Post-Consumer Food Waste Demonstration Project Internship Position Description

Background
The University of Michigan is interested in providing post-consumer food waste composting to campus. This new program would allow students, faculty, staff and visitors to dispose of plate scrapings, other food waste and compostable disposables in an environmentally-preferred fashion. In March 2011, a report was issued to campus outlining feasibility and costs associated with such a program. One of the first steps noted in this report was to conduct a pilot program in a building on campus that provides food service.

Objectives
The near-term objectives for the pilot program are:
1. To determine the most effective collection strategy for pre- and post-consumer food waste from the Michigan League.
2. To understand the costs associated with such a program in terms of required labor, collection materials, hauling fees, tip fees and contamination issues.
3. To develop and assess the effectiveness of training, signage and educational materials presented to staff and food service users and the associated costs.

The long-term objective for the pilot program is to give the University of Michigan a realistic idea of necessary costs, buy-in, equipment and support to institute pre- and post-consumer food waste collection and composting from all facilities on campus containing food service operations.

Internship Details
Plant Building and Grounds Services & the Michigan League are seeking a qualified student intern to lead the planning and implementation of a pre- and post-consumer food waste composting pilot program at the Michigan League. The internship runs from May 2012 through December 2012 and a commitment of 10-15 hours/week is anticipated. Pay is $10/hour. Supervision will be provided jointly by Tracy Artley, Plant Building & Grounds Services’ Sustainability Programs Coordinator, and Bob Yecke, Director of the Michigan League. Duties associated with this internship include:

- Review final report from the Winter 2012 ENV 391 project
- Tour kitchens and review the acceptable items for composting identified in the ENV 391 report
- Review and modify, as necessary, identified locations for compostables collection bins identified in the ENV 391 report
- Work with food service operations staff on operational and work flow issues related to the collection of pre- and post-consumer food waste and adjust as necessary
- Work with Waste Management Services’ operations foreman on scheduling collection of food waste from loading dock
- Review recommendations from the ENV 391 project, revise as necessary. Create and post posters, signs and handouts for use within kitchens and public areas containing information on what is and is not compostable
- Develop training materials for food service and custodial staff
- Educate and train custodial and food service staff in regard to the program and their roles
• Review recommendations from the ENV 391 project, develop informational and educational signage and materials for food service users
  o Identify potentially compostable in-building products
  o Define what is trash, recyclable and compostable
  o Create signs for waste, recycling and compostables bins
  o Work with purchasing departments to see if alternatives are available for some disposables
• Recruit and train volunteers to monitor and assist with carry out the program
• Create educational materials for staff to use in educating the public on the program
  o Resource guide
  o Bullet points
  o Talking points
• Review the pre-pilot survey & results from the ENV 391 project. Develop and implement a post-pilot survey for students and other food service users about recycling and composting programs
• Develop and implement a survey in order to get feedback from staff on ease of execution, cost savings and cost implications of the pilot program
• Maintain detailed notes on all aspects of pilot prep and execution, including successful and unsuccessful strategies
• Write final report

Interested students should email a cover letter and resume to Tracy Artley, artleyt@umich.edu, and Bob Yecke, yecker@umich.edu. Emails must be received by April 1, 2012. The anticipated start date for the internship is May 7, 2012.