

## USCC Issue Brief 2019-1: Campus Composting Startup

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### *How Does Campus Composting Begin? Survey Results*

As part of our preparation for a Campus Composting Manual targeted to release in fall 2019, the US Composting Council wanted to know what is behind the addition of food scraps and organics to the recycling programs that have become mainstream on college campuses. Who brings the idea to the table, staff (sustainability/dining/facilities administrators), students, teachers or other stakeholders? We also wanted to find out the prevalence of high-level goals and mission statements in program startups.



We had made some assumptions.: "it's a staff function", and" high-level goals are critical".

Well, we were surprised!



The University of Arizona Compost Cats



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## SURVEY

The week of Feb 26-March 6, we sent a survey 395 campuses in our "Our Campus Composts" community, and the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education Discussion Group. Responses came in quickly from 96 campuses (about 25%).

## RESULTS

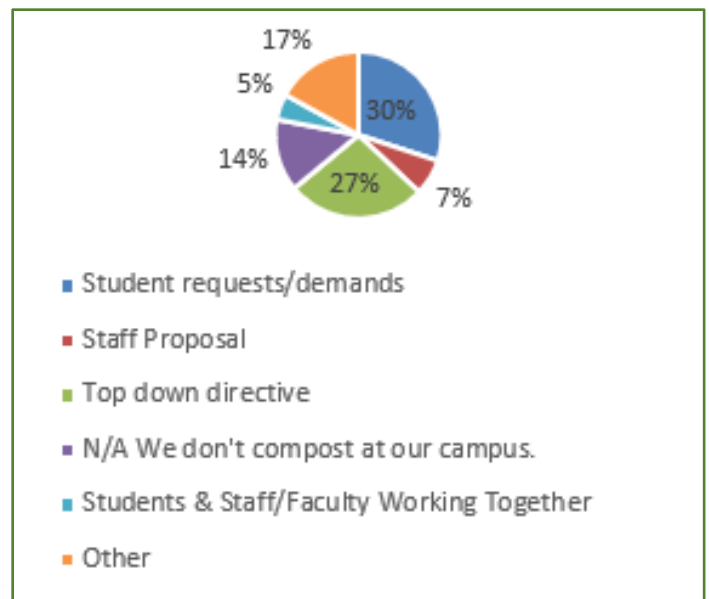
Approximately 30% of the respondents, a mix of students and university employees, stated that the program began with students! Not far behind, though, said the program was initiated through administrative

Directives from the top make department heads listen, funding flow, and ensure things happen.

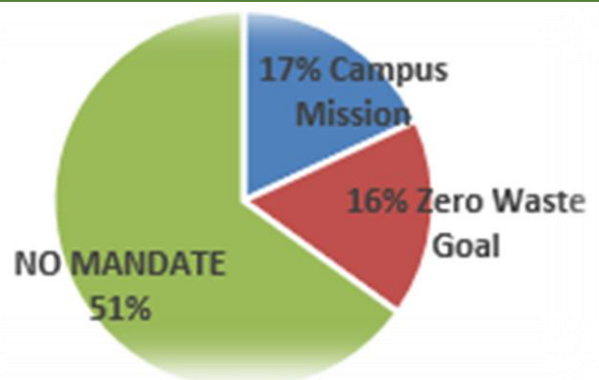
24%, staff.

In some cases, it began as a partnership; in others, it was faculty initiated. In a few cases, the program was set up to solve a waste problem in the community or on campus.

Sixty percent of the respondents said there is no formal mandate for composting; 17% said it came from a directive from the top level (such as the president's office) and 16%



said it was started as an element of a campus zero waste policy.



News!!

Don't wait for a campus policy—conventional wisdom is: GO FOR IT.



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