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UK RECYCLING

2022

ANNUAL REPORT



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OVERVIEW

2022 saw the beginning of the university returning to a pre-pandemic sense of normalcy. With this came challenges, but the UK Recycling staff worked hard toward their sustainability goals. **2022 was also the final year of the 5 year Sustainability Strategic Plan (SSP) adopted back in 2017.** This plan had 4 main goals specific to recycling and waste reduction:

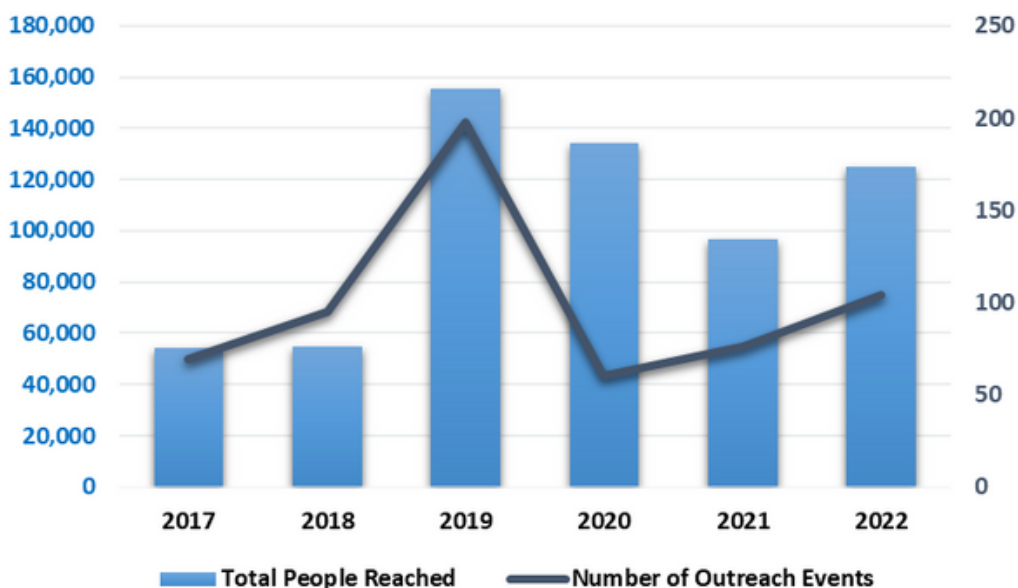
- 1.** Increase Education & Outreach on Waste Diversion.
- 2.** Conduct a comprehensive university waste audit.
- 3.** Develop and implement a Sustainable Purchasing Protocol.
- 4.** Increase UK's Campus Waste Diversion rate to 50%.



Sustainability Strategic Plan: Increase Education & Outreach on Waste Diversion

UK Recycling greatly increased their education and outreach efforts in 2022. Last year they reached nearly 125,000 people, which was a big leap from about 96,500 in 2021.

Though the number of people reached nor events was as high as in 2019, the increase from 2021 is seen as a major success.



Sustainability Strategic Plan: Increase Education & Outreach on Waste Diversion

Education and Outreach are incredibly important to creating awareness of the waste reduction efforts throughout the University. In the fall semester, UK Recycling celebrated America Recycles Day on November 15th by encouraging students, faculty, and staff to not just recycle but recycle right.



The 2022 campaign focused on what can be accepted in the mixed recycling stream. UK Recycling placed display cases labeled “What Am I?” across campus. These contained every material that can be placed in UK’s mixed recycling stream. The materials were later recycled after removing the installation.



Sustainability Strategic Plan: Increase Education & Outreach on Waste Diversion

UK Recycling also saw a big win during football season. With the Big Blue Recycling Crew's help, **42.74 tons of material were recycled and 2.38 tons of food was donated over the course of the 2022 season** at Kroger Field.



To help achieve this, the Big Blue Recycling Crew handed out tailgating kits at each home game, which contain educational materials on what's recyclable as well as recycling and landfill bags to collect at each tailgating area.



Sustainability Strategic Plan: Conduct a Comprehensive University Waste Audit

A comprehensive waste audit was conducted in 2018 and its results have been used to make data-driven decisions on where the university's efforts could be most effective. From the study, a series of recommendations were provided:

1. Expand what was accepted in the mixed recycling stream
2. Implement organic waste collection.
3. Implement new recycling programs, specifically to recover recyclables like non-hospital textiles, white goods, plastic film, and construction and demolition.
4. Increase our in-house training and outreach of the university's mixed recycling stream.



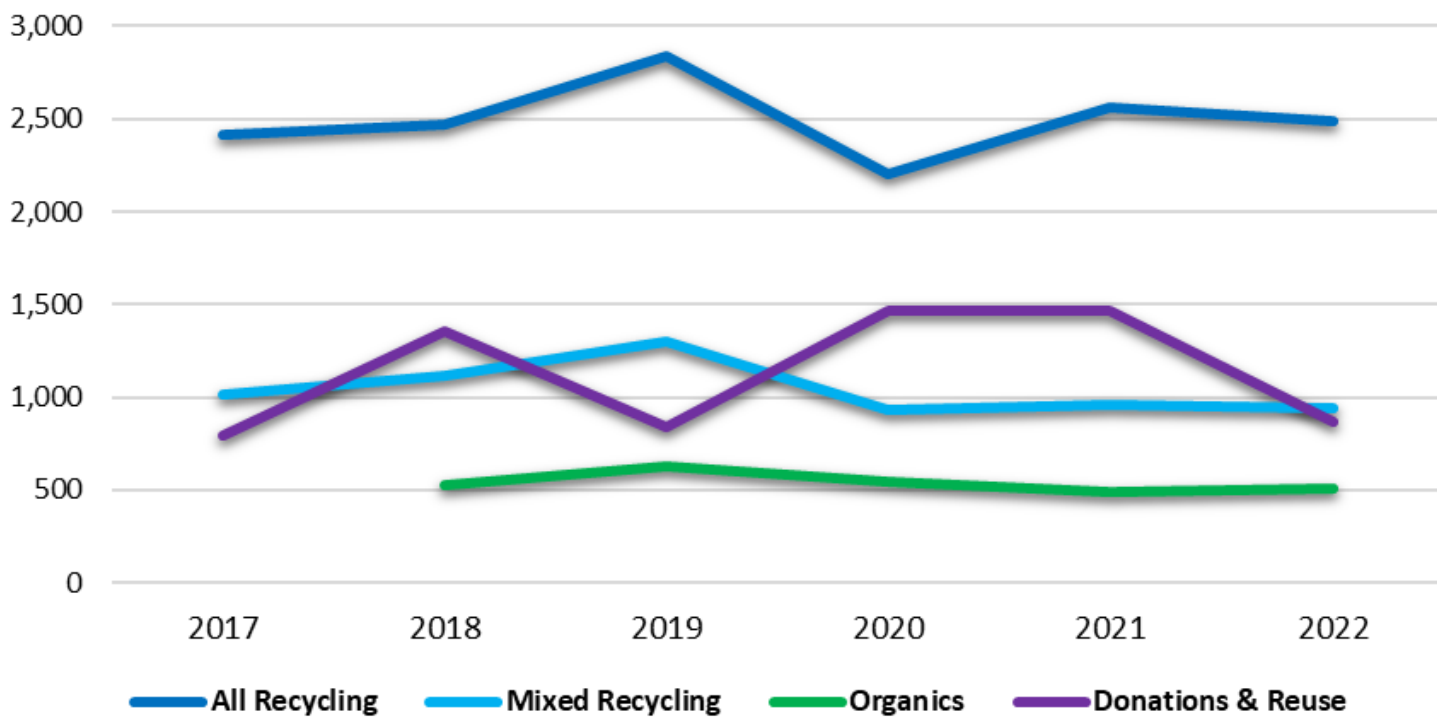
Develop & Implement a Sustainable Purchasing Protocol

While UK did not create a standardized purchasing protocol by 2022, we are incorporating this initiative into our future goals.

Sustainability Strategic Plan: Increase UK's Campus Waste Diversion rate to 50%

In 2022, the diversion rate for **campus** was 42%, a slight drop from 47% in 2021. Though returning from the pandemic brought many challenges to reducing UK's waste, we are committed to not only meet but exceed this waste diversion goal next year.

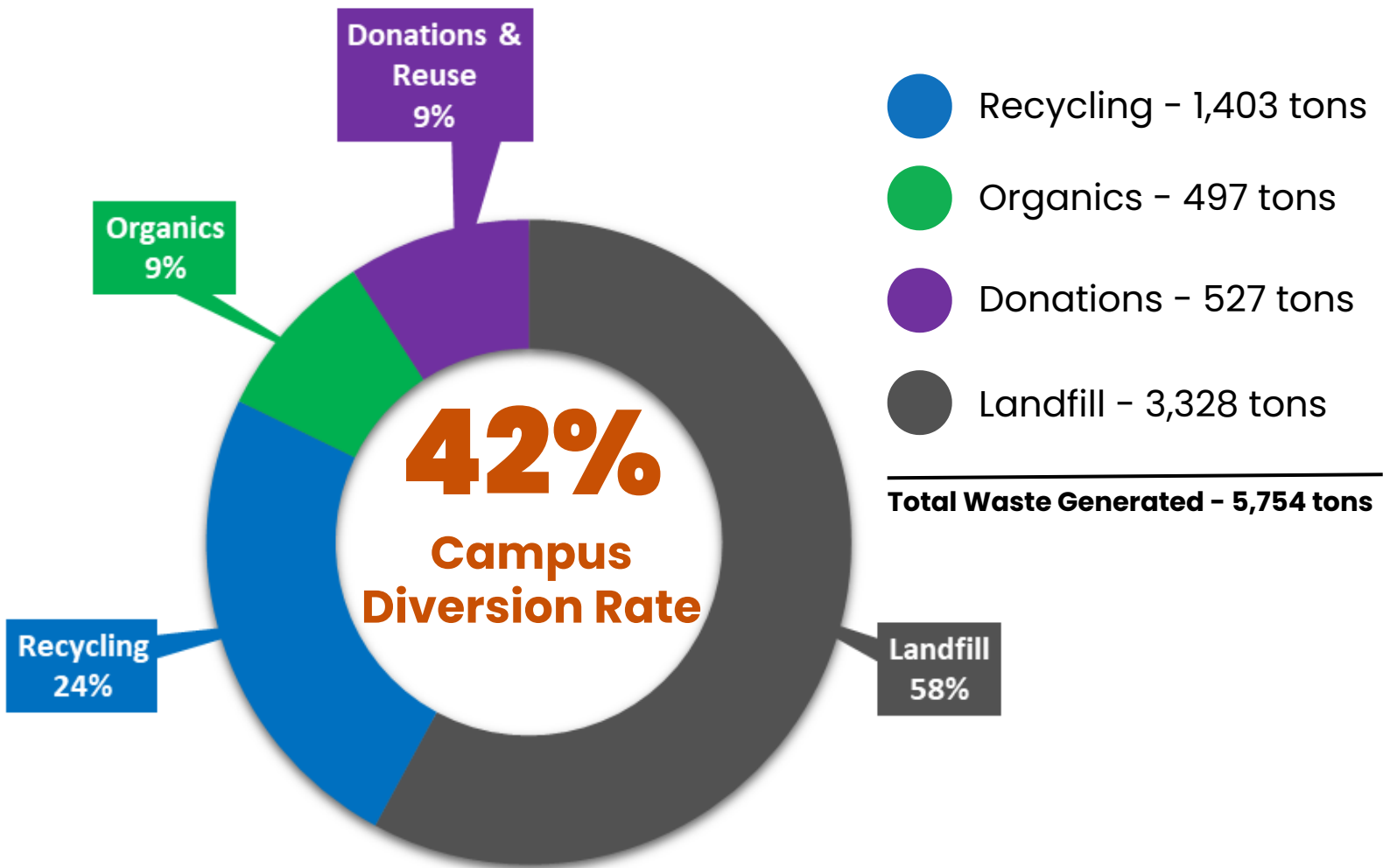
TOTAL Waste Diverted in Tons



While the university did not reach a 50% campus waste diversion rate, UK Recycling encourages everyone to remember that waste reduction should be thought of as a journey not a destination.

Sustainability Strategic Plan: Increase UK's Campus Waste Diversion rate to 50%

As the university returned to business-as-usual, this came with some challenges that may have contributed to the dip in the university's diversion rates.

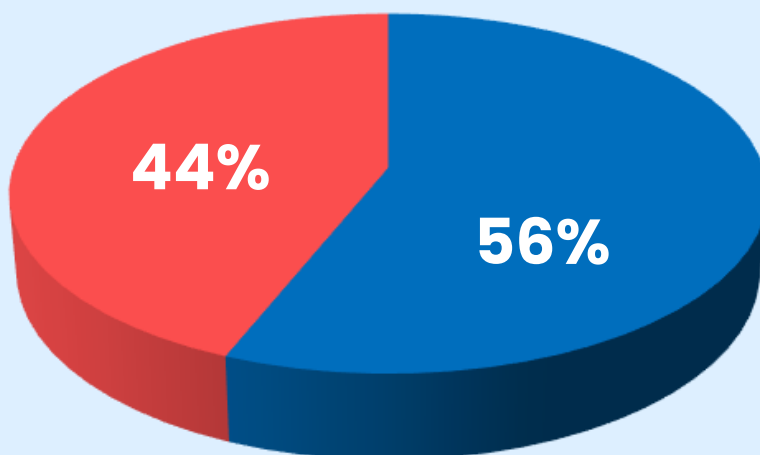


UK Recycling's staff is already looking ahead and planning for new opportunities and areas to expand the university's waste diversion efforts such as their Brown Paper Towel and All-in-the-Hall programs in order to reach their new goal!

A Closer Look at 2022: Total Recycling

University of Kentucky takes mixed recycling beyond bottles, paper, and cans. We have a dedicated team that is regularly looking for new avenues to recycle items such as light bulbs, oil, and toner cartridges. Check out [UK Recycling's website](#) for information on all the items that can be recycled here at UK.

Portion of Total Waste Produced



 **Campus - 1,403 tons**

 **Healthcare - 1,091 tons**

In 2022, UK recycled 2,494 tons of materials, 1,091 tons of which came from healthcare and 1,403 tons from campus. The total recycling rate for the university was 21% with healthcare having an 18% recycling rate and campus having an 24% recycling rate. **That means of 24% of all campus' waste was recycled in 2022. This made up over half of the 42% total campus waste diversion rate, with reuse and composting comprising the rest.**

A Closer Look at 2022: Mixed Recycling

In 2022, UK switched the language it used to describe its single-stream recyclables from "All-in-One" to "Mixed Recyclables" in order to more accurately reflect what is being collected. The mixed recycling stream is the largest portion of the university's recycling efforts.

938 tons
TOTAL
of mixed
recycling
collected

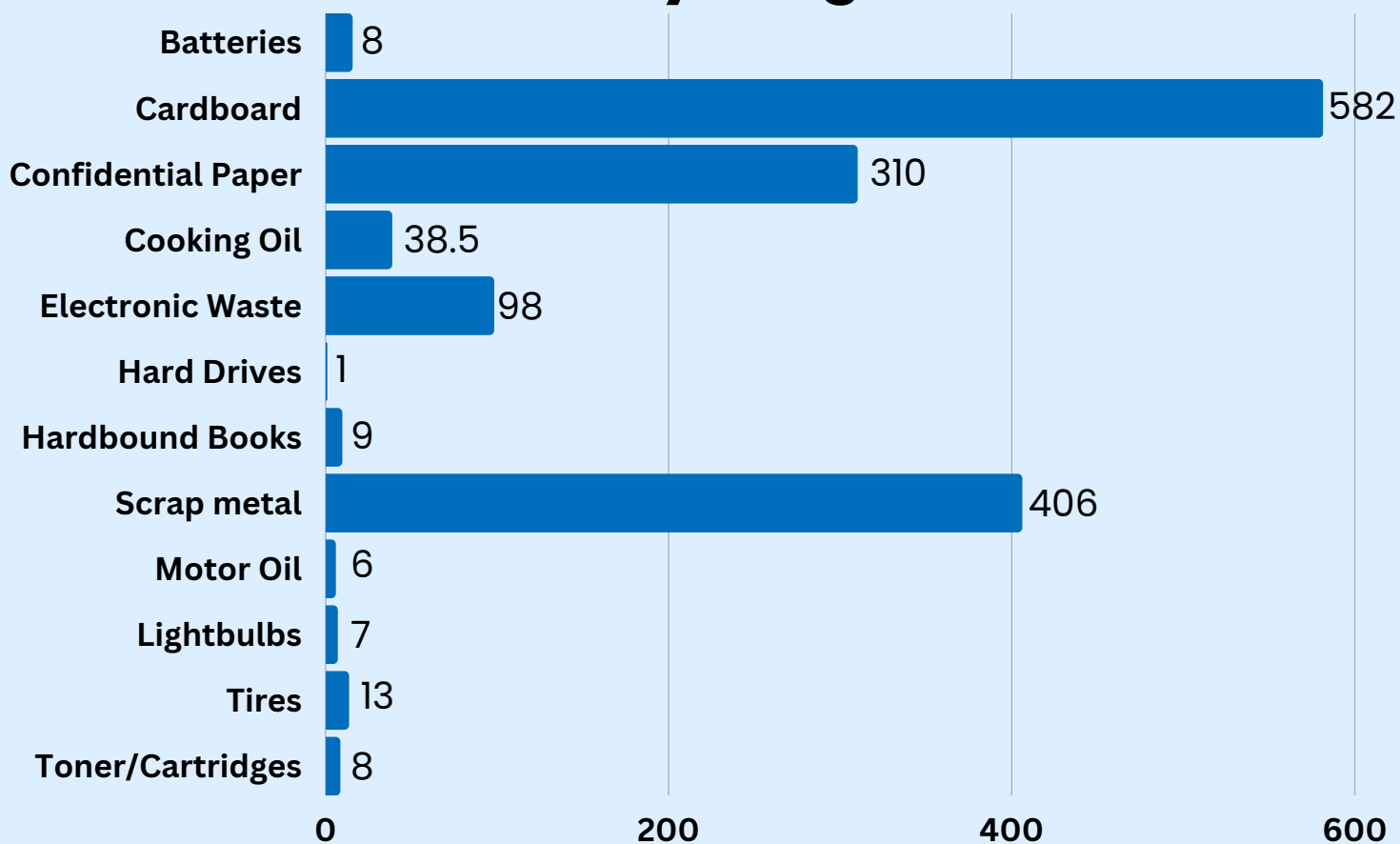
183 tons
from
healthcare

755 tons
from campus

A Closer Look at 2022: Other Recycling

In addition to mixed recyclables, UK has avenues to recycle other materials ranging from typical items like cardboard and scrap metal to harder to recycle items like toner cartridges, Styrofoam, and blue wrap from the hospital.

Other Recycling in Tons



4.5 tons

Styrofoam

1.63 tons

IV Bag Wrappers

5.47 tons

Stryker Equipment

Healthcare Recycling

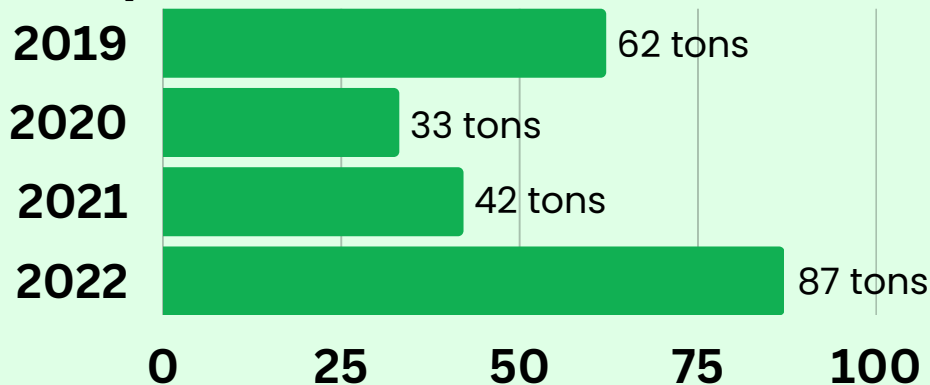
A Closer Look at 2022: Organic Waste

The organics program at UK continued to expand in 2022. Leaves, brush, logs, and wood chips are collected for composting by UK Grounds Department throughout campus.



Dining hall food waste and coffee grounds had been collected in years past, but in 2022 UK Recycling revived the Residence Hall Food Waste Program in University Flats.

Campus Food Waste Collected

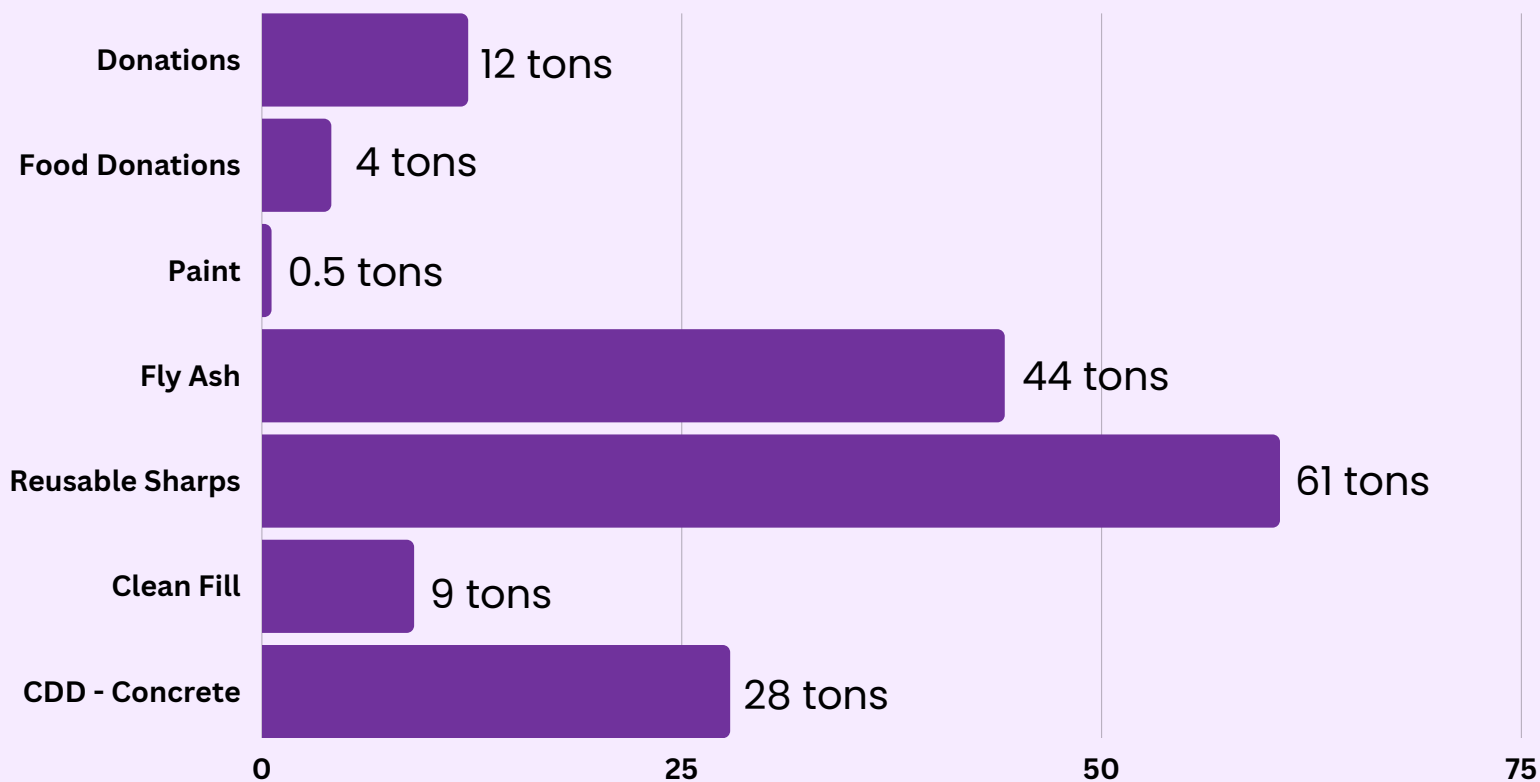


A total of 100 students participated in the program, helping contribute to the 87 tons of total food waste collected in 2022. This was a stark increase from the 42 tons of total food waste collected in 2021. **The amount of food waste collected in 2022 was even 40% higher than pre-pandemic amounts in 2019.**

A Closer Look at 2022: Donations & Reuse

UK Recycling is very proud of the efforts made across campus as things returned to business-as-usual following COVID-19.

Donations by Category



478 tons



Pallets

233 tons



Surplus

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

University President

Dr. Eli Capilouto

Office of Sustainability

Sustainability Administrator, Shane Tedder

Waste, Recycling, & Trucking

Zero Waste Administrator, Esther Moberly

This annual report is intended to provide a concise set of facts and measurements to support environmental decision-making. We welcome your questions and comments to:

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