

**Name:** Rachel Napoliello

**Is this a project that you will work on alone, or will you collaborate with others? If you are collaborating with others, list their names, their Tufts affiliation, and their contact emails. Please indicate which member of your team will be the principle contact.**

alone

**Please provide a 300-350 word description of your project**

Absolute Zero will be a short documentary following local college students who belong to the Boston zero waste community. There is a common perception that young adults, and specifically college students, are not involved in the zero-waste community due to restricted time and resources. However, primarily due to the spread of information on social media an increasing number of young adults are choosing to reduce waste consumption. I will be following Tufts students at different stages in their journey to zero waste. I will also be examining how they interact with their community by interviewing members of the Boston zero-waste community and business owners that support this lifestyle. This documentary will accomplish four things: 1) increase awareness of this lifestyle 2) provide a brief overview of the zero-waste community in one city, specifically focusing on college students 3) serve as a starting point for people hoping to start on their own zero-waste journey 4) educate students why people are adopting this lifestyle and to make them more conscious of their waste. This short documentary will be framed within the setting of Tufts but will also highlight resources in the greater Boston area. I am also hoping to feature environment focused groups on campus like the Eco Reps and the Office of Sustainability. The documentary will consist of interviews of zero-waste students and local Boston fixtures in the zero-waste community. Some examples of people being interviewed outside of Tufts includes Neighborhood Produce, a zero-waste grocery store, and Cleenland, a new zero waste shop in Cambridge. In addition to these interviews, I will also be film zero waste students in their daily lives to better understand how they make decisions to avoid waste. I will be taking on the role of director and cinematographer. As someone who has committed to a low waste lifestyle (which is a variation of the zero-waste lifestyle) I have prior knowledge of the zero-waste community in the greater Boston area and know other people at Tufts who have committed to more environmentally friendly lifestyle.

**What is the problem that you are looking to solve?**

When we throw away things or recycle things, they don't disappear, they need to take up space somewhere. Recycling facilities cannot keep up with the quantity of materials that end up in the recycling bin. Unfortunately, many recycled materials end up in the same landfills as trash. When I learned this, I was horrified and decided to reduce my waste. I see a lot of unnecessary waste production on Tufts campus. I believe that waste reduction can start with the student. Many students do not know the fate of their waste or know about alternative lifestyles. I would like to educate students about how to

change their consumption and waste patterns. While one person may not make much of a difference, a whole campus can make a much bigger environmental impact.

### **How will you measure success?**

I will measure success by doing small screenings on campus and handing out surveys afterwards that ask questions regarding how the film changed their thinking. I will try to measure prior knowledge and plans to reduce waste (if any). Some questions to measure student knowledge of waste habits I will ask may include: "Before this screening, did you know that many of the things you recycle end up in the same landfills as your trash?" Some questions I will ask to measure if students plan to reduce their waste I will ask may include: "Will you consider putting together and carrying around a zero-waste kit (Tupperware, handkerchief, silverware, reusable bag, reusable straw)?"

### **How many people would this project impact? Please categorize them as students, faculty, staff, and other**

This short film will be mainly targeted at students, since I believe this is the demographic which would find adopting these practices hardest. I will do multiple screenings across campus that will be open to students, faculty, and staff. I will also be releasing the video on social media across campus. I anticipate the students at the screenings will be the most engaged, but that the video released in Tufts social media groups will have a larger audience.

### **What is the environmental impact?**

The environmental impact of this film is to reduce waste production on campus. The goal will be to encourage students to not only reduce their trash, but their recyclables by choices they make regarding their habits. In making students more conscious of the quantity of their waste, I hope to reduce the waste at Tufts campus and introduce new habits to the student body.

### **What are the educational impacts of this project?**

I hope to educate the student body about waste practices in the US and also about lifestyles that can help reduce individual waste. The film will suggest practical new habits that students can adopt in their daily lives.

### **What is the social impact (excluding educational aspects)? (e.g. alleviating climate injustice, community resiliency, culture change, equity, etc)**

I believe that the main social impact of this film will be the potential to bring students together as a community. Whether students already practice zero-waste or are just interested in learning more, this film can bring people together with a common goal. At

a time when climate change feels out of our control, making active changes in our lives and joining a community with similar mindsets can make you feel just a little more in control.

**Will it help Tufts meet its sustainability goals? If so, how?  
(See Tufts sustainability goals here:  
<https://sustainability.tufts.edu/sustainability-at-tufts/our-commitments/commitments/>)**

This film will help Tufts reach its "Waste Reduction by 3% Each Year" by educating people about their current waste habits and offering solutions. By seeing other college students make lifestyle changes, making your own lifestyle changes will seem much more realistic. While one person living a zero-waste lifestyle cannot achieve this goal at Tufts on their own, an entire campus that is more mindful of their waste production can.

**What are the life cycle cost savings or the immediate cost savings, if applicable?**

N/A

**How much funding are you requesting from the Green Fund? Are you seeking funding from other places?**

I am requesting \$350. See itemized budget below. As I have

**How would you make this documentary Tufts specific?**

I would make this documentary Tufts specific by focusing on environmental groups on campus to help educate via interviews. The students that I will be following in this project will also be Tufts students. Since the focus of this documentary will be on how college students adapt to the zero-waste lifestyle, the documentary will depict Tufts resources that can aid students in their journey.

**What would the campus impact be?**

There will be screenings on campus in addition to a public release across Tufts social media groups. This film will inspire students to adopt some aspects of the zero-waste lifestyle and hopefully bring together a community on campus of people practicing or thinking about practicing alternative waste lifestyles. I am hoping people will be more conscious and will discuss their waste use within the Tufts community.

**As there is equipment at Tufts already, the committee is unlikely to fund purchasing any more equipment. Is there a specific reason why you would need additional funding for equipment?**

I have decided to use both Film and Media Studies and TUTV (Tufts University Television) equipment!