**Dining**

Overview:

In recent years sustainability efforts at Western have progressed quickly in food and dining services. A majority of the food services on campus are managed by service partner Aramark for University Dining Services (UDS) in contract since May 2011, who together continue to look for new ways to improve campus food and dining sustainability. An intern employed by UDS interfaces with the Office of Sustainability to manage the Real Food Challenge, a nationwide movement with the goal of shifting 20 percent of national university spending, both public and private, towards a more just and sustainable food system.

As of September 2013, 16.6 percent of the food provided by UDS qualified as Real Food. Many seafood purchases follow Seafood Watch as well as Marine Stewardship Council guidelines, allowing it to qualify as Real Food. Western has chosen to support local Whatcom County farms including BelleWood Acres for apple purchases and Edaleen Dairy for dairy items that are both rBST and antibiotic free. Some of the chicken provided by UDS comes from Draper Valley Farms, based in Skagit Valley, just south of Bellingham. A majority of beans on campus come from Central Bean Co. in Quincy, Washington and are Certified Food Alliance Sustainable. More food is provided by other local Bellingham businesses including Avenue Bread, Erin Baker's, The Bagelry, Chuckanut Foods, and Tokyo House. All coffee served in the Residential Dining Commons as well as in many of the retail locations is from Tony's Coffee, a Bellingham company that provides campus certified Fair Trade, Organic, shade-grown coffee. A full time dietician is employed 10 months of the year by UDS and vegetarian and vegan meal options are available at every meal.

As for food waste management, the full implementation of trayless dining in dining halls after successful test runs has led to less food-related waste and reduced water use. Food in the dining halls is served on reusable plates and bowls which are collected and washed after use. The FoodPlus! Program collects accepted compostable items in both pre and post-consumer wastes, serviced by Sanitary Service Company's food waste bins that are taken to Green Earth Technology in Lynden, where the contents are turned into to high quality A or AA-grade gardening compost. Standard Biodiesel buys all used vegetable oil from campus and converts it into fuel.

Outside of the campus dining experience, the Office of Sustainability in cooperation with Growing Washington provide the option for students to purchase shares of community supported agriculture and receive a box of fresh produce weekly throughout the summer and fall. Over long weekends and holidays UDS donates perishable and overstock food to organizations that feed the poor and hungry. Old kitchen appliances are replaced with new high efficiency models as funding is available.

**Vision for area:** Western Washington University strives to be a leader in sustainable food service practices through implementing goals and policies that keep ambitions high and progress continual in all service areas.

**Goals:**

* **Goal 1:** Become more energy efficient
  + **Objective 1.1:** Establish methods to track energy and water usage to identify areas for improvement

*Before solid improvements can be made in reducing energy consumption, there must be ways to quantify and log current energy usage so that major culprit areas can be dealt with first, and to develop reasonable reduction goals.*

* **Strategy 1.1.1.:** Employ audits to track current energy consumption in all areas of dining.
* **Strategy 1.1.2:** Inventory all food preparation devices to identify older models that may not be certified efficient.
* **Strategy 1.1.3:** Employ audits to track current water usage in all areas of dining, including bathrooms and sitting areas.
* **Strategy 1.1.4:** Locate water inputs to all UDS areas and install individual meters in order to get a dining services only water metering system separate from the buildings as a whole.
* **Strategy 1.1.5:**  Research and implement real-time computer software monitoring systems to keep track of and analyze energy and water usage in the future. An example is IBM’s Tivoli Monitoring for Energy Management software.
* **Objective 1.2:** Reduce energy consumption in all areas of dining by 25% in 2020

*Replacing older machines with new energy efficient machines, as well as practical solutions to light and heat usage will lead toward greater sustainability and monetary savings for the university in the long run.*

* **Strategy 1.2.1:** Continue to locate old machines in all kitchens and replace with energy efficient models, replacing the least efficient first.
* **Strategy 1.2.2:** Provide greater education to kitchen UDS employees in proper use and maintenance of equipment to maximize efficiency.
* **Strategy 1.2.3:** Identify any old lighting systems and replace with energy efficient bulbs or fixtures if required.
* **Strategy 1.2.4:** Employ auto shut-off lighting systems and limit light usage in summer months.
* **Strategy 1.2.5:** Install localized hot water heaters at dishwashers. This would allow the main hot water tanks in each building to run at average lower temperatures, saving on energy. Localized hot water tanks would only be turned on for use with dishwashers and would ensure the hot temperatures required for sanitation needs.
* **Objective 1.3:** Reduce water usage by 25% by 2020

*Using less water saves money and reduces the burden on local water resources.*

* **Strategy 1.3.1:** Develop a system to monitor water usage in all areas of dining to identify water waste.
* **Strategy 1.3.2:** Provide training for UDS employees on proper dishwasher use to maximize efficiency; only run dishwashers with full loads whenever possible.
* **Strategy 1.3.3:** Examine all current faucets in dining facilities and consider installing new faucets that turn off automatically or water saving faucet heads.
* **Goal 2:** Establish methods and policies that enable all of University Dining Services to continue purchasing more regional food and continue to increase the university’s Real Food Challenge score to the target 40% by 2020
* **Objective 2.1:** Increase regional food procurement

*Currently, according to the data, total local food procurement is at 22.58%, leaving room for improvement. Buying local increases sustainability at Western and supports the local economy.*

* **Strategy 2.1.1:** Support and utilize the North Sound Food Hub when it becomes operational.
* **Strategy 2.1.2:** Identify and purchasea wider range offoods that could be acquired through local agriculture in Whatcom and Skagit County.
* **Strategy 2.1.3:** Identify a wider range of local companies that operate in Bellingham and Whatcom County that can offer alternatives to major national corporation procured foods and drinks.
* **Strategy 2.1.4:** Establish a “harvest of the month” meal featuring a local seasonal food as a part of the main dish.
* **Objective 2.2:** Increase Fair Trade food purchases

*Fair Trade supports small scale farmers in developing nations and increases sustainability.*

* **Strategy 2.2.1:** Continue to identify imported foods that could be replaced by Fair Trade certified foods and switch over.
* **Strategy 2.2.2:** Maintain partnerships with local food providers that place an emphasis on Fair Trade foods.
* **Objective 2.3:** Increase ecologically sound food purchases

*Ecologically sound is an umbrella term for growing methods that limit the impact on the environment. Certified organic foods are a step in the right direction, but care must be taken to keep up on changing certification criteria.*

* **Strategy 2.3.1**: Continue to stay up to date with ecologically sound standards and adjust purchasing to meet the current criteria for such standards.
* **Strategy 2.3.2:** Buy 100% local and cage-free eggs for all dining facilities.
* **Strategy 2.3.3:** Continue to identify any foods that are currently not produced in an ecologically sound manner, and switch over.
* **Strategy 2.3.4:** Implement a broad education campaign on campus that provides information about the benefits of organic products, and helps to boost campus consumer acceptance of what could be slightly higher prices for those ecologically sound goods.
* **Objective 2.4:** Increase humane procurement of foods

*This objective will directly affect our Real Food Challenge score, and any time an opportunity for improvement presents itself, Western should take it.*

* **Strategy 2.4.1:** Continue to identify any and all animal food products that are not certified humane and research alternatives to switch to humane options.
* **Strategy 2.4.2:** Find a local third party food vendor who specializes in acquiring humane products and consult with them on improvement methods.
* **Goal 3:** Reduce pre-and post-consumer wastes
* **Objective 3.1:** Reduce food waste in all dining facilities by 25% by 2020

*Reduction in food waste at Western has improved, but we could still explore some possible methods to reduce further to save extra money and help the environment.*

* **Strategy 3.1.1:** Provide wider ranging food awareness education campus wide to help students improve habits concerning portion sizes and to educate on what happens to waste products.
* **Strategy 3.1.2:** Ensure clearly labeled compost waste bins are in every building in central locations.
* **Objective 3.2:** Reduce non-food waste generated by dining locations on campus by 25% by 2020

*Through programs that put emphasis on student owned reusable eating utensils we can not only reduce our need to purchase one time use compostable utensils, but we can also reduce the amount of compostable waste sent off to be processed.*

* **Strategy 3.2.1:** Sporks! Create and implement a program that gives food purchase discounts throughout all dining services on campus to students who use their own personal reusable utensils such as the popular two sided “spork.” Possible methods of implementation include a system where students purchase their own sporks for use and wash and care for them on their own, or the token system where students buy tokens that can be exchanged for a spork at any dining location when needed, and then the spork is turned in after use to be washed by UDS to get the token back in return. The University of Vermont currently uses the “Reduce, Reuse, Respork” program and has reduced utensil waste.
* **Strategy 3.2.2:** Research the costs and resources needed to implement a wider Project Mug with an administrative position in place to deal with all program logistics. Factors to consider will be the infrastructure involved with cleaning the mugs, if students will be required to clean their own mugs between uses, the cost of providing mugs to a wider range of students, or if students will be directed to buy their own mugs from locations on campus.
* **Strategy 3.2.3:** Continue to identify andswitch purchased single use cups, single use cutlery, and plastic food containers to compostable materials when feasible.

O **Objective 3.3**: Reduce the amount of compostable waste exported to outside processing facilities by 25% in 2020

*External composting on a large scale still requires processing which in turn requires additional resources. This objective will attempt to mitigate waste leaving the campus and composting on-site for use in the Outback or to be sold or donated in smaller quantities.*

* **Strategy 3.3.1**: Research the costs and technical challenges associated with the implementation of an on-site student run or educational composting program and implement if feasible.

Washington State University has operated a 4-acre compost site since 1994 and the University of Vermont operates a smaller program.

* **Goal 4:** Produce foods for University Dining Services on university owned farmland, both on and off campus
* **Objective 4.1**: Begin to produce limited foods on campus

*Other Universities, such as WSU and Duke have had success with farming on and off campus. Usually a test plot is selected; as small as one acre. In both cases they have expanded and now provide their dining services with produce. The farm practices are also educational opportunities for students.*

* **Strategy 4.1.1**: Research the issues associated with producing usable food in the Outback Farm on campus. These issues include all liability issues such as health standards, resources required, employee considerations, and so on. *Duke University has the “Farm to Fork” program which has been successful at providing their dining services with fresh food and also to sell produce at a local farmers market. Western may not currently have as much land, but we could use the Outback Farm to grow herbs and limited seasonal produce for dining as a start.*
* **Objective 4.2:** Produce food off campus on university owned farmland

*This objective would most likely be possible with institutional investment. In the long run, running an external farm would greatly increase sustainability in campus dining.*

* **Strategy 4.2.1**: Research costs and liability issues associated with purchasing, maintaining, and running an external farm for fruits and/or vegetables. Washington State University currently runs a 4 acre organic farm that is 1.5 miles away from their Pullman campus.
* **Strategy 4.2.2:** Purchase farmland and locate caretaker farmers to run a majority of the operation
* **Strategy 4.2.3:** Purchase farmland to be run by university staff and students with an emphasis on education.
* **Strategy 4.2.5:** Research costs behind creating a product line of local food grown on university owned land to be sold in area stores for profit and implement if feasible.

0 **Objective 4.3:**  Utilize greenhouses

*Greenhouses are essential to producing food year-round in our Pacific Northwest climate*

**- Strategy 4.3.1:** Integrate greenhouses onto university owned farmland in order to achieve year-round production. Food grown is to be used by UDS on campus, and extra produce could be sold, with profits going to the university or to the envisioned agriculture program. Greenhouses can be included either on university operated farmland, or they could occupy a separate property of their own. Since greenhouses are known in this region to be the best way to go in terms of year-round production and return on investment, it is possible that a property of greenhouses could be operated in place of a campus farm.

* **Goal 5:** Preserve the sustainable practices of University Dining Services and partner service providers
* **Objective 5.1:** Adjust internal policy to continue sustainability objectives

*This action plan should create standards and policies that continue to increase sustainability after current administration and service providers have moved on.*

* **Strategy 5.1.1**: Create a formal agreement between University Residences and administration that upholds standards in dining for current and future providers.

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| **Achievability** | **Action Steps** | **Related Strategies** | **Responsible Units** | **Completion Date** |
| Achievable with available resources: | Continue to go through current purchasing data and methods and identify immediate changes that could be made to switch to more Fair Trade, humane, or ecologically sound procurement | 2.1.1  2.2.1  2.3.1  2.3.2  2.4.1  2.4.2 | UDS | Jan/2015 |
|  | Research costs associated with implementing “reusable” programs to save money on disposable or compostable utensils, and to cut back on their waste | 3.2.1  3.2.2 | UDS | Jan/2015 |
|  | Research the costs and liability issues with using the Outback farm to produce usable food for dining services (capacity?) | 4.1.1 | UDS, University Residences | May/2016 |
|  | Compile a list of all legacy food preparation equipment to get a baseline understanding of what could be improved upon and how much it might cost | 1.1.2 | UDS | Jan/2015 |
|  | Research what resources it may require to implement a better campus-wide reusable mug program | 3.2.2 | University Residences, UDS | Jan/2015 |
| Achievable with additional resources: | Implement a system to precisely track all energy and water usage to get a baseline understanding of areas to improve | 1.1.1  1.1.2  1.1.3  1.1.4  1.1.5  2.1.6 | UDS | Dec/2015 |
|  | Re-implement a campus-wide reusable mug program. | 3.2.2 | University Residences, UDS | Sept/2015 |
|  | Create meals around more local foods as purchased percentages increase | 2.1.4 | UDS | Jan/2015 |
|  | Implement an on-site composting system to reduce exported waste and avoid the cost of transporting and processing waste externally | 3.3.1 | University Residences, Grounds, UDS | Jun/2016 |
|  | Install localized hot water heaters at dishwashers | 1.2.5 | UDS, University Residences | Dec/2015 |
| Achievable through policy change: | Implement policies to require the continuation of food purchasing that meets the guidelines of the Real Food Challenge. Policies should also be updated to match the changing criteria of the Real Food Challenge. | 2.2.1  2.1.6 | UDS | Jan/2015 |
|  | Increase education on sustainable agriculture practices and food composting methods | 3.1.1  3.1.2  3.1.3 | UDS, Students for Sustainable Food | Jan/2015 |
|  | Create a memorandum of understanding between University Residences and administration concerning sustainability standards and contracts in dining service providers, regardless of current and future food providers. | 5.1.1 | University Residences, UDS, University Adminstration | Jan/2015 |
| Achievable through institutional investment: | Replace all known aged equipment in dining areas with high energy efficiency models | 1.2.1 | UDS | Jun/2016 |
|  | Purchase land to begin a Western run farm both for educational purposes and to grow food to be used by UDS | 4.1.1  4.2.1  4.2.2  4.2.3  4.2.4  4.2.5 | University Administration, UDS | May/2019 |
|  | Implement greenhouses to grow foods for UDS | 4.3.1 | University Administration, UDS | May/2019 |

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| Key Performance Indicator | Interim Target | Target Date | Reporting Units |
| Energy and water use | 25% Reduction | 2020 | UDS |
| Compostable waste leaving campus | 25% Reduction | 2020 | UDS |
| Waste | 25% Reduction | 2020 | UDS |
| Real Food Challenge score | 40% | 2020 | UDS |

Stakeholder comments -- <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0Ap05TFtwHcyCdDVsQXJJbDktNklYUXhIWm9rS0VwWWc&usp=sharing#gid=24>

External research -- <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0Ap05TFtwHcyCdDVsQXJJbDktNklYUXhIWm9rS0VwWWc&usp=sharing#gid=21>