



Caroline Jones
Environmental Studies and International Studies Majors
Latin American, Latino, and Iberian Studies Minor
Richmond, Virginia; April 20th, 2018

Green Dining Proposal



Proposals for UR Sustainability Strategic Plan

Abstract

University of Richmond has slowly but steadily introduced efforts to reduce its campus-wide, local, and national environmental impact, most notably with its commitments to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 and to divert 75 percent of waste from landfills by 2025. Yet most eateries on campus offer their food and beverages to the hundreds of customers they serve every day only with single-use serve ware, an incredibly expensive practice in terms of cost, energy use, and environmental impacts. This proposal suggests introducing a “for-here” option—serving food and beverages with reusable serve ware—at all eateries on campus that currently do not offer one. The introduction of reusable serve ware, in tandem with an update of the current single-use to-go serve ware (such as switching to entirely post-consumer, recyclable, plant-based, or compostable materials), could help significantly reduce the University’s waste production and support efforts to reach its waste diversion goal. This project also has the potential to provide marketing opportunities for eateries, programming opportunities for the Office for Sustainability, and learning opportunities for students; enhance customers’ dining experience; and help improve the University’s rankings and reputation.



Figure 2: Single-use serve ware currently offered at Lou's (Jones, 2018).

Justification continued

- **Marketing, programming, and learning opportunities**
 - For eateries, opportunities for marketing and the promotion of a positive image of social responsibility and environmental consciousness
 - An enhanced experience for dine-in customers
 - Potential for Office for Sustainability programming to highlight environmental benefits of reusable serve ware and University environmental efforts
 - Academic and research opportunities for students and faculty across schools
- **University leadership and reputation**
 - Achieving environmental—not only academic and athletic—excellence as a renowned institution of higher learning
 - Gain a comparative advantage over other universities in attracting increasingly environmentally-minded prospective new students (Timm, 2014)
 - Improving rankings in the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education’s reports, in the “College Sustainability Report Card,” and in Princeton Review’s “Guide to Green Colleges” (Kurland, 2011, p. 396)
 - **UR is a Silver Level AASHE Institution – shouldn’t we be Gold?**
- **Model Gold-Level AASHE Institutions: Oberlin College**
 - A student-run Resource Conservation Team conducts periodic waste audits on campus (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, 2017)
 - Food waste is sent to a College property for use in organic farming (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, 2017)
- **Model Gold-Level AASHE Institutions: Green Mountain College**
 - The biology department and the sustainability office conduct yearly waste audits (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, 2017)
 - The sustainability office employs a waste diversion crew that collects data on post-consumer food waste weights and trends daily (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, 2017)
 - Chartwells Dining Services (the university’s provider) was awarded a Green Restaurant Certification for implementing environmental changes (Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, 2017)

Acknowledgements

Dr. Peter Smallwood, Environmental Studies Program Coordinator and Senior Seminar Advisor
Rob Andrejewski, Director for Sustainability
The University of Richmond Environmental Studies Program

References

- Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (2017, March 9). *Oberlin College STARS Report*. Retrieved April 03, 2018, from <https://stars.aashe.org/institutions/oberlin-college-oh/report/2017-03-09/OP/waste/OP-22/>.
- Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (2014, October 17). *Green Mountain College STARS Report*. Retrieved April 03, 2018, from <https://stars.aashe.org/institutions/green-mountain-college-vt/report/2014-10-17/OP/dining-services/OP-6/>.
- Jensen, M. (2017). Chapter 2: Getting Rid of Our Waste. In *Lean Waste Stream: Reducing Material Use and Garbage Using Lean Principles*, pp. 15-17. CRC Press.
- Kurland, Nancy B. (2011). Evolution of a campus sustainability network: a case study in organizational change. *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 12(4), pp. 395-429. Retrieved April 05, 2018, from <https://www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/pdfplus/10.1108/14676371111168304>.
- Office for Sustainability. (2010). University of Richmond Climate Action Plan. Retrieved April 09, 2018, from <https://sustainability.richmond.edu/common/pdf/climate-action-plan.pdf>.
- Preventing Trash at the Source. (2017, December 11). Retrieved April 04, 2018, from <https://www.epa.gov/trash-free-waters/preventing-trash-source-0>.
- Reusable Dishware (Why switch?). (2018, February 14). *City of Portland*. Retrieved April 04, 2018, from <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/sustainability/article/507480>.
- Timm, J. C. (2014, March 22). Millennials: We care more about the environment. Retrieved April 04, 2018, from <http://www.msnbc.com/morning-joe/millennials-environment-climate-change>.

Why introduce reusable serve ware?

Environmental Concerns of Waste

- According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, “Between 1960 and 2013, the average amount of trash generated by each person in the U.S. nearly doubled” (Preventing Trash at the Source)
- The best way to reduce waste is preventing it from being generated in the first place, which can be achieved in part by using reusable items as much as possible (Jensen, 2017, p. 15-17)

Upholding University Sustainability Commitments

- **The Talloires Declaration**, signed in 2003 by President William Cooper
- **The American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment**, signed in 2007 by President Ed Ayers
- **The American Campus Climate Pledge**, signed in 2015 by President Ronald Crutcher
- **The “We Are Still In” pledge** of continued support of the Paris Climate Accord, signed in 2017 by President Crutcher
- **2010 University of Richmond Climate Action Plan**
 - Goal of carbon neutrality by 2050 (with incremental greenhouse gas reductions of 30 percent by 2020 and 65 percent reduction by 2035)
 - Commitment to a 75 percent waste-to-landfill diversion rate by 2025



Figure 1: Passport Café at the Carole Weinstein International Center (Jones, 2018).

Serve Ware Overhaul

University of Richmond is home to one dining hall, the Bruce E. Heilman Dining Center, and five other eateries. The Cellar, the only sit-down, full-service restaurant on campus, and the dining hall are the only two dining locations on campus that use reusable serve ware. Passport Café (Figure 1), Lou’s (Figure 2), Tyler’s Grill, and Eight-Fifteen are the four other eateries on campus, and all four do not currently offer a for-here option—that is, their food and beverage offerings are only served in single-use materials, such as plastic and unrecyclable waxed paper products. This proposal recommends overhauling the serve ware systems at these four eateries by incorporating reusable serve ware for a new for-here option as well as switching to more sustainable materials for the current to-go option.

Introduction

- Tyler’s Grill, Lou’s, Passport Café, and Eight-Fifteen are the target of this proposal, as they do not currently offer a for-here option, yet many customers choose to dine in at in-house or nearby seating
- There is ample opportunity for Dining Services to make large contributions to the University’s efforts to **implement its 2017 Sustainability Strategic Plan and to reach its commitment of 75 percent waste to landfill diversion by 2025** (Office for Sustainability, 2010)

The Overhaul

- **A new for-here option:** Introducing a new set of reusable containers, utensils, cups, and other serve ware at each eatery based on their respective offerings, budget, and number of daily customers
- **An updated to-go option:** Revamping the current single-use to-go materials (see Figure 2) by switching to more environmentally-conscious and sustainable materials, such as recyclable, compostable, or renewable materials (like bamboo and other plant-based materials)

Justification

- **Environmental benefits**
 - Reusable serve ware is less energy intensive than single-use materials, and can be less costly in the long run (Reusable Dishware (Why switch?))
 - Pollution prevention, or preventing waste in the first place, is the best way to reduce waste (Preventing Trash at the Source)