

REVIEW OF CAFETERIA SUSTAINABILITY AT UTM



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Review and recommendations for sustainable food service at the University of Toronto Mississauga

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The *Review of Cafeteria Sustainability at UTM* study was born out of the ENV232 Environmental Sustainability Practicum course offered at the University of Toronto Mississauga campus. With the increasing demand for more alternative food choices on campuses, and the age old problem of unsustainable cafeterias, the study sought to review food service at the UTM campus. The review and recommendations reflect the three food provision arrangements on campus; the student run Blind Duck Pub, the operations of Chartwells in buildings, and the Chartwells programs in campus residences.

This study was compiled by Antoinette Battaglia, Nicole Abba, Rohit Mehta, and Sejin Kim. When these four students formed a group, they immediately agreed on pursuing the Cafeteria Sustainability study from a list of more than a dozen projects. After winning the project bid, the group began the development of a workplan and initiated project research. During the research stage, secondary data was gathered from internet research, and data provided by the Sierra Youth Coalition. The group then began gathering primary data by conducting focus groups - one with students, and one with food service administrators. Following the submission of a mid-term progress report and presentation, the group continued with data collection and analysis. The project culminated with recommendations, and a final presentation to community partners, students, and staff on April 1, 2010.

Primary data was collected by conducting two focus groups, with outcomes helping to shape the final recommendations outlined in the study. Participants were asked questions about their opinions on the current state of affairs, and were asked to suggest improvements to common issues. The focus groups also allowed the authors of this report to gain a deeper understanding of both sides of the cafeteria sustainability issues, and provided useful oversight used to shape the final recommendations.

The student focus group revealed that students want local vendors and food diversity in new capital development projects. Students felt that prices did not reflect food value, and expressed displeasure with food service. Students have also asked for improvements in food quality, and nutritional value.

The food service administration focus group revealed that cost is a key factor to consider when implementing sustainable practices. Students have been pressuring food service administration for food diversity and lower prices, but not local food. Programs have been implemented to reduce food and packaging waste, and the Compass Group Canada website contains information on the nutritional value of food, and sustainable programs. Further, new capital development projects are including options for vegetarian and vegan users.

The study of cafeteria sustainability at UTM included four key recommendations for food service administrators. (1) That food service administrators work with facilities staff at UTM to develop a composting station in all dining halls, and to improve recycling facilities. (2) That food service administrators hire friendly food service staff who are knowledgeable about the food which they are handling, and sustainable options available to users. (3) That food service administrators create a discounted 'harvest-of-the-month' local food menu item available monthly or as frequently as possible. (4) That food service administrators aggressively advertise sustainable incentives and product information available to students. These are all part of a sustainable cafeteria, and must be implemented in order for cafeterias at UTM to reduce their environmental impact.

INTRODUCTION

This report of cafeteria sustainability at University of Toronto at Mississauga (UTM) was written because cafeteria sustainability has become a key issue for meeting students' demand of more food options and healthy food on campus, while minimizing the impact on the environment. In this day and age, sustainability is a key issue, and is necessary to maintain the harmonious relationship between the environment, economy, and society.

In recognition of the concept of sustainable cafeterias, we have compiled this report with recommendations specific to UTM. Completed in April of 2010, the report focuses on four key recommendations moving forward. Reasons for the recommendations were as follows:

- the need for more interaction between staff and students;
- the need to reduce the carbon footprint of food consumed on campus;
- the need to enhance student awareness about sustainability;
- and the need for a system to dispose of food and biodegradable wastes.

The goal of this study was to identify areas of concern, and to make the cafeterias at UTM more sustainable in the areas of service, food, marketing and waste handling.

The report was designed to include three major steps:

- a) Conducting primary research through focus groups with students, and representatives of food service administration;
- b) Conducting secondary research on the internet to compare sustainability practices with other universities across Canada;
- c) Compiling recommendations for more sustainable food service

The report provides a clear vision that will allow for more sustainable collaboration among the economy, environment and society at UTM. There are still some barriers to overcome to achieve the vision; it is very obvious that committed support from students, staff and the local community are needed. These recommendations will need to be reviewed by food service administration, and discussed among staff and students in order to make it successful and become a reality at UTM.

VISION FOR CAFETERIA SUSTAINABILITY

TO FURTHER THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAMPUS FOOD SERVICES IN AN ENVIRONMENTAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS WAY.

The vision for sustainable food services at UTM has been largely drawn on suggestions and opinions found during our two focus groups, and from information provided by our key informants (see Appendix). These ideas were further developed through the sustainable practices and successful initiatives found on other Canadian campuses.

Local and organic food purchasing

One of the main measures towards serving sustainable food is the provision of food produced without pesticides and sourced from local farms. These food options often labelled as local and organic produce should be featured, whether raw or as a part of meals featuring these local or organic ingredients. The benefits of local and organic options are plentiful; both are known to be beneficial for overall health, offering more nutrients and limiting the consumption of harmful chemicals. Organic foods are grown in a way that emphasizes the limited use of agrochemicals, often eliminating the use of harmful pesticides altogether. By travelling less to get from field to table, local foods burn less of fossil fuels in the delivery process. This reduces greenhouse gas emissions, resulting in a more sustainable option, which also supports the local economy (Bently and Barker 2005). In this way, local and organic options help to reduce impacts on local ecosystems, and minimize the pollution produced in modern agriculture, which protects the environment and ecosystems around the world (Health Benefits of Organic Food 2009). An area extending 325 km from Rice Lake in the East to Niagara in the West and Tobermory in the North, it contains nearly 1.2 million acres of farmland (Ontario Greenbelt Facts 2010). The ideal cafeteria would change its menu according to the produce available locally and in season. UTM is situated right in the

middle of the Ontario Greenbelt and is thus in an ideal location to take advantage of the variety of local produce available.

Elimination of Wasteful Packaging

Canada generates the most waste out of any other nation globally ("Municipal Waste Generation" 2008). Most of the waste is diverted to landfills, which not only displace species by reducing habitat space, but also cause socio-political and health concerns. In addition, they are a large producer of methane, which is a greenhouse gas up to three times more powerful than carbon dioxide. The impact of wasteful packaging goes beyond a human generation, as much of the waste sits in landfills, and continues to contribute to the perpetuating cycle of global warming. One of the key components to maintaining sustainable food service is to reduce the amount of packaging waste which goes into landfills. The food service administration should aim for a zero-waste system in the future.

Friendly and informative service from food service staff

Customer Service is an integral part of sustainable food service. The employee is the face of the company, acting as the link from customer to administration. Social sustainability is a component of a sustainable food service and is particularly necessary in any service that serves the public. Building this relationship between the food service and the customer is necessary to becoming socially sustainable. Being open to consumer opinion, providing product information and simply smiling can go a long way into building and maintaining a healthy relationship with the customers. Without it, the food industry will not thrive as the needs of the consumer population will not be met.

Promotion of sustainable options and incentives

An important part in building the relationship between customers and the food service is the ability of the food service to market themselves and what they stand for. With the global awakening in ecological awareness and environmental sustainability issues, it is becoming increasingly important that all industries advertise what their customers can do to "go green". The availability of fair trade and socially ethical produce is necessary in order for the environmental impact of food service to be reduced. The promotion of sustainable incentives and options will encourage action from the consumers in a way that will be beneficial to the industries involved. Many students are unaware of the options and incentives available on campus. If enough marketing is done to promote these incentives then students will participate in them, as these promotions would ideally be at the forefront of their minds.

Implementation of composting, reusable china and cutlery, and biodegradable take-out containers

Reusable plates and cutlery is the best measure for reducing the waste generated from disposable food containers. This measure not only reduces waste, but also implies that organic take-out containers will have a lower environmental impact, when placed in a composter and allowed to biodegrade. It should be noted that this requires the use of a compost system. Biodegradable containers lose their benefits if thrown in the trash and taken to a landfill. Food services should strive towards a zero waste goal by reducing the packaging waste generated. By encouraging this policy, students will learn to take responsibility for the waste they generate, clean up after themselves by disposing food waste properly and taking care of the plates and utensils. The disposable culture associated with packaging allows everyone to simply throw everything out and this does not teach responsibility.

ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUP INPUT

ANALYSIS OF INPUT FROM STUDENTS:

A. Sustainable practices:

- Use of reusable soup containers
- Promotion and sale of coffee mugs

B. The value of local or organic food:

- Organic is not as appealing as local food
- Students will pay more for local food

C. What they want to see in new capital development projects:

- Local food vendor to market (less food miles)
- More vegetables in the cafeteria
- Limit the amount of fast food franchises. (No more fast food)
- Emphasize the quality of the dining experience
- More diverse foods, particularly for Halal, vegetarian or vegan diets
- More authentic ethnic dishes
- Menu consistency
- Qualified servers and chefs (specialized staff)
- More investment into the facilities and dining area for an appealing ambiance
- Ability to buy various items to help students who cook (i.e.; ingredients, utensils)

D. Feedback on value:

- Healthy options are more expensive
- All-you-can-eat food options
- Perceived value of food is less than price paid
- Food is generally overpriced
- Meal Plan does not yield highest value
- Lack advertising of nutritional value
- Students not getting what they pay for (unanimous)
- Students, on average, invest a lot more money into groceries rather than actively use the meal plan.
- Easier to obtain basic goods for a lower cost
- Food prices are largely inflated and do not reflect the value of the food
- Cafeterias are short staffed.
- Food service levels are not very pleasant.
- Need for a campus food report card to communicate student opinion and to grade food outlets.
- Most students don't understand the allocation of the meal plan funds

E. Key elements to a sustainable cafeteria:

- The service must be fast, efficient and friendly
- Open communication between the students (customers), servers and food providers.
- The food has to be of good quality and not too expensive.
- An efficient and effective waste management system
- Increased education and delivery of information to students about what they are paying for, what they are eating, and what is recyclable or not.
- Increased education and training for employees about proper food handling (there is the impression that their current training is brief)

F. Quality, cost and value of food on campus:

- Quality of food services is not meeting student's expectations
- Instantly made food mostly available only at Blind Duck
- Cost of healthy food is expensive
- High cost may encourage people to bring food from home
- Food-poisoning has occurred multiple times in residence
- No appealing food options for commuters
- Some universities hired specialized chefs for better quality and healthy foods

G. Consideration of “fair trade” foods, food “miles”, or local produce:

- Students are not aware of sustainable options
- Starbucks has a fair trade coffee option, but it is still corporate
- Cost is more important to students than fair trade options
- Students want to see 100 food mile challenge operated by Chartwells at UTM
- Collaborating with local farmers for more food options
- Most students are not willing to pay more for fair trade
- More food options will make students spend money here

H. Key changes proposed by students

- Specialization of cafeteria staff
- Need for composting infrastructure
- Increased garbage bins located in the North building
- Increased recycling receptacles around campus cafeterias
- Need for an efficient recycling system that avoids cross contamination
- Provision of recycling information to ensure proper recycling
- Encourage the use of locally grown products
- Provision of hospitality programs that involve students in local farms
- Awareness campaign during new student orientation week

- Installation of more refill machines to encourage the use of reusable bottles

I. Barriers to changes proposed by students

- Composting
- Improper management in residence
- Lack of awareness
- Initiating new programs during staff and student orientation
- Cross-contamination recycling
- Lack of sufficient receptacles
- Lack of employee interest
- Lack of proper recycling information to prevent contamination

J. Solutions to the issue of china plates not being returned

- Use of china beyond Spigel and Oscar Peterson Hall (OPH) but also at Tim Horton's and Subway to have china plate use as an option
- Assign daily china plate collection in residence
- Controlled entrance to ensure accountability of china plates

K. Other

- Ingredients are not advertised, thus an issue for those with allergies

ANALYSIS OF INPUT FROM CAFETERIA FACILITY STAFF:

A. Personal satisfaction with current sustainability practices at UTM facilities

- Not 100% satisfied
- Will never be completely satisfied
- Job goal is to continuously 'push the envelope'

B. Possibility of the Blind Duck Pub (BDP) and Chartwell's working together to make food service more sustainable at UTM

- Willing to work together
- They do not keep secrets from each other, information is readily available

C. Pressure on UTM food services from stakeholders (mainly students)

- Students do not pressure for local food
- Students will not pay more for local food
- Pressures mainly about food diversity and price
- Students are not concerned about organic and local
- No pressure or feedback on using LFP (Local Food Plus) food
- Student pressure on BDP after there was a 50 cent increase in wings

D. Use of University of Guelph model of sustainable food services to emulate program at UTM

- UTM and Guelph are different institutions
- Guelph's practices are well known because they are marketed
- Guelph's location grants them better opportunities

E. Addressing the issue of packaging waste at UTM

- Eliminated Styrofoam
- OPH is paper free
- Efficient napkin dispenser to avoid wasteful use
- Concern of recycling bin contamination at BDP
- Physical resource department must consult more with food services

F. Alignment with "Towards 2030" plans to reduce food waste at UTM

- Composting coffee grinds at Starbucks
- Oil from deep fryers used as potential biodiesel fuel
- Need for efficient technology and energy star products
- Equipment cooling by water rather than air
- Need funding to stream waste properly
- Innovative methods to store china plates safely

G. Preference for more authentic international food

- Diversity is not associated with authenticity
- Need more space for more food facilities
- OPH has a diverse menu
- Students must be willing to pay more for authentic food choices
- BDP menu changed to Halal (all except for two items)
- Given available facilities, food service is diverse

H. Availability of nutritional information

- Compass group Canada website provides nutritional information
- Allergy information varies with changing OPH menu
- Food staff are capable to provide food information
- Families are provided information when acquiring meal plans

I. Eating healthy at UTM

- BDP offers combo with fries or salad (approximately 95% of students choose fries)
- Willing to educate those interested
- Healthy choice stickers appear on menu
- Nutritionist brought in during wellness week
- Healthy vegetarian options at OPH and BDP
- Meeting place renovations will include vegetarian options
- Salad is priced by weight, lowers salad cost in comparison to junk food
- Culinary entrees require more labour and cost more

SUMMARY OF CAFETERIA SUSTAINABILITY PROCEDURES BEYOND UTM

This summary provides an overview of the trends in cafeteria sustainability across Canada, and provides an opportunity to compare the sustainability practices among leaders in food and recycling categories.

UTM can use this summary as a guideline to help achieve sustainable cafeteria.

The following institutions received at least an A- grade on the Food and Recycling Category of the College Sustainability Report Card. Key sustainability practices are listed below each institution

1. University of Alberta (University of Alberta: Sustainable Endowment Institute)

- A. Dining services provides locally produced food
- B. Bio-degradable packaging containers are used
- C. Compost system has been installed for kitchen and consumer wastes
- D. Students maintain an organic garden

2. University of British Columbia (University of British Columbia: Sustainable Endowment Institute)

- A. Dining hall food materials are from the campus farm
- B. Composting system in place for all food waste and biodegradable containers
- C. Dining hall distributes reusable containers
- D. Coffee supply is mostly fair trade

3. University of Guelph (University of Guelph: Sustainable Endowment Institute)

- A. Purchase local food from 50 local producers at a cost of \$1 million annually
- B. Use dishes in their cafeteria (return area in residence)
- C. Provide discounts on reusable containers

4. Queens University (Queen's University: Sustainable Endowment Institute)

- A. Provide discounts on use of mugs in dining locations
- B. All dining facilities compost pre- and post-consumer food waste

5. University of Western Ontario (University of Western Ontario: Sustainable Endowment Institute)

- A. 26% of residence dining budget spent on purchasing local or organic food
- B. Provide vegetarian and vegan food options in 30% of all food

- C. Eliminated styrofoam packaging
 - D. Coffee supply is mostly fair trade
- 6. McGill University** (McGill University: Sustainable Endowment Institute)
- A. Dining services purchases local food from 15 local producers
 - B. 90% of coffee supply is fair trade
 - C. Seafood purchases meet Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch guidelines
- 7. York University** (York University: Sustainable Endowment Institute)
- A. Purchase locally grown food and organic food
 - B. Using food items from a local community supported agriculture farm
 - C. Maintain 22 compost digesters around campus
 - D. Fair-trade coffee is served
- 8. Carleton University** (Carleton University: Sustainable Endowment Institute)
- A. Purchase local food
 - B. Coffee beans are fair trade
 - C. Compost pre- and post-consumer food waste
- 9. Dalhousie University** (Dalhousie University: Sustainable Endowment Institute)
- A. Maintain composting systems in all dining facilities
 - B. Have more than 100 composting stations elsewhere
 - C. Spend 40% of annual (food) budget on local food purchasing
 - D. Every dining hall serves fair-trade coffee.

Based on the above list, the key components for successful cafeterias include:

- A. Composting
- B. Using biodegradable or reusable packaging/ceramics
- C. Purchasing local food or organic food
- D. Providing fair trade coffee and produce

In our primary research with Chartwells and Blind Duck Pub staff representatives, we learned that each of the four key components have been implemented, to a degree.

- A. The Blind Duck Pub composts table scraps regularly. Chartwells aims to implement coffee bean composting in conjunction with Starbucks and the campus Green Team
- B. Styrofoam has been eliminated in Chartwells food outlets
- C. Local food is purchased by Chartwells whenever possible
- D. Starbucks sells fair trade coffee

CURRENT SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AT UTM

- Chartwells, according to the Compass Group website, has been observing sustainable seafood options in an increasing effort to include them. On campus, the Chartwells cafeterias discuss these sustainable fishing practices by displaying branded posters and placing fliers on cafeteria tables whenever seafood products are on the menu.
- Local food is purchased from Local Food Plus (LFP) when possible. Most of the local food available can be found in the salad bar, where there are stickers posted identifying the local products.
- The serviettes are 100% post-consumer recycled paper. Customers at the cafeterias are encouraged to only take as many napkins as they will use. This, in conjunction with the efficiently designed serviette dispenser is the most recent initiative to reduce the waste of paper products.
- The residence dining hall, Colman Commons, provides china plates and silverware for customers. However, disposable take-away plates and plastic cutlery are still options in the cafeteria. Spigel Hall only serves on china plates and all cutlery are plastic.
- Pizza Pizza has eliminated individual pizza cardboard boxes and returned to the less wasteful cardboard triangle alternative for pizza slices.
- Booster Juice has eliminated their Styrofoam containers, replacing them with a paper wax cup and a refillable plastic cup option.
- Tim Horton's at both the North Building and South Building locations will offer a 10 cent discount for the use of a reusable mug. However, this incentive is not advertised.
- There has been a water bottle refilling vending machine recently installed in the South Building, which is an attempt at curbing the plastic waste generated from bottled water.
- The Blind Duck Pub provides table service, which allows staff to compost whatever table scraps are left behind by customers. However, most food items are served on disposable wax-paper.

- Organic and fair trade coffee and tea are available only in the one Starbucks location on campus. In all Chartwells locations, Roaster's Coffee which implements an "ethical trade" policy (Ethical Trading Policy 2007) is available. However, the availability of fair trade coffee is not advertised.

What is missing at UTM?

Our focus group analysis revealed that students feel there is very little choice given to them as a consumer. As well, they identified the lack of information about the produce offered in cafeterias. This indicates that initiatives such as the local food purchasing are not marketed enough, and that most measures taken by Chartwells are neither spoken about nor seen often enough. Students will not ask about initiatives that they are not informed about. It is also likely that they will not question whether products are local or not if they are not made aware of this difference.

Management methods must be reviewed for the handling of plates and packaging. The loss of china plates and cutlery in cafeterias has occurred because students are allowed to take plates away from dining facilities without any incentive to return them. This has continued without any incentive for returning plates, or any monitoring program to prevent plates from being lost, stolen, or broken. This prevents a good sustainable strategy from fully benefiting the community, as it had been originally intended to. Take-out packaging should only be offered upon request. Often, it is simply given to customers either because the establishment will close soon, or because it is within reach.

Our vision sees food service administration collaborating with one another, staff, and students to engage the entire campus community in sustainable practices.

KEY ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS

“SUSTAINABILITY IS NOT A DESTINATION AT WHICH WE WILL ARRIVE; IT IS A PROCESS, A MYSTERY, AND AN ADVENTURE. THERE WILL BE OBSTACLES, BUT THESE SHOULD NOT DERAILED US, FOR OUR JOURNEY TOWARD SUSTAINABILITY, LIKE THE JOURNEY TOWARD HUMAN EQUALITY, IS FOREVER EVOLVING” - R. WARREN FLINT AND W.L. HOUSER.

To see the objectives outlined in our “Vision” chapter come into full fruition, we require effort from our current food service administration, as well as cooperation with the various faculty, staff, and students at UTM. This section includes a guide to help identify the key areas which require improvement.

Localizing Our Cafeteria

Incorporating a variety of local produce into the menu items is economically, socially and ecologically beneficial to the community. Partnerships with local farmers will decrease the costs of sourcing local food products and increase support of local food farms.

Staff Training and Responsible Management

The social element is highly important because it facilitates the social norm for people to be environmentally friendly. Training staff to be knowledgeable and friendly is an asset to any consumer-oriented industry. Better customer service will provide a multitude of avenues to improve the face of the food industry at UTM, as well as the social sustainability of the food service experience on campus.

Waste Management System

A sustainable cafeteria should incorporate a waste management system that minimizes cross contamination and is user friendly. This is necessary to limit the strain which food services put on

landfills, and the waste management sector. The management system should include a composting system for all organic and biodegradable material. According to the 2008-2009 ecological footprint data, UTM produced approximately 43,000 kilograms of waste and 19,000 kilograms of recyclables (Svadja and Shakeel, 2009). With a predicted increase in student enrolment, there is a clear need to curb the waste generated on campus.

Increased Outreach and Exposure

A sustainable cafeteria should have ample advertising of their sustainable efforts and promotions. This allows customers to become aware of sustainable efforts and provides rationale as to why customers should make more sustainable choices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WASTE HANDLING: WORK WITH FACILITIES STAFF AT UTM TO DEVELOP A COMPOSTING STATION IN ALL DINING HALLS, AND TO IMPROVE RECYCLING FACILITIES.

This recommendation involves working with the *Facilities, Management and Planning* department to develop a new composting and waste collection program in UTM cafeterias. Current issues with waste handling pertain to cross contamination of recyclables, and a lack of composting receptacles at all cafeteria locations.

Firstly, composting stations should be installed within every cafeteria at UTM. Secondly, an easy-to-understand program developed through student input, must be implemented in order to alleviate confusion between recyclable, compostable, and disposable items. This will convert current unsustainable cafeteria practices into more sustainable operations by diverting waste sent to landfills, and thus reducing the ecological impact of cafeteria operations on campus.

Supporting data was gathered from focus groups, and an analysis of composting facilities available to students in post-secondary institutions across the country. Data from the Sustainability Report Card published by the Sustainable Endowments Institute revealed that 10 of 17 Canadian universities have composting services available to students, and that others are working on implementing these programs.

SERVICE: HIRE FRIENDLY FOOD SERVICE STAFF WHO ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT THE FOOD WHICH THEY ARE HANDLING, AND SUSTAINABLE OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO USERS.

Student focus group consultations determined a tremendous support for more friendly and knowledgeable staff. We recommend hiring staff with suited technical skills and qualifications to promote greater job responsibility. Greater job responsibility subsequently creates a better working relationship between customers and cafeteria staff.

In order to nurture and retain student customers, Chartwells needs to improve customer relationship management. Customers need to become more aware of the connection between their diet and health. Educating staff about food products and ingredients during orientation and training gives cafeteria staff a distinct advantage when they are able to answer questions regarding food content.

In the Analysis of Focus Group Input section of this report, the summary of focus group feedback shows that participants voiced the need for improved food service. Comments included: ‘Staff are not concerned about the option of take-out packaging, or dine-in packaging,’ and ‘Staff should be able to share knowledge on ingredients, and distinguish between local and organic options.’

FOOD: CREATE A DISCOUNTED ‘HARVEST-OF-THE-MONTH’ LOCAL FOOD MENU ITEM AVAILABLE MONTHLY OR AS FREQUENTLY AS POSSIBLE

Providing local products can be an important point of differentiation in the market place and signifies sustainable practices. It would be very feasible in Southern Ontario, where UTM is situated in very fertile farmland. In fact, cafeteria sustainability can be greatly increased by making local food options readily available, and even considering local food harvesting from on-campus agriculture.

Local food is an important addition to sustainable cafeterias because it has a lower food mileage, and thus a reduced environmental impact. Food mileage is a concept that measures carbon emissions generated by the transportation of a food product from the field to the table. Buying local reduces the amount of fuel required to transport food, and subsequently the greenhouse gas emissions released into the environment.

We recommend the provision of discounted items as frequently as possible, with the benefit of increased revenues. ‘Harvest-of-the-month’ programs provide an opportunity to educate students on local food options and sustainability efforts. Running sustainable initiatives can be costly; however increased revenues from informed consumers will help offset these costs.

MARKETING: AGGRESSIVELY ADVERTISING SUSTAINABLE INCENTIVES AND PRODUCT INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS.

Chartwells has many sustainability initiatives in practice and maintains an informative website with nutritional information, value meal options and other food service information. However students are not aware of these services, as they are not effectively marketed. In addition, the website often lacks detailed information regarding menu items at UTM cafeterias.

It is recommended that Chartwells aggressively advertises what is available for students, including its website, and sustainability incentives. Chartwells is also advised to provide all information relevant to the food products available to the average student. With more promotion, benefits will include an increase in revenues, and more informed consumers who will make sustainable choices, and help reduce the ecological impacts of food service operations.

Visual observations of the cafeterias on campus revealed a lack of marketed information. The re-usable cup option available at Tim Hortons is not advertised anywhere on the UTM campus. In addition, focus group responses included comments indicating a lack of awareness of sustainability incentives available to students.

“STUDENTS ARE LARGELY IN THE DARK ABOUT THE INNER WORKINGS OF THE FOOD SYSTEM” – THE MEDIUM (LATOURE, 2010)

CONCLUSION

This review, conducted over a three month period has been compiled with input from focus group sessions with students and food service administrators. The vision presented in this report reflects significant input provided by consultations, researched initiatives by other institutions and visual observations of UTM cafeterias. Perspectives provided by focus group participants aided in analyzing and determining current UTM food service practices.

This research study has determined that sustainable cafeterias require a constant assessment of food, service, waste handling and education through awareness. This can be achieved through consistent dialogue and interaction with students to improve food service provision at UTM. Successful sustainable cafeterias have achieved localized food options, impeccable customer service management, efficient waste management systems and advocate sustainable practices through marketing.

The key elements of success are important for a realistic and long term viability of sustainable practices. A sustainable cafeteria must be implemented in order for cafeterias at UTM to reduce their environmental impact. It also requires a collaborative approach between customers (students) and cafeteria staff to its development.

In conclusion, a sustainable cafeteria at UTM will add value to the quality of life within the Mississauga campus, increase awareness of environmental viability and ensure that UTM is playing its part in environmental sustainability.

Respectfully Submitted,
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APPENDIX

NOTES FROM FOCUS GROUP 1

Tuesday, February 23, 2010

2:10 PM - 3:30 PM

6 participants

1. Can you list current sustainable practices at UTM cafeterias? (Define sustainable practices) If so, what are your comments on them?

In residence, takeout boxes were replaced with china plates

Styrofoam plates now used with plastic wrap covering them

Students are taking plates and leaving them in their residences

Instead of making styrofoam, cardboard or something environmentally friendly could have been used

This would prevent resentment from residence students

Discounts offered on other campuses for use of plates from home

Chartwells has been encouraging reusable soup containers and coffee mugs

Tim Horton's wants to promote their brand, and doesn't utilize reusable containers on campus

2. What changes, if any, need to be made at UTM cafeterias? What are some barriers to these changes?

The recycling system leads to cross contamination and the staff are not concerned

Recycling receptacles causing confusion, people using recycling bins as garbage bins, and the lack of receptacles

Concerned about material in separated recycling bins not getting recycled, and contamination issues

Suggested educating students through orientation week or having school administration start an awareness campaign

Residence has tried composting, however mismanagement by students caused the program to be removed

It is hard for individuals outside of cafeterias to use composting facilities

There is a demand for composting in residence - over 1000 users

The first place we need to compost is in kitchens

The university needs to start a hospitality program where students are involved

Suggested that environmental students could grow their own food and others prepare it

Locally grown - it should be advertised where food on campus comes from

Students do not want more fast food places; want more food choices instead (pasta, seafood, ethnic foods)

Students want greater consideration for vegans, vegetarians, Halal and allergies (e.g. gluten free and no peanut options)

3. What do you want to see in the four new capital developments or buildings, in regards to food service and sustainability? (List them)

A vendor that sells only local food - local meats or vegetables. Provides the option of a local sustainable meal

More vegetables and more local food

A student mentioned the development of the good food box by *Foodshare*. Every Thursday, a box of freshly grown local food is delivered to the residence desk by order

Not fast food. Pizza and subs are available, yet we lack places to get good healthy food

Need for pastas, seafood, and some more ethnic food

Challenges faced by vegetarians and vegans, who have options of eating subs, or pizza

Considering our diverse campus, we need Halal, vegetarian, and vegan food options

Need vendors who specialize in what they're serving, rather than making pasta, and salads and everything else

Ethnic food day is insulting because it is poor quality, and not consistent

The admin needs to invest more in the facilities; we have very narrow kitchens and need better equipment

There is no specialization; we need people whose jobs are as chefs rather than those who can make quick meals

Vegetarian student mentioned the need for a store selling cooking supplies like flour rather than increasing options in meeting place

With mandatory meal plans in residence, it is difficult for students to cook for themselves

Instead of letting upper year students cook on their own, meal plan was forced upon them

4. (Food Quality) which food items served on campus do you feel are most nutritional or healthy? What would you like to see more of?

Mr. Sub is the most nutritional or healthy, although they are too expensive

Other foods in Spigel and OPH could be nutritious however they spend too much time in the frying pan and they lose their nutritional value

They only place with food prepared instantly is at the blind duck pub

The blind duck pub could add a lot more healthy food, and have food diversity

Storage space is a barrier to having healthier options at the pub

Need for a place dedicated to salads in the North Building, which is now a Pita Pit

The trade-off was that it was really expensive

Most unhealthy foods are the ones which have been sitting in heat lamps all day

Commuter goes to Tim Horton's when healthy food is desired

Health and sanitation issues, 2 friends have gotten food poisoning from Mr. Sub

Undercooked, old, and raw meat

Hiring high school students who may not have the training and maturity level to maintain sanitation

5. (Value) would you be willing to pay a premium price for local or organic food? How much more would you be willing to pay? How important is this to you?

Local is more appealing than organic, would not pay \$2 extra for organic baby carrots than regular

Local food should be part of subsidized options

Other viewpoint was that there is no difference between regular and organic, as long as it tastes good

Willing to pay up to 50 cent more for hamburger and salad as long as salad was fresh and locally grown

Most healthy options on campus are already more expensive

Students may want to revert to a burger and fries if salad prices increased

There is willingness to pay 25 cents more for spicy fries

6. (Quality and value) On average, what do you currently pay for food on campus weekly, and what are your value expectations? Do you get what you pay for?

I don't get what I pay for

Meal plan is used to buy a coffee or pizza once per week, otherwise goods are purchased from the grocery store
Foodshare local produce box program available through residence, costing \$13 per bin and delivered to residence biweekly

Local vendors give deals because they want you to buy from them, that was the best value I've ever seen on campus

Family residences do not require mandatory meal plans

Not eating at Coleman Commons because value or quality does not meet expectations, friends don't eat there either

Staff or atmosphere in Coleman Commons is not nice or quick

Shortage of staff at Pizza Pizza

Need for more investment at Coleman Commons, since meal plans require most meals to be eaten there

Staff are either old, or really young, and generally very unhappy

50% of what students pay goes to overhead

The half discount is misleading, as meal plan students pay the same price

7. China plates are used less often than they could be because there is no guarantee of their return. In order to reduce packaging waste, what potential solutions would you suggest?

In past, residence students were encouraged to bring their own containers at Coleman Commons

Lack of practicality, especially since small residence room don't have storage space for containers

Providing a discount to townhouse students for bringing their plates

Plate replacement costs are a big investment with Chartwells, there is a health issue because there is no return on plates, and potential for being fined in a house check

Dishes in the Erindale Hall bin are often not rinsed

Collect plates from residences twice per week, cost is 1 person earning minimum wage

A bin could be placed on each floor of residence and employees could take plates

The capital development project must have china plates

Requirement of a controlled entrance, and the aesthetic issue of requiring vendors along edges, pointing into the food court

8. Do you consider “fair trade” foods, food “miles”, or local produce when making purchases at UTM cafeterias? Are you willing to pay more for these types of foods?

These options are not visible

Bring in these options will raise meal plan prices, residence students need to be asked if they are willing to pay

I would love to see Chartwells try to do a 100 mile challenge where all of their food has to be within 100 miles of campus

Lack of local produce in the winter

Whatever items are in season could be featured - many support this

Students are generally not willing to pay more, however more options will cause more students to eat here
Making partnerships with local growers would allow for more food selection on campus

9. In your opinion, what would a sustainable cafeteria look like? What are the key elements?

Service - fast, efficient, friendly service where the voices of students would get heard

Food value and quality - nutritional, healthy, good quality, not too expensive

Waste - there would be a place to put what you've used and it would be changed frequently, including: leftovers, cardboard boxes, plates. Options will be more sustainable, and there will be less garbage.

Education - employees will be educated about proper food handling, users will know where their food is coming from, and what's recyclable and what's not

Open floor

Salads on campus at Colman Commons are charged by weight -It should be all you can eat

Charging by weight makes a difference in costs

More people would rather buy a chicken salad if they knew it was the same price as fries and hamburger

Meal Plan pricing scheme and the issue of prices being as high as street values

Half of the money for meal plans goes towards overhead costs, so no matter how residence students feel about the quality of their food - they have paid for it.

Allergies and lack of advertised policies. Issues with wheat, gluten, celiac issues.

Pizza Pizza doesn't offer wheat-free pizzas on campus due to lack of space

Need for nutritional guides in all places

Need for a food report card which is specialized for cafeterias on campus, and graded by students. This would be published using a media source

Restricted beverage exclusivity contracts, and the need for improved (quality and quantity) water fountain infrastructure and refill machines on campus

Chartwells is here for making profit, and that the university gets 20 cents for every dollar spent by students

Need to expand base of students who eat on campus before incorporating local and sustainable options and expanding services

Need to eliminate wasteful packaging such as Mr. Sub wax paper as it ends up in the garbage

Need for Chartwells to be open to discussing the addition of infrastructure for composting, as there is high demand for it.

NOTES FROM FOCUS GROUP 2

Wednesday March 3, 2010

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM

4 participants

1. Can you describe or tell us about any sustainability practices that you are aware of at UTM?

The board outside Spigel Hall lists all of them

This website: <http://www.dineoncampus.ca/utm/>

Using china plates

Reusable packaging

Better napkins

They have eliminated Styrofoam in OPH

They have ordered biodegradable take-out packaging

Reusable china offered in every location

Discounts of 15 cents for bringing mugs

Reusable soup containers

Pushed Booster Juice to have paper cups

The vending machine for water

Water fountains in the student centre

2. Speaking personally, and not as an employee, are you satisfied with current sustainability practices at UTM facilities?

Neither said they are completely satisfied, and that they will most likely never be satisfied

It is not where they want it to be

3. Do you think that there are any ways that BDP and Chartwell's could work together to make food service more sustainable at UTM?

They don't keep secrets from each other

4. Are you aware of any pressure on you as stakeholders to change food services at UTM?

How does this pressure express itself? Why?

Currently purchase organic and local whenever possible

When there is an increase in supply, there is a decrease in costs and consumers buy. There needs to be stability in supply

Students do not pressure for local food

Students will not pay more for local food

Pressures are about food diversity and price

Students are not as concerned about organic and local

They did not receive any feedback after putting up signage about LFP food

Students aren't willing to pay even 50 cents more

There was pressure on BDP admin after a 5 cent increase in cost of chicken wings

5. Mention University of Guelph and its sustainable food practices. Are there any ideas or practices that you are aware of given the experiences of the University of Guelph?

Given the University of Guelph model of sustainable food services, do you believe that it makes sense to emulate their program at UTM?

Every institution is different

There are things that UTM does which Guelph does not

Sustainable seafood and free-range eggs example
Guelph's practices are well-known because they are marketed

6. What is being done to address the issue of packaging waste being produced?

Eliminated Styrofoam, which makes up the most waste by volume
OPH is paper free
Special napkin dispensers reduce the number of napkins being taken to one at a time
At the BDP, everything is recycled in the back, including food as compost
Concerned about students not correctly using the bins of the BDP
The physical resource department needs to consult more with food services

7. The University of Toronto guiding document, "Towards 2030" speaks to a future population of 15,000 UTM students. Are you planning cafeteria infrastructure now which will reduce food waste in the future?

Working with the Green Team to compost coffee grinds at Starbucks
Oil from deep fryers is picked up, with the potential to power a bus as biodiesel in the future
Looking at biodegradable options
Assessing technology options for the future
Looking for very efficient equipment, and energy star products
Equipment cooled by water rather than air
Need funding to stream waste properly
Thinking about how to store china efficiently
Want the ability to allow students to take away food meaningfully

8. Mention student preferences for more authentic international food on a regular basis.

Are you aware of these preferences? Are there any plans to offer more and better quality ethnic food? Why or why not?

Diversity doesn't need to be associated with authenticity
There is a lack of capacity to offer this
Need more food service space
OPH has a diverse menu
Students must be willing to pay for more authentic choices
Food service needs students to define choice
In BDP, the menu was changed 2 years ago to be include Halal, vegetarian, and diverse options
The menu is 100% Halal except 2 items
Given the available facilities, food service is already diverse

9. Nutritional information of food served in restaurants must be required for public viewing.

What are you doing in terms of providing this type of information to students at UTM?

Compass Group Canada website has nutritional information and calorie calculator
It is difficult to post allergy information for all items with a diverse menu that changes daily
Don't have the manpower or money to do this
Students are reluctant to approach food services
The information is available
There is always someone who can answer questions
Most students are mature enough to ask
Families reach out to food services when meal plans are purchased, and they meet

10. Students wish to eat healthier according to our focus group? This currently costs more.

For example, during our focus group, students mentioned that a salad is often more expensive than a burger and fries. Can you discuss efforts to improve or reverse what some see as a value imbalance?

BDP offers combo with a side choice of fries/salad. Approx 95% of students chose fries

Healthy choice stickers appear on menus

Participated in health and wellness week on campus and brought in nutritionists

Willing to educate those interested

Meeting place lacks the facility to post nutritional info

Many healthy and vegetarian options in OPH

Both Chartwell's and BDP offer many vegetarian options

Meeting place renovation will include vegetarian options

Selling salad by weight allows them to cost less than junk food

Standardization of labour means that burgers and fries are cheaper

Culinary entrees require more labour, and thus are expensive

Healthier foods can be more expensive