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I carried my bag of waste to class with me, although I only had one today, and accidentally forgot it! I had to go back for it so that I could continue taking it with me to lunch, frisbee practice, and later, dinner. No one much seemed to notice my bag carrying, so I had to put myself out there in order to have conversations about what I was doing.

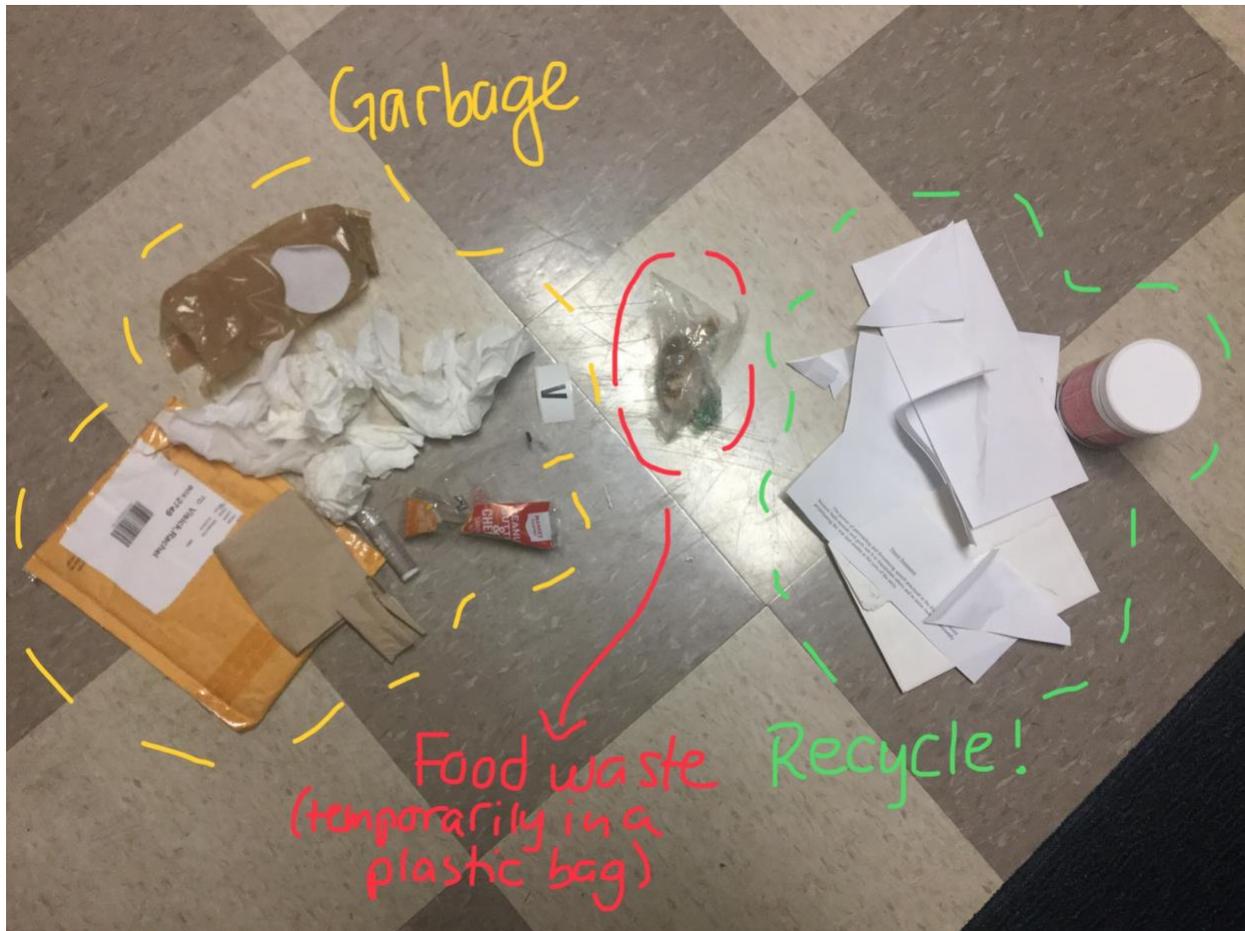
First, my roommate asked me about why I had a bag of trash on the floor (when we so obviously have a trashcan of our own in the room). I told her that I was collecting and carrying it for the Project Green Challenge; she gave me a look that seemed to say, “Okay, that’s pretty weird,” but ultimately, she was curious. How much trash had I accumulated? What kinds of things did I have in the bag? I told her some of what I had collected and she seemed to think it was reasonable. I think that although we find waste to be distasteful, there is a part in all of us that wonders, “How much stuff does one person actually throw away? What kinds of things would someone throw away throughout the course of the day?”

Later, I was walking to my dorm with the girl who lives in the room across from me, and I told her about what I was carrying around as she was carrying a shirt with wet paint. She said that she didn’t think that she would produce too much waste today, and thought that it was an interesting challenge. I thought it was cool that she reflected on her own life first.

I encountered my roommate and a friend of hers in the hallway, and my roommate hurriedly said to her friend, “Oh! Ask her what she’s got in that bag.” The friend asked, but her attention was diverted by someone else before I could explain. But I was thrilled to see my roommate remember the challenge I was participating in and encourage her friend to ask about it.

Finally, I talked with another girl in my dorm at the bathroom sink, and I told her about what I was doing. She said that she had done a similar challenge for an environmental science class in high school, but that they’d had to carry around their trash for a week! I was actually inspired by her; it’s one thing for me to do this for a day, but a week is a serious commitment that lends thought to how best to reduce all of that waste (if only to get rid of the weight!).

I also emailed my parents back at home to tell them what I was doing, and my dad told me that he was interested in carrying around all of the waste that *he* had made that day, since it was time to take out the trash. I was delighted!



The paper towels are definitely something that I can change. I own a hand towel, but I never remember to bring it into the bathroom with me, so I end up using the paper towels right in the dispenser. As the picture shows, that's a lot of accumulation of just paper towels. This made me realize how easy it would be to bring my hand towel, so I'm going to put it in a more obvious spot and work on using it more often this week!

The second thing that I want to change is individual wrappers. There is a cracker wrapper on the right side of the garbage pile—I have a box of crackers for snacks, all individually wrapped. I bought them because they're good, and sometimes wrappers are nice when I need to stick some crackers in a bag, but I wonder if I can shop in such a way that I pay attention to the materials being used and work to ensure that I buy snacks with less packaging than the ones I currently use. That is my goal for the future, and I'm excited to try it.

One small change I made today was reusing some papers that had mis-printed before recycling them. I needed an envelope to slide an activity fee under a professor's door, and found myself lacking. Instead of buying some envelopes, I used a mostly blank sheet of paper I had been about to recycle and folded it into an envelope instead. I felt that I was making at least a little bit of use of what I otherwise would have put directly in my waste bag! The other small change that I plan on making is, of course, using my hand towel, and I can start that today.