

# opinion

## Considering paper straws for a more sustainable campus

**GRACIE WILSON**  
Assistant Editor

Ashland University is arguably a sustainable campus. There are plenty of opportunities for students to get involved through Sustainability Club and various locations to recycle practically anything.

The dining locations around campus are also working towards sustainability. The Eagle’s Nest lets students purchase a reusable green box for a small fee that can be exchanged and reused each time they pick up food from there. This cuts down on the amount of styrofoam that is discarded.

While these efforts towards sustainability around AU are great and have the potential to make a difference, there are always small changes that can be made to do more. Another move that could be made towards sustainability would be making the change to paper straws.

Changing to paper straws would cut down on the number of plastic straws that are used and thrown out all over campus between the Eagle’s Nest and Tuffy’s Smoothie Bar. Especially since the Eagle’s Nest also serves Starbucks Coffee and straws are provided

with the cold beverages.

Now would be a good time to start implementing paper straws because the AU Sustainability Club began surveying for interest in switching to reusable cups around campus during the 2019 fall semester.

Paper straws are better for the environment than plastic because when they are thrown away or recycled, they can break down easier and are less harmful. When plastic breaks

down it can get into groundwater resources and is a source of contaminants, harmful to both humans and animals.

Since AU is already making strides towards sustainability through its clubs and recycling program, it would make sense to keep pushing towards a more sustainable campus culture. Switching to paper straws would be a way to cut down on our ecological footprint as a campus even more.



CNBC

Paper straws pose a lot of pros and cons even though they could be better for the environment.

According to CNBC, paper straws cost around two cents more than plastic and over time that cost would add up, but the environmental impacts from an increase of plastic could potentially decrease and that is better for the long term.

Paper straws, if thrown away, will break down much easier than plastic, but they could also be recycled or composted. That way, even if these straws are thrown away, the environmental impacts would be less.

A lot of people are opposed to paper straws because of the potential for them to disintegrate in their drinks or because they may have an odd taste to them. These are cons to using paper straws and should be taken into consideration alongside the cost because people use straws at such a high frequency.

While there are certainly pros and cons to switching to paper straws, the main thing to realize is that there is a high capacity of straws used on this campus and decreasing that amount would contribute significantly to the push for sustainability at AU.

## Dorm essentials to brighten up your room for the new year

**CASS TOLLIVER**  
AU-Live Sports Editor

The spring semester can sometimes start off gloomy with the cold weather and the after-Christmas sorrow. However, this semester can also be a time for new beginnings, resolutions being put into action and spring cleaning in your dorm room.

Although dorms are small spaces that are typically shared, it is not hard to make them cute and lively. Once you utilize your room to give you the maximum amount of storage space and walking area, adding decorations and furnishings will help to make it more welcoming to you and your friends.

Your dorm room should be a place where you actually want to spend time and a place where you can relax after classes.

Here are just a few things that can help your dorm room become the perfect space for you:

### 1. Decorative pillows

These pillows are perfect to add to dorm beds to make them look cuter and comfier. I personally like to buy decorative pillows that can also serve a purpose, and not ones that are only for looks. You could put pillows along the wallside of your bed to give it a futon or couch look, or add pillows to the end of your bed to make it look longer.

### 2. Indoor plants

Having something green and alive in your dorm will bring life to it. Indoor plants have been proven to boost your mood, productivity, concentration and creativity. They also reduce stress levels, fatigue, sore throats and colds. Along with helping human immune systems, plants clean indoor air by absorbing toxins, increasing humidity and producing oxygen. They also help add life to sterile and bland environments, give a sense of privacy and reduce noise levels. As long as you water it appropriately, your plant will change your dorm room for the better.



CASS TOLLIVER

Indoor plants can help dorms feel cozier.

### 3. Lights

From string lights, Christmas lights, LED lights to lamps, any light fixture will brighten up your dorm room. I especially love to turn these lights on in my room at night as opposed to having the overhead ceiling light on. They are cute, but also provide a necessary function.



CASS TOLLIVER

String lights add decor and functionality.

### 4. Essential oil diffuser

There are numerous benefits to having an essential oil diffuser in your room. It can relieve stress, improve sleep, kill off bacteria and mold, help with appetite control and decongestion, as well as pain relief. Along with those benefits, oil diffusers have safe scents. Unlike air fresheners, essential oil diffusers release types of cleansing molecules into the air that purify it, without releasing heavy or unhealthy chemicals. Since we cannot have candles in the dorms, oil diffusers are the best, if not an even better, alternative. They are not fire risks, and they are simple and easy to use.



CASS TOLLIVER

Essential oil diffusers are safe for dorm use.

### 5. Small area rugs

Rugs have the ability to make spaces look larger than they actually are. Adding a rug by the door can make your dorm feel more homey and welcoming, whereas adding one by your bed can make it feel more cozy.

### 6. Photos of people and things you love

Having photos of your best, closest friends and family will give your dorm a more personal feel. If you go to school far from where you live, this could provide a sense of home and familiarity for you. I order photos to hang in my dorm from Super Snaps; they are affordable and super cute! You can order them in different sizes and shapes, too.



CASS TOLLIVER

There are lots of ways to organize your photos.

Decorations and other dorm necessities will make your dorm living experience more enjoyable, and when the semester is over, you can take them home to make your bedroom at home look just as nice, too!

## the Collegian

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