Lauren Casey
5/14/13
Professor Dethier & Professor Boyd
GEOS. 206

Williams Harvest Week: A Trial in Sustainable Dining
**Introduction:**

Colleges and Universities have been at the forefront of addressing the many issues dealing with sustainability. By quickly browsing any number of college and university websites, one will see that most of these websites have whole sections devoted to campus sustainability. One of the important topics schools are addressing is sustainable dining. Because of the large journey most items have to go through in order to make it from the beginning stages of production to the plate on which is it served, food presents a number of issues when it comes to sustainability. Studies from the EPA show that in 2011, Agriculture contributed to 8% of greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S ("Agriculture Sector Emissions"). Furthermore, food systems account for 19-29% of global greenhouse gas emissions ("Food System Emissions"). By developing sustainable dining programs, institutions are making a conscious effort to not support industrialized food systems that are creating large problems, like increased amounts of greenhouse gases and other pollutants in the atmosphere and depleted fertile land due to mono-cropping, for future generations to deal with.

While it is clear that the issues presented by food production need to be dealt with, discussing the sustainability of food on an institutional level can often be complicated, as many schools rely on some type of food service (ex. Sysco, Sodexo) to supply and prepare food for students. Despite this, a number of colleges have been able successfully develop sustainable dining programs. In particular, Yale University had great success with “Yale Sustainable Food Project”. The impetus for starting up this
project was the poor quality of food being served by the university’s vendor, as well as the environmental impacts of industrial food systems. In the fall of 2003, Yale began a pilot program in one of the school’s dining halls “in which 100% of the food met its criteria of local, seasonal, sustainable and organic.” (“Retraining and Retooling the System”, 3). This program only began after a group of students, faculty, and staff collaborated on what the “Yale Sustainable Food Project” would entail, as well after the school found proper financial support from donors. Yale University faced some initial challenges with the program, but overall the pilot program turned out to be a great success. It eventually led to an expansion of the project on a smaller scale into all of the school’s dining halls in 2004.

The Yale Sustainable Food Project serves as great example for other colleges looking adopt similar dining programs that address the environmental issues of food systems while maintaining or improving customer satisfaction. This study will examine the potential for a sustainable dining program at Williams College’s Driscoll dining hall (Figure 1).

http://facilities.williams.edu/properties/driscoll-dining/
Figure 1. Exterior View of Driscoll Dining Hall

The overarching goal of the study is to set up a sustainable dining pilot program that would hopefully lead to a fully established program, much like that of Yale Sustainable Food Project, but it will more importantly look at creating an initial week long trial of a sustainable dining program that would generate feedback from dining services and students before delving into a full fledged pilot program.

**Why Driscoll:**

Built in 1963, Driscoll is the smallest of the three open dining halls on campus, with 9,143 square feet of space (“Williams College Facilities”). Due to Driscoll’s inconvenient location in relation to most academic buildings on campus and its smaller size, it is also the least heavily trafficked of the three dining halls. The small size of Driscoll would make it easier to offer a simpler menu with fewer options without making the number of options appear sparse. Additionally, Driscoll appears to be at the forefront of Williams College’s sustainable dining accomplishments. In 2008, the dining hall went trayless, which helped reduce the amount of waste from meals and also increased the efficiency of the dishwashing process. The dining hall also recently got rid of paper cups and began a reusable mug program in the spring of 2013. Perhaps the most relevant of the sustainable dining initiatives is Driscoll’s “Meatless Mondays,” which began with push from students as a way to teach students how to enjoy a meal without eating meat. All of these sustainable practices that Driscoll has already adopted serve as stepping-stones for starting up a sustainable dining program at the dining hall.

**Current Driscoll:**
Driscoll Manager, Molly O’Brien, and Driscoll First Cook, Christopher Moresi, provided useful information about the logistics behind the dining hall. On average Driscoll serves 215 people for breakfast and lunch and then about 300 people for dinner. For every meal served the cost per person averages at about $3.15. This puts the total daily cost of food at about $2,299.50 (Table 1). Of this food served, only 13% of it is calculated as “real food” (Appendix A) meaning the food qualifies as being fair, local, humane, ecologically sound, or all of the above (“Real Food Calculator”). While this percentage is a large improvement from what it was at about a decade ago (6%), there can certainly still be further improvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meal Time</th>
<th>Plates Served</th>
<th>Cost Per Plate</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breakfast</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>$3.15</td>
<td>$677.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>$3.15</td>
<td>$677.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinner</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>$3.15</td>
<td>$945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daily Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>730</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,299.50</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Vision for a Sustainable Dining Program at Driscoll:

An ideal dining program for any institution would be one that addresses the issues of food systems by reducing waste and purchasing more “real food” while maintaining customer satisfaction and most importantly, keeping cost at a minimum. Unfortunately, the major constricting factor for this ideal program is the very tight budget most dining services run on (Table 1). When discussing the potential for a sustainable dining program at Driscoll with O’Brien, this hindrance the budget has on food purchasing options became more and more evident. O’Brien explained that the cost to serve all
“real food” can be as much as two times the cost of what is normally served in the dining halls. On top of this increased cost for food, there is the increased amount of labor that goes into preparing the meal. When I suggested the idea of starting up a month long sustainable dining pilot program at Driscoll that would serve strictly “real food,” O’Brien and Moresi both seemed wary of the idea. They were not only worried about how the program would be financed; they were also worried about how to create almost a completely new menu for an entire month, the amount of extra labor that would certainly have to go into the project, and how the program would be received by students. O’Brien and Moresi both felt that it would be better to start such a new program out slowly, similar to how Driscoll did with Meatless Mondays. Creating a sustainable dining program that served one meal a week that consisted of entirely “real food” would give both dining services and students a chance to adjust.

The Vision:

Wanting to develop a sustainable dining program for Driscoll dining hall that would be feasible, the idea for “Williams Harvest Week” was created. This would be a week in the fall--ideally at the end of September or the beginning of October (although, you would have to worry about the potential for Mountain Day if in October)-- in which every meal served at Driscoll would provide entirely “real food.” This means that for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, all of the food at Driscoll would fall under “real food A” or “real food B” standards (all food must have at least one “real food” attribute) (Appendix A). The reason for the inclusion of the “real food” guide is that it provides appropriate framework for dining services in terms of food purchasing for the week. The goal of the “real food” guidelines (Figure 2) is to address a number of the issues concerning food
systems and to improve the quality of productions for producers, consumers, communities, and the environment ("Real Food Calculator").

![Diagram of Real Food Wheel](http://realfoodfellowship.weebly.com/real-food.html)

**Figure 2. Diagram of Real Food Wheel**

The week of sustainable dining would occur at some point in late September or early October in order to provide bountiful seasonal meals throughout the week (obviously such a program would not be as successful in the winter months). "Williams Harvest Week" would be an educational experience for students and staff, and it would also serve as a trial round for future sustainable dining endeavors at the college.

**What to Expect:**

While additional funding for the project would be necessary, dining services would attempt to stay as close to the $3.15 cost per meal budget as possible when planning the menu for “Williams Harvest Week.” After the menu for the week is planned the additional cost per meal (if any) will be known, and dining services will be able to receive the
funding necessary for “Williams Harvest Week” to successfully occur.

On top of additional funding, the week of sustainable dining will require a group of unpaid student volunteers to help prepare the food for each meal. The extra assistance will help the staff at Driscoll deal with the increased labor that O’Brien anticipates will come with providing 100% “real food.” By allowing the student volunteers to integrate with the staff at Driscoll and get a better understanding of how much preparation goes into a sustainably nourishing meal, this will also serve as a learning experience for the students.

Throughout “Williams Harvest Week,” students should expect to see simpler menus at Driscoll. By keeping to a simpler menu that provides the students with fewer options, the overall cost of the meal and waste produced would be reduced. Strict adherence to “real food” guidelines would also mean that items like soda, processed bread, and deli meats would not be available at Driscoll throughout the week. With appropriate planning, the higher quality and better tasting options that provided will mean that students should not have an issue with the fewer number of options being offered.

Final Thoughts:

“Williams Harvest Week” would certainly take a considerable amount of advanced collaborating and planning from students and staff at Williams College. Until the trial program is executed, the challenges of the project can only be anticipated. There is the fear that the week long program will not be well received by students or dining services, but the success of “Williams Harvest Week” will be unknown until is carried out.

The fear that the week long trial of sustainable dining will not be well received, or that it will not be worth the expense, are risks that need to be taken in order for Williams
College to make steps towards an improved future in sustainable dining. A large part of improving or maintaining the quality of life for future generations is ensuring that food supply is nourishing and abundant. There may seem to be an abundance of food for some people with the industrialized food system that is in place right now, but this abundance will not be there with the amount of emissions food systems are putting into the atmosphere and with the vast areas of fertile land that are quickly being depleted (Food Systems Emissions). In order for Williams College to consider itself a college that is focused on sustainability, it must take a look at the current dining system that is in place. “Williams Harvest Week” would only take up a week of the academic year and a small of percentage of the yearly dining services budget. It wouldn’t resolve any of the issues concerning institutional support of industrialized food systems, as it is only a week long trial, but it would be a great initial step in moving towards a full fledged sustainable dining program for Williams College
# Attributes and Guidelines

**Real Food Challenge Proprietary:** You may not post, modify, distribute, or reproduce this document in any way without obtaining the prior, explicit written consent of The Real Food Challenge.

---

### Local and Community-Based

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attribute</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ecologically Sound</strong></td>
<td>Products grown in a farm or garden at the institution in which the researcher can confirm the use of organic farming practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humane</strong></td>
<td>Products with the following certifications or claims:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Animal Welfare Approved Certified by Animal Welfare Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Biodynamic Certified by Demeter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Certified Humane by Humane Farm Animal Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Global Animal Partnership Steps 4-5+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

### Fair Trade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Certification</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ecocert Fair Trade Certified by Ecocert</td>
<td>Products with the following certifications or claims:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Food Standards Council Fair Food Program (Coalition of Immokalee Workers Tomatoes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair for Life Certified by IMO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Trade Certified by Fair Trade USA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Justice Certified by Agricultural Justice Project</td>
<td>Products with the following certifications or claims:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biodynamic Certified by Demeter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Alliance Certified*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USDA Organic‡</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protected Harvest Certification</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainforest Alliance Certified*</td>
<td>Fish Only:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine Stewardship Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch Guide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

### Organic & Non-GMO

- Green Light: Products with the following certifications or claims: |
  - Organic Farming Practices Certified by Organic Valley |
  - 100% Organic by the USDA Organic Program |
  - 100% Organic by the Canadian Organic Growers' Association |
  - 100% Organic by the European Union Organic Certification |
  - 100% Organic by Agriculture Canada |
  - 100% Organic by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service |

- Yellow Light: Products with the following certifications or claims: |
  - Certified Organic by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) |
  - Certified Organic by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) |
  - Certified Organic by the European Union Organic Certification |
  - Certified Organic by Agriculture Canada |
  - Certified Organic by the European Union Organic Certification |

- Red Light: Products with the following certifications or claims: |
  - Non-GMO Project Verified |
  - Non-GMO Project Verified by the Non-GMO Project Foundation |
  - Non-GMO Project Verified by the Canadian Non-GMO Project Foundation |
  - Non-GMO Project Verified by the European Union Non-GMO Project Foundation |
  - Non-GMO Project Verified by Agriculture Canada |
  - Non-GMO Project Verified by the European Union Non-GMO Project Foundation |

---

### Producer Information

- Green Light: Products with the following certifications or claims: |
  - Producer must be a private- or co-op owned business that:
    1. Has full autonomy and decision-making power about business practices.
    2. Has full control over production, processing, and distribution facilities within 150 miles of the institution.
    3. Is a true co-op rather than contractors to a larger corporation.

- Yellow Light: Products with the following certifications or claims: |
  - Producer must be a privately- or co-op owned business that:
    1. Grosses less than 1% of the industry leader.
    2. Independently owned businesses must have full autonomy and decision-making power about business practices. All production, processing, and distribution facilities controlled by the producer, its parent or family companies, and contract farmers must be within 150 miles of the institution.

- Red Light: Products with the following certifications or claims: |
  - Sale of any fish product must be within 150 miles of the institution.

---

### Certification and Claim Verification

- Italics = There is strong, third-party verification of claim
- "Text with Quotes" = Industry Claim
- * = Certification/claim occurs in more than one column
- ‡ = Needs verification that it is not from a Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO)

---

### Producer Information

- Green Light: Products with the following certifications or claims: |
  - Producer must be a private- or co-op owned business that:
    1. Has full autonomy and decision-making power about business practices.
    2. Has full control over production, processing, and distribution facilities within 150 miles of the institution.
    3. Is a true co-op rather than contractors to a larger corporation.

- Yellow Light: Products with the following certifications or claims: |
  - Producer must be a privately- or co-op owned business that:
    1. Grosses less than 1% of the industry leader.
    2. Independently owned businesses must have full autonomy and decision-making power about business practices. All production, processing, and distribution facilities controlled by the producer, its parent or family companies, and contract farmers must be within 150 miles of the institution.

- Red Light: Products with the following certifications or claims: |
  - Sale of any fish product must be within 150 miles of the institution.

---

### Certification and Claim Verification

- Italics = There is strong, third-party verification of claim
- "Text with Quotes" = Industry Claim
- * = Certification/claim occurs in more than one column
- ‡ = Needs verification that it is not from a Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Certification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanely Raised</td>
<td>USDA-AMS, Demeter, Fair Trade Certified, Certified Humane, Process Verified Grass, Process Verified AgA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecologically Sound</td>
<td>USDA-AMS, Certified Organic, Global Animal Partnership, Rainforest Alliance Certified, Food Alliance Certified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly Traded</td>
<td>USDA-AMS, Ecocert Fair Trade Certified, Fair Trade Certified, Food Alliance Certified, Global Animal Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local and Community</td>
<td>USDA-AMS, Certified Organic, Global Animal Partnership, Food Alliance Certified, Global Animal Partnership</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend:
- **Green Light**: No Anti-Biotics Administered
- **Yellow Light**: Raised without Antibiotics
- **Red Light**: Anti-Biotics Administered

For multi-source of multi-ingredient products, must meet all of the above criteria.

For products of less than 50% of the ingredients in the product meet the above standards, the proportion of the ingredients must be within 250 miles of origin, 150 miles of farmers, and 250 miles of ins and distribution facilities controlled by the producer, its parent or family owned businesses must meet the above criteria.

For products from cooperatively owned business that grosses less than 1% of the gross of the corporation, is part of the family, and contract producer, it is an entity owned and operated by the producer, its parent or family owned businesses and distribution facilities controlled by the producer, its parent or family owned businesses must meet the above criteria.

For products from cooperating business must meet the above criteria.

For multi-source of multi-ingredient products, must meet all of the above criteria.

For products of less than 50% of the ingredients in the product meet the above standards, the proportion of the ingredients must be within 250 miles of origin, 150 miles of farmers, and 250 miles of ins and distribution facilities controlled by the producer, its parent or family owned businesses must meet the above criteria.

For products from cooperatively owned business that grosses less than 1% of the gross of the corporation, is part of the family, and contract producer, it is an entity owned and operated by the producer, its parent or family owned businesses and distribution facilities controlled by the producer, its parent or family owned businesses must meet the above criteria.
Bibliography


Moresi, Christopher. Personal Interview. 30, April 2013.

O'Brien, Molly. Personal Interview. 30, April 2013


“Retraining and Retooling the System.” Summit Case Study. Provided by Brent Wasser.

