Reduce Waste and Create Profits:  
Bronco Throw-Back 
An on Campus Thrift Store

Problem/Opportunity
Western Michigan University has a huge waste problem, particularly when it comes time to move out. Students throw away many items that they no longer want or need. One student said "One of the most wasteful things I have ever witnessed in my whole life was when students moved out of the dorms at the end of the year. Dumpsters full of furniture, tv, clothes... it was heartbreaking!" This provides an opportunity to reduce waste by collecting these goods and selling them back to students at low costs.

Research and Analysis
This project provided opportunities to look at alternatives rather than just the traditional thrift store. There are many options to creating a thrift store. Whether it is a for profit, a swap and trade program or just free store. There are many ideas for creating this new opportunity on campus. Researching other campus thrift stores provided best practice at Western Michigan. This project also required the research and surveying of students at Western Michigan University. Surveying around 100 students there is a great deal of interest in opening an on campus thrift store. Surveying students also helped with what types of items that would find most beneficial to them. The survey also identified that students would like the thrift store to be in a location that was consistent with their daily routines.
Solution and Recommendations

After looking at many different store options the best practice for Western Michigan University would be a system that sells donated goods at a reduced price. We looked at the Bronco share space as well as looking at Nick Bennett who researched similar project. Also looking at stores on other campuses helped us reach this decision. This way the school will have money to use for the operation costs of the store. The money could also back to the University and other office for sustainability projects. This store would then be revenue neutral. In addition to this the thrift store should be somewhere that students can easily go to so that they can donate and purchase goods that they need. Many students come to campus with nothing or do not have the items they need. Those students include the growing international student body. This on campus store would provide students with a better quality of life when they have the items they need. Students need these items which will be at a reduced price and easily accessible for students. Many items were identified by students as to what they need would include but not limited to clothes, furniture, kitchen items and other things that students use. This store would reduce waste from Western students. This store would reduce resources consumed by students by not having them purchase new products. This service would also reduce carbon emissions, by eliminating the amount of waste that is thrown out; there will be less need for haul away costs. For the future of this initiative Western would need to find a suitable permanent location. Along with this Western would need to allocate funds for the project. There will also need to be a staff to run this store. Internships and volunteers would possibly be the best solution to the staffing issue since there is a lot of student interest based on conducted surveys.

Project by: Lauren Kurtz, Michael Dresen, Stephanie Davis
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