Introduction

Welcome to Week 7 of the 2018 CGOP! If you need a refresher on any past newsletters, please check them out [here](#). For this week, we will be discussing Elective Actions #8 & #9.

8. Choose an office product that you regularly purchase. Commit to buying (or continuing to buy) the most ecologically friendly version of that product available through your chosen vendor.
9. Before purchasing office equipment or supplies, check University Surplus to see if they have something that can work instead.

As a reminder, completion of five Elective Actions beyond the Required Actions will earn you Bronze level certification, completion of ten will earn Silver level certification, and fifteen Elective Actions will earn Gold level certification.

Instructions

Think about the sheer number of offices that exist around the world. Now imagine the copious amount of office supplies they consume every year. As long as we work out of offices, we are likely to need some level of supplies to fill them. Therefore, the products we buy are a significant opportunity to lessen our environmental impact. Obviously, the most efficient way to do this would be to simply reduce the amount of physical products purchased as much as possible. Of course, we don't expect you to immediately ditch all of your supplies -- just that the supplies you do buy are more sustainable with less of an impact on the environment than their traditional counterparts.

Elective Action #8: Choose an office product that you regularly purchase. Commit to buying (or continuing to buy) the most ecologically friendly version of that product available through your chosen vendor.

Products to consider include recycled writing utensils or fair-trade coffee.

The possibilities for this action are admittedly vast, and we don't have all that much specific advice to offer. A good place to start is by visiting the website of your chosen vendor, and searching for the product you want to buy along with search terms like "eco-friendly," "eco-conscious," "recycled," etcetera. The search options on their websites may also have an option to filter for these kinds of products only. You can also use Google to search for products recommendations before seeing if your

vendor has them, or to find out if there is any kind of program or certification in place for eco-friendly versions of that product. An example of such a product would be paper products with forest certification like the Forest Stewardship Council. There are also an abundance of fair-trade coffee certifications, and it is not difficult to find fair-trade coffee at local grocery stores. We would, however, recommend that you research a product's certification before you purchase it; some certifications are not particularly credible and amount to little more than greenwashing.

Elective Action #9: Before purchasing office equipment or supplies, check University Surplus to see if they have something that can work instead.

Located at 1801 S. Orchard St, Urbana, University Surplus is a hidden treasure of our campus. At the "store," employees can "shop" (for free!) for surplus equipment that has been discarded by other university offices. All of this equipment is state property, so it cannot be taken for personal use. Surplus equipment that does not sell at the shop, or is deemed to be unsellable, is shipped back to the state, where usually it is scrapped as waste. By "buying" these products from University Surplus, they are saved from the landfill, and the consumption of new, raw materials is reduced.

Common items found at University surplus include:
- Computers
- Televisions
- Monitors
- Printers
- Desks
- Bookcases
- Tables
- Chairs
- File cabinets
- Lamps
- And more!

If anyone in your office finds themselves in need of one of these items, University Surplus should be their first stop before they look for anything new.

This 2013 News-Gazette article describes the warehouse in more detail as well as some of the more unique items that have been found here.

More information from the university can also be found here.