

GreenWeaver™

by Oak Hall Cap and Gown

In January 2008 we started exploring options in eco-friendly fabric. We looked into the following:

- ♦ Bamboo – Our first try was working with fabric made from 100% bamboo. This is a natural resource that grows like weeds. In researching though we learned that harsh chemicals are needed to break down the bamboo in order to make fabric.
- ♦ Fabric made from Trees (Acetate) – Acetate has been around since the early 1900's, and is made from wood pulp. Oak Hall use to carry an acetate fabric called Aristocrepe. We discontinued this fabric in the mid 90's due to the fact that with the development of better polyester fabrics the need for acetates was becoming obsolete. The fabric was and still is known to be hot and wrinkles set in easily.

While the wood pulp used to make Acetate is harvested from managed forests, we also felt that we would not be creating a positive effect on our environment by reintroducing it again; at best it would have been carbon neutral.

Also important to note, when we researched the claim that acetate fabric is “proven to decompose in soil” we realized that for the graduation gown to properly decompose in a landfill, conditions must be perfect. Factors such as direct contact with soil and moisture need to take place for a prolonged period of time. Most waste is thrown away in trash receptacles with plastic can liners. If the gown is disposed of in a garbage bag, how will it get contact with the soil and moisture to decompose?

- ♦ Plastic Bottles Made into Fabric- After learning that millions of plastic bottles go into landfills daily and remain there for generations, reengineering this waste into a usable product seemed like the right thing to do. Also, everything we were reading on sustainability lists the three R's:

Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle

So, after 14 months of development, Oak Hall proudly introduced a new concept in the collegiate market, GreenWeaver. Made from 100% post-consumer plastic, it takes an average of 23 bottles to make one gown. **To date, 9 million plastic bottles have been reclaimed from landfills to produce GreenWeaver.**

Reduce – For every 1,000 students that walk in GreenWeaver regalia 23,000 plastic bottles will be kept from landfills. That's a number we can all be proud of! CO₂ gas emissions are also reduced by over 54% in the process of manufacturing fabric from plastic verses virgin polyester.

Reuse – We are reclaiming those plastic bottles to be turned in fabric. Also, thermal recycled energy instead of petroleum is used to produce the fabric, which saves energy use by over 52%.

Recycle – Any student not wanting to hold on to their gown as a keepsake will have the ability to place them in collection boxes after commencement and those gowns will be recycled into new product.

Lastly, to further support sustainability efforts, for every gown purchased, Oak Hall will make a \$0.25 donation to an on campus sustainability program of the college/bookstores choice.