Dining Services Sustainable Practices

UMD Dining Services is committed to following sustainable practices. Some of the ways we are achieving this is by going green, recycling, composting, and buying local. As stated in our Mission Statement, “We are committed to sustainable practices by respecting our environment, and consciously purchasing local foods whenever possible.”

Areas we have made progress:

- Aluminum, plastic and glass are recycled from all areas
- Fryer oil is picked up by a vendor and re-used in certain items such as crayons, lip stick and bio-diesel
- Going trayless in the Dining Center included a 4.6% reduction (or $45,000) in food waste and a 10% reduction (or $9,318.00) in water consumption. Benefits of these changes that were not measured included: reduced chemicals, detergents and drying agents, conservation of energy, and conservation of financial resources
- Spring of 2011 Dining Services partnered with the UMD SAP Farm and to date has purchased over 38,000# of produce
- All coffee grounds from Northern Shores Coffee Shop are composted at the UMD SAP Farm
- Leftover food that can’t be utilized in Dining Services is picked up by Second Harvest Northern Lakes Food Bank and is used at area shelters
- Purchase local food from local vendors when possible
- Purchase over 500# of Lake Superior white fish annually
- All food waste is pulped and picked up by WLSSD for use in compost production, this program was started in 2000 and will further reduce the amount of garbage entering the local waste stream
- Departmental computer and ink/toner cartridges are recycled from all departments
- Most cleaning products are “green” certified, indicating these products are environmentally friendly
- Cardboard boxes are compacted, baled and picked up by a paper recycler
- Food purchases are made when possible with “Pouch Pack” packaging, eliminating cans and bottles, thus taking up less transportation and storage space
- Bulk ordering (salad dressings, frying oils) reduces excess containers and helps to hold down costs
- Bread, pop, juice and water bottles are delivered to campus in returnable cases
- Food grade plastic containers are washed and re-used for other needs or recycled
- Food grade plastic buckets are washed and re-used
- Non-food grade plastic buckets are saved and given away to other departments for non-food use
- Since 1995, unbleached napkins have been used in Food and Vending operations, keeping bleach and other whitening chemicals out of the paper making process
- Dining Center curtains and tinted windows reduce the demand placed on air conditioning
- State-of-the-art Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certified dishwashing machine installed in the Dining Center August, 2006 – replaced two smaller/older machines that had longer run times; use of steam heat saves water; larger wash chamber ensures shorter run times, resulting in less water consumption than the previous unit; new unit utilizes rinse and wash water more efficiently before releasing it to waste water stream. Water consumption was reduced by 35% after installation of this Hobart Flight-Type warewasher; electric power and soap reduction also realized from the installation of this unit
- Dining Center Dish Room lighting improvements in 2007 included retrofitting inefficient bulbs/lamps and ballasts with energy efficient (low wattage/high output) lighting products
- Washable dishware, linen napkins and table cloths are used where applicable for events hosted by the Catering Department
- State-of-the-art Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Certified pot and pan washing machine installed in the Production Kitchen in 2007 saves water, soap and electricity, similar to the previously noted DC installation
- End of Fall Semester 2007, Food Court eating utensils were switched to a biodegradeable product
• Food products are dated as they are received and rotated to ensure freshness and quality and reduce waste
• Fair Trade coffee is offered in Northern Shores Coffee, Catering and the Food Court
• Cloth towels that can be used many times are laundered and placed back into service
• Stainless steel serving pans utilized when feasible rather than aluminum foil disposable pans
• Bulk ordering reduces excess containers and helps to hold down cost
• Washable dishware, linen napkins and table cloths are used where applicable for events hosted by the Catering Department
• Catering offers for 25 or more people, 100% compostable events
• Catering is using bulk creamer and sugar, eliminating the paper packaging going into the garbage
• 95% of all packaging, cups, plates and utensils in the Food Court is compostable or recyclable
• Food Court eating utensils were relocated to a spot near the cash registers in September 2007 – they were formerly “out in the open” and passersby routinely grabbed a handful of these items, raising costs to all. They were ultimately tossed in the trash; this relocation reduced excess consumption and as a result, we saw a 30-40% reduction of these items entering the waste stream.
• Reduced the use of foam plates and cups in Dining Services operations by 80% in the summer of 2007; one foam product is used now only to ensure that customer safety if not compromised
• Lamps and fixtures in various sections of the Food Court (Burger Hub, Center Court) were changed to Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFL) in November 2007; this resulted in an average of 82% reduction in power consumption with no corresponding loss of illumination
• Food Court Xpressnap stand napkin dispensers, now located in this high volume eating area, have resulted in savings of 25% reduction in napkin usage, although actual results often show savings as high as 40%. Utilizing this dispenser saves labor too, as each dispenser holds up to 900 napkins, nearly three times the capacity of traditional dispensers.
• Service records are maintained so that prepared amounts of food match demand – food consumption is tracked to save money initially and later to reduce food waste
• Dining Center portion sizes are served to encourage customers to return for “seconds” rather than over-serving initially, resulting in food waste
• Foods are prepared in smaller batches throughout the day and appropriate meal periods, eliminating food waste
• Food products are dated as they are received and rotated to ensure freshness, quality and reduce waste
• Computerized recipes are utilized to make exact numbers of needed portions
• Spring 2010 – Food Court lighting changed to allow for fewer operating fixtures during daylight hours – approximately 66% reduction in power consumption
• June 2010 Northern Shores Coffee Shop replacement TV uses 40% less energy than traditional LCD TV’s and is also 100% mercury and lead free
• Compressors in Cocoa Cola vendors in academic buildings have been modified to operate in a “shut down” mode during the overnight hours; this means that the compressors will not draw electricity 1/3 of the time
• Older Cocoa Cola vendors have been replaced around campus with new vendors that can be programmed for energy savings operational modes; October 2010
• Dining Services staff plant an edible garden outside of Center Court Restaurant - produce is used in all areas of operation
• Compostable/recycle bins have been added in the Food Court