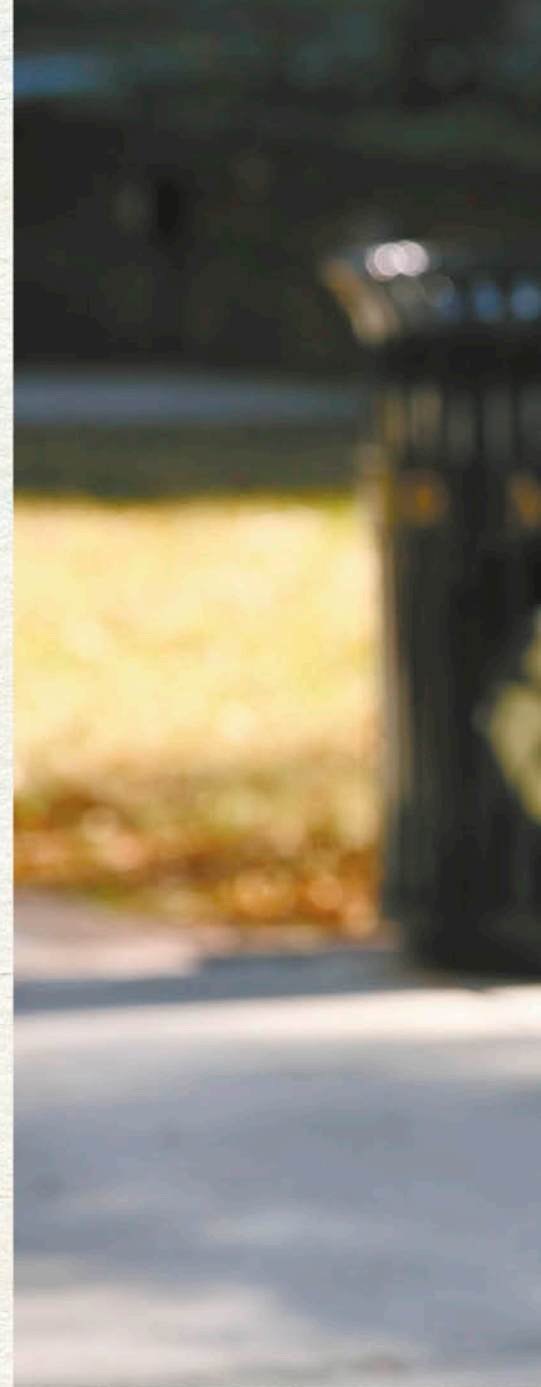


# Saving the Planet, a Little at a Time



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hristine von Kolnitz Cooley talks trash. Real trash. Like used office paper, scrap metal, cardboard, even grease.

As sustainability manager for the Medical University of South Carolina, Cooley and her staff of 10 are responsible for the recycling of a lot of MUSC's waste, and with 82 buildings, approximately 700 hospital beds, more than 800 labs, and at least 15,000 people on the grounds each weekday, that's a lot of trash.

Consider that last year, MUSC shredded and recycled approximately 520 tons of waste office paper (all shredded for confidentiality), 309 tons of cardboard and 120 tons of yard waste, among many other items, from books to batteries. The Sustainability and Recycling Program, under Cooley's direction, handled much of that waste.

S&R has been working with Sodexo Food Services to decrease the environmental footprint of food from our cafeterias. Sodexo no longer uses plastic foam food trays in favor of paper food trays and now serves salad in containers made from corn. They also recycled five tons of grease – it turns out recycled grease can be used in bio-diesel and related products. In late 2012, the University Hospital cafeteria began composting food waste, diverting 12,000 pounds the first month from the dumpster.

Two areas in which the university has made significant recycling progress are hazardous waste and medical waste. The entire campus now recycles all types of batteries and medical facilities such as OR's and procedure rooms recycle plastic packaging now.

In all, the university processed 1,155 tons of waste in fiscal year 2011-12, roughly the weight of six adult blue whales. That accounts for 23 percent of MUSC's total waste production of nearly 3,800 tons.