed at the forefront when contracting new vendors through ACTC schools. Currently, RPA tries whenever possible to use a ACTC vendor because they are able to obtain a lower price with the large volume ordered by ACTC schools. (See Appendix 2 for a list of ACTC contracted goods and services.) ACTC schools have contracts that usually last for 3 years, with the exception of the office supply contract that is for 5 years. Given this turnover in vendors, it is critical that investigations be made regarding the environmental values of corporations when renewal of contracts comes. The purchasing directors of each member college meet once a month to discuss these issues, and they should have the resources and support of the college to select vendors that not only provide the best price, but also are concerned with the environment.

In addition to implementing an EPP on the departmental level, EPP should be incorporated into the largest expenditures of Macalester. The three of the top four highest paid vendors at Macalester in 2003 were Kraus-Anderson Construction Company, Bon Appetit, and Xcel Energy (the fourth is HealthPartners). These expenditures suggest that in addition to a procurement policy and specific action taken on a departmental level, the ultimate goal of should be to make sure our largest expenditures take the environment into consideration. Often these areas are overlooked when talking about procurement. With new construction of the field house coming online, it is imperative that a construction company as well as architect support green building practices. Because Macalester itself will not have much say in the specific purchase of every element needed for the construction of the field house, there should be an increased effort to hire a contractor who will take

the environment into consideration. Similar situations exist in food services and energy use: Macalester must make sure that Bon Appetit and Xcel Energy are considering the environment. In the areas of construction, food services and energy use, Macalester should also incorporate an environmental procurement policy.

### **Bibliography**

The Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Guide, Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance, [www.swmcb.org/EPPG/default.asp](http://www.swmcb.org/EPPG/default.asp)

Tallories Declaration, [www.macalester.edu/environmentalstudies/tallories.htm](http://www.macalester.edu/environmentalstudies/tallories.htm)

Danise Dembouski, Director of Requisitioning, Purchasing, and Accounts Payable (RPA)

Policies Related to RPA, [www.macalester.edu/BusinessServices/manual/rpa.pdf](http://www.macalester.edu/BusinessServices/manual/rpa.pdf)

SUNY Buffalo, <http://wings.buffalo.edu/services/recycling/>

Tufts University, [www.tufts.edu](http://www.tufts.edu)

Trent University, [www.iisd.org/educate/policybank.asp?pid=3&detail=Yes](http://www.iisd.org/educate/policybank.asp?pid=3&detail=Yes)

University of Northumbria in the UK

Chatham College, Middlebury College, and Pratt Institute procurement actions are available at [www.nwf.org](http://www.nwf.org)

Current ACTC vendors, [www.macalester.edu](http://www.macalester.edu)

## **Appendix 1a: Sample Procurement Policy, SUNY Buffalo**

### BACKGROUND

The University at Buffalo, in concert with a variety of federal initiatives, is attempting to develop working practices and policies that give primary consideration to environmental concerns. Included in this important objective are matters related to the type of products purchased, proper disposal of waste materials, optimal utilization of all resources and a constant review of production processes.

### POLICY

The University at Buffalo, through its strong commitment to environmental protection, will seek to utilize to the fullest extent possible "environmentally friendly" products which, to whatever extent possible, have the following attributes or qualities:

- \* Durable, as opposed to single use or disposable items
- \* Made of recycled materials, maximizing post consumer content
- \* Non-toxic or minimally toxic, preferably biodegradable
- \* Highly energy efficient in production and use
- \* Can be recycled, but if not recyclable, may be disposed of safely
- \* Made from raw materials obtained in an environmentally sound, sustainable manner
- \* Manufactured in an environmentally sound, sustainable manner by companies with good environmental track records
- \* Causing minimal or no environmental damage during normal use or maintenance
- \* Shipped with minimal packaging (consistent with care of the product), preferably made of recycled and/or recyclable materials
- \* Produced locally or regionally (to minimize the environmental costs associated with shipping)

(signed)

Robert J. Wagner

1/12/93

Senior Vice President for University Services

Link URL: <http://wings.buffalo.edu/services/recycling/>

## **Appendix 1b: Sample Procurement Policy, University of Northumbria**

The University as a Purchaser.

The University is a significant consumer, spending in the order of £5.5 million in 1992/93 on materials and capital equipment ranging from paper, food, furniture and building materials to computer equipment and telephones. A further £1 million was spent on purchasing fuel and water.

The institution's impact upon the environment is not therefore, inconsiderable. We must attempt to reduce adverse impacts by carefully selecting the products which we purchase and by using our power as a consumer to influence the environmental standards of our suppliers.

Currently the University purchases commodities and supplies from approximately 1000 companies. Of these a small number have already provided environmental policy statements and it is likely that a number of others could do so on request. It is unlikely however, that every company that we currently trade with has addressed environmental issues.

The University does purchase some products which can be considered environmentally friendly. A comprehensive listing of these products would be advantageous.

The University's current purchasing procedures and appropriate legal requirements are detailed within the Finance Department's Purchasing Manual. The adoption of the following principles and guidelines in addition to those already in place would help to reduce the University's impact upon the environment as a consumer and would demonstrate our commitment to environmental improvement.

### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The University of Northumbria at Newcastle seeks, by working with suppliers and by implementing a sensitive purchasing policy, to reduce the environmental impact of the goods and services which it consumes.

In order to achieve this aim, the following principles will be applied:

1. All purchases must be made in accordance with EEC regulations and the University's Financial Regulations and Procedures.
2. Where ever possible when purchasing goods and services the most environmentally friendly option available shall be purchased. In doing so regard shall be given to the environmental impact of products during their production, use and disposal.
3. Value for money must always be obtained.

### **GUIDELINES:**

1. Minimization of Consumption

- Encourage the minimization of resource consumption thus reducing the environmental impact of the University's purchase of materials.

(All heads of Department)

- Encourage suppliers to adopt resource minimization as a principle in their production processes.

(Purchasing Officer, Environmental Policy Officer)

## 2. Environmental Awareness

- Ensure that all staff are made aware of the University's purchasing policy and the environmentally friendlier options that are available.

(Purchasing Officer, Departmental Environmental Representatives, Environmental Policy Officer)

- Ensure that all suppliers are made aware of the University's environmental policy and purchasing policy.

(Purchasing Officer, Environmental Policy Officer)

## 3. Environmentally Friendly Products

- Do not purchase products containing or produced using chlorofluorocarbons (CFC's) or other ozone depleting chemicals where suitable alternatives exist. This includes for example, aerosols, refrigerators, freezers, air conditioning units, CFC blown foam (e.g. in furniture), CFC blown insulating materials and fire extinguishers.

- Ensure that all wood and wood contained within the products that we purchase is from sustainably managed sources and avoid the use of tropical hardwoods unless essential, e.g. in preserving the character of listed buildings.

- Ensure that energy efficiency is a prerequisite when purchasing all appliances including light bulbs and street light bulbs.

- Ensure that the most water efficient appliances available are purchased.

- Specify the use of reclaimed stone and brick and the use of secondary or recycled aggregates where ever practicable.

- Avoid the use and specification of substances known to be deleterious or hazardous to health. If no suitable alternative exists such substances should be used under strictly controlled conditions and subject to a full COSHH assessment.

- Avoid the purchase and use of all pesticides and wood preservatives for which safety evaluations to current standards have not been carried out and which are known to be persistent in the environment. (Avoid in particular atrazine and simazine as total weed killers and wood preservatives and treatment chemicals containing pentachlorophenol, lindane or tributyl tin oxide.) If no suitable alternatives

exist such substances should be used under strictly controlled conditions and subject to a full COSHH assessment.

- Purchase recycled paper for all applications where economic use of paper and quality of service is not compromised or the health and safety of employees prejudiced.
- Where suitable recycled paper cannot be purchased an attempt should be made to select the most environmentally friendly alternative in terms of its production and disposal characteristics.
- Ensure that all photocopiers purchased or hired are capable of double sided copying.
- Avoid the use of peat as a soil conditioner, mulch and growth medium, and where ever possible attempt to purchase plants that have been raised in alternative growth media.
- Whenever possible purchase organic produce.
- Purchase phosphate free and biodegradable cleaning materials where their use will not compromise quality of service.
- Where ever possible purchase equipment that can use mains electricity but where batteries are essential ensure that low mercury and cadmium batteries or rechargeable batteries are purchased.
- Ensure that all petrol engined vehicles purchased run on unleaded fuel and are fitted with a catalytic converter. Ensure that vehicles with the best fuel efficiency for the likely operating conditions are sought.
- Purchase goods made from recycled and recyclable materials.
- Purchase goods with minimal packaging that is made from recycled and recyclable materials or which can be reused.

(All staff)

<http://www.iisd.org/educate/policybank.asp>

## **Appendix 2: Current ACTC Vendors**

<b>Air Freight</b>	Airborne Express DHL Worldwide Express
<b>Armored Car Service</b>	American Security
<b>Ballasts</b>	Voss Lighting
<b>Biological Supplies</b>	Carolina Biological Supply Co.
<b>Bottled Water</b>	Culligan Bottled Water
<b>Bus Service (Group Travel)</b>	Minnesota Coaches
<b>Catastrophe Restoration</b>	National Catastrophe Restoration
<b>Computer Accessories</b>	Faison/Corporate Express
<b>Computer Training</b>	Science Museum of Minnesota
<b>Courier Service</b>	Quicksilver Express Courier
<b>Document Shredding</b>	Document Destruction
<b>Electrical Supplies</b>	Grainger Graybar Electric
<b>Envelopes</b>	Western State Envelope Co.
<b>Fax Cartridges</b>	Cartridge Care, Inc.
<b>Fax/Copiers</b>	Canon Stringer Business
<b>Fertilizer</b>	Tessman Seed, Inc.
<b>Hazardous Waste Spill</b>	Bay West, Inc.
<b>Ice Melt</b>	Tessman Seed, Inc.
<b>Information Technology Professional Development</b>	NOREX
<b>Light Bulbs</b>	Voss Lighting

<b>Industrial Supplies</b>	Grainger
<b>Janitorial Supplies</b>	Grainger
<b>Laboratory Supplies</b>	VWR International
<b>Mattresses</b>	South State Bedding Co.
<b>Medical Waste</b>	Stericycle
<b>Moving</b>	Bester Brothers
<b>Office Furniture</b>	Faison/Corporate Express
<b>Office Supplies</b>	Faison/Corporate Express
<b>Paper Towels</b>	Unisource
<b>Plumbing Supplies</b>	Sexauer
<b>Poly Can Liner</b>	Unisource
<b>Power Door Operator</b>	Roy C., Inc.
<b>Printer Cartridges</b>	Cartridge Care, Inc.
<b>Printing Paper</b>	Unisource
<b>Toilet Tissue</b>	Unisource
<b>Toner Cartridges</b>	Cartridge Care, Inc.
<b>Utility Consulting</b>	NUS Consulting