



# Enhancing Sustainable Dining at SUNY Potsdam

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SUNY Potsdam – Intro To Sustainability



## Background

Unsustainable food systems contribute to such as greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, and water pollution. On-campus solutions like sourcing greenhouse produce from the Wiser Center and promoting plant-based initiatives such as Meatless Mondays address these issues effectively. These efforts reduce waste, lower carbon footprints, and encourage environmentally conscious choices within the campus community. By implementing these strategies, we can foster a culture of sustainability while setting an example for other institutions.

## At SUNY Potsdam

At SUNY Potsdam, we could improve our sustainable dining practices. On the AASHE stars report submitted in 2020 we only received a 1.5/2.0 score showing there are many means of improvement. Ranging from an increase in low-impact dining events, labeling and signage, a food recovery program. This campus currently has the wrong view on food. We must create a connection between the people and our food, what's in it, and where it comes from. The main goal of sustainable dining in Ray Bowdish's words (head coordinator of the WISER Center), "We must give the opportunity for students to consume local organic foods." We look to achieve through education, guidance, and environmental changes on campus.



## Meatless Mondays

Meatless Mondays help reduce the environmental impact of meat production, which contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, and water use. By lowering meat consumption even once a week, campuses can conserve resources and promote sustainability. These programs also encourage students to explore plant-based meals, fostering environmentally conscious behaviors. Cornell University, for example, successfully implemented Meatless Mondays with plant-based options and educational campaigns, inspiring a shift in dining habits and sustainability awareness.



## On Campus Food Sourcing

As of now there is no on campus sourcing on our campus. We have the tools and resources to supply our dining halls with food grown right on campus, and this was done in the past before the pandemic. By using the Tower Gardens in our WISER (Wagner Institute for Sustainability and Ecological Research), green houses [shown below] we can grow many of the vegetables that can be prepared into food for students. This would save the college money as we already run these green houses, and there would be no transportation cost. Some other benefits would be the education aspect, students would learn how local food can be easily grown and good for them. The students would be able to see the whole process from farm to table similar to 'Farm to School'. Yale has a student ran on campus farm. Where they connect land and food.



## Labeling And Signage

- Solution to labeling and signage, offer more informative description of the ingredients and what macros each food contains in food on campus.
- Locally sourced, vegan, vegetarian, macros, calories. A separate index where you can look up and see on the Potsdam website
- Add leaves or another symbol for vegan and vegetarian on menus, with the calories (ESF has this)
- Presentation for freshman orientation to introduce sustainability because not everyone is going to read signage (which we also need) on why we're composting or just other environmental consciousness
- ESF has signage promoting their reusable container bin and where each specific material stream belongs. They also have dine-in durable dinnerware



## Food Recovery

Currently there is a lack of some sort of food recovery program on campus. There is not set process on what to do with food that has not been touched that is extra. We need a food donation, or program where this perfectly good food does not just join our compost bin. At SUNY ESF there is a student-run organization where they collect unserved food and deliver it to the local shelter and neighborhoods. In other places in the U.S. there are Facebook groups that are alerted anytime there is extra food after a catering event, they are welcome to eat what's leftover for 1 hour after the event until the rest is composted. Food recovery saves money by having less compost to take care of.

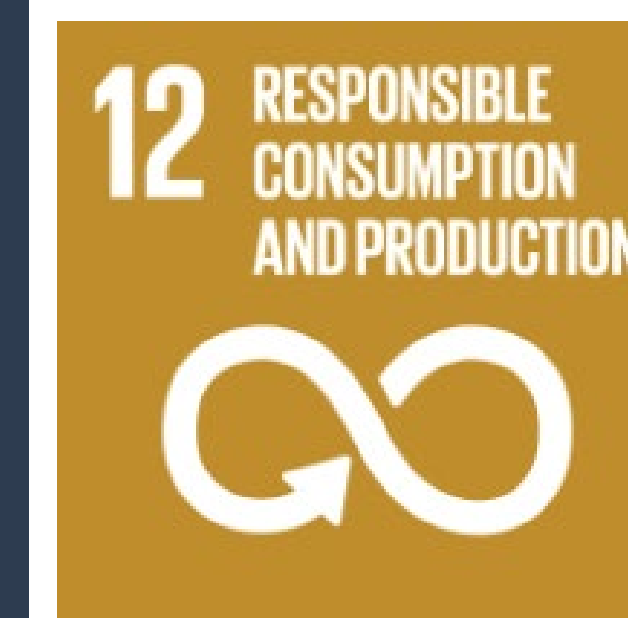
## Connection with the SDGs



- **Food recovery:** By donating food there will be less wasted helping with the hunger issue.
- **Meatless Mondays:** these are sus. dining options more food for less energy



- **Labeling and Signage:** Promoting local and organic food will educate people and encourage healthier food choices



- **On campus sourcing:** By having food provided and grown on campus we can control how much we grow. Overconsumption is a huge problem.



## References

Ray Bowdish – WISER Center Coordinator  
YALE <https://www.sustainablefood.yale.edu/>  
SDGs <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal13>  
Cornell University  
[https://events.cornell.edu/event/meatless\\_mondays](https://events.cornell.edu/event/meatless_mondays) . ESF  
<https://www.esf.edu/sustainability/index.php>  
AASHE STARRS <https://reports.aashe.org/institutions/state-university-of-new-york-at-potsdam-ny/report/2020-02-04/OP/food-dining/OP-7/>