

Real Food Working Group Meeting

Wednesday, August 28, 2013

Attendees

Alison Nihart, Stefy Narvaez, Maria Carabello, Jane Kolodinsky, Jennifer Porter, Kira Kelly, Angela Debettencourt, Joe Speidel, Becca Brady, Kierstin Wall, Gioia Thompson, Caylin McKee, Annalena Bartlett, Melissa Sullivan, Melissa Zelazny, Ani Quigley

Background on Real Food Challenge

- Stefy provided a history of the RFC national campaign: the campaign began based on the idea that “anchor institutions” (e.g. universities and hospitals) can have a positive effect on the food system by shifting purchases. The RFC started in 2006-2007 as a network of students doing food work at campuses across the county.
- Maria explained how the RFC came to the UVM campus: UVM students first became involved in 2009. In 2010-2011, Ali Nord, the Sodexo sustainability intern, piloted the calculator. UVM students attended the RFC Summit in Boston in March 2011. In 2011-2012, students successfully advocated for the President to sign the Campus Commitment, making UVM the 5th campus in the country to sign.

Real Food Working Group

Alison provided an overview of the Working Group, its charge, members, and structure.

- The charge of the RFWG is as follows:
 - Develop a *real food policy* and *multi-year food action plan* for the campus;
 - Advise University Dining Services on real food purchasing decisions;
 - Conduct outreach to increase student awareness and knowledge of the Real Food Challenge;
 - Review annual Real Food Calculator assessments and annual progress report;
 - Promote cross-departmental and cross-division communication and collaboration;
 - Facilitate partnerships within the local community, including between campus dining providers and local farmers;
 - Meet annually (in the fall) with the Dining Services Advisory Committee regarding on-campus food infrastructure and meal plans as they relate to real food;
 - Conduct feasibility studies to further develop institutional real food initiatives, where necessary.

- A list of [current members and their affiliations](#)
- The working group is divided into three committees:
 - Policy (chaired by Alison Nihart)
 - Outreach (chaired by Jane Kolodinsky)
 - Calculator (chaired by Caylin McKee)

Update from RFC National Campaign

- RFC has been growing quickly in the northeast region, with regional staff size growing from three to seven this year.
- There are currently 17 commitments nationwide (UVM was 5th to sign).
- The New School, Hamilton College, and Northeastern University all anticipate signing the RFC this year.
- RFC signed a national transparency agreement with Sodexo.
- Stefy has been spearheading an implementation working group to create toolkits for schools that sign the RFC. She will send Alison the packets so we can give her feedback.
- Stefy has been working with FINE (Farm to Institution New England) with their launch of a farm-to-college program.
- Kierstin has been working with Lyndon State College (signed last year) and they are excited to connect with UVM.
 - Gioia mentioned the idea of taking a field trip to other schools in the area that have signed/are hoping to sign the RFC Campus Commitment (ex. Goddard College, Sterling College, Lyndon State).
- Both Middlebury and SUNY Plattsburg are very interested in signing the RFC Campus Commitment.

Upcoming Events

- Table at Activities Day (Sept 4, 10am-3pm; 8:30am setup)
 - a great chance to engage and educate A LOT of people about the RFC
- Table at Farmers Markets (Sept 9, Oct 7, Nov 4; 11am-3pm; 10am setup)
- Homecoming panel discussion (October 5, 1pm)
 - STUDENTS: Let Alison know if you are interested in being on this panel
- RFC Summit in Minneapolis (October 11-14)
 - The summit is a weekend gathering of 2-5 student delegates from over 200 universities around the country in various stages of involvement with the RFC and the campaign. It is a great chance to build leadership skills, network, organize, and facilitate workshops

- and trainings around Real Food initiatives with like-minded students from diverse backgrounds.
 - STUDENTS: Let Alison know ASAP if you are interested in representing UVM at the RFC Summit in Minneapolis so that travel and funding can be coordinated.
- Food Day (October 24)
 - We will be coordinating with Slow Food, VSTEP, and EcoReps to make it a more open campus-wide event.
- We need volunteers to staff the tables for these upcoming events. Please contact Jennifer Porter (Jennifer.Porter.1@uvm.edu) to sign up.

Committee Updates

Policy (Maria)

- Summer meetings have focused on developing the RFWG Policy (*Technically a plan/guiding document not a University-level policy)
- This document outlines the charge of the RFWG, group composition/structure/voting procedures, role of students and available leadership roles, criteria for annual assessments made with RFC calculator, a timeline outlining incremental progress, and a section on purchasing prioritization.
- The Policy group is in its finalization stages of this document's draft, so it will be made available and brought up for a group vote in either September or October.
- Other upcoming tasks/projects: Developing a decision matrix to allow us to more strategically apply our values to purchasing decisions, and drafting a Multi-Year Action Plan to guide our progress towards 20% by 2020.

Outreach (Melissa)

- The group has come together to develop stickers which were handed out at the First Year BBQ, and has put out informational table tents and napkin holder displays in the on-campus dining locations.
- Gioia updated the group on David Conner's CDAE 250: Social Research Methods course (48 students). They are trying to identify campus awareness, attitude, and future actions surrounding the RFC campus commitment on-campus through surveying. If you have ideas about things you would like to see the students investigate funnel them through Gioia who is serving as the contact person between the Working Group and the students in the course.

Calculator (Caylin)

- Caylin (Sodexo Sustainability and Social Media Coordinator) and Annalena (Sodexo Intern) have been working on last year's invoices, along with playing with projection scenarios to target purchasing shifts which will have the most impact.
- 2 new interns (for course credit) to possibly join the calculator team this Fall.

Opportunities for Student Leadership

- We need to vote on this year's RFWG Student Chair at the next meeting! This role is open to any student who wants to build their leadership and organizational skills by managing the administrative tasks involved with this group, with support from Alison Nihart as the group's Staff Advisor. Students, feel free to contact Alison (alison.nihart@uvm.edu) for more information on this opportunity.
- Stefy and Kiersten presented a flow chart on the various opportunities for student involvement and leadership development surrounding the RFC both at UVM and nationally - contact Stefy (stefy@realfoodchallenge.org) or Kiersten (kiersten.wall@gmail.com) for more information about this.

Upcoming meetings:

Mon, Sept 9 3:15-4:45 in Williams Room (Davis 403)

Monday, Oct 7 3:15-4:45 in Williams Room (Davis 403)

Monday, Nov 4 3:15-4:45 in Aiken 311

Thursday, Dec 5, 12-1:30 in Aiken 311