

# Real Food Working Group Meeting

Friday, December 5, 2013, 12:00-1:30 p.m.

Aiken 311

## Attendees

### *Students*

Annalena Barrett (Sodexo Intern), Becca Brady (student), Maria Carabello (Food Systems Masters Program), Angela Debettencourt (Fair Trade UVM), Ryan McNally (SGA), Jennifer Porter (Food Systems Masters Program), Ani Quigley (Vermont Students for Animal Protection), Melissa Sullivan (VSTEP)

### *Administration/Staff*

Alison Nihart (Food Systems Initiative), Gioia Thompson (Office of Sustainability)

### *Dining*

Caylin McKee (Sustainability and Social Media for Sodexo -- University Dining Services), Brian Roper (District Chef -- University Dining Services), Melissa Zelazny (Head of University Dining Services)

### *Faculty*

Cynthia Belliveau (Continuing Education), Jane Kolodinsky (Community Development and Applied Economics)

## Agenda

**Facilitator** - Ani Quigley and Alison Nihart

**Notetaker** - Jennifer Porter

Alyssa Johnson joined us as a prospective replacement for Angela Debettencourt.

### *Results of David Connor's class*

- Class completed 900 surveys gauging student awareness and impressions of the RFC
- Approximately a third of students surveyed have heard of the RFC
- On average, students thought UVM was currently at 8% real food
- Even when students had heard of the RFC they were not well educated about what it means
- There was a lot of confusion about what the four categories means
- Identified a need for more education/outreach
- Jane doesn't think it is surprising that students are confused about categories because the general public is confused about them
- There was pushback from the students in the class about beverages counting as "real food" and whether they are a genuine way to achieve 20%
- The survey showed that students were not willing to pay more for real food; at most they were willing to pay 3% more
- Students in the class had mixed feelings about creating a "real dining hall"
- Students in the class expressed the desire for a "real meal"
  - o They didn't just want real ingredients scattered throughout meals
- Students from Rubenstein and CALS were more likely to be willing to pay more for real food
- The students in the class were not aware that the RFC is a student led initiative
- Convenience and location were the most important factors in choosing dining locations
- Students want to know the impacts of the RFC or the stories associated with it
  - o i.e. how does this effect the local economy, what changes are being made
- There was a correlation between class year and awareness of real food values

- Older students were more aware
- The “UVM effect”
- Jennifer will do further analysis on the dataset with help from Jane

### ***Committee Updates***

- Calculator Committee
  - Caylin prepared a “what if” matrix, in which she forecasted how certain purchasing shifts would change our real food percentage
    - i.e. if we switched all of our coffee to real it would increase us by 1 percentage point
  - This will help us decide where to dig deeper
  - Some of these product changes may conflict with Sodexo’s contractual obligations with companies (i.e. Yoplait)
  - Cynthia thinks we need to first decide what we think is most important to us before we dive in deeper to categories
  - In one of the early meetings next semester we will set aside time for “vision planning”
  
- Outreach Committee
  - Next semester we will need to advertise the Regional Training at UVM
  - David’s class suggested hanging banners about the RFC in the Davis Center
  - Can we strategically place the four banners we already have in the Davis Center?
  - Perhaps we need a new tagline?
    - i.e. “For students, by students”
  - Do table tents make students think this is a top-down campaign?
  - How can we advertise in a way that doesn’t make students feel green-washed?
  - We need education about what is real food *and* that is it a student led campaign
  - Use personal stories to explain impact/importance
  - Melissa thinks it might be more effective if students led the education campaign
  - Outreach committee will meet to discuss potential education campaign
  
- Policy Committee
  - Since the last meeting Alison went through the guidance document to change the language based on Dennis’s suggestion to make it sound less like a contract
  - Dennis then went through it and approved Alison’s changes and made some additional suggestions
  - The revised Guidance Document was handed out so members could review it
  - Any further revisions should be sent to Alison
  - We would like to share this document with the Provost and the President before we vote to adopt it
  - We will plan to vote at the first or second meeting next semester

### ***Budget Update***

- Alison revised the budget based on input from last meeting
- The provost is looking to cut budgets
- Cynthia thinks we should ask for more money than we need

- Jane thinks the current budget is too detailed
  - o Group some of it into “communications”
- How should we pitch the budget?
  - o They are very afraid of student unrest about this issue so our budget would allow us to educate the student body
  - o The Food Systems Spire says that we are not only going to study food systems but live the ideals too
  - o The university signed this commitment and will look bad if they do not meet the goal

### ***Students' Meeting Update***

- Updates from December 4 meeting of RFWG students
- Students want transparency and student involvement in the RFP process
  - o Meet with Annie Stevens or someone that can explain the RFP process
    - Alison will talk to Annie about this at their next meeting
- Start hosting monthly student meetings that will be open to all students, where we will recap what the working group is doing and where we can solicit student input
- First meeting will happen shortly after the regional training in February
- Create three tiers for students to get involved
  - o Listserv emails/updates
  - o Monthly student meetings
    - Town hall sessions or “listening session” or “real talks”
    - The word meeting might be too formal
    - This would create a pool of students that could join the working group when current students leave/graduate
  - o Allow students to serve on outreach committee
    - Would require the outreach committee to meet regularly
    - Would allow students to take a more active role and make meaningful contributions

### ***Farmer Training Program Presentation***

- Guest presenters Laura Williams (Farm Manager/Program Coordinator) and Susannah Daloz (Program Director) from the Farmer Training Program (FTP)
- In 2012 Sodexo spent \$9500 on produce from the FTP and in 2013 they spent \$4500
  - o In 2013 some Sodexo chefs stopped buying mid summer
- This coming year the program is doubling production and would like to see a commitment from Sodexo
- The program is willing to plan their crops around what Sodexo wants/needs as long as they have a commitment
- There is the potential for students to consume food grown by other students
- This program offers direct connection between students and their food
- Laura deals directly with the different chefs- some are super committed and others are not
- It is often too expensive for Sodexo to purchase their produce
- There needs to be more conversations between Sodexo and the FTP so that the FTP grows what Sodexo cannot get cheaply elsewhere
- The program will never be able to compete with Black River Produce (BRP) prices for certain crops
- We shouldn't treat produce from the FTP the same as other produce

- i.e. don't put baby lettuce from program on a sandwich
- Treat it specially so that they can charge the customer more
- If that is the strategy then those high quality foods will never be in the resident dining halls
- Use the higher quality produce for fancy dinners (catered events) instead of imported asparagus in September
- Catering has the more flexible budget for higher priced items
- Program wants to be selling to Sodexo, but they need to know relatively soon if it will be possible for Sodexo to purchase their food, so that they can plan their crops and possibly seek commitments elsewhere
- Can we work the FTP into the new Sodexo contract?
- FTP prices can be lower if there is a contract
- FTP is covered by UVM insurance

### ***Administrative Updates***

- RFC Regional Training in the planning process for Friday, February 7 through Sunday, February 9
- Please put your schedule for next semester into Oracle, so we can schedule our next meeting ASAP

### ***Action Items***

- Outreach committee will meet to discuss potential education campaign
- Jennifer will do further analysis on David Conner's dataset with help from Jane
- Next meeting we will set aside time for "vision planning"
- Alison will revise the budget to ask for more money than we need
- Everyone will put their schedule into Oracle
- We will vote on the Guidance Document at the first or second meeting next Semester
- Alison will talk to Annie Stevens about setting up a meeting with RFC students