



UC DAVIS DINING SERVICES

Awarded Sustainable Business Certification

The University of California, Davis (UC Davis) Dining Services, operated by Sodexo, recently earned the Sacramento Area Sustainable Business Certification for its three dining rooms — Cuarto, Segundo and Tercero.

Dining Services' operation was recognized for implementing measures and practices in six different categories including: energy conservation, water conservation, pollution prevention, solid waste reduction, green building design, and transportation/air quality initiatives.

Over the past five years, UC Davis Dining Services has strategically implemented the Sustaining Our Future program — a seven-pronged approach to fostering a more sustainable food system at UC Davis. A partnership with UC Davis Student Housing, UC Davis Facilities & Grounds, and the UC Davis Office of Environmental Stewardship has yielded results from installation of energy efficient cooking equipment to solid waste reduction through composting to steadily increasing sourcing of locally-grown foods.

Education is one of the facets of the Sustaining Our Future Program. “We have done a lot of educational awareness campaigns to our audience about ways in which the amount of wasted product from napkins to uneaten food or just taking what they will consume,” said James Boushka, marketing director. “We implemented Try a Taste program, which provides a two-inch ramekin of a particular entrée so they can sample that. It is at every meal. It helps to prevent wasted food because they taste it before they take it.”

With reduction of solid waste an important part of the program, Dining Services has centralized purchasing, eliminated unnecessary forms and purchases items in bulk. “We



have moved our catering ordering systems to online orders,” said Dani Lee, sustainability manager. “All of our trainings are available on a central drive where employees are able to sign up on their computers instead of on paper forms. Basic online ordering, buying cleaning products in bulk in concentrated formulas that we dilute and we work with EcoLab to do that and we are purchasing products that are FSC certified. Nearly all of our collateral materials are printed on 80 percent post-consumer recycled content that is FSC certified.”

All of the dining halls make use of reusable dishware. “It is something that all campuses should be encouraged to do because it really does reduce the amount of solid waste generated,” she said. “As you can imagine, reusable containers are used over and over, whereas a disposable container, regardless if it is compostable or is going to the landfill, it still creates quite a bit of waste and takes a lot of energy to produce.”

Dining also has a zero-waste policy. “We worked with R4 Recycling (now known as the campus’ Waste Reduction and Recycling program), to set up our comprehensive waste diversion program, which includes recycling of all glass, plastics 1 and 2 and metals,” said Lee. “We worked on our composting program so we can start recycling food waste and compostable products, things like paper towels and some wax products that we do use. That program has helped us achieve a diversion rate of about 80 percent on average per year. We are continuing to work toward reducing the amount of waste that we are sending to the landfill.”

Although they do not offer take-out containers because they are dine-in only, they have set up the AggieWare program for programs in the residence halls. “Traditionally, students in programs in their residence halls would use disposable cutlery and add a significant amount of waste to our landfill system,”

MARIST BUYS LOCAL

Sustainability is a very important part of dining at Marist College in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., and local buying is a key part of that.

“I think it is huge to buy locally — to support the local economy, to get fresher product, to cut down on the carbon footprint,” said Anthony Legname, executive chef with Sodexo, the campus foodservice provider. “I think it is really a win-win. When we buy locally, it keeps the farmers and their staff employed.”

To help stay in contact with local suppliers, Legname is a member of Dutchess County Bounty, a collaborative of farmers in the Hudson Valley. “I often visit local farms and see what kind of product they are cultivating and incorporate them in our menu here — fresh vegetables and produce. I just found out last week that there is a local company individually quick freezing (IQF) vegetables for when you can’t get what you need fresh.”

The school is fortunate to have a number of farms in the region. “Having that relationship with the local farmers is a win-win,” he said. “It hits so many avenues. Buying local cuts down on the carbon footprint. Why do we need apples from Washington? Hudson Valley has numerous apple orchards in the area and why not support local?”

To highlight the local foods on the menu, every Tuesday Dining offers the Valley Café. “I try to use the Valley Café as not just a learning experience for everyone’s taste buds, but also exposing everyone to a culture,” said Legname. “I will do various country and regional cuisines. Our next one will be New Orleans, so we will be doing a New Orleans kind of menu. I’ll do the Northeast, the Southwest, the East Coast, trying to teach diversity through food.”

He puts his own spin on the dishes he serves at the café. “I try to do things that are a little different. I do a ratatouille, which is a French dish, which is basically stewed vegetables. I do a twist on it and we made it like a lasagna. We had all of our vegetables and we sliced them and made a lasagna out of it. It is a variation of what people are used to, still cooked the same way, but presented differently.”

The campus also hosts a farmer’s market. “It is an opportunity for me to meet farmers who I may not be aware of and to continue a relationship with the ones that I do,” said Legname.



MARIST COLLEGE Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Enrollment: 5,000
Type of operation: Leased by Sodexo
Number of dining facilities on campus: 11
Approximate number of meals served daily: 3,200
Key Staff: Mohamad Charafeddine, general manager
Beth Ainsworth, director of operations
Anthony Legname, executive chef



she said. “We worked with Housing to create the Aggieaware program, where we provide reusable dishware to the students, including a container to collect all of their waste for composting. They then bring them to our dining facilities after the event is over – the dirty dishware and the food waste. We accept it from them and wash it, compost all of the food waste and issue them a new kit. That has been pretty successful. The students embraced it and are really excited about it.”

The initial cost of the program was more than purchasing disposable paper products. “We are serving about 4,500 residents on campus,” said Lee. “Student Housing, who assisted with the launch of this campaign, had estimated that pretty close to \$8,000 a year was used in purchasing disposable paper products and obviously contributed to quite a bit of trash. The entirety of purchasing the Aggieaware kits when we first started was just about \$17,000. When you factor in that the Aggieaware kits can be reused with a life of several more years than what a single disposable will, the program itself will pay for itself in two years. The return on that investment from a financial standpoint is really positive and obviously from an ecological standpoint is phenomenal as well.”

The school also works with its manufacturer suppliers to reduce the amount of packaging used to send products on campus. “We purchase some locally produced vinegars and the manufacturer was sending it to us in boxes with Styrofoam peanuts,” said Boushka. “Any time we entertain bringing in a new product, one of the questions that has become a standard for us is to be asking about their sustainability manufacturing and shipping processes. One, in an effort to lower their carbon footprint for the place it was produced to campus, but also when it gets on campus, what is the packaging like?”

He said, “This one, when it had Styrofoam peanuts, we worked with them and for a couple of cents more per bottle,

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS Davis, Calif.

Enrollment: 32,290 students
Type of operation: Leased by Sodexo
Number of dining facilities on campus: 3
Approximate number of meals served daily: 51,700 per week

KEY STAFF:

Brenan Connolly, general manager
Andy Burtis, Resident Dining executive chef
Ruben Andrade, Retail Dining executive chef

they were able to use biodegradable peanuts. Therefore, we were able to then compost them. That is one of the things that has grown over the years in which we have looked just at our operations. Now we are beginning to involve other key producers and manufacturers. Essentially, while there isn't a formal system, we'll award a couple of extra points if you will for them implementing some level of sustainable practices within their operations before we will actually buy their product.”

Lee and Boushka are very pleased with the fact that many of the processes that earned the certification were already practiced on campus before certification was sought. “These processes have been implemented for the last five years,” said Lee. “Composting started in 2001 and it was really a partnership with the campus community and a lot of departments on campus. The UC system as a whole has really strived to be a leader in sustainable practices on campus as a higher education facility to foster that development and that responsibility in students to maintain our environment. They've stayed at the cutting edge with really progressive policies and programs, not only on the campus level, but on the system-wide level, that really helped us receive this certification.”

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