

CAROLINA DINING SERVICES

CDS

ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

2022



A NOTE FROM CDS

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 note some sustainable initiatives were paused/reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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 Building on our sustainability outreach initiative (and NACUFS award winning program for Educational Outreach), we hold a social media contest to keep the conversation about compost and recycling going.

Minimization of Environmental Impact We work with local vendors to focus on ecologically sustainable growing techniques such as hydroponics. We also work to integrate seasonally available local foods and energy efficient transportation from farm to table.

Sustainable Design Principles We commit to using sustainable design principles in construction projects on campus. This can be shown in reusing existing layouts for new restaurants on campus and repurposing building materials when possible.

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 the Chase Hall lobby, Student Union, and 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.

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.

BIPOC Farmers We partner with various historically underutilized businesses, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers in North Carolina such as Hanes Family Farms. In 2022, we also provided a \$10,000 grant to a nonprofit focused on bringing BIPOC farmers to campus.

2001-10

- Recycled cardboard, bottles and cans
- Used recycled napkins in dining halls
- Recycled fryer oil into biodiesel fuel
- Created pre-consumer composting program
- Hosted annual Farmers' Market
- Eliminated trans-fats in dining halls
- Offered Fair Trade coffee
- Implemented trayless dining program
- Partnered with Interfaith Council on weekly food donations
- Promoted campus awareness + involvement in initiatives via tabling + special events
- Served grass-fed beef weekly in dining halls
- Implemented reusable to-go containers
- Developed reusable mug promotion
- Developed Annual Sustainability Report
- Created Carolina Catering green menu guide
- Utilized bulk dispensers when possible to reduce excess packaging waste

2011-13

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

our success over the years

SUSTY TIMELINE

2013-15

- Hosted 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
- Performed third-party energy assessment in Lenoir Hall and Chase
- Expanded partnership with Real Food Calculator for biannual review
- Extended Ep Eta partnership to promote composting
- Introduced compostable packaging in main retail operation
- Expanded front of the house composting at largest campus retail location, Mainstreet
- Offered a weekly menu feature of local pork and local/humane chicken in the dining halls
- Offered organic yogurt daily in the dining halls
- Converted to Maola Milk, a Durham-based company, in the dining halls
- Offered organic, fair-trade, locally roasted Larry's Coffee exclusively in both dining halls
- Expanded local restaurant partnerships at the Beach Café and McColl Cafe

2016-18

- Partnered with local vendors and campus departments dedicated to sustainability to host 5-week Susty Series educating campus on sustainability initiatives
- Increased transparency in sustainable food purchasing by only ordering local/humane chicken, grass-fed beef, local milk, NC catfish and NC produce when available
- Achieved over 20% Real Food Purchasing for 3RD consecutive year in both dining halls as per Real Food Campus Commitment
- Continued food waste education and outreach with Feeding the 500 event in fall semester
- Partnered with Green Restaurant Association to certify both dining halls and 1.5.0. at Mainstreet as 3-Star Green Certified Restaurants
- Partnered with Southern Season and UNC-CH Edible Campus to provide cooking demo open to the local community
- Increased "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)
- Expanded compostable packaging options in retail operations, as well as provide an alternative reusable mug for purchase with a sustainability discount at select locations
- Hosted first EatSortWin sustainability campaign. Awarded the following for the event:
 - 2019 NACUFS Silver Award for Educational Outreach and Sustainability

- CDS reduced the number of plastic bags on campus in our main food court, Mainstreet. Messaging and outreach encouraged customers to minimize waste by bringing their own reusable bag or not using one at all
- Added front-of-house composting to the Student Union
- Removed single use cups from the dining halls diverting over 500,000 cups from the landfill
- Implemented our Choose 2 Reuse campaign. Awarded the following for the event:
 - 2020 NACUFS Gold Award for Educational Outreach and Sustainability
- Increased “Environmentally Friendly” score on the National Association of College and University Food Services’ (NACUFS) customer satisfaction survey to 4.10, higher than prior year (4.09) and the national average (3.99).
- Carolina Dining Services continues to partner with the Office of Undergraduate Research as students examine the history of the Real Food Challenge (RFC) on UNC’s campus, looking for alternatives to RFC, and interviewing stakeholders in the NC Food System with the goal of achieving over 20% Real Food purchasing in both dining halls as per the Real Food Campus Commitment
- Partnered with Midway Community Kitchen to provide a hands on cooking class for UNC-CH’s Business and Finance for Student Affairs
- Partnered with Southern Season and UNC-CH Edible Campus to provide a cooking demo open to the local community
- Developed vibrant and unique plant-based (vegetables, whole grains, beans, etc.) options.
- Increased educational opportunities about sustainable/plant forward dining options.
- Encouraged all future incoming brands to provide sustainable packaging, when available.
- Expanded partnership with UNC Edible Campus to identify and execute educational opportunities.





OUR GOALS FOR 2022-23

Innovative Sustainability Practices and Education

Work to develop and bring new innovative programs to campus such as a Biodigester, SNAP! Benefits, Swipe Out Hunger, and a new full-time sustainability coordinator.

Conduct Energy Audit

To ensure that management, kitchen, and serving operations use resources efficiently through the effective deployment of resource-saving practices and staff training.

Host Roundtable Focusing on Underutilized Farmers

We plan to co-facilitate a roundtable with the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) focusing on underutilized farmers, including BIPOC farmers to identify opportunities for collaboration.

Develop Training Course on Racial Equity in the Food System

We will work with CEFS, the North Carolina Extensions Committee, and Soul Fire Arms to develop and train our teams on racial equity in the food system.

“Pick Your Portion”

Introduce new initiative (Pick Your Portion) to minimize food waste within our all-you-care-to-eat residential dining locations. Encourage customers to “taste before you waste.” Offer customers options for a “tasters” portion, half portion, or full portion. (Double portions will be offered for those who prefer a larger portion size.)

Reduce Single Use Bags on Campus

Increased outreach, education, and messaging to encourage Tar Heels to forgo the use of single use bags on campus. Bags will be available upon request to minimize waste.

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 Fall ‘21 school year CDS purchased approx. 24.6% 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.
- Local purchasing and partners. We partner with local vendors who integrate seasonally available local foods, incorporate energy efficient transportation and sustainable growing techniques
- 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 three-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 vegan Plant Forward 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 Plant Forward, 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 23.7% within our dining halls in **Fall 2021**.

Notable North Carolina purchases within Fall 2021:

- FreshPoint®, our primary distributor of produce, provides the campus community with apples, peaches, greens and other fresh produce from NC farmers. *(\$89,399)*
- Maola Milk®, a Durham-based company, provides dairy products to dining halls. *(\$59,110)*
- Joyce Farms, located in Winston-Salem, NC, provides us with all of our locally raised chicken. *(\$74,275)*
- Firsthand Foods, pasture-raised proteins through Chapel Hill distribution. *(\$51,217)*
- North Carolina seafood (catfish, trout, shrimp) is served on a regular basis in the dining halls. *(\$93,222)*
- Manhattan Bakery, a Durham NC bakery that makes up most bread in dining halls. *(\$60,894)*
- Homeland Dairy, NC dairy farm outside of Burlington, NC provides milk in Chase Dining Hall. *(\$21,995)*
- 4P Foods, NC Producer and Distributor. *(\$31,932)*

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 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.

Edible Campus Partnerships We partner with Edible Campus, the local community garden on campus, to educate students on sustainable foods and meal preparation.

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.
- 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 the Student Union, lobby of Chase Hall, and 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. Choose 2 Reuse was awarded a 2020 NACUFS Gold Award for Educational Outreach in Sustainability.

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 (2019-20).

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 546,900 pounds in 2021.

Total Diversion Our total recovery rate for 2019-20 was 67% at Lenoir and 69% 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.
- We partner with UNC facilities to create a standard practice list for effective deployment of resource-saving practices.

ACT SUSTAINABLE

