

CAROLINA DINING SERVICES

# ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

2018-19

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

CDS

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# A NOTE FROM CDS

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I am happy to present Carolina Dining Services' annual sustainability report. The Carolina Dining Services (CDS) team understands its responsibility in integrating sustainability into everyday operations in order to achieve success and promote a sustainable culture.

Campus dining programs have a considerable impact on many resources, including food, water, waste, energy and building construction. CDS strives to reduce its impact through several initiatives, which include increasing selection of local and third-party certified offerings, minimizing waste stream and reducing water and energy usage.

At Carolina Dining Services, we work to foster partnerships within the campus community to garner support and participation in our sustainability initiatives. Conscientious of the fact that dining services always have opportunities for improvement, CDS continually seeks to implement new initiatives and evolve current ones to achieve greater success in sustainability with each passing academic year.

Please feel free to share your comments or ideas with us.

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## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

*Sustainability goes beyond “just food” - our holistic approach addresses waste stream, energy consumption, resource + facility management, as well as education, promotion + awareness.*

**Sustainability Coordinator** We have an on-site coordinator that works with our team, students and UNC departments to incorporate sustainable initiatives into the overall dining program. They are also available to guests during educational tabling sessions to engage students, highlight environmentally-related holidays and promote our ongoing sustainability efforts.

**Meals with Focus** We hold meals that focus on various sustainability issues and the processes that relate to “sustainable foods.” The goal is to increase student awareness of pertinent topics (food waste, water conservations, fair trade, etc.) and provide an educational element that explains terminology and concepts.

**EatSortWin** As part of our new sustainability outreach initiative (and NACUFS award winning program for Educational Outreach), we hold a social media contest each fall semester to keep the conversation about compost and recycling going.

**Farmers’ Markets** We organize and host Fall and Spring Farmers’ Markets with our partners - Fair, Local, Organic (FLO) and Epsilon Eta (Ep Eta), which are student groups at UNC. CDS, FLO and Ep Eta work together to engage students by organizing a collection of local farmers and CDS vendors to encourage on-campus awareness of our local farming community.

**Food Waste Messaging** We promote consumer awareness and responsibility by developing specific collateral and programming (including signage at dish machines and point-of-sale) to encourage students to “think before they take.”

**Sustainable Menu Items** We implement and maintain continuous sustainable menu options including but not limited to Meat “Less” Mondays, grass-fed burgers, organic yogurt, local dairy, local chicken, fair-trade organic locally roasted Larry’s Coffee and North Carolina produce and seafood whenever possible.

**Surveying** We keep our finger on the pulse of our campus sustainability initiatives. To determine which of our efforts are most effective and pertinent to the campus community, we solicit feedback from our meal plan customers (at least 5%) through an annual survey; we then review and apply that feedback to future planning.

**Real Food** We partner with the Real Food Calculator Program for a bi-annual assessment of our “Real Food” purchases within our dining halls. We also track fiscal year purchases internally with the goal of annually maintaining over 20% “Real Food” purchasing as part of former Chancellor Folt’s signing of the Real Food Campus Commitment in April 2016.

**Front of House Composting** Compostable packaging and collection bins are offered within two of our largest food courts, Mainstreet and Beach Café. Compost bins are clearly labeled with instructions guiding customers on proper use to reduce compost contamination.

**Reusable Water Bottle and Mug** We provide an attractive reusable service-ware option for all locations to decrease the waste stream generated by plastic water bottles, soda cans, coffee cups, etc., saving 500,000 cups from ending up in the landfill. Our user’s incentive program for reusable cups offers \$0.99 refills at participating locations.

**Local Restaurant Partnerships** We partner with local restaurants to integrate a diverse range of ethnic cuisine into UNC retail operations as well as generate a sense of community by providing local businesses an opportunity to interface with students and offer food on campus.

**Food Donations** We donate an average of 150 pounds of prepared food every week during the academic year to the Inter-Faith Council, a non-profit organization that provides food and housing to the local homeless population.

## 2001-10

- Recycle cardboard, bottles and cans
- Use recycled napkins in dining halls
- Recycle fryer oil into biodiesel fuel
- Create pre-consumer composting program
- Host annual Farmers' Market
- Eliminate trans-fats in dining halls
- Offer Fair Trade coffee
- Implement trayless dining program
- Partner with Interfaith Council on weekly food donations
- Promote campus awareness + involvement in initiatives via tabling + special events
- Serve grass-fed beef weekly in dining halls
- Implement reusable to-go containers
- Develop reusable mug promotion
- Develop Annual Sustainability Report
- Create Carolina Catering green menu guide
- Utilize bulk dispensers when possible to reduce excess packaging waste

## 2011-13

- Increase energy efficiency (equipment and lighting) in all renovations
- Recycled and reclaimed materials (diningware and counter tops) in Top of Lenoir renovation
- Install water refill stations in Lenoir Hall
- Implement digital screen menuing system, eliminating the need for paper menus
- Utilize Green Seal Certified\* cleaners
- Partner with [Real Food Calculator Program](#)
- Open 1.5.0., a retail dining concept focused on utilizing local and third party certified food
- Track local food purchases to identify local spending & increased sourcing for menu development based on growing seasons
- Expand Farmers' Markets to once per semester
- Implement food waste management processes to identify and eliminate wasteful food production procedures
- Participate (with the Sustainability Office) in the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's (AASHE\*) Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS\*)
- Feature Meat "Less" Mondays in dining halls to reduce carbon footprint
- Implement front of house composting program at largest campus retail location in Lenoir Hall

our success over the years

# SUSTY TIMELINE

## 2013-15

- Host first Feeding the 5,000 event in higher education, the second within the nation. Awarded the following for the event:
  - 2015 NACUFS Gold Award for Educational Outreach and Sustainability
  - 2015 NACUFS Grand Prize for Educational Outreach and Sustainability
- Perform third-party energy assessment in Lenoir Hall and Chase
- Expand partnership with Real Food Calculator for biannual review
- Extend Ep Eta partnership to promote composting
- Introduce compostable packaging in main retail operation
- Expand front of the house composting at largest campus retail location, Mainstreet
- Offer a weekly menu feature of local pork and local/humane chicken in the dining halls
- Offer organic yogurt daily in the dining halls
- Convert to Maola Milk, a Durham-based company, in the dining halls
- Offer organic, fair-trade, locally roasted Larry's Coffee exclusively in both dining halls
- Expanding local restaurant partnerships at the Beach Café and McColl Cafe

## 2016-18

- Partner with local vendors and campus departments dedicated to sustainability to host 5-week Susty Series educating campus on sustainability initiatives
- Increase transparency in sustainable food purchasing by only ordering local/humane chicken, grass-fed beef, local milk, NC catfish and NC produce when available
- Achieve over 20% Real Food Purchasing for 3<sup>RD</sup> consecutive year in both dining halls as per Real Food Campus Commitment
- Continue food waste education and outreach with Feeding the 500 event in fall semester
- Partner with Green Restaurant Association to certify both dining halls and 1.5.0. at Mainstreet as 3-Star Green Certified Restaurants
- Partner with Southern Season and UNC-CH Edible Campus to provide cooking demo open to the local community.
- Increase “Environmentally Friendly” score on the National Association of College and University Food Services’ (NACUFS) customer satisfaction survey to 4.09, higher than prior year (4.08) and national average (4.02)
- Expand compostable packaging options in retail operations, as well as provide an alternative reusable mug for purchase with a sustainability discount at select locations.
- Host first EatSortWin sustainability campaign. Awarded the following for the event:
  - 2019 NACUFS Silver Award for Educational Outreach and Sustainability

# OUR GOALS FOR 2019-20

## **Becoming an Integral Part of a Sustainable Campus**

We are excited to align our sustainability efforts with both the UNC Food for All theme and expand our partnership with the campus-wide Three Zeros Environmental initiative. With the goal of achieving “Zero Waste to Landfills,” we will continue to expand our front-of-house compostable offerings across all campus retail locations. This includes scaling down cup offerings exclusively to one compostable cup and reducing the number of plastic bags offered. We will also further investigate feasibility of adding front-of-house composting to smaller retail locations such as McColl Cafe and the Student Union and expanding compost messaging at Beach Café.

## **Choose 2 Reuse Campaign**

We will continue to reduce our environmental impact by encouraging students to opt for a reusable cup option in the dining halls and retail locations. This is aided by the removal of compostable single use cups in the dining halls, as well as distributing reusable drink containers to all Meal Plan holders. Additionally, we will target our sustainability messaging more effectively to students through strategic social media campaigns incentivizing students with the chance to win free sustainability swag items for committing to reducing their footprint.

## **Engaging Students in Environmental Responsibility**

We will work with UNC students to conduct the Real Food Calculator for the tenth year in 2018-19 and achieve greater than 20% “Real Food” in any months reviewed. In addition, we will continue to achieve a full year percentage of dining hall food purchases over 20% “Real Food” as per the Real Food Campus Commitment. We will also continue our relationship with student group Fair Local Organic (FLO) and Ep Eta in conducting monthly “green theme” meals and host Farmers’ Markets at least two times per semester.

## **Increasing Customer Satisfaction Scores**

We will continue to improve our National Association of Colleges and Universities Food Services (NACUFS) Customer Satisfaction score for “Environmentally friendly practices related to food,” which in Fall 2019 was 4.09 out of 5. This will include more transparency about CDS’ sustainability programs and collaborating with Student Dining Board to implement student-led sustainability initiatives.





### **Reducing Waste Overall**

We will reduce our total landfill waste per capita by 5% in both Lenoir Hall and Chase Hall in 2019-20. We will accomplish this through increased composting and continued recycling programs in both back and front of house. We will continue to divert food waste from landfills by raising awareness of food waste and food insecurity on our campus, improving food preparation processes, maintaining our food-donation partnership with Interfaith Council, as well as revitalizing our food waste messaging, empowering students to personally reduce food waste.

### **Partnering with Our Local Community**

Community and local food is an integral part of our sustainability program. In 2018-19, we will partner with new local vendors to engage our students, support our community and increase the percentage of environmentally responsible food we serve. In the spirit of our increased transparency, we will partner with Southern Seasons, a local gourmet grocery store, to promote UNC's Edible Campus initiative, as well as teach the community with a cooking demo from our Executive Chef Gueiss using local ingredients. Additionally, we will partner with Midway Community Kitchen to provide a hands on cooking class for UNC-CH's Business and Finance for Student Affairs. Midway Community Kitchen is local to Chapel Hill and interested in empowering the community by providing a communal space for cooking and learning new skills.

# SUSTAINABLE FOOD

*We understand the power and centrality of food in our daily lives and recognize that the foods we choose to serve have a direct impact on our health, culture, environment and local economies.*

*We are committed to changing the culture of food by nourishing guests with menus that emphasize sustainable, fresh, whole foods that are raised, grown, harvested and produced locally whenever possible. With each passing year, we seek to find new ways to enhance sustainable food sourcing and educational touch points.*

## Highlights

- We purchase products from within a 250-mile radius of campus, with preference given to North Carolina vendors, whenever the quality and quantity meets our need and financial parameters.
- We partner with UNC students to participate in the [Real Food Calculator Program](#) and have consistently raised the percentage of “Real Food” each year. With the signing of the Real Food Campus Commitment in April 2016, we are dedicated to maintaining over **20%** “Real Food” purchases for the dining halls.
- We regularly track sustainable food purchasing (as defined by the Real Food Calculator). During the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years, CDS purchased approx. **21.0%** and **23.6%**, respectively, of food from producers and distributors that meet these requirements for our dining halls.
- We seek out third-party certified options, including organic, fair trade, humane, grass-fed, Animal Welfare Approved, and “Best Choice” as defined by Monterey Bay Seafood Watch.
- We feature sustainability at 1.5.0., a CDS retail concept dedicated to serving dishes hand-crafted by chefs and inspired by local and sustainable ingredients. 1.5.0. is located in our largest food court, Mainstreet.
- We provide transparency in sustainable food purchasing by only ordering local chicken, organic bananas, grass-fed burgers, locally sourced dairy, organic yogurt, organic fair-trade coffee and cage-free eggs.



**Vegan + Vegetarian Offerings** In collaboration with the student group Vegans for Peace, we developed a two-week vegan menu cycle for our dining halls. The menu introduces a wide variety of vegan-friendly proteins, such as seitan, tempeh, soy nuggets, polenta and legumes, and utilizes new cooking techniques to enhance overall flavor and appearance. The completely vegan Veg Out station was designed not only to increase vegan offerings but to ensure nutritionally complete meals that appeal to herbivores and carnivores alike, and Meat “Less” Mondays increase vegetarian offerings every week. In addition to Veg Out, we incorporated a vegan pizza with Daiya cheese available every day.

**North Carolina Purchasing** We are dedicated to local food, which strengthens and supports small farms and local economies, increases the ease of food traceability and reduces overall carbon output. Over the last several years, CDS has increased partnerships with North Carolina producers and distributors. Overall, North Carolina purchases accounted for **28.2%** within our dining halls in **2018-19**.

**Notable North Carolina purchases within 2018-19:**

- FreshPoint®, our primary distributor of produce, provides the campus community with apples, peaches, greens and other fresh produce from NC farmers. **(\$190,000)**
- Maola Milk®, a Durham-based company, provides dairy products to dining halls. **(\$262,000)**
- Joyce Farms, located in Winston-Salem, NC, provides us with all of our locally raised chicken. **(\$238,000)**
- Brasstown Beef, located in Brasstown, NC, provides the majority of all of our beef. **(\$122,000)**
- North Carolina seafood (catfish, trout, shrimp) is served on a regular basis in the dining halls. **(\$155,000).**

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

*We regularly engage in community outreach in order to spread awareness of our efforts in sustainability as well as to educate and garner participation in our programs. We make it a top priority to partner with student-led environmental groups and other campus and community organizations on shared initiatives.*

## Highlights

- We partner with the UNC Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling to seek out cross-promotional opportunities for waste-related initiatives, obtain and exchange waste diversion statistics, and organize recycling and composting pick-ups.
- We participate in the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's (AASHE®) Sustainability Tracking Assessment and Rating System (STARS®).
- We partner with the Sustainability Office to gain insight into top campus sustainability initiatives (e.g. Three Zeros Day) and to provide the office with the food and beverage purchasing data.
- We host educational events (EatSortWin, Green Meals) designed to raise sustainability awareness, engage students, promote current sustainable food efforts, highlight environmental holidays and gather support for current CDS initiatives.
- We partner with Fair Local Organic Food (FLO) a student group and Ep Eta at UNC, to develop a more sustainable program that includes sustainable food education and menu offerings.
- We meet weekly with our Student Dining Board to discuss new and innovative sustainable dining initiatives.
- We work with a collection of students participating in the Real Food Calculator Program, a collaboration which started 2010.
- We participate in community outreach events as a team, including Habitat for Humanity and Campus Community Gardens.



**Ramsgiving** In addition to our weekly food donations to the Interfaith Council, we tackle food waste from a different angle every year with Ramsgiving. This educational meal shines a light on local poverty rates and food insecurity, while encouraging our students to learn about issues in their home state and volunteer their time with the local non-profits fighting to combat these issues.

**Farmers' Markets** Held twice a semester, Farmers' Markets are a partnership between CDS, FLO and Ep Eta . Together we host a collection of local farmers and CDS vendors on campus to encourage awareness of our local farming community among students as well as the University's faculty and staff.

# WASTE DIVERSION

*We recognize the massive amount of discarded material produced by the food industry every day. It is with this in mind that we aggressively pursue waste reduction initiatives. We are committed to finding new ways to divert waste from landfills by reducing and reusing materials.*

## Highlights

- Employ a food waste management process to identify, track and eliminate wasteful procedures.
- Track food production every meal to better forecast future purchasing.
- Utilize digital screens for menus and advertisements to reduce use of printed menus and paper signage.
- Purchase bulk dispensers to reduce packaging, e.g. beverages, condiments, cereals.
- Offer a 20% discount for all customers who bring a reusable mug or bottle to select locations for fountain drink and coffee purchases.
- Our reusable to-go containers in the dining halls have entirely eliminated use of disposable containers for take-out meals.
- Offer metal, glass and plastic recycling bins in all dining locations and paper recycling bins in offices.
- Recycle cardboard boxes from food deliveries at all locations.
- Filter fryer oil at all dining locations for extended life and recycle it into biodiesel.
- Compostable napkins and compostable straws in all locations.
- Front of house composting system, compostable packaging, utensils and cups available in Mainstreet and Beach Café, two of our main food courts.
- Pre-consumer food waste composting at the Beach Café and Mainstreet and pre- and post-consumer food waste composting in both dining halls.



**Food Waste Awareness & Education** We perform a food waste assessment in both dining halls (pre-consumer versus post-consumer) to determine relative percentage of total compost in the facilities related to production versus consumption. We utilize this information to educate customers about food waste reduction.

We initiated a social media campaign, EatSortWin, in the fall semester of 2018 to raise awareness of food waste and educate the community about composting. This campaign was awarded the 2019 NACUFS Silver Award for Educational Outreach in Sustainability. We continue to reinforce and support this important message by hosting it annually, in addition to a follow-up educational campaign with a smaller scale, Choose 2 Reuse, every fall semester.

Each spring, we survey customers to gather feedback from at least 5% of our meal plan participants regarding the importance of each attribute of our current sustainability program (local food, composting, programming, etc.). We use this information to better understand the perceived impact of our program, which helps us create sustainability programming that matters most to our community.



**Waste Diversion** Waste diversion is the process of deferring waste from landfills. The recovery rate equals the total weight of recycling and compost divided by the total weight of all waste (trash, cardboard, compost, bottles and cans). We track our waste diversion via the OWRR's Waste Recovery Trend Report (2018-19).

**Recycling** We recycle bottles, cans and cardboard in our back of house food prep operations and have front of house recycling bins at our three major food courts (Mainstreet, the Beach Café and McColl Cafe).

**Composting** Food waste and paper products are separated for composting by our staff. Compostable material is stored in 65-gallon carts located throughout the food prep and dish washing areas, then transported to storage bins on the loading docks. The compostable material is then collected by Brooks Contractors throughout the week and is composted at their facility in Goldston, North Carolina. Campus-wide compost by CDS was 596.25 tons in 2018-19.

**Total Diversion** Our total recovery rate for 2018-19 was 65% at Lenoir and 72% at Chase.



# CONSERVATION

*We recognize the critical role water plays in the food and beverage industry. We strive to reduce our impact on the local water supply through various water conservation practices and responsible chemical application.*

*We also strive to incorporate energy efficiency into our dining halls as a means to counter the amount of energy that is consumed to grow, process, package, and distribute food products. We also aim to integrate sustainable construction and design elements into new or renovated locations.*

## Highlights

- We conserve water use in the dish machines by implementing trayless dining programs (eliminating about 2 million trays washed annually) in both dining halls starting in November 2007.
- We utilize Green Seal Certified® bathroom, floor, glass and all-purpose cleaners by EcoLab®.
- We employ more energy efficient lighting by converting to LED lighting at Top of Lenoir and CFLs at Rams Head Dining Hall.
- We purchase Energy Star-rated equipment in new construction and renovation when affordable and available.
- We turn kitchen hoods off at the end of shifts to reduce the capacity at which the air handlers work.
- We incorporate recycled, reclaimed materials, low VOC paints and glues in new construction and renovation.

ACT SUSTAINABLE

