

What you buy  
(or don't buy)  
is important!



## Buying Green Means Buying Less

### Sustainable Purchasing Recommendations

- 1 Purchase only 30% recycled content paper (eliminate the option to purchase virgin paper)
- 2 Reduce office product deliveries to one day per week
  - saves greenhouse gas emissions due to fewer deliveries
  - encourages more planning, coordination, and inventory control – avoid waste
- 3 Celebrate your success buying sustainable products! Communicate the value of SP throughout the university, starting with upper administration.
- 4 Make "Buying Green" a priority.
  - use less/buy only what you need
  - buy durable or reusable products
  - buy non-toxics
  - buy recycled-content
  - always print double-sided (when you need paper)

Five universities in Omaha participated in a study of green purchasing of office products in academic year 2014-15. Surveys were conducted and educational/motivational messages about buying green (sustainable purchasing) were sent to office professionals.\* Here are the results:

### Office product purchasers at every campus are willing to BUY GREEN!

- 86% believe sustainable purchasing should be an objective of their university's sustainability policy.
- Cost savings and performance are critical criteria for making purchases.
- By gaining just a little more knowledge, 80% will "buy green."
- 67% would likely order office supplies no more than once per week.
- Even at a 16% premium, product purchasers feel recycled paper products are worth it.

### Using less paper is the best thing you can do for the environment and the bottom line — but when you need paper, buy recycled-content paper.

In 2014–15, the universities participating in the study spent \$293,000 on paper products and saved **\$57,600** over the previous year by simply purchasing less paper. Environmental savings were:

- 184 tons of wood
- 1,590 million BTUs of energy
- 273,773 pounds greenhouse gas emissions
- 1,118,653 gallons of water
- 93,954 pounds of solid waste

### One university changed their policy to purchase only 30% recycled paper.

The university that changed their policy also used only 52.2 pounds of paper per employee, second lowest. Consumption of paper ranged from 48.8 to 64.4 pounds of paper per employee. Savings—paper NOT purchased—ranged from 3.5 to 36.2 pounds of paper per employee. The university with the highest use of paper also had the highest savings, however one university purchased 0.2 pounds more paper per employee.

### What are the barriers to Sustainable Purchasing? Leadership.

- 44% say they could use more knowledge about sustainable purchasing but it wouldn't really be beneficial to their job.
- 47% say sustainable purchasing is never brought up.
- 82% believe there is little or no chance of being rewarded for sustainable purchasing.

\* The project was funded by EPA and conducted by the Nebraska Business Development Center at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Messages are archived at <http://nbdc.unomaha.edu/cbagreenteam/epp-archive.cfm>  
The Environmental Paper Calculator (<http://c.environmentalpaper.org/home>) and Native Energy Travel Calculator (<http://www.nativeenergy.com/travel.html>) were used to calculate environmental savings.