

Proposal: 10R21

Title: Installation of Water Bottle Refill Station in Lower Beamer

Date: November 16, 2019

Sponsors: Averil Cumings, EVP of Campus Sustainability, Luke Witzig, EVP of Technology and Finance

Text: Be it resolved that the 2019-2020 Student Government of Wheaton College recommends the college install an Elkay EZH₂O water bottle refill station in Lower Beamer.

INSTALLATION OF WATER BOTTLE REFILLING STATIONS

Introduction:

The Campus Sustainability Committee proposes the installation of Elkay EZH₂O water bottle refilling stations in place of one of the four traditional Elkay water fountains situated between the men's and women's restroom in Lower Beamer. The Campus Sustainability Committee also proposes utilizing the wall space behind the water fountains as a sustainability message board that can reflect both the Campus Sustainability Committee's purpose and the water fountain donation theme of the class of 1978.

Rationale:

Participation in a Sustainability Initiative

Installation of water bottle refilling stations in Lower Beamer would provide students both the convenience of refilling their water bottles and the opportunity to participate in an easy yet effective sustainability practice. Currently, most Elkay EZH₂O models include a count feature that tallies the number of water bottles refilled. In theory, this tally effectively highlights the student's engagement in helping reduce the number of single-use bottles being sent to the landfill. Having both the count feature and the added convenience of refilling one's water bottle, the Elkay systems encourage students to both reduce and reuse while enjoying free, cold, and clean water.

Strategic Placement

The proposed location of the two water bottle refilling stations is strategic. Because Lower Beamer operates as Wheaton College's student center, a pathway between classes, a study area, and a doorway to STUPE and Sam's, it is likely that Lower Beamer represents the most trafficked area on campus. Given the number of individuals navigating Lower Beamer throughout a given day, the refilling stations would be heavily visited by the student body and act as an improved public utility compared to the utilization of the current water fountains. The placement of the refilling stations could also serve as a resource to Sam's by decreasing both the burden placed on the cafe's water refilling station and the number of single-use paper cups that Sam's provides to students.

Student Desirability

Due to the convenience of the water bottle refilling stations, the stations are highly desired amongst students in dormitories and the most-visited areas on campus. Student desirability for the refilling stations stems from the fact that they can completely fill, for example, a 32oz water without the hassle of tipping one's bottle, like is necessary when using a traditional water fountain. Students were asked in a Campus Sustainability Committee poll if they would want a water refill station installed in Lower Beamer. Within three days of posting the survey, 97% of the 168 students that responded said they do want this technology. Therefore, the installation of the water bottle refilling stations would meet student demand and help foster a better student environment in Lower Beamer.

Visibility of Campus Sustainability:

Water refilling stations in Lower Beamer will provide greater visibility to sustainability initiatives taken upon by the college. Colleges and universities such as George Mason University, University of Marshall, College of Charleston, etc. highlight the importance of installing and making refilling stations accessible to students on their sustainability websites. Universities such as Princeton or Pennsylvania also provide maps of all water bottle refilling stations on their campus, further easing access and convenience. By utilizing the back wall of the current water fountains, we could provide a map of all current water refilling stations, mark milestones (i.e., 500,000 total bottles saved across campus, etc.), and provide biblically rooted messages emphasizing the importance of sustainability and environmental stewardship.

The back wall of the water bottle refilling stations will be made aesthetically appealing in an attempt to draw students and visitors to it. A definition of sustainability, facts about single use plastics, and Mark 9:41 will be painted on it. The back wall design will be decided and paid for by the Campus Sustainability Committee. The back wall is important to the Campus Sustainability Cabinet because it provides greater visibility to campus sustainability initiatives and the colleges stance on environmental stewardship.

Honoring the Class of 1978

The traditional Elkay water fountains found in Lower Beamer were gifts of the Class of 1978 commemorating their 25th class reunion in 2013. On the plaque acknowledging the gift is written verbatim the verse of Mark 9:41. To honor the class and their gift the Campus Sustainability Committee will adopt Mark 9:41 as the theme for the back wall.

Respectfully Submitted,

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