

A PUBLICATION OF



UMASS
DINING
UMassAmherst



MAKING LOCAL, HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE DELICIOUS

The How-To Guide for Foodservice Operators

HENRY P. KENDALL FOUNDATION



**Making
Local, Healthy, Sustainable
Delicious**

The How-to Guide for Foodservice Operators

A Publication of UMass Auxiliary Enterprises and UMass Dining Services
University of Massachusetts Amherst

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Table of Contents

Forward	
<i>Making Local, Healthy, Sustainable Delicious</i>	04
Introduction	
<i>About The Guide</i>	05
Background	
<i>The Local Healthy UMass Food System Initiative</i>	06
1. BUILD A SOLID FOUNDATION	
<i>How to prepare for implementation</i>	08
2. KNOW WHERE YOU'RE HEADED	
<i>How to set quantifiable goals, objectives, and measures of success</i>	22
3. SOURCE AND PROCURE SUSTAINABLY	
<i>How to work successfully with the local food supply chain</i>	32
4. CREATE THE DINING EXPERIENCE	
<i>How to plan, prepare and serve local, healthy, delicious food</i>	44
5. PUT YOUR CUSTOMER FIRST	
<i>How to maintain impeccable customer service</i>	62
6. TELL A COMPELLING STORY	
<i>How to market your initiative</i>	72
7. EVALUATE YOUR PERFORMANCE	
<i>How to track and measure progress</i>	88
8. GROW YOUR RESOURCES	
<i>How to prepare a convincing case statement</i>	96
Conclusion	
<i>Themes for a promising future</i>	103
Acknowledgments	108

Forward

Making Local, Healthy, Sustainable Delicious: The How-to Guide for Foodservice Operators is a manual for restoring real food and regional food systems to their right place in our society. For over a decade, the Dining Services program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (UMass Dining) has been an industry leader in environmentally conscious practices. Our serious commitment to sustainability has changed the way college students on our campus think about food and food consumption. They now understand that food is an essential source of personal health and wellness; that eating local, sustainable meals contributes to a strong and vibrant regional food system in New England and beyond. This Guide is designed to help your foodservice operation transform the quality of your customers' lives in the same way.

The impetus for preparing this Guide stems from a local healthy food system initiative we are currently undertaking with support from the Henry P. Kendall Foundation, and our decision to adopt the "50 by 60" challenge proposed by Food Solutions New England (FSNE): *to source 50% local food by the year 2060*. The vision of 50 by 60 requires a dramatic shift in our society's relationship to the production, sourcing, distribution, purchasing, preparation and serving of local, healthy, sustainable food. High-volume foodservice operators – colleges and universities, health care facilities, and K-12 schools – are uniquely qualified to lead the way to such a transformation.

As the flagship campus of our state's university system and the largest campus foodservice operator in the nation, UMass Amherst and its Dining Services Program have assumed the special responsibility to inspire and empower every dining operation, large or small across New England and beyond, to participate actively in strengthening local and regional food systems. We have proven that when you walk the talk of sustainability, you make a difference for the people you serve, for the institution within which you work, and for the society in which you operate. We invite you to grow your own local food system initiative and join us in making local, healthy, sustainable food delicious for all!



For UMass Dining

Ken Toong, Executive Director Auxiliary Enterprises

Garett DiStefano, Director of Residential Dining

Introduction

About the Guide

Making Local, Healthy, Sustainable Delicious offers a step-by-step approach to the planning and development of local, healthy food-system initiatives by large-scale foodservice operators. It is based on the successful experience of the Dining Program of the University of Massachusetts Amherst over the past 15 years or so. The Guide provides tips and hints to help you set up your own local healthy food system initiative, boost local sourcing of food, and re-engineer your menu cycle in favor of healthy, sustainable, delicious meals. Throughout the Guide, you will find case study examples from UMass Dining

Case study examples are indicated by indented and bracketed text highlights.

The “How-to” part of the Guide is organized around eight categories of strategic action that have been essential to our success:

Chapter Title	Addresses how to...
1. Build a Solid Foundation	<i>prepare for implementation</i>
2. Know Where You're Headed	<i>set quantifiable goals, objectives and measures of success.</i>
3. Source and Procure Sustainably	<i>work successfully with the local food supply chain.</i>
4. Create the Dining Experience	<i>plan, prepare and serve local, healthy, delicious food.</i>
5. Put Your Customer First	<i>maintain impeccable customer service.</i>
6. Tell a Compelling Story	<i>market your initiative.</i>
7. Evaluate Your Performance	<i>track and measure progress.</i>
8. Set Your Future Path	<i>prepare a convincing case statement.</i>

Consider our Guide a new addition to the existing library of farm-to-institution reference materials that have been available for a number of years. There is no “right” way for a foodservice operation to implement a local healthy food system initiative. We encourage you to take what we have written about our situation at UMass with an eye to the special and distinct circumstances at your own foodservice operation. We invite your institution to join UMass Dining in making this important difference to the people you serve in your world, in the way that we have in ours.

Background

The Local Healthy UMass Food System Initiative

Overview

In 2013, building on nearly 15 years of experience in sustainability programming, the UMass Amherst Dining Program set out to reimagine its relationship to local food systems from the ground up. We elevated “local, healthy, sustainable, delicious” to a core value. We completed a \$15.5 million state-of-the-art renovation of our 46,000-square-foot Hampshire Dining Commons and declared that we would make it the healthiest, most sustainable dining facility in the nation. Through a generous grant from the Henry P. Kendall Foundation of Boston, Massachusetts we launched the Local Healthy UMass Food System Initiative that is the basis for this Guide.

Mission of the Local Healthy UMass Food System Initiative

- Implement healthy, sustainable, and delicious menu items at UMass Amherst in a cost-effective manner.
- Grow the local food economy to increase access to fresh, healthy food for all people.
- Increase food literacy education to our students and the broader campus community.
- Offer mentorship and guidance to our peer foodservice providers to implement similar holistically-designed farm-to-institution programs.

ABOUT US...

UMass Dining is the largest campus foodservice program in the nation, with a budget in FY15 of over \$90 million. We serve 45,000 meals each day, six million each year. Currently, over 19,000 students, faculty and staff are on meal plans. We maintain four large dining commons and eighteen retail cafés, two food trucks, a delivery service, a bakeshop, catering and concessions, and the University Club. Each day, we offer over 15 world and specialty cuisines in our menu cycles. No other collegiate dining program in the nation has received as many honors, including our ranking as #2 in the 2015 and 2016 Princeton Review ratings for “Best College Food”.

LOCAL HEALTHY UMASS FOOD SYSTEM INITIATIVE OUTCOMES BY 2015

- **100% antibiotic-free chicken served campus-wide since fall 2015.**
- **In 2015, sourced \$4.07 million regional and sustainable food.**
- **Pledged to the Real Food Challenge (to source 20% Real Food by 2020).**
- **Aligned with Food Solutions New England (FSNE) regional goal to source 50% local food by 2060.**
- **Re-engineered menus to reflect plant-forward ingredients.**
- **Increased plant-based menu items by 30% during the summer of 2015.**

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Be a Visionary

Envision the outcomes that will manifest when your foodservice operation becomes committed to a local, healthy food system initiative.

Think Strategically

Always ask: “How can we apply this [decision][action][relationship] to our vision for a robust local, healthy food system?”

Promote a Culture of Excellence

Set the bar high, train well, and adjust often to reach new heights. Your program should be agile enough to change with new opportunities that may arise.

Support Institutional Goals

Weave your program vision into the goals of your institution’s leaders.

Innovate

Deliver high-quality cutting-edge products and services aimed to where the market is trending.

Think “Triple Bottom Line”

A local, healthy initiative is not only socially responsible and environmentally conscious; it must also be financially sustainable. Make sure your initiative gives excellent value while employing smart cost-control measures.

Follow the Metrics Closely

Quantify the headway your initiative is making. Create new ways to measure higher-order health and sustainability goals when industry standards have not yet quite caught up.

Put Your People and Resources Where Your Passion Is

Hire skilled, values-driven employees who are invested in the mission and can follow your lead.

Make Sure Your Local, Healthy Menu Also Tastes Great

The proof is in the pudding!



01 BUILD A SOLID FOUNDATION

How to prepare for implementation



OVERVIEW

Once the decision is made to support your local/regional food system, you should articulate:

- a clear vision of what success will look like
- core values that will bring your vision to reality
- explicit definitions for the terms you will be using

Establish an organizational structure to get the job done well, and a commitment to build and nurture stakeholder relationships with those who will support and champion your efforts.

KEY CONCEPTS **A clear vision** for your initiative will provide an anchor for all subsequent goal-setting and strategic planning.

Core values define the nature of your commitment for others; drive strategic planning toward the results you care about; and inspire others to join you in making your vision a reality.

Explicit definitions of key terms will guide your decision-making, help make your tracking consistent, and keep your team and stakeholders on the same page and headed in the same direction.

Stakeholder involvement should begin early in the planning process. Stakeholders are those inside and outside your institution who are served or impacted by your initiative. Identify who they are, and engage them in helping you better understand the role your dining program might effectively play in shaping the future of a local healthy food system. Design your implementation and outreach strategies around stakeholder demographics.

Organizational structure includes a Project Planning Team (to oversee and monitor the initiative), a tight-knit staff (to manage the project), a Data Analysis Team (to track and report on progress); and student interns (to help with data checking and leg work).

Networking and Partnerships with other organizations, agencies and foundations will increase the impact you have on the regional food system by amplifying your collective buying power, resource sharing, and collaborative marketing. Networks and partnerships help aggregate best practices and regional goals for sourcing and procurement of locally-based, sustainable food purchasing by large-volume foodservice operators.





Envision Future Success

A vision of what success will look like for your initiative is a critical first step in the process. Your picture of a successful future should encompass such questions as:

- What does a vital, robust local food system look like as a result of your initiative?
- What will the component players be doing and in what ways will your institution be relating to each?
- What changes will you see in your customers; how do they relate to you; how will they be feeling about the initiative?
- What new procedures, facilities, staffing, etc. be in place as a result of the initiative?
- What kind of buy-in do you see from your own foodservice team?

When you imagine the food system of the future, don't forget to think about all components in the farm-to-fork continuum: farmers, processors, value-added producers, brokers, distributors, transportation providers, retail outlets, consumers, regulatory agencies, etc. Consider the roles they will be playing, the resources they will provide for your initiative, their relationship to one another, and their future relationship with your institution as you realize success for your local, healthy initiative. Perhaps most important for your own long term success within the institution, don't forget to envision how up-line supervisors and leaders are feeling about the success of your initiative.

Write down the vision – a couple of paragraphs should be sufficient. Always be ready to share the written vision statement, but also consistently speak it, and regularly refer to “Our vision for the initiative is...” whenever you explain to others what you are doing. This will make your vision real for others!

Lastly, consider the vision statement as a snapshot, taken in a moment in time, not a static unchanging image. Circumstances, both positive and negative, many beyond your control– unexpected staff turnover, unforeseen budget cuts, a new donor who shows up – will likely arise that make it necessary to adjust your picture of future success. Modifying your vision for good reason – it cannot be a frivolous or fanciful change – is not a problem; indeed, others will respect you for acknowledging the dynamic nature of your initiative.

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Identify Values

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Recognizing and defining your organization’s values enables you to establish more consistent guidelines for sourcing and serving local, healthy food. On one hand, supporting local growers is “the right thing to do,” but you also need a clearer and more compelling set of reasons that clarify what is so right about it. The following are examples of values and their definitions that can support and guide your initiative:

Value	How it applies to foodservice operators
Wellness	Promotes good health and helps combat the rising rates of obesity diabetes, and other food-related diseases.
Quality	Favors the freshest, most nutrient-dense, flavorful foods available.
Environmental sustainability	Prioritizes the stewardship of natural resources.
A vital local economy	Serves our community and region by expanding the market for its farmers, businesses, and community members.
Financially responsible	Accessible and affordable to all, while generating the income that keeps it viable.

It is also important to be sure that your project's vision and mission statement are aligned with the greater institution's overall values. A college or university foodservice provider should consider the university's strategic goals and determine the role that a dining services program with a robust sustainability component can play in achieving those goals. Framing your initiative in terms of the parent institution's success generates greater buy-in from up line executive and administrative leaders. Such buy-in naturally leads to a deepening commitment of the institution to continue to support local and healthy food systems.

Our University's strategic plan is entitled "Innovation and Impact: Renewing the Promise of the Public Research University." It calls for UMass Amherst to become a "destination of choice" for students, and an "investment of choice" for donors and other philanthropic funders. Framing the UMass Dining program in language that shows how we contribute to reaching these goals definitely works to our advantage. As a sub-unit of our university's Administration and Finance (A&F) division, we also position our programs to support A&F's strategic goal for impeccable customer service. As a result, the University and our own division consider UMass Dining's accomplishments in supporting the New England food system a significant point of pride (for example, the University Relations office regularly touts our statistics on sustainable purchasing to prospective students, alumni, donors, and broader networks).

As you review your values and consider your program's internal policies and procedures in light of them, be mindful that other organizations you are working with may have their own respective missions and values. You may even find that some of your most supportive farmers, funders, and industry groups have different or even conflicting ways of looking at things. In any event, your mission/vision is the compass for setting the direction of your own program's direction, and should disagreements with others arise as to the details, stick to your higher mission for guidance as you proceed.

UMass Dining signed on to the Real Food Challenge Campus Commitment, which defines "local" as within 250 miles. At the same time, our grant initiative with the Henry P. Kendall Foundation defines "local food system" as anywhere in the New England region. This meant that food grown in northern Maine would satisfy our Kendall Foundation grant commitment to local/regional food, but would not meet the Real Food Challenge criterion for local sourcing. When setting our values as an institution, we had to consider overlapping these qualifiers in a consistent, logical way.



Articulate Explicit Definitions

To make sure everyone is clear and on the same page about the shift envisioned by your initiative, you need to make sure that you and all your stakeholders have a common understanding of what the initiative is out to address. This is not a black and white process. For example, the slogan “From farm to fork” only refers to the end-points of the food system continuum, and fails to convey the many components that a local food system encompasses. As well, there are no universally accepted definitions for local, healthy, sustainable, and delicious food. You will have to research and review the definitions and explanations of these aspects of the initiative and publish a statement of your own understanding of what these important topics mean to you.

For this Guide, we present two sets of definitions that we use at UMass Dining. First, we define the term “local” for the purpose of sourcing products. Second, to inform and guide our menu planning and implementation process, we define the terms of our daily mantra: **Healthy, sustainable, delicious!** We borrowed this tag line from our colleagues at Menus of Change -- a collaboration between of the Culinary Institute of America and Harvard’s T. H. Chan School of Public Health -- to describe the ideal qualities that increase public health, sustainability, and customer satisfaction.

Defining “Local” for Sourcing and Procurement

With no standard definition of the term “local” for foodservice operators, we reviewed the definitions used by Real Food Challenge and Food Solutions New England (FSNE), two sustainability advocacy organizations with whom we have partnered with in recent years, and by the Henry P. Kendall Foundation, a primary funder of the Local Healthy UMass Food System Initiative. The definitions of local for these three partners are similar, but with differences and overlaps:



Real Food Challenge defines local as within a 250-mile radius of UMass Amherst and relies on third-party certifications to qualify which vendors make the cut in reaching a goal of 20% locally sourced food by 2020.



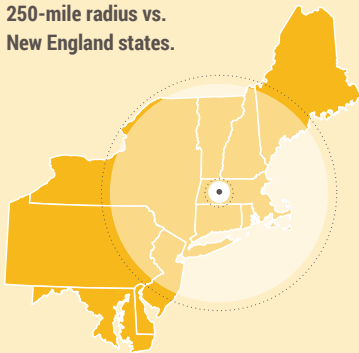
Food Solutions New England supports the goal of “producing at least 50% of clean, fair, just and accessible food for all New Englanders by 2060.” FSNE’s definition of local includes growers and vendors within a 6-state region from Connecticut to Maine (over 600 miles at its furthest points).

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The Kendall Foundation adheres to a less specific regional mission: “to create a resilient and healthy food system in New England that increases the production and consumption of local, sustainably produced food.”

The challenge that faced UMass Dining: How to develop a definition of local sustainable that would embrace the values of these three partner organizations, honor the values of our own campus, and not create any unresolvable conflict(s)? We met this challenge by establishing a tiered system of priorities for sourcing local, sustainable food, that would encompass the definitions of all three organizations, and still enable us to make choices with our own program in mind. We call each level of priority a “Tier” which allows us to quantify how much is spent at each level (Tier), with the goal of eventually shifting as much of our budget as possible to Tier 1, the most preferred source of local and sustainable items.

**Defining “Local” for UMass Dining:
250-mile radius vs.
New England states.**



Tier 1: (Most Preferred) First and foremost, we value local and community-based farms that produce foods or products themselves. By community-based, we mean farmers and producers that play an active role in the regional economy in which they reside. By spending our dollars here, we’re keeping funds in the community and supporting the creation of local jobs. Also, the fewer miles required to transport food, the smaller the carbon footprint.

Tier 2: Includes regional food businesses and distributors that support a resilient and healthy local/regional food system economy. Located within New England or within 250 miles of our campus, these vendors include larger businesses like Cabot Cheese, a cooperative and worker-owned business that sources dairy from a network of New England farms, yet is large enough to sell product nationwide. Tier 2 also includes the food and produce sourced locally (grown and processed locally) or sustainably (certified) by our produce and broad-line distributors FreshPoint and Performance Food Group. These businesses are incredibly important for supplying the needs of large-volume foodservice providers. Their efficiencies in production and distribution make it possible to produce the volumes we need at prices we can afford. And, located within New England, they also provide jobs to our regional economy.

Tier 3: When it is not possible to purchase locally or regionally, we source from other sustainable farms and businesses with certified humane, fair trade, organic, and other sustainability best practices. Most of what we consider sustainable meets the criteria of the Real Food Challenge. If a farm or vendor isn’t close enough for us to visit, we look to reputable third-party certifiers for verification that they meet our standards. For example, we supplement our local fish with Alaskan seafood that is certified by Seafood WATCH for best practices regarding fishing techniques and maintaining healthy fish populations and marine ecosystems.

When it comes to third-party certification, educate yourself on which certifiers are credible and which claims can be substantiated. There is, unfortunately, a lot of what may be called “green washing” in the food industry. Vague claims like “All-Natural” conjure visions of food produced without chemicals or preservatives, while “Raised with Care” might elicit images of free-roaming animals out to pasture. Yet these terms have no legal definition and are applied liberally to foods that offer no proof of sustainable or humane practices. For guidance on which certifiers meet best practices for sustainability, we recommend “Real Food Really Works,” the Real Food Challenge’s guide to effective, affordable real food procurement.

By creating guidelines based on priorities, we are able to source food items from a variety of local, sustainable farms and vendors, and calculate the total aggregated volume of sourcing and procurement into one statistic of local, sustainable food. This produces a single number that encompasses all of the foods and beverages that we consider to be local and/or sustainable.



Defining “Healthy, Sustainable, Delicious” for Menu Planning and Implementation

Some foods are healthier than others; some are more likely to support sustainable agriculture than others; and some are tastier to a college student than others. Therefore, it was essential for our team to determine exactly what **healthy, sustainable, delicious** would mean at UMass Dining and how we would intersect these values.

Healthy foods include:

- **Fruits and vegetables**
- **Fruit-infused waters and smoothies** (in place of sugary sodas)
- **Whole grains, nuts, and seafood**
- **Plant-based proteins**
- **Healthy fats and oils**
- **Lean animal proteins**
- **Low sodium, without added sugars, additives and preservatives**
- **No trans fats**
- **Less-processed whole ingredients**



Sustainable foods include:

- **Local/regionally-sourced produce.** The products are grown and processed in New England or within 250 miles of campus. (A few exceptions may be made to accommodate family businesses and co-ops.)
- **Ecologically-sound products.** We verify that these foods are third-party certified as sustainable by reputable sources, such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Rainforest Alliance; or in accordance with the Real Food Challenge guidelines.
- **Humanely-raised animal products.** In accordance with the Real Food Challenge guidelines, such products must be third-party certified. In the event that a local farm does not possess a 3rd-party certification, UMass Dining staff members visit the farm to vouch for humane treatment.
- **Fair-trade products.** These food items are third-party certified, as defined by the Real Food Challenge guidelines, to promote socially just practices in the food system and build community capacity through equal access to jobs, living wages, and more.

Delicious foods include:

- **An authentic world cuisine**
- **A flexible menu in response to seasonality and student feedback**
- **Customizable meals**
- **Made-to-order foods**
- **Small plates with big flavor and healthfulness**
- **Dishes that are taste-tested in the design phase to ensure high quality**

Know Your Stakeholders

Your stakeholders are those inside and outside your institution who are served or impacted by your initiative. Identify who they are, then design your outreach and strategies around their demographics. The stakeholder network at a University would include students you serve and educate; university staff and faculty who dine with you; the community of farmers and producers in the region you are supporting; and policy-makers you can inform and influence and with whom you will develop working relationships.

In the case of K-12 schools, the stakeholders would at least include students, parents, teachers, and staff. For healthcare institutions, stakeholders might start with the patients, staff, visitors, and healthcare professionals and administrators. It is important to recognize stakeholders on all levels, from administrators and directors to customers and even members of the local community-at-large.

You can learn a lot about your stakeholders and strengthen your relationship with them by engaging them (one-on-one or in small groups) around these three questions:

- 1 What do you see as the future of our local food system?
- 2 From your perspective, what is working and not working right now with respect to the local food system?
- 3 In what ways might our initiative make a difference to you and the local food system?



Organize for Success

Create a Project Planning Team | We highly recommend that institutions form a planning team to monitor and oversee their local, healthy food system initiative. The team should represent several groups: the players responsible for managing and implementing the project (i.e. sustainability specialists, foodservice managers, culinarians, etc.); stakeholder interests (e.g. students and farmers); and those in support of the project (e.g. up-line institutional executives, funding sources, etc.). The more interests the team represents—from chefs to purchasers to managers to sustainability specialists—the more effectively it will perform.

The participation of staff representing higher and lower ends of the reporting chain ensures that more viewpoints are considered, and ultimately gives voice to a wider spectrum of stakeholders within the organization.

The planning team at UMass Dining is composed of sustainability specialists, our residential dining director, chefs de cuisine, our purchasing/marketing director, and student representatives.

The role of the planning team is to implement project goals and propose innovative solutions to challenges as they arise. In general, the team should meet regularly to check progress, cross-pollinate ideas, and set new goals. At the start of the initiative they are likely to meet frequently (every other week), and less often (on an as-needed basis) as the project moves forward. It is important to keep open channels of communication with the planning team. They connect your initiative to stakeholder groups who want their voices represented at the table and who expect transparency in decision-making and project evaluation. The planning team will augment its connections within the institution by associating with other complementary stakeholder groups and organizations that may be active within your institution.

UMass Dining's planning team is allied with a multidisciplinary stakeholder committee on our campus called the Food System Working Team (FSWT) – a student chapter on our campus of the Real Food Challenge's national campaign. Recently created on campus, the FSWT consists of students, faculty, staff, and local food entrepreneurs who are also developing a campus-wide food policy and multi-year action plan for sustainable sourcing. FSWT serves as an advisory council in support of UMass Dining's health and sustainability goals.

Staffing the office

You will staff your initiative as appropriate to the structure and style of your own foodservice operation. Because you will be relying on the core planning team and others to support your initiative, a large staff should not be necessary.

UMass Dining's ideal sustainability program team is comprised of a full-time sustainability director, two program associates, a grant-funded data analyst (consultant), and undergraduate student interns.

The Data Analysis Team

The Data Analysis Team handles the critical function of providing your initiative with accurate, timely and complete data in connection with changes and trends in the purchasing/pricing of local, healthy sustainable food. This team is a small, focused group of people who compile and organize information harvested from your foodservice and vendor systems. The team prepares periodic reports (at least bi-annual or as needed) that support the Core Planning Team in assessing your initiative's progress and in setting (or re-setting) goals and targets. The Data Analysis Team seeks advice, feedback, and guidance from the Core Planning Team regarding the nature of the data needed (e.g. what food items should be included in reports), and what the numbers should realistically look like. As an added benefit, the Data Analysis Team strengthens the transparency of your initiative by providing you with hard data to back up your published statements about how, where, and how much you source local, healthy, sustainable food.

Working with student teams and committees

Student interns, teams and committees can be an effective component of your initiative's organizational structure.

UMass Dining has been very successful in using student interns in a variety of capacities, especially in connection with the Real Food Challenge calculations. The students have dedicated a few hours each week during the semester to input data and update the Real Food audit. Admittedly, our model is ever evolving, and is likely to change in the future.



Cultivating Networks and Partnerships

Don't go it alone! There is no need to reinvent the wheel in order to source and serve local and healthy food. Many resources for guidance and practical advice are available just for the asking. With a little research, you can find numerous nonprofits and academic centers dedicated to simplifying the complexities of supporting local food systems. Among them in New England are: Farm to Institution New England (FINE), Health Care Without Harm, Farm to School, Farm to Institution New York State (FINYS), Food Solutions New England (FSNE), and Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA). All have in some way advised or inspired the UMass Dining planning team. By establishing partnerships and networks in your region, you are also activating a larger buying network, therefore increasing the buying power of your institution. Through your connections with other organizations and foundations, you will amplify your collective buying power for resource sharing and marketing, while at the same time, increasing the impact you have on the regional food system. Also, by activating these networks and partnerships, you're opening up channels of communication that are essentially aggregating best practices, regional goals and objectives, and selection criteria in support of more localized and sustainable large-scale food purchasing. These networks can provide a wider reach for educational materials than your institution would find in going it alone.

CONCLUSION A successful local, healthy food system initiative is built on the following components:

- **A clear context:** a *vision* of future success, *values* that support the vision, and *definitions* of "local, healthy and sustainable" that everyone understands
- **Organizational structure** that assures action and accountability (Planning Team, Data Analysis Team, staff, and student interns); and
- **Relationships with stakeholders and partners** that are productive and resourceful.

In the next chapter, we present an evidence-based method to make sure you and those around you are clear about the results your initiative is intended to produce.

02 KNOW WHERE YOU'RE HEADED

How to set quantifiable goals, objectives and measures of success



OVERVIEW

Measurable goals and quantifiable objectives are the targets you set for producing results; to show that your initiative is shifting food purchasing dollars previously budgeted for conventional food, to the purchase of local, healthy, sustainable food. Goals and objectives are also milestones of performance that enable you to track your progress along the way, and to make program and budgetary adjustments mid-stream. They make you responsible and accountable, not only to your own program and institution, but also to your customers, stakeholders and the sustainable food movement.

KEY CONCEPTS **Measurable goals and objectives** make your vision credible and your initiative accountable by giving you specific targets and milestones that help you evaluate your progress periodically and over time.

The benchmark measure sets the standard unit of outcome whose value at a given point in time will indicate results and performance being achieved. In our case, this is *the amount your foodservice operation spends on the purchase of local, healthy, sustainable food*, expressed in two ways: (1) as an absolute dollar amount, and (2) as a relative percentage of total food expenditures.

The planning horizon sets the time frame for planning. A multi-year period gives you the time to work through initial start-up issues and build a good track record.

The final goal target sets a specific projected (intended) value for the benchmark measure at the completion of the planning period.

The baseline value is the starting value of the benchmark measure against which all future results will be measured over time.

Interim goal targets (annual or semi-annual) give you milestones to measure your progress over the course of the planning period.

The Budget provides a plan for re-purposing financial resources to local, healthy, sustainable food that were previously spent on conventional food.

It is best to track your results in monthly or quarterly time periods; this enables you to make adjustments, and to prepare reports others require for reporting your progress.



For the remainder of this Guide, we use the following two important terms:

LHS refers to *Local, Healthy, Sustainable food*

TFE is *Total Food Expenditures*

Planning Horizon:

The time frame for achieving your goals and objectives

Your planning horizon establishes the number of years by which you want your vision to be realized. It not only sets the outer date for reaching the final goal target of your initiative, but also allows you to project interim goal targets and outcomes that you will establish when you proceed with planning for your program and budget (see below for more on targeting). There is no “right” planning horizon (number of years), but you do need to project a long enough time frame for the initiative to get started, to take hold as it evolves, and to mature into a “stable” program.

At UMass Amherst, the 6-year planning horizon of our initiative was set to coincide with the goal of the Real Food Challenge to source 20% Real Food by 2020. Here the term “Real Food” equates to what we are calling “local healthy sustainable food” (LHS). The Real Food Challenge, an established third-party program that is widely accepted in the college and university world, works on a tracking system to assess what percentage of TFE is being spent on LHS. This approach makes good sense to us because the idea of 20% by 2020 is a specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused, and time-bound (SMART) goal. Coincidentally, the year 2020 also matches the planning horizon established for the strategic planning activities of Auxiliary Enterprises, our parent division at UMass.



Accounting period: Calendar vs. Fiscal Year

The choice of whether to operate in a fiscal or calendar year accounting cycle will likely be pre-determined by your institution's internal accounting policies. If you follow your institution's fiscal year cycle, be watchful in reporting your data to others who expect calendar year accounting. Many funders, regulatory agencies, and trade groups set their deadlines for the end of the calendar year, which will not coincide with your fiscal year-end accounting. In order to report accurately for both accounting periods, you will want to track your data in monthly or quarterly units of time. This may sound complicated, but it's really just a matter of being mindful of which accounting cycle is meant when someone says, "by next year" or "by the end of 2020."

The UMass fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30, and our Dining Program anticipates large expenditures on local, healthy food during September to November, the most productive time of the year for farms in New England. If we are looking to meet a calendar year goal set by an industry organization, then we are mindful that our greatest purchasing activity to meet the target will occur in the latter part of the calendar year, which is toward the beginning of our next fiscal year.

Benchmarking: What to measure

Benchmarks are the quantitative measures of activity; points of reference you will use to evaluate your progress over time. *Benchmarking* is a process of comparing current results against targets that you create (see below for more on setting targets). The preferred benchmark measure for a local healthy sustainable food system initiative is *expenditures on LHS*. Spending patterns are favored over other measures (such as "quantity of food") because "spending" can be easily tracked by your accounting and procurement systems and "expenditure" is a conventional benchmark measure in the foodservice industry. Moreover, spending is a measure that vendors like because their own systems can more easily track dollar sales than product quantities. The benchmark measure for LHS should be stated in two ways: (1) as an *absolute value* (dollar expenditures on LHS), and (2) as a *comparative value* (percentage of TFE spent on LHS). The absolute value helps quantify the goals for budgeting purposes, while the comparative value is a clearer way of showing progress toward a goal that itself is relative (i.e. "20% of TFE on LHS by 2020").

UMass Dining benchmarks its local, healthy initiative on expenditures of local healthy food, both as an absolute dollar amount, as well as a percentage of total expenditures for all food.

NOTE: For the balance of this chapter, we will use expenditures on local, healthy, sustainable food as the assumed benchmark measure. Please be advised that the principles and procedures that follow will apply to any benchmark measure that you may choose to use.

Baseline: Values at the starting point

The first measure you make of the benchmark is called the *baseline value* – a known quantifiable number that is the starting point for the quantifiable goal targets that you will be setting (see next section on targets). The baseline value also sets the initial measurement against which you will measure/evaluate your progress periodically over the time frame of the planning horizon. You can establish the baseline value simply by auditing expenditures on local, healthy food for the year immediately *prior* to the start of your initiative (called the *baseline year*). Calculate the baseline value both as an *absolute value* (actual dollars spent on LHS), as well as a *comparative value* (dollars spent on LHS, as a percentage of TFE for all types of food in the same period).

To set the baseline value for our initiative beginning FY15, **UMass Dining** audited our spending on food purchased in FY14. For that year, we found that TFE = \$23.8 million, of which \$2.67 million (11.2% of total food expenditures) was spent on LHS.

Goal Targets: Setting quantifiable objectives

A goal target is a quantifiable value of the benchmark measure that you anticipate achieving at a certain point in future time; in this case, how much you project spending on LHS. You will establish two types of goal targets: (1) the *final goal target* is the amount of expenditures on LHS that you anticipate making by the end of the planning horizon; and (2) *interim goal targets* are values of such purchases that you anticipate achieving across each time period – usually annually -- within the planning horizon.

You can set your *final goal target* by using an industry standard (as UMass Dining has done with the Real Food Challenge), or by starting from the baseline year and increasing the value by some increment for each year to the end of the planning horizon. Whichever method you use, we encourage you to set a final goal target that will make a serious difference to the local food system and demonstrate a new and unequivocal level of commitment to quality of life, and health and wellness.

Interim goal targets are calculated across the planning horizon by starting with the baseline value and incrementing that value for each time period of the planning horizon (usually annually) such that by the last increment (at the end of the planning horizon) you have achieved your final goal target.



While several methods are available to calculate the size and magnitude of the interim goal target increases, we suggest a simple approach – called the straight line method -- that shows equal increases across each interim time period until the final goal target is reached at the end of the planning horizon. It should be noted that the straight-line method of projecting interim goal targets does not account for variability caused by situations and circumstances that might affect (up or down) interim results during certain periods of the planning horizon. If you feel that more accurate interim goal targets would be better suited to your initiative, we advise you to check with your finance/business office to determine if your institution uses sophisticated financial models to set interim goal targets of this kind.

As mentioned previously, **UMass Dining** uses the widely accepted third-party standard of the Real Food Challenge to set our final goal target to spend 20% of TFE on LHS by 2020. In our baseline year (FY 2014), 11.2% of actual TFE fell into the category of LHS. To reach the projected 20% final target goal by 2020, we projected the 6 annual interim goal targets by subtracting the baseline starting point (11.2%) from the final goal target (20%) , and dividing by the number of years in the planning horizon (6) (See Table 1).

TABLE 1
UMass Dining Projected Goals to Meet Real Food Challenge
 (LHS= 20% of TFE by 2020)

	FY14 BASELINE ACTUAL	FY15 INTERIM GOAL	FY16 INTERIM GOAL	FY17 INTERIM GOAL	FY18 INTERIM GOAL	FY19 INTERIM GOAL	FY20 FINAL GOAL
% of TFE projected for LHS*	11.2%	12.7%	14.1%	15.6%	17.1%	18.5%	20%

* Percentage of total food expenditures spent on local, healthy, sustainable food.

Strategic Budgeting: Re-purposing food purchasing dollars

A local healthy food system initiative is not intended to increase the total quantity of food you purchase, but rather, to substitute local healthy sustainable food for a portion of the conventional food you are currently buying -- essentially changing the ratio of dollars spent between the two types of food. Budgeting is a way to quantify projected re-purposing of food purchasing dollars away from conventional food and toward local, healthy food. This is a strategic approach because the decision to change the financial ratio between the two types of food will affect policies and procedures in such areas as procurement, vendor relations, menu planning and design, food preparation, etc. Budgeting is thus a management tool, not only for effective financial decision-making within your foodservice operation regarding food purchasing, but also for changing organizational culture by elevating the priority of sourcing, preparing, and serving local, healthy sustainable food.

If you have followed the previous sections of this chapter, you will have calculated the projected increases in expenditures on LHS that you need in order to meet your final and interim goal targets for the initiative. For budgeting purposes, you now need to calculate the amount of your TFE budget that needs to be re-purposed to LHS during the planning period. This value will be the dollar amount you will spend on local, healthy, sustainable food rather than on conventional food.



To calculate how much of your total food purchasing budget you will re-purpose to local healthy sustainable food:

- 1 Calculate projected TFE of your dining program over the planning horizon period. Your business office or financial manager will use historical trend data and other known factors to give you a good sense of this figure.

At **UMass Dining**, based on historical data, we can reasonably project a 4% increase in total food expenditures each year during our 6-year planning horizon – starting from our baseline year of FY14. The 4% yearly projected growth in spending is comprised of inflationary increases in food costs, as well as in the growth of our dining program itself (anticipated increases in the number of meal plan subscribers). Given this 4% straight-line projection, we project that TFE will rise in 6 equal annual increments from actual \$23.8M in the base year (FY2014) to \$30.1M by our final year of the planning period (FY2020). (See Line A in Table 2)

- 2 Calculate the projected value of final and interim goal targets for LHS. Use the interim and final targets you developed in the previous section of this chapter.

As mentioned previously, because **UMass Dining** uses the Real Food Challenge as the standard to set our goals, our interim and final targets are expressed as the percentage of TFE we spend on LHS. To convert the percentage to a dollar amount, we multiply each percentage target by the TFE amount for each respective year. (See Lines B and C in Table 2).

- 3 Calculate the annual projected dollar value of conventional food purchases projected to be repurposed to LHS purchases. For each respective year in the planning period, calculate the difference of the projected LHS purchases for the current year over the projected LHS purchases in the previous year. (See Line D in Table 2).

- 4 Calculate the aggregate (compounded) projected dollar value of conventional food purchases projected to be repurposed to LHS purchases. For each respective year in the planning period, sum up the repurposed food expenditures from all previous years to date in the planning period (See Line E in Table 2).

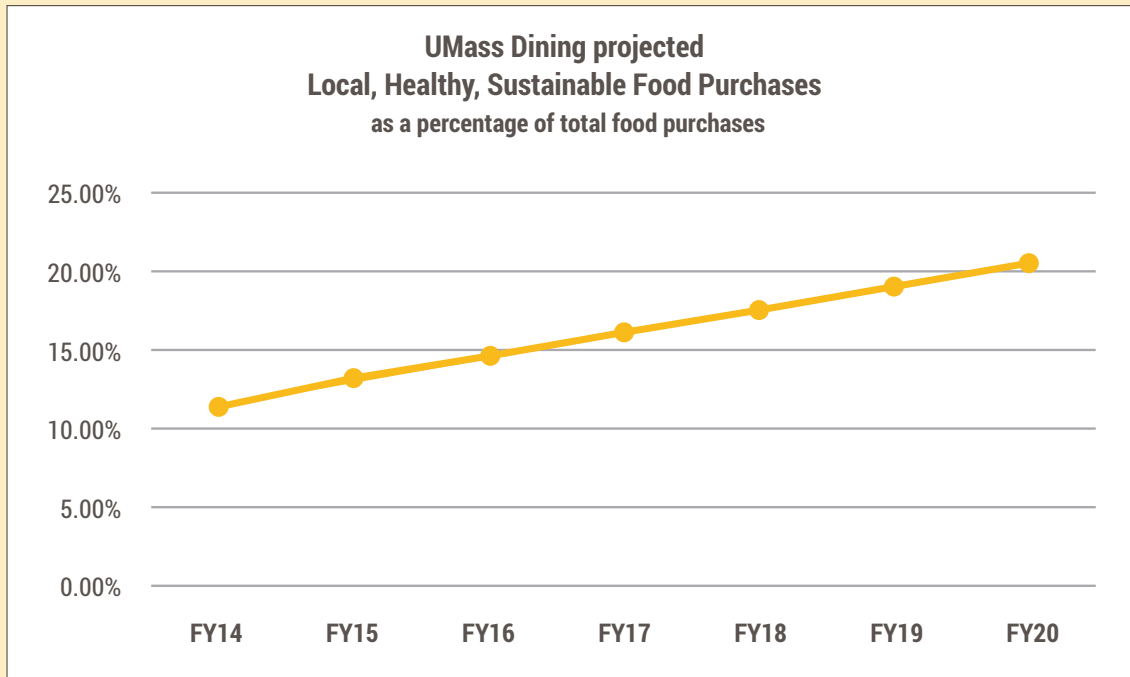
Table 2 shows how this 4-step approach worked out for the Local Healthy UMass Food System Initiative

TABLE 2
Target Projections for the Local Healthy UMass Food System Initiative

		FY14 BASELINE ACTUAL	FY15 PROJECTED INTERIM	FY16 PROJECTED INTERIM	FY17 PROJECTED INTERIM	FY18 PROJECTED INTERIM	FY19 PROJECTED INTERIM	FY20 PROJECTED FINAL
A	TFE ¹	\$23.8M	\$24.8M	\$25.7M	\$26.8M	\$27.8M	\$29.0M	\$30.1M
B	% basis LHS Target ²	11.2%	12.7%	14.1%	15.6%	17.1%	18.5%	20%
C	Dollar value LHS Target ³	\$2.67M	\$3.14M	\$3.64M	\$4.18M	\$4.75M	\$5.37M	\$6.02M
D	Dollars being re-purposed over previous year ⁴	NA	\$470.000	\$503.000	\$538.000	\$575.000	\$615.000	\$656.000
E	Aggregate \$ being re-purposed to date during planning period ⁵	NA	\$470.000	\$973.000	\$1.511M	\$2.086M	\$2.701M	\$3.357M

1. Total Food Expenditures. Annual increase projected at 4% straight-line increments for each year.
2. Interim and final goal targets for local healthy sustainable food purchases based on Real Food Challenge: LHS = 20% OF TFE by 2020.
3. C= (A x B)
4. D= C - (C-1)
5. E= D + (E-1)

The following diagram shows the projected rate of growth of LHS as a percentage of TFE.



CONCLUSION

The step-by-step method outlined in this chapter does more than just help you set measurable objectives. When you go through this process, you will experience a shift in your thinking about the re-purposing of food from conventional to local, healthy, and sustainable. This shift first manifests when you start changing your sourcing and procurement habits and procedures, which is the subject of the next chapter.

03 SOURCE AND PROCURE SUSTAINABLY

How to work successfully with the local food supply chain



OVERVIEW

Your local healthy food system initiative will change your food sourcing and procurement habits and procedures, putting you (perhaps for the first time) in direct contact and a close working relationship with the system where local food comes from. Procurement of locally-sourced food is a personal process. Do not expect faceless, remote business-as-usual transactions, but rather, hands-on connections to food where it originates, and face-to-face back-and-forth interactions with local farmers and suppliers. We encourage you to adjust your procurement style to match the style of your local food suppliers. When you and your local suppliers relate as partners with a common mission, a win for the farmer is a win for your institution.

KEY CONCEPTS

The learning curve to kick off your local healthy food system initiative starts with: (a) understanding the *complexity and culture of your local food system*; (b) taking advantage of the many *resources* that can help get you up to speed; (c) *familiarizing yourself with fresh and value-added food products* in your region – when they are available during the year and at what cost; and (d) *getting to know the local food suppliers* with whom you will be working.

Sourcing entails identifying the local, healthy, sustainable food products you need and can afford, and where the suppliers of these products can be found. It is important to get to know what food products are available locally, and who can supply them to you. *Establish selection criteria for sourcing local, healthy, sustainable food*. Make sure local vendors and suppliers have appropriate *certifications, payment policies and preferences* you can accommodate, *business acumen* you can rely on, and *delivery capacity* to get the items you ordered to your receiving dock.

Procurement of local, healthy, sustainable foods – product ordering, payments, delivery, and purchase tracking – follows the same general process as for conventional food, but with a more relaxed and less structured style. Make sure your information system can track and report local food purchases with weekly updates.

Because the local food system operates on a more personal basis, it is important to **maintain open channels of communication** with all parties in the supply chain. You and your suppliers should be able to communicate inconsistencies and problems as soon as they arise. View any concerns or criticism as an opportunity to fine-tune your sourcing practices and supply chain relationships.



The Sourcing/Procurement Learning Curve

If you are new to the sourcing and procurement of local, healthy food, you should first take the time to research and gain a general understanding of your local and regional food system landscape. Here are some tips and hints to follow:

Resources to help | You can find quite a few resources to head you in the right direction. Contact your state agricultural department or one of the many local and regional nonprofit organizations who will be ready to help connect you to farmers and other food producers.

The six-state New England region is rich with helpful resources for enhancing the local food system.

Buylocalfood.org, the website of *Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture* (CISA; located in South Deerfield, Massachusetts) lists hundreds of local farmers' contact and product information.

The *Northeast Organic Farming Association* (NOFA) and the *Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association* (MOGFA) are two great resources for ideas and connections.

Food products and their availability | Take the time to learn about varieties of locally farmed *raw, fresh produce* items and their growing and harvesting seasons. Raw, fresh produce is in greatest abundance during peak seasons when it is available at a particularly good price. With respect to local animal protein, ask farmers about breeding cycles, birthing patterns, how long it takes to bring livestock to market, and what quantities (and at what price) the farmer can realistically supply you with product. Remember to include menu engineering in your thinking about *seasonality of local food*. Your menus will feature certain local food items at peak growing season and other kinds as the off-season approaches.

At **UMass Dining**, we engineer our menus to feature local tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, and spinach during the summer growing season. As the colder months approach, we focus on produce that can be stored well: carrots, parsnips, turnips, beets, rutabagas, squashes, apples, pears, potatoes and cabbage.

Don't forget to identify specialty *value-added products* available in your region: locally processed raw items that are altered in some way to create a new product with greater value than the original. Local apples are pressed to make cider; cucumbers are preserved in brine or vinegar to make pickles; and sap from maple trees is boiled down into maple syrup. Bruised berries that would otherwise hold little value are made into delicious jams. Value-added products such as yogurt, cheese, and flavored milks, granolas, and flour, all can be sourced locally, and in relatively large quantities.

The growing season affects certain categories of value-added produce. For example, berries that are abundant in summer can be Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) for year-round consumption. Frozen berries may not have the same curb appeal as fresh berries, but can be readily used in menu items such as smoothies, baked goods, or as a healthy dessert topping.

At UMass Dining, we order berries that undergo Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) processing at the Franklin County Community Development Corporation's Western Massachusetts Food Processing Center, and at Farm to Table Co-Packers in Kingston, New York. This process seals in freshness and high nutrient density. We place the order through our local supplier, Joe Czajkowski (three tons each of blueberries and strawberries in the summer of 2015) and they are delivered to our on-campus warehouse for storage.



Suppliers of local, healthy food | In general, farmers tend to be smart and resilient folks who seek out opportunities for their business. When an opportunity arises, they will take it. Universities, K-12 school systems, hospitals, and other high-volume dining facilities are key opportunities. As such, your inquiry about where to get your local food will likely stimulate a lot of excitement and interest, but could also raise some eyebrows of concern that your institutional presence will overwhelm a marketplace that historically has been small in scale and informal in style (think farmers' markets, farm stands, and CSAs). You will need to acknowledge the significant impact your institution will have on the existing local food system, and recognize that you are now an important and influential part of its future growth and development.

There are several types of suppliers you will find to provide your local, healthy food: (a) *independent farmers and value-added producers* with whom you will work directly; (b) *food aggregators* who bring together multiple providers into one mechanism for sales, marketing, processing, distribution, etc. (e.g. a regional food hub); and (c) *conventional food distributors* who offer a product line that includes locally sourced food. Occasionally, you will find a hybrid of these three models; for example, a farmer who has grown a regional business by creating alliances with other small farmers – an aggregator of sorts. Once you start making inquiries and your local, healthy food system initiative receives some publicity, the word should get out to suppliers that you are in the market and the connections should get made.

UMass Dining sources and procures local, healthy, food from all three types of local healthy food suppliers. While we buy from a number of independent orchards, produce farms, and livestock breeders, our largest source of local seasonal food is a single farmer-broker-aggregator, the previously-mentioned Joe Czajkowski of Hadley, Massachusetts. It is worth noting that having Joe Czajkowski aggregate the majority of the produce we source from local suppliers currently works very well for UMass Dining, but it may not be the best model for everyone. We suggest that you consider back-up strategies in the event your aggregator can no longer supply your needs. We have also been pleased to find that our conventional produce purveyor, FreshPoint in Connecticut (a Sysco-owned produce distribution chain) has a very robust local/regional sourcing program. FreshPoint works with local farmers (including Joe Czajkowski) to help them obtain their Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) certification, and even assists them in marketing their products.

Sourcing

Sourcing is the process of finding out where something can be obtained. For your local healthy food system initiative, sourcing entails, (1) locating the products you know you need; and (2) finding the supplier to provision your foodservice operation with those products. Before embarking on the sourcing journey, you should already be clear about what you mean by local, healthy, sustainable (see Chapter 1); your target goals and budget for how much you can spend (see Chapter 2); and the general landscape of the local food system (see beginning of this Chapter 3).

Product | Your product sourcing activity should entail planning meetings with your culinary team about menu re-engineering and food handling considerations that might affect your product selection. Remember, you are not targeting your entire food budget to be local and healthy, so don't expect to transition every item on your menu to something local. Start small and increase over time.

Identify items that you can easily source locally or regionally. For example, in the Northeast, root vegetables such as potatoes, onions, and carrots are plentiful in the winter months. Also, consider which menu changes toward local food would have the most beneficial impact on your foodservice operation as well as on the regional food economy. Your budget for purchases from local farmers will go further with some products than with others. If you can source local apples for half the year or local potatoes for the full year, which will you choose? The answer lies in identifying your priorities from a financial as well as culinary perspective.

From experience, we know that carrots, parsnips, turnips, beets, rutabagas, squashes, apples, pears, potatoes, and cabbage are abundant in our region, can be easily sourced, and store particularly well. Moreover, these items taste great and are reasonably priced. Designing our menus around the greater availability of these items makes for healthier food for our customers, makes good financial sense for us, and supports our local farmers through a longer season.

When selecting food products, it is a good practice to develop selection criteria to help guide your decision-making process in order to quickly and effectively find the food items that best fit the definitions you have established. It is important to note that these selection criteria are guidelines, not hard requirements. Don't be rigid with your criteria; if an item does not satisfy all the criteria, a product and its supplier should not necessarily be disqualified from consideration. Take each product on its own merit.

The following table shows selection criteria that UMass Dining uses:

Criteria	Definition for UMass Dining
Sourced Regionally	The item is grown and processed within the New England states or within 250 miles of campus.
Affordability	The cost of this item, balanced against the value of making local, healthy sustainable food accessible to our customers.
Replicable	Menus and recipes using this product can be replicated by a range of institutions beyond UMass Amherst.
Anticipated Usage Level	The item is one of UMass Dining's top-usage foods; therefore, its purchase will have a greater impact on the re-purposing of conventional food expenditures.
Ease of Implementation	The additional skills or labor required to utilize the item are considered to be manageable for the dining services staff.
Supply Chain Logistics	Methods of procurement, delivery, and storage of the item align with current UMass Dining systems policies and procedures.
Visibility	The item can be prominently featured in the menu cycle, thereby increasing awareness of the Local Healthy UMass Food System Initiative and the importance of supporting local, sustainable food systems.
Customer Interest	The item addresses current high-interest topics in food sustainability (as determined by surveys, current events, and trending topics).

Vendors and suppliers | If you are accustomed to purchasing food products only through conventional commercial food distributors, you might find working with local farmers and food businesses to be a more involved process, requiring greater personal engagement and some flexibility on your part. To identify the most appropriate vendors and suppliers, keep in mind the following criteria to help guide your decision-making process.

Certification is a primary criterion when considering whether to source from a local farm. Don't hesitate to ask if the farm is GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) Certified or if their local protein is processed in a USDA certified plant. Some local farmers feel that their close knowledge of suppliers is an appropriate and sufficient standard to qualify their crops or goods. It is important for you to assess which items will require strict certification, such as for health and safety concerns (which are of paramount importance to foodservice operators); and which products you can verify on your own by visiting the suppliers and confirming first hand that they are meeting commonly accepted standards and best practices.

Another criterion that might affect vendor selection is payment policies and preferences. What form(s) of payment to farmers will/can your institution make, and under what terms following order placement and/or delivery? How does your institution pay its vendors? Some local farmers may require cash on delivery and may feel uneasy about issuing credit terms at first. In this case, it may take a while longer to set up payment terms. Issues of this kind benefit from a diverse planning team working toward a solution that will satisfy both parties. Be patient and understanding. Remember, cash flow is very important to small farms. In transitioning from conventional food systems to local food systems, such seemingly small details as payment preferences can interrupt sourcing and delay partnerships.

Two other criteria in vendor selection are business acumen and delivery capacity.

Farmer Joe Czajkowski may be a rarity in that he is both a farmer and businessman who has created a network of farms that can handle large scale institutional demand. He has established a distribution system that extends from western Massachusetts east 100 miles or so to Boston. He has no problem picking up products for us from other farms along his regular route. This distribution system implemented by Joe was a long-term strategy. He realized that with UMass Amherst as his "anchor customer," he could slowly, methodically, and sustainably grow his business, which, in turn, enabled him to hire more people, put more delivery vehicles on the road, plant more acreage, and support other local farmers through a longer season.

Procurement

Once you familiarize yourself with what is available in your area, and have identified vendors/suppliers and confirmed their qualifications, you must determine how to procure the product – get it from the local farm or food production facility to your receiving dock. The smooth flow of goods from the producer to the end user is one of the most important aspects of any successful local food system initiative. If local items aren't ordered appropriately and then shipped to your facility conveniently and in a timely manner, your program might struggle with supply, time efficiency, freshness, and even cost. It's best to start with producers who already work with your ordering system and can easily deliver the items you need, either on their own or via a distribution system already in place.



Ordering | A Purchase Order (PO) is the basic sales contract between your institution and a vendor. The PO spells out in detail what you will pay in consideration for a specified quantity of product (or services rendered) at a given price over a given time period. A PO that is in effect for the entire fiscal year (July 1 to June 30) will provide stable and consistent orders and cash flow to the business of a local farm or supplier.

As you place orders for local food items, be mindful of your institution's ordering policies and procedures, especially with regard to purchasing thresholds that force contract bids. You may also find yourself re-negotiating exclusivity clauses with your large-scale prime vendors to allow you to purchase small quantities directly from local suppliers.

Over and above the specific binding financial commitments outlined in a purchase order, it is beneficial to be open about the anticipated volume of business you hope to give a local food supplier over the course of the year. Unlike conventional commercial food operations where your order is a drop in the bucket of all product available, the local farmer or value-added processor will be using your business volume to shape very specific crop plans for the coming season. You might even be able to negotiate a specific amount of a given crop based on your anticipated needs (i.e. more potatoes for French fries, or berries during the summer).

Payments/Terms | As previously mentioned, the nature and form of payment made to local suppliers may need to be negotiated flexibly as the local supplier may not have the capacity or experience to accommodate your institution's policies and procedures for invoicing, credit terms, forms of payment, etc.



Deliveries | Once you have a local supplier and know what you will be sourcing, you'll need to determine how often deliveries will be made and at what time during the day. Make sure this is clearly communicated to the supplier. For any relationship to be successful, both parties must know the expectations as well as the consequences of not fulfilling those expectations. The following guidelines will help:

- Inform the local supplier of your institution's yearly goals for quantities.
- Establish what products and what quantities the institution generally will be expecting on a daily/weekly basis.
- Determine a delivery schedule, including when orders will be placed and when they will be received.
- Agree on how late additions or cancellations will be handled.
- Make sure the local supplier knows when, where and how the delivery will be made.
- Decide how to address the institution's expectations when they are not met.
- Establish the procedure to follow if there is an issue with deliveries and whom the supplier should contact. (This includes broken-down vehicle, products of low quality, and not enough product to meet demand.)
- Agree on the procedure for billing, in accordance with you institution's requirements for payment processing.
- Confirm when the local supplier can expect to receive payment.

Once you have a routine delivery schedule arranged, and you are receiving local products, how do you expand the volume of product you can expect from local sources? Share your goal targets (see Chapter 2) with your suppliers. Ask if they might be able to increase production. You may even have an opportunity to set a preseason contract with a farm, whereby the local farmer plants a certain acreage solely for your institution's use.

Tracking purchases | It is important to routinely track local purchases in light of your overall goal. By updating information at least once a week, you'll be better able to make changes that align with your goals. Finding out how much you procured at the end of the academic year won't allow you to make interim changes.

Keeping Communication Open

Open communication is the key to any successful relationship; especially with local food suppliers. Articulate clear and explicit expectations and deliverables. Outline when deliveries need to occur, when and how invoicing happens, and when bills will be paid. Leave nothing to chance and never assume anything. When something doesn't go as planned, quickly identify what went awry and what issues need attention, then come up with a plan of action for resolving the situation. Communicate your corrective plan to your local partners, and convey why it is important to you.

One day, farmer Joe had arrived at our loading docks later in the day than we would have preferred. When we contacted Joe, we found that he was holding trucks back from his delivery to UMass because he had to wait for a few items from another farmer who drops off his UMass products to Joe later in the day. We communicated to Joe that we run a "just-in-time" food operation, and for cost efficiency and quality purposes, we don't keep back-up products in our coolers to cover shipments that don't arrive on time. If we are not alerted to a late delivery, our units assume that something went wrong and they immediately order from other suppliers. We told Joe it was OK to send partial orders as long as he let the affected locations know about it ahead of time. Ever since our open communication over that incident with Joe, he has delivered the bulk of our orders earlier in the day and the remaining items in the afternoon. Everyone is satisfied!

Maintaining a successful local partnership is a two-way street. As the farmer's customer, you should immediately communicate inconsistencies when they arise. Your local farmer should do likewise with you. If you both keep your communications open and forthcoming, any problems that might arise for either of you because of what the other has done should be quickly handled for the benefit of both. View any concerns or criticism as an opportunity to fine-tune your sourcing practices and supply chain relationships. Communication is key—keep it open, clear, and frequent.

CONCLUSION

If sourcing 100% local produce and value-added goods was easy, everyone would be doing it. Stay focused and keep your eye on the prize. We encourage you to adjust your procurement style to match the style of the local food suppliers. Remember that most local food systems in the USA are in the earliest stages of development. They are not yet seasoned mature economic structures. It may take some time for local food producers and suppliers to handle the demand your institution requires. Moreover, your structured procurement policies and procedures may challenge a farmer's more relaxed business practices.

Each interaction with your local vendors is an opportunity to connect and strengthen your supply chain relationships; but making those connections may not be easy. Keep in mind that, in most cases, local vendors are better at farming than pushing paper and filling out forms. They may not always answer their phone because they are in the barn or field. The most important thing to remember is that the institution and the vendor are on the same team, and a win for the local vendor is a win for the institution.



04 CREATE THE DINING EXPERIENCE

How to plan, prepare and serve local, healthy, sustainable, delicious food



OVERVIEW

Once the local, healthy food you have sourced and procured is in hand, it is ready to be transformed from raw material to a healthy delicious meal, served in a facility that supports a local, healthy, sustainable food experience. Creating the dining experience encompasses an array of activities -- receiving, storing, menu planning, prepping, serving, and training -- everything that it takes to get the food from the your doorstep to the plate.

KEY CONCEPTS

The local, healthy, sustainable dining experience begins on the **receiving dock**. Make sure you received the local, healthy, sustainable food you actually ordered, that it arrived on time, is of the quality you expected, and meets your food safety criteria. If not, work with your suppliers to correct the situation immediately.

When **menu planning**, take into account the special qualities and impacts that local, healthy, sustainable food will have on recipe development, staff training, and product utilization. Test new recipes with tasting events for in-house dining staff.

Stay flexible in your menu development process to take advantage of unexpected opportunities that may arise due to an unforeseen abundance of seasonal offerings.

Diversify your menu with offerings from world cuisines that promote good health, sustainability, and cost effectiveness.

Pre-processed / value-added. Take advantage of suppliers in your region who offer pre-peeled or pre-sliced fresh produce, frozen fruits and vegetables, or value-added products such as yogurt, honey, preserves, etc. that use local ingredients.

Healthy servings. To encourage healthy eating, pre-portion menu items in your all-you-care-to-eat locations. Pre-plate desserts.

Train your culinary team in the special techniques associated with local, healthy sustainable menus and recipes. They will appreciate the attention you give to improving their craft, and you will encourage a local, healthy, sustainable mindset in the kitchens.

Bust the “local-healthy-costs-more” myth. With shrewd purchasing, innovative utilization techniques, state-of-the art food processing technology, and creative menuing, local and sustainable food items can cost approximately the same or even less than their conventional counterparts.

Smart waste management goes hand in hand with a local, healthy initiative. Increase your throughput by shortening waiting lines at stations in your all-you-care-to-eat locations; track waste closely to reveal opportunities for improvement; introduce trayless dining (at UMass Dining, this helped us reduce food waste by about 30%); and re-purpose “ugly” food. Composting and food recovery are two post-production practices that increase food utilization.

Enhance revenue with grants and contributions. Food sustainability has become a focus of funding by government agencies, philanthropic foundations, and local food system advocacy groups. Such support offsets research, planning and implementation costs of your initiative.

Design your dining facilities to enhance the impact of your local healthy food system initiative.

Receiving

The first thing to do when local food arrives at your doorstep is to check for reliability. Quality control is critically important with local vendors, and it is put to the test every day at the receiving dock. As the local products you have ordered come through the door, you should perform quality checks to confirm that the product is, in fact, what you ordered and that it meets your quality standards. Train your receivers what to look for, including timeliness of delivery to ensure you have product when it is needed. Work closely with the local farm or supplier to make sure they are clear as to your receiving requirements.

At UMass Dining, we asked our local produce aggregator, Joe Czajkowski, to deliver five days a week, rather than three. By increasing the frequency of deliveries, his products are just as accessible as those from FreshPoint, our prime produce distributor. It also allows the farmer flexibility in delivery timing and reduces the pressure to consistently make early-morning deliveries, which can be challenging for small-scale producers and farmers.



Menu Planning

The purpose of this section is to explain the steps to fulfill a menu that follows the UMass Dining mantra:

Healthy, Sustainable, Delicious!

Healthy

A menu that is both great tasting and nutritious appeals to college students, who have become increasingly more health conscious.

Sustainable

Students appreciate food that is responsibly sourced, especially from local producers whenever possible.

Delicious

Flavorful offerings make happy customers!

Thoughtful menu planning and recipe development can result in healthy, sustainable food that is delicious. Such a menu showcases local food products favorably. To do so, you need to be flexible enough to add/drop items depending on product availability, and nimble enough to make adjustments to your menu on short notice. Moreover, you can debunk the myth that healthy, sustainable foods are expensive with cost effective and financially sustainable menu planning (see page 54). Today's students are mindful eaters who will use their food dollars to vote in support of local growers as well as organic, sustainable, and humanely-raised products.



Here are three important menu-planning issues to consider.

Recipes | It is important that recipes for your initiative manifest a consistent local, healthy, sustainable, culinary point of view. They should be accurate, cost effective, and standardized, yet adaptable to take advantage of whatever seasonal ingredients are available.

The following components of recipe planning will verify quality control, assure that menu items will consistently look and taste great, and increase acceptance of the initiative by your culinary team and customers.

Research and Development

Menu research is a year-round process, not done just during down times. Creative menu ideas can come from a variety of sources: culinary conferences, guest or consulting chefs, conversations with other foodservice operators, farmers and local suppliers, industry publications, advocates for sustainability, etc. You will also learn a lot by closely observing the food consumption patterns and habits of your customers in the dining halls. The more you delve into the local, healthy menu development process, the more you will come up with new recipe ideas that build on your own direct experience.

UMass Dining uses its guest chef series creatively to identify menu changes and new recipes from the nationally known chefs who visit our campus throughout the year.

Writing

Writing a recipe sets down the initial parameters for your dish and is the first tangible expression of your culinary creativity. Be advised that writing down an appealing recipe idea or concept does not mean the actual execution will work. Three hints when writing healthy, sustainable, delicious recipes that are cost effective: smaller portions, products in season, and less expensive products (e.g. cheaper animal cuts; vegetable “scraps”, underutilized seafood species, etc.)

Testing

Testing a recipe before you roll it onto the menu cycle will give you an idea of what the dish will look like, how it will taste, and if it will be a likely success on your menu. You can test a recipe for best results by creating a few different variations, or preparing it using a few different techniques.

At UMass Dining, our chefs periodically host a new-recipe tasting event for all dining and food services staff. After the tasting we have an open critique session where we get great feedback on whether or not the dish is likely to be successful and what improvements may be needed before “going public.” The staff really appreciates being involved in the meal planning process.



Roll Out

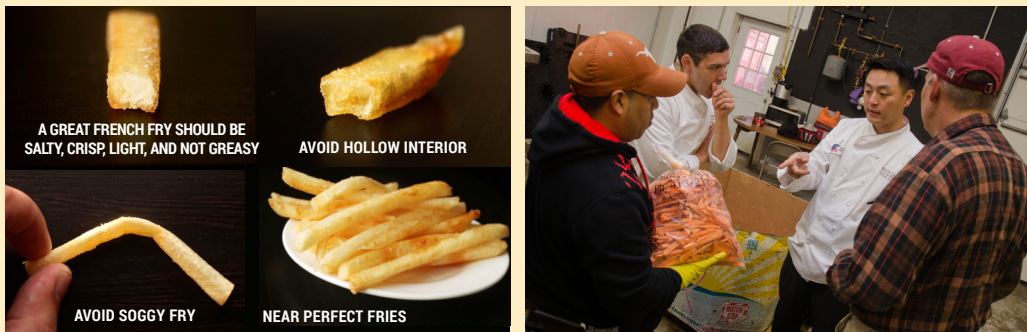
Once new recipes are revised and taste-tested again, they can be added to your menu on a trial basis to get further feedback directly from the students and staff.

At UMass Dining, recipes that test favorably are placed in our regular menu cycle. The length of the menu cycle itself is altered slightly for each season -- as short as 7 days -- to incorporate local ingredients as they are available. The shorter cycle menu allows us more flexibility while expanding variety on the food line.

Training

Proper training of staff on recipe implementation goes a long way toward creating a successful menu of local, healthy food. Training is also a key to a happy team of chefs and their cooks; as well as dining managers and their down-line supervisors and servers. Through training, you will give chefs and their culinary team(s) the opportunity to become familiar with new ingredients, different cuisines, or special techniques. This is a valuable investment of time, energy, and money that will inspire and empower them to create better recipes, improve techniques, increase product utilization, and lower costs. Educating cooks to respect the ingredients they work with and understand the importance of where their food comes from is just as worthwhile. Certain techniques (such as butchering to break down meat primals) may require more time to learn, but when mastered, reduce waste and optimize product utilization. Moreover, your culinary team's professional passion will be enhanced when team members know they are preparing and serving local, fresh, and healthy food.

The chefs at UMass Dining developed several culinary standard operating procedures (SOPs) especially for working with local food. For example, our chefs produced an in-house training guide for preparing local, fresh-cut french fries that we sourced from a local value-added supplier.



UMass Dining chefs work with local farmers to develop SOPs for local, healthy foods.

Reworking

Reworking a recipe uses all prior feedback and further research to hone in on final ingredient ratios, portioning, and specific preparation/presentation techniques.

Execution

When you are confident that you have carried out best practices and due diligence for recipe development, the dish is put on your regular menu cycle. Once a recipe has made it onto the menu cycle, you should be aware of what your customers are saying and not saying about it. Feedback from customer surveys is one way to tell if they are satisfied with your food. What diners leave on their plate and what food is left unserved are also great indicators of customer response. So keep your eyes on your recipes even after they are on the line, and you might find another adjustment, or even your next new recipe idea!



Seasonality | Maintain a flexible menu that can be altered to take full advantage of seasonal foods and to feature products in their peak season. When regional farmers have bumper crops (crops harvested in abundance), the prices for such produce drop. When you keep informed of current crops, you can work abundant items into the menu to increase your volume of local product at a favorable price. When possible, work with farmers and local food-processing hubs to freeze these foods to use throughout the winter and spring.

To refine our seasonal menu, **UMass Dining identifies three distinct segments** of the academic year in accordance with the New England growing season.

(1) From September through October or early November

we enjoy the nearly full availability of summer produce.

(2) From November through December

broccoli, cauliflower, kale, collard greens, Swiss chard, and Brussels sprouts are all available, but finish up before the real winter starts. We incorporate these items as much as possible, and begin utilizing the squashes, carrots, and potatoes as they come available.

(3) January through April

is our longest segment, when squash, carrots, potatoes, and parsnips rule the menu. If we're lucky enough to have asparagus, ramps, and fiddleheads available before the semester ends in May, they make a welcome addition and are utilized as much as possible over those final weeks of the school year.

Because some items can be available one week and not the next, a staff member can be appointed to be the liaison with local farmers and distributors. Weekly reports to managers via e-mail ensure that you will always be aware of the freshest produce available when ordering for the week.

In the fall of 2015, one of our farmers informed us that they had an especially abundant crop of cauliflower. At the time, our chefs were in the midst of planning menus for a forthcoming series of special events. We called upon a knowledgeable student intern -- a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America and a Sustainable Food and Farming major -- to develop three cauliflower recipes that we then integrated into the menu the following week.

World Cuisines | As the demographics of college students become increasingly diverse and international, you will want to adjust your menus to provide meals that reflect the growing international character of your customer base, and exemplify the importance of diversity and inclusion on campus (an important topic these days). Many dining facilities are already taking advantage of this trend by designating dining stations for world cuisines—from Latin to Mediterranean to Vietnamese, and more.

You can promote interest in world cuisines by hosting special events in your dining facilities to showcase the variety of flavorful and healthy dishes from around the world and the cultures they represent – a strategy that shows your dining program is responsive to the issue of cultural diversity and inclusion.

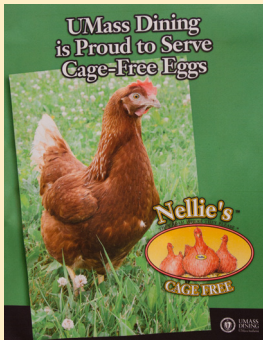


Cost Savings

It is a myth that a healthy, sustainable, delicious approach will necessarily cost more than a conventional menu. It is true that some local, sustainable foods are priced higher than conventionally and industrially prepared foods; not surprising, given the scale of production, fair wages and responsible practices that local farmers abide by. However, with some creative thinking and a spirit of innovation, your team can keep costs in check while improving the quality of the meals you serve.

It is within your means to offset higher purchasing costs through waste reduction, menu engineering, procurement efficiencies, productivity and more. These offsets include hard benefits: reduced expenses or increased revenue that can be measured in quantifiable values (e.g. meal plan revenue, food purchases, personnel expense, number of media articles etc.); and soft benefits: intangibles to which we ascribe a subjective positive value (such as brand enhancement, good will, prestige, reputation, etc.).

There are many ways to incorporate local, healthy, sustainable products cost effectively into your menu. If you pay attention to abundant product supply (seasonality), employ creative utilization techniques (e.g. in-house butchering), and take advantage of available processing technology (freezing), local and sustainable food items can cost approximately the same or even less than their conventional counterparts.



UMass Dining, switched to Pete & Gerry's Eggs and Nellie's Free-Range Eggs (both from New Hampshire) for local, medium-sized shell eggs. Regional demand for medium sized eggs was down; therefore, we were able to source organic and free-range eggs at a price comparable to conventional eggs.



Although **UMass Dining** purchased higher volumes of seafood in FY2015, we actually spent \$70,000 less than in FY2014, thanks to the sourcing of underutilized local fish species, such as Acadian red fish and pollock, both sustainably harvested, readily available locally, and much cheaper than the more popular salmon or haddock—yet just as delicious. The average cost for the underutilized fish species was \$5.03 per pound compared with \$6.37 for all other seafood purchases.

Produce | Spending a little more on local produce may actually save money in the long run. Generally speaking, local produce provides a higher yield and has a longer shelf life than conventional counterparts. By using ingredients (especially local produce items) in multiple recipes, products are less subject to spoiling.

Broccoli

Broccoli can appear in numerous different stations and dishes—on the salad bar and at the stir-fry station; in soups and composed salads; roasted, etc. With the stems incorporated into the soups and a composed salad, the whole vegetable can be used.

Brussels sprout tops

These are an excellent example of unexpected utilization of local produce in New England. The tops are often plowed back into the fields, but they taste great (similar to a blend of kale and collard greens), are packed with vitamins (mainly K and C), and can be transformed into a tasty, healthy side dish.

Animal Protein | Animal proteins are among the most expensive ingredients on a foodservice menu. Choosing underutilized cuts of meat can save money. Instead of ordering chicken breasts, consider thighs, legs, or even the whole bird to roast in a rotisserie or break down in-house. Reducing meat—particularly red meat—will save quite a bit of money, and will generally result in a healthier menu.

Global cuisines

For many health-conscious, international cuisines, meat is utilized primarily as a flavor accent, rather than as the core element. For example, homemade ramen noodle bowls feature surprisingly little meat, but offer big flavor and are very popular.

Blended meat recipes

Meat dishes that blend in plant-based ingredients are another strategy for reducing meat costs. Substitute pure meat burger patties with beef-mushroom blend sliders; students will be happy with the switch.

Portion size

Portion size of animal proteins can be decreased to 2 oz. at lunch and 3 oz. at dinner; we've had no negative feedback from students at UMass Dining when we made this change.

Grass fed beef

We find that while grass-fed beef is more expensive than conventional ground beef, it tends to be less fatty, and thus cooks down much less, offering a greater portion yield when served.

Plant-based protein | It should be noted that you should not reduce portion sizes or add plant-based proteins into your menu simply to save money. According to foodservice consultant Ken Botts, “Beans, nuts, and grains are among the most protein-dense foods available. As long as a sufficient amount of calories are consumed from a variety of foods, an individual will not have a problem getting enough protein.” Plant-based proteins are not only healthier, but also have a much lower impact on the environment. Your chefs should work creatively to cut down on animal proteins while still maintaining high-quality, nutritionally balanced meals.

Selected UMass Dining Menu Items Featuring Plant-Based Proteins

Roasted Polenta Cakes

with quinoa & corn, roasted pepper pesto, and mozzarella cheese

Red Lentil Kofta

with tzatziki sauce, arugula, red onions, feta cheese, and whole wheat pita bread

Pan Seared Edamame-Zucchini Cakes

with cilantro, Greek yogurt, and feta cheese

Rolled Lasagna

with mushrooms, spinach, quinoa, and ricotta cheese with a roasted red pepper sauce

Hampshire Chilaquiles

with corn tortillas (from Mi Tierra restaurant), chipotle salsa, queso fresco, refried pinto beans, and avocado



Smart waste management | Food waste is a serious problem that can be addressed with closed-loop thinking, where unused or waste materials and food are recycled as much as possible; it is especially beneficial if these waste products can be added back into the local food system. The following simple strategies will reduce waste, save the cost of disposing of it otherwise, and strengthen the local food system at the same time.

Increase your throughput

The 2014 Hartman Group's ethnographic research study on student food culture at UMass Amherst found that time is one of a student's most precious assets. When they have to wait in long lines in an all-you-care-to-eat setting, students are apt to take more food—they hedge their bets against having to go back into the line for additional items.

Hampshire Dining Commons at UMass Amherst features an oval-design servery and open lines of site that have reduced ques by spreading guests out and allowing them to see all options. If you cannot remodel a dining facility, you can speed up service through menu engineering and time and motion studies.



Tracking your waste

By measuring waste and making small behavioral changes, you can save considerable sums.

To analyze and reduce our pre-consumer food waste, **UMass Dining** partnered with LeanPath, a company that provides tracking tools designed to help foodservice operators manage pre- and post-consumer food waste easily and effectively. Through this process, we saved \$750,000 between 2012 and 2015.

Trayless dining

By eliminating trays, UMass Dining reduced food-waste by about 30%.

Recycling ingredients

Managing post-consumer waste (i.e. food not eaten that is scraped off diners' plates, or cooked food not served by the end of the night) can be cost-effective. The savings you accrue by reducing both pre- and post-consumer food waste will enable you to offset the higher cost of local and sustainable products.

Repurposing

Work with local farmers to take "ugly" fruits and vegetables that might otherwise go to waste and utilize them creatively in your menus.



UMass Dining recently bought late-season tomatoes at risk of being lost to early frost. We turned these tomatoes into a delicious, homemade sauce. We're now piloting a new retail location called "Pledge," which will have a menu option that creatively uses leftover ingredients from the dining commons in an effort to raise awareness and participation in responsible food use.

Post-Production Practices | Composting and food recovery are two related means of being conscious about complete food utilization.

Composting

Nearby farms will accept food waste for composting at a cost of about half as much as hauling it to the landfill or an incinerator. In this case, your waste is productively turned back into the local food system to create nutrient-rich soil for farmers and growers in the area.

Food recovery

If you have a local chapter of the Food Recovery Network in your area, student volunteers will collect pans of cooked food that went unserved at the end of the day, bag it up, and deliver it to a nearby homeless shelter.

Fundraise to offset planning costs | Food sustainability has become a focus of support by government agencies, philanthropic foundations, and local food system advocacy groups. Once the word spreads that your foodservice operation has begun a local, healthy sustainable initiative, your institution could become the recipient of a grant for project implementation that will cover planning costs that otherwise would have to be paid out of general operating funds. Government grants are available through the USDA and Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Grants (SARE). Various private foundations in New England, such as the Kresge Foundation, John Merck Fund, and the Henry P. Kendall Foundation also support local, healthy sustainable initiatives. Check the application guidelines for complete information about any funder before contacting them.

UMass Dining accrued nearly \$1 million to support our sustainability work. At present, the vast majority of UMass Dining's grant funding has come from the Henry P. Kendall Foundation, a private, family foundation. Several smaller grants were awarded through UMass Amherst and the UMass State System.

Facilities:

Lessons from UMass Amherst Hampshire Dining Commons

The Local Healthy UMass Food System Initiative coincided with the completion of the newly renovated Hampshire Dining Commons. The state-of-the-art facilities at the new dining commons greatly enabled our team to transform the dining experience around local, healthy, sustainable and delicious food. The following are several lessons we learned:

Servery design

A central oval servery reduces lines and queuing, enabling students to “shop” around and build/customize their meal.

Display/just-in-time cooking

The original facility utilized its lower level as the kitchen and the upper level as the servery. Now, we prep ingredients downstairs and incorporate display and just-in-time cooking at stations upstairs.

Flexible equipment utilization

Stations around the oval are adaptable and can incorporate different menu items and concepts as needed. Stations can feature certain cuisines being promoted at one-time special events.

Meat fabrication room

We converted a spare walk-in cooler into a meat room where we break products down ourselves – a great cost savings measure.

Healthy serving

Encourage healthy portioning of menu items in an all-you-care-to-eat facility by pre-portioning items, such as 4 oz juice glasses and 2-3-oz servings of animal proteins with each meal. Pre-plating desserts also educates customers about healthy portioning.

Seating to build community

Table layout brings students together naturally, fostering large and small groups. Tables accommodate groups of two or four, and high tops can be pushed together. Customers can create their own nook.

Use of technology

Flat screen monitors with state-of-the-art AV capability are strategically located throughout the dining commons and used for special events and promotions.

Displays for healthy habits

Strategically located and convenient flavored water, filtered tap water, and smoothie stations make it easy for customers to get healthy beverage alternatives. Display more fruits and veggies on the line and consider stand-alone fresh fruit displays. Locate the dessert station in a less trafficked area of the facility.

Colorful. Everything should pop at you, engaging all your senses. Customers should feel that they are part of an experience of place; in the middle of the action. In particular, graphics should draw customers to healthy choices.

Engagement. Dining facilities today are centers for social and educational engagement. Tasteful and informative displays about nutrition, local suppliers, and featured cuisines should be placed where they can be seen as customers arrive, while they are walking around, and when they are seated.

Function Room. Designing a separate function space within the dining facility is not only a good additional meeting space for groups, but also an excellent opportunity for scheduling more special extracurricular opportunities such as chef demos and presentations.

CONCLUSION

The dining experience at your foodservice operation is a complex system of interwoven components, all of which will come into play with your local healthy food system initiative. Once you are sure the local food you sourced and ordered is the food you received, you will want to make sure your menus reflect healthy and delicious recipes. The menu planning process should involve the entire dining program team – culinary, service, and management – to make sure everyone is 100% involved with and in support of the initiative.

We encourage you to prove that local, healthy, sustainable food does not need to be more expensive. Take advantage of seasonal pricing and availability. Reduce animal proteins while increasing plant-forward recipes in your menu cycle. Implement waste management and post-production utilization strategies. These are approaches to effect savings that you would not normally consider with conventional food items and products.

Lastly, don't forget to include end-user food consumption as part of your total dining experience strategy for local, healthy foods. The physical setting is important and a special opportunity for you to highlight the new direction of your operation. Indeed, in the next chapter of this Guide we further explore the importance of customer service in building a strong and lasting local healthy food system initiative.

05 PUT YOUR CUSTOMER FIRST

How to maintain impeccable customer service



OVERVIEW

A dynamic campus foodservice program that serves great tasting, healthy, and sustainable food must also maintain open lines of honest communication with its customers and listen to their feedback. You must let your customers know you are actually doing something about their concerns. Customer service in the dining facilities also means creating a “dining experience” that educates customers about where their food comes from, how it is prepared, and why local, healthy, sustainable food matters in their lives, now and into the future.

KEY CONCEPTS

Today's students are well-informed and concerned about food, health, and the environment. Good customer service means keeping your clientele apprised of what you are doing (**transparency**) and providing them with data about where you are sourcing your local, healthy, sustainable food products (**traceability**). Doing so demonstrates your openness and sincerity, thereby building trust among your customers.

Regular periodic **customer satisfaction surveys** enable an institution to devise clear and actionable strategies that are responsive to customer values and expectations. A well designed survey will give you reliable longitudinal quantitative data about customer opinions and behaviors, their values and expectations, and a measure of impacts your program is having on your clientele over time.

Online and real-time customer feedback through various social media provides your program with feel-good attention and buzz, and while not necessarily reliable for decision-making, endears your program to its customers.

The dining experience itself is a customer service strategy. Enhance value to the customer with experiential food preparation, pleasant and caring service, colorful labeling of food nutritional values, and creative operational strategies (e.g. small-portion sustainable Grab 'n Go snacks).

Tips and hints for healthy food consumption habits on tent cards will inform your customers about lifestyle skills while showing that you care.

A student ambassador program engages students directly in your customer feedback loop.

Use your program as a **living laboratory for academic research and co-curricular engaged learning.** Such student-centered involvement connects your foodservice to academic departments and adds value to the residential higher education experience.



Transparency and Traceability in Sourcing

The current generation of college students is probably the best informed and most concerned regarding food, health, and the environment to come along. They are more purposeful in selecting the food they eat and increasingly prefer foods that are clearly labeled as local and healthy. For this demographic, good customer service means keeping your clientele informed about what you are doing (transparency) and providing them with data about where you are sourcing your local healthy food products (traceability). Doing so demonstrates your openness and sincerity, thereby building trust among your customers.

At UMass Dining, student interns review our invoices and provide an analysis of our spending on local, sustainable, and real foods and beverages. While UMass Dining staff members analyze data on a regular basis, having students review it independently lends credibility to the numbers we tote.



Customer Surveys

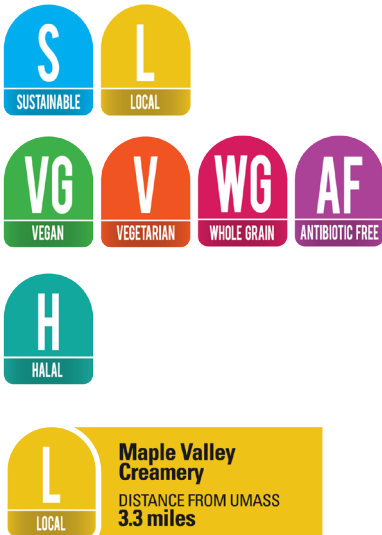
When it comes to menu preferences and the value of a meal plan, understanding the customers' values and expectations allows an institution to devise clear and actionable strategies for providing better customer service. A successful food-service operation will anticipate the changing values of younger generations and innovate to stay ahead and maintain relevance with your more youthful customers. You need to know what your customers think about your program and what works/doesn't work for them. Quality survey research will also give you data on the impact your food program is having on your clientele.

Every semester, **UMass Dining** seeks feedback from students on the meal plan via a digital survey. We send it out to 4,000 students selected at random and get an average response rate of 34%. We use this data to inform changes in the program that will better serve our students. We typically include questions about the quality of the program, and what priorities students have regarding food choices. For the spring semester of 2015, we modified the questionnaire to focus in on health and sustainability, and we were pleased with the responses. Survey findings indicated that today's students are more cognizant of what they are eating and where their food comes from. They are increasingly favoring plant-based meals and less inclined to fatty foods, sugars, and simple carbohydrates. Many students on the meal plan at UMass Amherst report that their consumption of red meat is decreasing while their intake of healthier ingredients, such as beans and legumes, seafood, and fruits and vegetables, is the same if not greater, compared to their eating patterns before entering college.

Interestingly, students apparently see local sustainably-sourced food as healthy food. They are beginning to understand that the nutritional balance of locally harvested foods is higher than the conventional counterparts. At the same time, students may be equating "local" with "healthy", which actually may not be the case. As you move toward serving more local and sustainable ingredients in healthy and delicious ways, be careful to promote both "local" and "healthy" to show that you are running a holistically focused dining program for the benefit of personal well-being, a robust economy, and a cleaner environment.

Customer Service Strategies

Local, Sustainable and Healthy Visuals | A major goal of your local healthy food system initiative is to introduce students to foods that are more nutritious and more seasonal. You want this message to carry after they leave campus, and into their adulthood. In order to benefit significantly from your health and sustainability efforts, students must first be aware of your intent and your actions. Label all foods and beverages with identifiers. If an item is local, include the farmer's name, the location, and distance from campus. Use colorful displays around the dining commons: a slideshow at the entrance, and posters featuring local farmers throughout the dining area. At the start you might test out some of these strategies in one dining location and expand to others over time.



Experiential Food Prep | An important customer service strategy is to bring first-hand observation of food preparation to your customers. Just-in-time prep fosters a more intimate connection to food and a more engaged (and more transparent) dining experience.

The imaginative renovation of **Hampshire Dining Commons at UMass Amherst** removed the barriers that formerly separated our dining staff and customers. The kitchen there is now open to public view; customers see the raw food being prepped, and many meal items -- such as our custom stir-fry and sushi -- are prepared in real time for student diners.

Real-Time Feedback | While a periodic customer satisfaction survey gives you reliable data to work with, real-time feedback is a great option for impeccable customer service. Customers are empowered when they get immediate responses to their comments --- especially via social media. Most of the feedback you receive this way will be incredibly useful; but you may be concerned about unfiltered inappropriate on-line feedback from customers. These days, the cost of not being transparent is outweighed by the positive customer response you will get for showing up as vulnerable and real. Moreover, by addressing complaints online, you provide the tools or next steps to engage your customers in correcting the problem—and make sure they keep coming back.

Over the years, **UMass Dining** has tried various ways of soliciting feedback. Now, we find that our students' preferred modes of social media feedback is through Twitter and Facebook. Here are several examples from each channel:



Lisa Cotta Wilson
My family and I ate at Hampshire and Berkshire dining commons during parents weekend. Such amazing delicious and fresh food! And an array of items to chose from. So Impressive!

Nuryelk Gutierrez
Best food I've honestly ever had on a college campus. I'd do anything to re-live my UMass days again and eat lunch, dinner - or really any meal here.

Ellen Saltzman
So Cool! I love the guest chef series. UMass Dining, you rock!



Andres Lesin@AndresLesins
13 Dec
Shout out to @UMassDining for how awesome they mark the vegetarian and vegan options! Much appreciated!!!

Anne Welch @Anne125
31 Oct
Weekly healthy living cooking classes?! @UMassDining will never cease to amaze me!

Diego Fellow @diegofellows
10 Oct
Dinner at Hampshire! #HealthyLiving @UMassDining

One of our most popular means of feedback is our Txt n Tell program. Students text their feedback, and the message is monitored by the dining commons managers. Responses to the text messages are displayed on large monitors in each of our dining commons. Txt n Tell is a platform for light-hearted back-and-forth transparent communication for dining managers and students, and often includes a touch of humor from both sides! Here are several examples of recent Txt n Tell comments made by students and responses from our dining commons management team.

DON'T JUST THINK IT...
TEXT IT!
TXT "55744" #txtberk YOUR MESSAGE



**UMASS
DINING**
UMassAmherst

Student Comments

Dining Management

MAR
24

Chicken tikka masala was awesome make it a regular



You will see that every Monday for dinner in the Hillside Room and Tandoori Chicken at Grab n Go Wednesday, enjoy!

MAR
25

thank you thank you for bringing back the cinnamon



You got it. We always have it in house. If it's not out there ask a staff member and we will get it out there right away.

MAR
25

Thank you for always having a variety of fruit! That's my favorite part about Worcester



You got it! Thanks for coming!

Student Ambassadors | Consider a Student Ambassador program whereby students serve as “secret shoppers” to provide anonymous feedback about your dining program and special events. You can recruit these students from your most vocal customers, even from among complainers. A student who complains shows a concern for the quality and value of your dining program. Such a person demonstrates a vested interest in improving the dining program for the better. The feedback of the student ambassadors can be processed immediately. Consider compensating your student ambassadors for their time; even a small stipend will make the student more accountable for accurate and responsible feedback.



Healthful Rules of Thumb | Customer service means showing that you care about the well-being of your clientele. The following are tips and hints you can offer to students that will encourage healthy food consumption habits and practices for your customers.

Minimize Sugar Intake: Limit sweets by checking food labels for high sugar content in unexpected places such as breakfast cereals, salad dressings, condiments, and many prepared foods. The American Heart Association recommends no more than 6-9 teaspoons of sugar per day for a healthy diet. Eliminate sodas and other sugary drinks to reduce refined sugars throughout the day. Blend whole fruits into smoothies for a healthy, sweet alternative beverage.

Develop a “Plant-Forward” Diet: Limit consumption of animal proteins (especially processed meats, and red meat in general), as they contain high levels of saturated fat and can contribute to cardiovascular diseases. For a healthier alternative that is gentler on you and on the environment, try tasty plant-based proteins instead such as beans, lentils, chickpeas, nuts, and seeds. Plenty of plants provide complete proteins (containing all 20 essential amino acids), such as rice and beans (eaten together), quinoa, chia, buckwheat, and soy.

Bring on the Fruits & Veggies: Eat lots of fresh fruits and vegetables. They are low-calorie, packed with vitamins and fiber, and are great raw or cooked. The more colorful, the better. Lightly wilt leafy green vegetables in heart-healthy olive oil and your body will absorb the vitamins more readily.

Minimize Highly Processed Foods: There is nothing inherently wrong with processing food, but in general, the more processed the food, the more likely it is to contain lots of preservatives, additives, sodium, and refined sugars. Check labels for foods with only a few ingredients – preferably foods with whole ingredients that you recognize!

Simply Seafood: Fish is rich in vitamins, omega-3 fatty acids, and is low in saturated fat. In New England, local, yet underutilized varieties of fish are available that can spice up your menu. Try Acadian red fish, Sole, Pollock or sustainable, omega-3 packed Atlantic mackerel.

Switch to Whole Grains: Don't avoid carbs altogether, just choose the right ones. Complex carbohydrates like whole grain bread and rice are high in fiber, digest more slowly in the body, and regulate blood sugar spikes. Plus, they are also more filling. It's not just grains that contain complex carbohydrates – find them in fruits, vegetables, nuts, and beans as well. Avoid simple carbohydrates like sugar, white breads, and other foods with refined flours.

Drink Plenty of Water: Water helps the body function at top performance. Try waters infused with fruits and herbs for a refreshing and healthy alternative to sugary or high-calorie beverages.

Creative Dining Hall Options | Unlike their predecessors who consumed two or three large meals each day, today's students tend to snack more, eating smaller meals, faster, and frequently throughout the day. Think about ways to serve healthy sustainable and seasonable that are responsive to your customers' lifestyles:

- Sponsor educational and entertaining programs and special events that showcase local, sustainable foods.
- Offer seasonal small-portion "grab 'n' go" options with local and sustainable foods.
- Keep the dining rooms open for late-night local, sustainable snacking.
- Be flexible with your menu cycle to accommodate local healthy foods that may come available on short notice.

Co-curricular Opportunities. | Consider your facilities as living laboratories, to create service-learning opportunities for students. Internships and volunteer opportunities allow students and campus community members to gain hands-on experience with various components of your local, healthy initiative. Student interns can support your education, outreach, and implementation efforts. In particular, consider collaborative research opportunities between your dining services program and academic departments. Such opportunities for students help not only your initiative, but also the engagement goals of your academic institution, while helping shape food system champions of the future.

UMass Dining partnered in 2014 with the Mushroom Council, a national organization that promotes the use of fresh mushrooms, and UMass Amherst's Food Science department to create an experimental healthy beef/mushroom blend slider. It is now served in our Hampshire Dining Commons. This menu item is not only healthier and tastier, but also, by using fewer animal proteins, more cost-effective.

CONCLUSION

One of our mottos at UMass Dining is "*We are only as good as the last meal we served.*" Each meal is an opportunity to connect with a guest and offer a superior customer experience. A meal served at seven in the morning should offer the same high-quality experience as one offered at ten that night. Consistency is the key.

When a dining services program caters very well to the demographic it serves, customers become its best marketing allies. Word-of-mouth is proving to be the most trusted form of marketing and in the age of digital media there are more platforms than ever to share the story. It's simply not enough for a dining services program to tell customers how good the food is. The students themselves are the best vehicle to spread the word -- by sharing photos on Instagram, or inviting their friends to join them in person for a meal in the dining halls.

06 TELL A COMPELLING STORY

How to market your initiative



OVERVIEW

Storytelling—aka strategic marketing – will make your local healthy food system initiative real to the world. A good story about your local healthy food system initiative should be *descriptive* in expressing the identity of your initiative (its nature, special qualities, persona, “brand,” etc.); *forward-thinking* in depicting your vision of the future; *compelling* in influencing how others think about your project and your focus on local, healthy, sustainable food; *convincing* in securing much-needed financial and human resources for your program; and *transformative* in helping shift the culture within your organization.

KEY CONCEPTS

Strategic marketing. Your local healthy food system initiative has a special message to tell and many good reasons to tell it.

Start with a small piece or short narrative. As the initiative grows, so should the scope and breadth of the stories.

Seek out marketing resources that already exist around you (within your institution); they are ready to help.

Keep your story vibrant and authentic by including data to validate results and objectives.

Create a storytelling hub in one of your facilities where you can showcase your initiative on a regular and ongoing basis.

Special events in your dining facilities will put your campus community in direct contact with your local, healthy sustainable message, and make your initiative real for your customers.

Bring your story out into the community and world; your initiative will be a great topic for community programs sponsored by local TV stations, nonprofit groups, other peer institutions, and philanthropic organizations.

Host high-profile guests such as politicians, public officials, or leaders from peer institutions who may drop by your facility to learn more about your work. They will spread the word to others.

Use the Internet and social media to tell your story; student interns can help you keep your online presence current, responsive, and lively.

Partnerships are a great way to amplify your storytelling volume; when other organizations reference your initiative as something with which they are associated, their stakeholders become your stakeholders!

Stories can transform the culture (attitudes and behaviors) of your dining services operation and of students and faculty on campus. Conduct field trips to farms and processing facilities for your dining program staff; host special lunches for faculty; and deliver classroom presentations in conjunction with academic courses.



Your Special Message

At the very outset, telling your story should be a vital component of your local healthy food system initiative. You will be proud of your accomplishments and should want to inform and engage all of your stakeholders -- customers, supporters, your institution's leaders, greater community, etc. -- in that story. As a campus dining program, you are part of the auxiliary administrative support system of your university, not part of its academic core. Yet, you hold a very unique position relative to other administrative units, in that you are not only keeping students healthy while they live on campus and pursue their studies; you are delivering a message – a teaching, so to speak – about health and wellness, with a focus on nutrition and food consumption patterns and habits. Foodservice operators are thus educators in their own right, demonstrating their respective missions and values three or more times each day. If you do this educational work well, students will leave their university home prepared to make skillful and informed choices about food for their entire lives.

When you share your story, you are spreading the word about the goals you hope to achieve through your local healthy food system initiative as well as news of each accomplishment on the way toward meeting those goals. There are several overarching rationales for telling your story:

- To focus on the whole campus dining experience, from the moment when customers walk through the door, and continuing as they swipe in, are served and eat their meal, and leave their plates and cutlery at the dish return. Every moment is an opportunity to connect, tell your story, and gain allies.
- To demonstrate that high-volume foodservice operations can successfully overcome the perceived barriers to sourcing, procuring and serving local healthy sustainable food within an institutional context.
- To underscore for your customers the value of being a conscientious consumer and demonstrate how to become one.
- To educate young consumers on their place and role in supporting the local food system.

Your storytelling will also make clear not only that you have prioritized sustainability, but also that sustainability is now being woven into the very fabric of what you do. The feedback and excitement in response to the stories you tell will increase your momentum and visibility. That momentum will give you a can-do confidence to grow your local healthy food system initiative. If your program is innovative, highly impactful in the community, and replicable by peer institutions, it won't go unnoticed. Programs that place an emphasis on local and sustainable sourcing initiatives are— for now—ahead of the competition, and can realistically create a reputation for themselves as leaders in the movement.

Getting noticed has been a major goal of the **UMass Dining** sustainability program, and it has been largely successful thanks to our collaboration with the marketing and sustainability teams of UMass Auxiliary Enterprises and the University of Massachusetts Amherst's University Relations department.

Where to Start

The story of a sustainability program does not have to encompass all the messages you need to tell, nor all the activities you are undertaking, nor all the results you are producing. Indeed, at the start, you will not have a big story to tell, but a story of starter successes that might be quite small in scope and magnitude. The little successes along the way are also part of the story. By celebrating the little victories as they come, you will show progress to your goals, and build buy-in and support from your stakeholders..

At **UMass Dining**, we initially started more than ten years ago, by just making connections with our neighboring farmers in western Massachusetts. We began sourcing produce from Joe Czajkowski in Hadley, and soon after that, our honey was coming from Warm Colors Apiary in South Deerfield. We found our local farmers by just walking through farmers' markets and visiting farm stands. While in the beginning the quantity wasn't especially sizable, these additions to our purchasing portfolio were modest steps to a grander regional vision. They were worth talking about as breakthroughs in challenging conventional food-systems purchasing.

The buzz of our commitment to sustainability quickly reached our students, and we were soon able to boast the largest, most comprehensive permaculture program of any institution of higher education. Our permaculture program is a tangible, on-campus example of collaboration and innovation between students and UMass Dining. Soon enough, we found ourselves becoming the largest university to sign the student-initiated Real Food Challenge Campus Commitment –yet another example of student leadership and administration working together.



The mission of **Warm Colors Apiary** is to promote the art of beekeeping, to provide their customers with the finest all-natural products, and to practice farming methods that protect and sustain the land.

Local farmer **Joe Czajkowski** (right) has built a significant regional food-producing operation as a result of his business relationship with UMass Dining.

Work with Other Storytelling Resources

Your program will not likely have the resources to create an independent marketing capacity. As such, you will need to invite the collaboration of other marketing resources within your institution whose writing, promotion, graphics, and public relations skills and networks already exist.

The Sustainability Department at **UMass Amherst** works very closely with the UMass Amherst Auxiliary Enterprises marketing team, which is responsible for promoting all events and releasing news and updates on anything related to UMass Dining. They carefully weave our sustainability story into the UMass Dining marketing platforms. This is important because it elevates sustainability as an important, prioritized facet of the UMass Dining program story and demonstrates how integral our initiatives have become.

Make Data a Part of Your Story

Consider the following statements:

In the next few years, UMass Dining expects to source more local, sustainable food!

By 2020 UMass Dining is targeting local, sustainable food purchases to grow from 11% to 20% of all food purchased – an increase of over \$3.25 million to support our regional food system over a six-year period!

It is clear which statement is more exciting and engaging. Including percentages as well as actual numbers provides a context when the reader doesn't have any background information. Being able to call upon data and facts legitimizes your local healthy food system initiative, and also provides transparency. Having the numbers and facts at your fingertips allows you to speak confidently about your progress and successes.



Storytelling Strategies

Storytelling hub | At the start of your initiative, you will want to select a place (most likely a dining facility) where your initial stories will be featured. You can use unobtrusive signage with appealing photographic images to showcase and highlight certain aspects of your local healthy food system initiative in the dining facility:

- Label locally produced food items to note the source farm and its distance from the dining facility.
- Create slideshows that present your sustainability commitments and partnerships with farmers; present the slide deck continuously on display monitors in the dining facility.
- Mount photos of events, farms and farmers on the walls.
- Display a “Farmer of the Week” featuring a bio, interview, and other information.

Some of these materials, along with notices of sustainability events, can also be displayed online and in other locations.

When we started our project at **UMass Amherst**, Hampshire Dining Commons was to become the campus hub for healthy, sustainable, delicious food. We envisioned that when students walked through its doors, they would immediately be made aware that they were entering a special foodservice location on campus. Guided by our marketing team, we transformed the newly renovated dining commons into just that. While we understood that it would be the students' destination for eating and relaxing rather than learning, there was no place better to tell them our story in an engaging, yet unassuming way.



Special events | You can use special events to reinforce your storytelling hub as a focal point on campus where students, faculty, and staff can learn more about their own place and role in the local healthy food system. Consider *menu specials* featuring local sustainable food coupled with guest chef *food demonstrations*. Your special events calendar can include *workshops* for dining staff; *extra-credit educational programs* for students; and a “*Know Your Farmer*” Series (where local-source farmers talk about who they are and what they do). *Sustainability Dinners* (coupled with a lecture or presentation) are particularly well-suited to introduce new local and sustainable products or recipes as they are incorporated into your menu. On a larger scale you can organize *conferences* where participants develop new ideas, strengthen existing networks, and learn tools and techniques to enhance their capacity to cultivate a sustainable world. Don’t forget to invite key stakeholders and community members to your events so they can learn more about your program, and the ways they can work together to increase your impact.



The following is a sampling of special events that UMass Dining has hosted to support our local healthy food system initiative:

Sustainability Dinners

- **Local Chicken Special** when we began sourcing from Misty Knoll Farm in fall 2014.
- **Trash Fish Highlight** when underutilized fish became a staple in our menu design as both a sustainable and cost-effective protein option.

Discussions, Panels and Planning Meetings

- **Massachusetts Food Day:** To celebrate the Massachusetts food system, [former] Agricultural Commissioner Greg Watson, local farmer Joe Czajkowski, and UMass Sustainable Farming professor Amanda Brown sat as a panel to discuss the case for local food along with new challenges and breakthroughs in our local food system. This event drew more than a hundred guests, including foodservice directors, K-12 cafeteria staff, representatives of nonprofits, students, and faculty.
- **Food System Design Charrette:** In fall 2014, we hosted several meetings with Massachusetts Agricultural Commissioner Greg Watson and his staff, including an intensive full-day design charrette that focused on improving local farming relationships and increasing Massachusetts agriculture purchasing.
- **Menu Design Planning Sessions:** In re-engineering our menu for local, healthy, sustainable food, our chefs regularly host new-recipe tasting events for small groups of dining services staff members. This provides feedback to the chefs as they test out new ingredients and menu concepts.

Conferences

- **Tastes of the World Chef Culinary Conference.** Each summer, UMass Dining hosts more than 375 campus chefs and high-volume foodservice operators at this 5-day conference whose purpose is to accelerate the dissemination of sustainable foodservice concepts to the next generation of chefs –and inspire them to embrace health, sustainability, and food ethics in meeting the increasing diversity of consumer preferences. Prominent keynote speakers have included food authors Mark Bittman (2015) and Michael Pollan (2014). In 2016, the conference theme is “Food is medicine, food is love,” and we will be joined by Alice Waters, American chef, restaurateur, activist, and author, as our keynote presenter.
- In 2014, we hosted **“Revisoning Sustainability,”** a gathering of 175 administrators and innovators from 22 states looking for ways to accelerate food-systems sustainability on the sixty campuses they represented.

Presentations | From time to time, you may be called upon to present your story to other institutions and local partners. *Nonprofit community organizations* may be interested in bringing the topic to their constituents and clients; peer *institutions* in your own field as well as *institutions in other fields* may want to learn the lessons of your initiative so they can become more involved themselves; and *funders* may inquire about the nature and status your efforts as a way to refine their own funding programs and initiatives in the realm of local, healthy, sustainable food.

Among the many presentations, tours, and workshops we have hosted have been: *Girls Inc.* (an organization that empowers young women to become leaders in their community), *Westfield State University* (a nearby university interested in pursuing local/sustainable food system procurement); *Baystate Hospital* (in nearby Springfield, MA); and *The John Merck Fund* (a Boston-based funding institution dedicated to sustainability and environmental stewardship).



High Profile Visitors | Be prepared to welcome, host, and tell your story to public officials who may drop by your facility to learn more about your work in local, healthy, sustainable food. As well, you may be invited to showcase your efforts to leaders in the sustainability field. These visits are important story-telling moments that could have an influential ripple effect as your story gets told and re-told by your visitors to others.

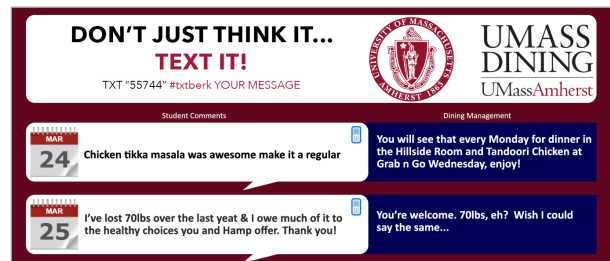
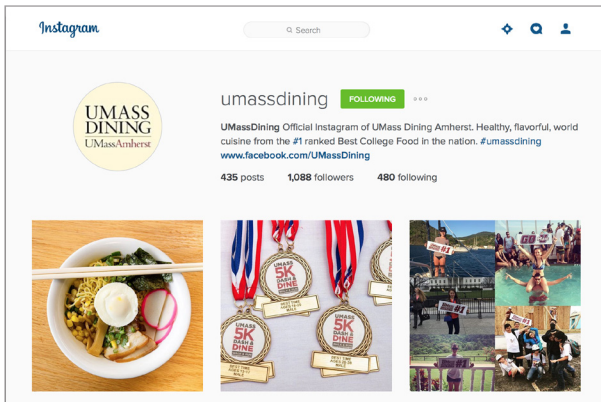
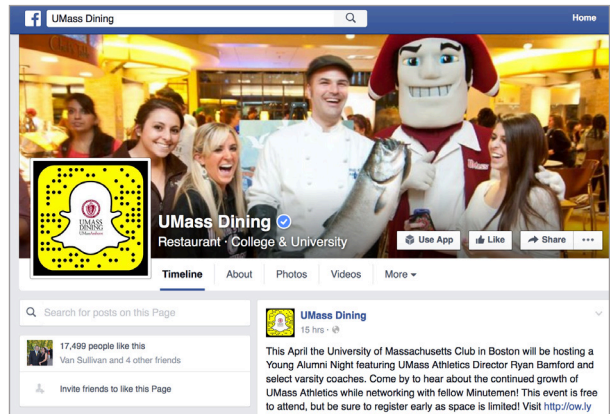
In the past year, we have been visited by a number of elected officials and policy-makers, including Representative Ellen Story and Congressman James McGovern, both of whom highly value local food system efforts. In addition, we have served critical roles in hosting and presenting to the Farm to Institution New England Food Summit (2015), NECSC Conference (2015), and NOFA Conferences (annual), all held at UMass Amherst, and all showcasing UMass Dining as a living case study.



Use the Internet and Social Media to Tell Your Story

Your website is a 24x7 channel for storytelling. Blogging has become the standard approach to highlight the progress you're making. Use your blog to showcase new local farmers whose food is now being offered or local healthy products that have been introduced into your menu. You will add value and transparency to your program with posts about your challenges and successes. Make sure the blog postings represent a variety of voices: one week it may be the sustainability manager and the next, a student farmer.

Your customers may be your best marketers. When the food is worth talking about, they will talk about it on social media. Today's students are constantly on the go and connected to each other through the latest apps—so make sure you are there too! For most of the students on your campus, social media has become interwoven into their daily routine. Use social media to increase awareness of what you are doing and also to generate two-way interactions. The student interns in your office probably know best how to connect with their peers; consider putting them in charge of maintaining your social media presence. After all, they're the experts!



Social media is forever evolving; here are some of the apps we've put to good use at UMass Amherst:



The UMass Dining App is an on-the-go companion for UMass Dining, launched in October 2015. With this app, one can see the menu for each of our residential and retail locations, hours of operations, contact information, how busy a location is, and the current special events. The user can also connect directly with Facebook and Twitter, and will soon be able to offer feedback throughout the app. In version 2.0, we will connect dietary and sourcing information to each menu item and provide ways to create a complete meal based on information (such as nutritional requirements) inputted by customers.



Facebook continues to be useful for posting daily updates on dining initiatives, including sustainability. However, posts are now limited to your followers unless a nominal fee is paid to reach a wider audience. For a very special event, like a guest lecture, we will pay \$10 to \$20 per post to boost its exposure. This nominal charge is the difference between reaching 100 fans and 60,000 fans.



Snapchat allows the user to snap a picture or movie, add a caption, and instantly send it to friends. We use it to circulate new menu design items, promote different dining locations as needed, and engage and interact with students on a relevant, popular social media platform.



Instagram enables its users to take pictures and videos, and share them on a variety of social networking platforms. We often post pictures of events (current and upcoming), farm visits, students in the dining commons, etc.



Txt 'n Tell is a customer-experience tool that enables customers to provide feedback through simple surveys using their cell phones. It allows students to text their feedback directly to UMass Dining's managers and operators. Responses are then cycled onto a video screen for managerial feedback.



Mail Chimp enables us to send graphically designed e-mails to as few as ten to more than 10,000 customers and also track which ones open each message. For us, it's a great way to get information out to a large group of people quickly. The monthly fee is based on variables such as the number of contacts.



Hootsuite™

Hootsuite allows users to control the messaging on multiple social-media sites and also schedule posts in advance. As with Mail Chimp, there is a service fee.

Keep in mind that if you contact your customers too often, you'll be viewed as a pest and may be dropped from their list. Unlike the dreaded spam e-mails everyone receives daily, your messaging should be infrequent and targeted.

Seeking, Creating & Attracting Partnerships

When you make a priority of telling your unique story in a genuine, forthright way, you can quickly create a buzz. And when you create a buzz, you're likely to find yourself creating and nurturing resourceful and productive partnerships with key stakeholders—within your institution and beyond it—that add value to your work.

It's safe to say that broadcasting the story of **UMass Dining's** local and sustainable food-sourcing efforts brought us to the attention of the Henry P. Kendall Foundation. That outreach, along with our reputation, led to our receiving a sizable grant to further bolster our program.

If you don't make the effort to proclaim your dedication to sustainability and the reasoning behind it, no one will know about it, no one will want to align with your efforts, nor support you, nor join with your important cause. If you neglect to tell your story effectively and compellingly, you're doing a disservice to your program and missing out on opportunities—perhaps without ever knowing they were available to you.

Creating a partnership strategy that reflects your many and varied stakeholders should have a significant impact. Begin by identifying and building relationships with organizations and people outside your institution's walls. By marketing your priority of local, sustainable food systems, you will gain the attention of other nonprofits, foundations, and institutions that are doing similar work. By teaming up with them, you will add traction and impact to your work... and theirs, reaching larger, more diverse audiences.

HENRY P. KENDALL FOUNDATION



MASSACHUSETTS
Farm to School
PROJECT



At UMass, to date, we have established partnerships with:

- Henry P. Kendall Foundation
- Farm to Institution New England (FINE)
- Food Solutions New England
- Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA)
- Massachusetts Farm to School
- Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR)
- Real Food Challenge
- Food Recovery Network

By building such relationships, you will expand your marketing channels and therefore, share your story further. Sharing your story further allows you to spread best practices, and increase the reach of your work. Increasing your reach, puts you in touch with more people and institutions with whom to build new productive partnerships. It's easy to see that partnership building is an ever expanding cycle of influence and resource development.

This cycle of partnerships will have a complementary impact on small farmers and their farms. Your procurement of food from local farms will likely give rise to expansion plans by those farmers to develop their business even further. Effectively sharing your story with your partners and peer institutions brings attention to these farmers that may help their businesses grow. In some instances, you may be able to connect farms to large-scale distributors, which makes it much easier for other institutions to source locally.

By tailoring your project to make a splash in the news, you open the door to a number of great partnerships and potential funding sources for additional projects within your program.

After **UMass** publicly prioritized serving healthy, sustainable, delicious foods on campus, we were approached for partnerships with Congressman James McGovern and his staff, former Massachusetts Agriculture Commissioner Greg Watson, and the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources staff. In 2013, the Henry P. Kendall Foundation awarded us a \$485,000 grant—a portion of which funded this guide. We have now received a second Kendall Foundation grant of \$500,000 for 2015-17. From the start, we believed in sharing our success, and doing so has become one of the most worthwhile strategies we adopted for advancing our sustainability programs.

In many cases, universities and municipalities employ professional grant writers or at least people with experience in writing grants. You should seek out help from specialists within your institution's development office who can help you draft budgets, write grant narratives, prepare progress reports, and research additional funding opportunities. Such grant experts can save you a lot of time, effort, and guesswork as you navigate the complicated terrain of grant applications.

Storytelling & Shifting the Culture within Your Institution

Beyond the immediate benefits of resource development and buzz-making, storytelling is a key element of creating the important *cultural shift* we need to make if local healthy sustainable food system initiatives are to take hold and flourish *within our institutions*. In this respect, storytelling has a critical transformative role to play within our institutions – with students, faculty and staff in the case of higher education – in permanently changing attitudes, beliefs and behaviors not only about local, healthy sustainable food, but also about the power of the institution to make a difference on global issues.

As a foodservice operation, you understand that students typically go to the classroom to learn and the dining commons to eat. Your challenge is to integrate those functions as two related components of an overall campus experience. When internal stakeholders understand not only the practical how-to but also the *why* of sustainable food systems, they will come to view local, healthy, sustainable food in an entirely new way—with a renewed sense of physical, social and emotional well-being.

Many of the marketing strategies described previously in this chapter can have a transformative culture-shifting impact over time. For example, the saturation of information through repetitive display of presentations on large screens in the dining facilities tends to create new patterns of thinking. The messages regularly presented at special events and conferences, at some point will begin to “take hold” as a new mental construct and perspective about “local, healthy sustainable” takes shape. Linking multiple channels of storytelling around a single event is a culture shifting strategy.

Below are three additional of best practices for *internal transformative marketing* to build support, buy-in and feedback loops for staff, faculty, and students.

Dining staff field trips | An important element of internal culture shift is to connect the day-to-day tasks of your dining operations *experientially* to global food issues. You can do this by creating a first-hand experience for dining staff of the closed-loop system of food sustainability.

Faculty Lunches | If you find that faculty members do not ordinarily eat in your dining facilities, simply talking about your project will not be enough. Give the faculty an *experience of dining on healthy, sustainable, local foods*, and they will likely leave as new fans and supporters. Invite faculty to walking tours. Provide them with an overview of your vision and implementation of sourcing and serving healthy, sustainable, local foods. Then, eat lunch together and talk more about your project, its successes and challenges. Before they leave, encourage the faculty to let their students know about this project and its goals.

Classroom Presentations and Student Tours | On any large campus, in-class presentations are an efficient way to reach large numbers students *at the very time when they are prepared to learn!* Larger lecture-room classes provide a broad reach, while smaller seminar classes enable more intimate, candid dialogue about successes and challenges. Classroom interactions give you an opportunity to hear what students are thinking about your program and to learn how they and their friends talk and think about local, healthy and sustainable food. Listen carefully to them; their feedback in these settings will be invaluable to you.

CONCLUSION

“Storytelling” is the serious business of shaping your initiative’s identity in the world (*brand*) and helping you be clear about your *values* and the *results* you are making in the world. There are many different ways to tell a story (*marketing strategy*) and many different venues where you can tell your story (*marketing channels*). Which strategy(ies) and channel(s) you choose will determine the audience (*market*) you will reach and the story (*message*) you want to tell. In short, storytelling opens doors of understanding that can lead to positive action by others on behalf of your initiative.

One of the most important stories you will tell is “Look how well we are doing!” Assessing and evaluating the progress of your initiative is the subject of the next chapter in this Guide.



07 EVALUATE YOUR PERFORMANCE

How to track and measure progress



OVERVIEW

Measuring results and tracking your progress – the auditing process -- entails being clear about what data to track, having the personnel and process to track the data reliably (on time, accurately and with completeness), and regular reporting procedures that let you know how your initiative is doing.

Tracking measurable progress lends credibility to your program in the eyes of your stakeholders and enhances transparency to your success stories. A good audit will reveal adjustments or improvements you need to make to your program.

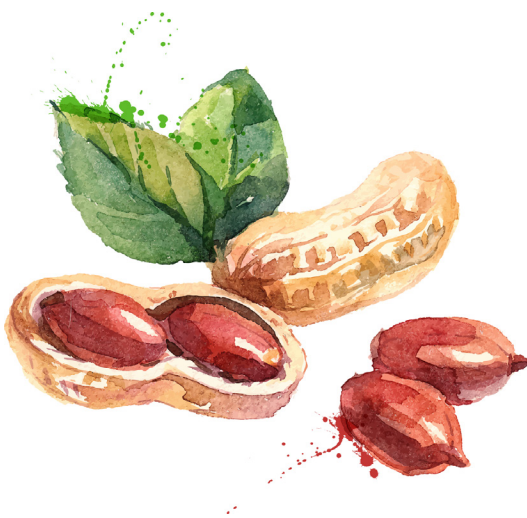
KEY CONCEPTS Tracking and measuring starts with the foundational work you do in the planning phases of your initiative to define what you mean by local, healthy, sustainable food, and to set the quantitative targets your initiative is expected to achieve.

The recommended benchmark measure to evaluate is **amount of local, healthy sustainable food purchased**, expressed in two ways: (1) as a **dollar value**; and (2) as a **percentage of total food purchased by your dining program**.

Data will be derived from **three primary sources**: your dining services purchasing department; your distributors, vendors and suppliers; and your institution's financial management team. Get to know how these players develop and report out the data you will need to track your progress.

Ensure **reliability of data** (accurate, timely and complete) by having the data checked and re-checked before publication. Your data analysis team can be small, and should utilize the expertise of others.

Customer service surveys provide valuable data that indicate the impacts your program is having on customer consumption patterns, health and wellness, and related attitudes and behaviors.



What are you evaluating?

Chapters 1 and 2 of this Guide have given you the foundation for evaluating your progress as you proceed.

- **Definitions of “local” healthy” and “sustainable”** food are the criteria of what to measure.
- **Planning horizon** is the time frame you have set to achieve your initiative’s goals, and the period during which progress will be evaluated.
- **Benchmark measures** establish the units of measurement you will use to evaluate your progress.
- **Baseline values** set the starting position of the respective benchmark measures at the beginning of the planning horizon.
- The **final goal target** sets the end result you have projected to achieve by the end of the planning horizon.
- **Interim goal targets** are milestones you want to achieve (usually annually) across the span of the planning horizon.

Players and Data

Several types of players are involved in the auditing process: your program staff (especially the Data Analysis Team); the Core Planning Team; Dining Services administrators (operating, culinary, financial and purchasing); student interns; your food distributors, and certain food suppliers. Involving students in the audits provides a learning opportunity for them to become immersed in the technical aspects of the foodservice industry, and to be exposed to institutional purchasing practices. Such inclusiveness always enhances transparency, and therefore engenders more trust in your values and where you are allocating financial resources.

In-house staff of **UMass Dining** runs extensive, in-depth audits of our local and sustainable food purchasing on a monthly basis. Three primary sources of data are used to perform the audits: (1) our primary distributors, who prepare consolidated invoices for us on a weekly or monthly basis, and also upon request; (2) internal UMass purchasing recap reports summarizing smaller vendor/ farmer purchases, and (3) usage reports from our dining commons and retail food outlets to confirm what has been purchased, and how it has been used. We then compare notes with students who run the Real Food Challenge “student calculator” which tracks our spending patterns on local, healthy sustainable food purchases. With this data, we prepare a summary of our spending on what we have defined as local, healthy, sustainable food. Measuring against the targets we previously set (see Chapter 2), we present the findings and suggest shifts in the budget that might better help our initiative to reach interim and final goals. The initiative’s management team then makes program and budget adjustments as necessary to keep the program on track.

The tracking process

1 Step 1: Determine and Understand Your Tracking Tools and Procedures. Ask yourself: What tools do I have? How does my institution purchase food and beverages? Where is this information stored? You'll have to learn the ins and outs of your institution's purchasing policies, mechanisms and procedures to learn how to track data most effectively. Even though a majority of the information for analyzing local and sustainable data may come from your distributor's records, your own Data Analysis Team will supplement that information with data from your institution's internal financial records, as well as reports from external individual vendors. Cross-referencing data ensures that the data is accurate and up-to-date.

2 Step 2: Collect, Simplify, Organize. The data collection process will be greatly expedited if you set simplified parameters that will allow the data to be identifiable and reported out across the several respective systems of distributors, individual vendors, and your internal financial management system. As you can imagine, you will be working closely with all your supply chain partners (distributors and vendors), as well as with your in-house financial managers to make sure the results you get from their systems match your tracking needs.

In order to simplify our tracking process and results, our Data Analysis Team identified the questions we were trying to answer as an informed way to frame the information. Beyond knowing what we are spending locally, we also want to know:

- What do we purchase and how much are we spending within Massachusetts?
- What do we purchase and how much are we spending within New England?
- How do our local sustainable food purchases this fiscal year compare with similar purchases in the previous fiscal year?

3 Step 3: Check, Double Check, Triple Check. Data reliability is a hallmark of an impeccably managed program. The numbers you calculate are meant to add value and transparency to your program. Because of this, it is very important to make sure the numbers are accurate.

To prevent missteps and embarrassments, *everyone* on your team should see the numbers. Your Data Analysis Team members are primarily the finders and organizers of data, not necessarily the authority on the accuracy of the data they find and organize. The more eyes on your audits, the more likely mistakes will be caught. And the more likely you will find better ways to track your data and prepare good audits that add decision-making value and transparency to your initiative.

During one of our recent audits at **UMass Dining**, we noticed low procurement levels for local potatoes and carrots; they were being conventionally sourced. These two items are available locally year-round and they are cost-effective because of their abundance in New England and their relatively long shelf life. We quickly and easily shifted to all local potatoes and carrots. This shift, implemented in fall of 2015 was expected to increase our local and sustainable numbers by \$130,000 for the year.

4 Step 4: Report, Re-assess, and Adjust as Necessary. You should create reports of local healthy sustainable food purchases at least twice each fiscal year. This frequency enables you to check your progress against annual targets and then make mid-year adjustments as necessary.



Customer surveys as tools to evaluate progress

As noted in Chapter 5, *customer satisfaction* surveys are important tools to manifest a “customer first” culture. Such surveys have an even greater internal management role to help you understand the impact(s) your work is having on your primary clientele. Use customer satisfaction surveys to track and measure subjective results regarding student attitudes and behaviors in connection with local, healthy, and sustainable food.

As previously mentioned, every semester, UMass Dining conducts a digital survey. The survey questions are developed in conjunction with the University's Director of Survey and Evaluation Research in the Office of Academic Planning & Assessment (OAPA). For the spring semester of 2015, we modified the questionnaire to focus on health and sustainability. The following are some of the questions we asked and the responses of the students:

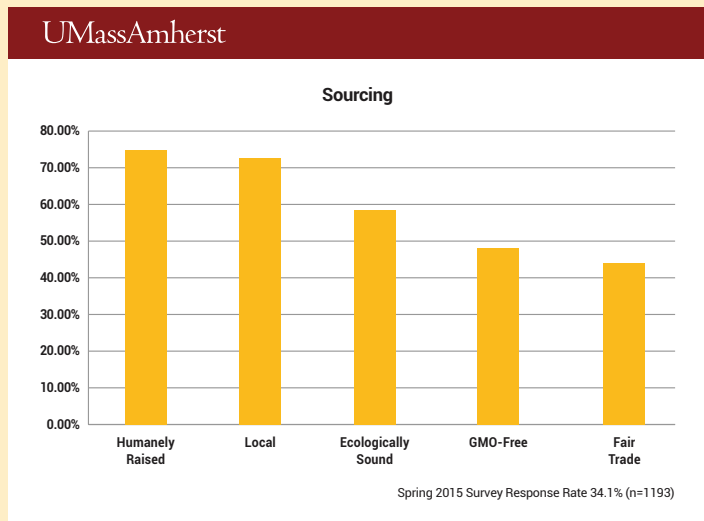
IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINABLE SOURCING

(UMass Dining Survey; Spring 2015)

Question

Please rank in order from 1 (most important) to 5 (least important) each aspect based on how important it is to you, personally.

- Local
- Humanely Raised
- Ecologically Sound
- GMO-Free
- Fair Trade



THE RESULTS REPRESENT STUDENTS RESPONDING SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT AND MOST IMPORTANT.

STUDENT EATING HABITS

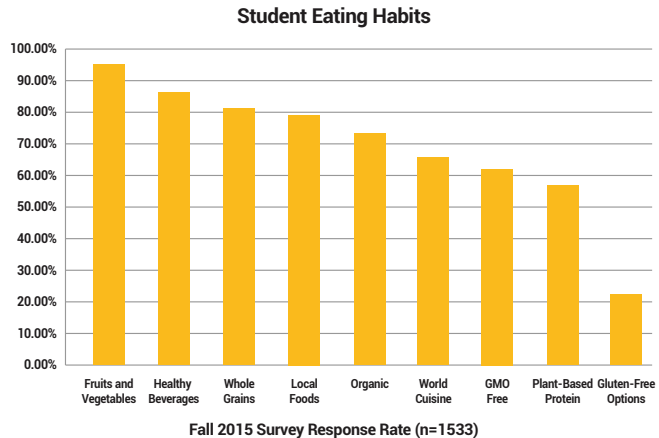
(UMass Dining Survey; Fall 2015)

Question

How important is each of the following to your own personal eating style and habits? (Options are: Very Important, Somewhat Important, Somewhat Unimportant, Very Unimportant.)

- Fruits and Vegetables
- Healthy Beverages
- Whole Grains
- Local Foods
- Organic
- World Cuisines
- GMO Free
- Plant-Based Proteins
- Gluten-Free Options

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THE RESULTS REPRESENT STUDENTS RESPONDING SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT AND VERY IMPORTANT.

Question

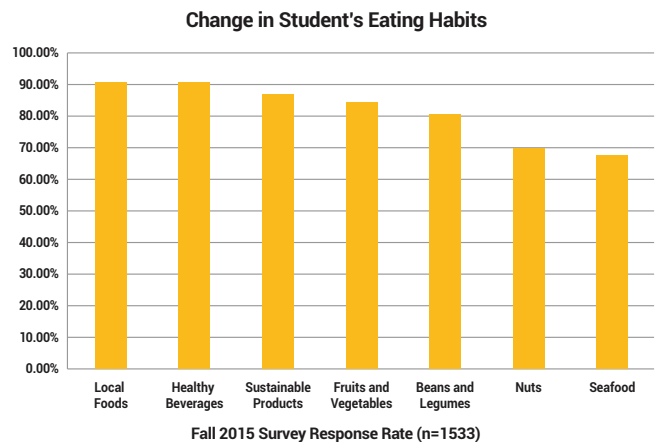
Since you have been eating at UMass Amherst Dining Commons, how much more or less are you now consuming of the following? Participants could select the following responses: Much Less, Somewhat Less, About the Same, Somewhat More, Much More, I am not sure.

- Local Foods
- Healthy Beverages
- Sustainable Products
- Fruits and Vegetables
- Beans and Legumes
- Nuts
- Seafood

CHANGE IN STUDENTS EATING HABITS

(UMass Dining Survey; Fall 2015)

UMassAmherst



THE RESULTS, REPRESENT STUDENTS RESPONDING THEY CONSUME ABOUT THE SAME, MORE OR MUCH MORE IN PERCENTAGE.

LOCAL AND SUSTAINABLE FOODS AND GOOD HEALTH

Question

Do you think eating locally grown foods will help you become healthier?

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Do you think eating locally grown foods will help you become healthier?

Yes, definitely	25.50%
Yes, probably	47.00%
Probably not	15.00%
Definitely not	1.14%
Not sure	11.10%

Spring 2015 Survey Response Rate 34.1% (n=1193)

With a significant majority of students equating “locally sourced” food with “healthy” food, it appears that students are beginning to recognize the nutritional benefits of locally harvested foods.

CONCLUSION

Progress can be measured and evaluated in several different ways. *Quantitative measurements* of milestones toward your projected targets require good up-front planning (to set the measurable objectives accurately) and meticulous data tracking along the way (to know how well you are doing). The process requires a close working relationship between you, your suppliers, and your institution’s purchasing department.

Subjective customer responses are also a measure of progress. Increased customer satisfaction with local, healthy food (as reflected in surveys and interviews) is a valid measure of how well you are performing. The positive feelings expressed to you by farmers and other suppliers is also a measure of your progress. Lastly, anecdotes you read in the media, or in emails and letters sent to you, will indicate if your initiative is taking hold in the way you anticipated.

As your initiative progresses and gains traction with stakeholders on both the supply and demand side of the equation, you will likely find the need to secure further outside support to grow the program. For this, you will need a convincing case statement, which is the subject of the next chapter.

08 GROW YOUR RESOURCES

How to prepare a convincing case statement



OVERVIEW

As you implement initial small projects at the start of your local healthy food system initiative, you probably can find all the resources you need from within your own dining services general operating budget. But as your program grows (you add staff, develop collateral programs, run special events, etc.), you will most likely need to seek additional resources from sources outside your own budget – from your institution’s up-line leadership, a corporate sponsor, a philanthropic organization, or a public agency. The key to securing these external resources will be a compelling proposition that presents a strong and defensible case statement to convince others to invest their dollars, time, goods and services in your initiative. A good case statement can be tailored for a business development proposal, for grant requests, or for up-line approvals to proceed.

KEY CONCEPTS Resources will come from a variety of sources; some will be familiar, and some new.

Find out the **expectations, requirements and goals** of the people and organizations to which you are submitting a case statement. What is their interest in the sustainability movement and in your dining program? What kind of relationship will they want with your initiative once they provide the resources you are requesting? What level of detail do they want in the proposal? What are their reporting requirements?

Case statement documents include a cover letter; project narrative; financial documents and supplementary materials. Prepare a generic set of documents that you can customize as needed for specific resource providers.

The **project narrative** is the heart of your case statement. It summarizes the history and rationale behind the initiative; describes the experience and capacity of your dining services program to undertake the project; and describes what you intend to do with the resources you are soliciting, what results and outcomes you intend to produce, and how you will evaluate your progress and make adjustments along the way.

Financial documents include budget spreadsheets showing anticipated expenditures and revenue for the initiative, as well as narrative descriptions and explanations of any major items in the budget such as key staff positions and capital expenditures.



Know your Audience

You may be submitting a case statement to an up-line supervisor from whom you are seeking approval for an increased allocation of institutional resources to your local, healthy sustainable initiative; or to a foundation for a \$500,000 grant request to help you work more closely with local farm cooperatives; or to a state government agency to support a "Local Sustainable Food Conference" you want to host for other large-scale food purchasers in the state. Whatever the reason, a case statement will generally be structured the same; but the nuances in the substance of the case statement will vary, depending on what the recipient is expecting to see.

We suggest that you prepare and format a generic case statement that will work for any prospective recipient, but that can be tailored to the unique or special needs of each. Meet with the resource provider and ask about their interest in the local, healthy sustainable food system movement. Listen carefully to their response as a way to discern how the case statement will highlight the ways in which your initiative matches their goals and objectives, not just your own. Second, get a sense of their project management style. Some may take a hands-off approach to your project, while others may want close oversight (e.g. more frequent reporting, or site visits), or even a collaborative partnership (e.g. a position on your planning team). The point is not which approach is best, but rather that you should get a sense of the relationship they expect with you before you begin the process of preparing a case statement.

Once the stage is set to submit a case statement, you should seek out specific requirements or expectations of the resource provider. The most important question to ask is, "What level of detail is expected?" The answer will apply both to the project description, as well as to the financial information you will provide. Some may only want a broad general description, while others may want you to describe the project and present financials in great detail. Make sure to ask if they want to "thicken" the statement with lots of supplementary materials such as news clippings, annual reports, brochures, job descriptions, samples of promotional materials, brochures, etc. Lastly, your dining service program may need to find a third-party fiscal sponsor or agent (e.g. your University's Foundation) whose IRS determination will enable you to receive charitable funding.

Case Statement Documents

Cover Letter | A one-page document that states in brief summary terms:

- Name of institution, unit, department, committee, etc.
- Support being requested (be specific: state an explicit dollar amount in the case of funding)
- Qualifications (what makes you worthy of support; proof of integrity, credentials, competence, etc.)
- Overview of the initiative/project (purpose, objectives, what will happen, who will be involved, etc.)
- Impacts if support is provided (benefits to your institution, stakeholders, and community/region)
- Expression of gratitude (thanks) for being considered for support
- Signature/name and title of person responsible for the request

Project Narrative | This document is the descriptive heart of your case statement. It reviews the background leading up to your need for additional resources. It states your qualifications to get the job done responsibly and accountably. The narrative includes a project description, the results you intend to produce, and your method of evaluating your progress and final outcome.

Background and Rationale

This section describes the events and circumstances that have led up to needing a case statement for additional resources. The background should demonstrate that you understand and are engaged with both the current situation and future trends relating to local, healthy, sustainable food in institutions such as yours. Include your vision and mission, and as well as relationships you have already built to get started, and projects you may already have implemented that evidence your serious commitment. You may wish to note any challenges to overcome (also called threats and risks), that are key items to acknowledge in your case statement. It is almost certain that you will be asked about them later, so why not be up front and honestly state the things you may need to overcome. Don't forget to align your program's mission to the goals of the entity to whom you are submitting the case statement.

Qualifications

This section provides information that will validate why your dining services program is the right entity to be doing this. You want to present information that will inspire confidence in the reader that your program will be successful in implementing the project activities for which their resources are being requested. Make sure to connect basic information about your organization and its people (history, credentials and awards, prior experience, relationships with stakeholders, etc.) to the specific intent and focus of local, healthy sustainable food systems. This is an opportunity to differentiate your capabilities from others who may be making similar requests for similar projects.

Project Description

Here you will want to provide an outline that describes what you are going to do with the resources being requested (i.e. how, and on what items, people, and activities the resources will be expended). Break down your project description into discrete component pieces; either chronological phases or broad tasks.

Intended Results

Results will come in three flavors: Quantitative results are the measurable goal targets you set in Chapter 2. Qualitative results are subjective attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that change as a result of your initiative. Anecdotal results are stories you hear about effects your program has had in the world. Whatever results you describe, you must also show how the result will be documented or evidenced. (see Table on the next page).

Method of evaluation

The method evaluation is a description of the process by which you will determine if the intended results you have projected are being produced. In explaining your evaluation process, outline what will be measured (see Chapter 2); the approach to measuring (see Chapter 7); how often measurements will take place; and the process of making adjustments as necessary.

Intended Results and the Method of Evaluation

Type of result	Example of a result	Evidence to show result	Method of Evaluation	Frequency
Quantitative (operating data)	x% of total food purchased is spent on local, healthy sustainable food	Financial data from distributors and purchasing department	Performance audit	Semi-annually
Quantitative (customer data)	Diners eating more beans and legumes	Responses to survey questions	Customer survey	Each semester
Qualitative	Diners like new local, healthy menu item(s)	On-line posted comments	Records of Txt n Tell input	Ongoing
Anecdotal	Local farmers enjoy working with the institution	Stories and testimonials	Archived emails/letters	Ongoing

Financial Documents | A case statement will include two kinds of financial statements

Project Financials

Financial documents for the project come in two forms. First, spreadsheets present sources and amounts of expenditures, income, savings, and overall returns (gross and net surplus/deficit) of the initiative. Keep in mind that institutions do not all have the same financial guidelines or practices. You should confirm at the very beginning what reporting will be expected at the completion of the project. Second, you should provide narrative explanations for (a) any major items of expense for which the resources being requested will be used, such as capital equipment, extraordinary travel, etc., (b) key salaried and contracted personnel, including their roles and costs for each as reflected in the spreadsheet figures, and (c) any comments or notes that you feel will clarify any unusual, unexpected, or special/unique aspects of the financial numbers (you might include charts that are easier to read and interpret than a spreadsheet of numbers).

Institutional financial statement/audit.

Foundations will likely require a copy of your parent institution's most recent financial statements and/or audited financials.

Supplementary Materials | (optional, depending on the expectation of the recipient of the case statement)

501(c)(3) or other IRS tax determination letter

Most foundations and public agencies will require you (or your institution) to provide a copy of your Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax determination letter indicating that your organization is eligible to receive charitable funding. If the project has a fiscal sponsor, the 501(c)(3) determination letter of the fiscal sponsor will be required in addition to a letter from them indicating their willingness to assume fiscal and administrative reporting responsibility for the request you are making.

Fiscal Sponsor Letter (if applicable)

If project financial support necessitates a fiscal sponsor, you will need to secure a letter from an authorized official or agent of the fiscal sponsor confirming their agreement to assume fiscal responsibility as well as financial and administrative reporting responsibility for the grant.

Collateral materials

Annual reports, newsletters, media coverage, and/or brochures about your program and its relationship to local, healthy, sustainable food systems.

CONCLUSION

As we said at the start of this chapter, everyone from whom you are soliciting support for your initiative will want to know why you want support, for what purpose, and whether or not you are qualified to receive that support. Admittedly, not every such request you make will require a formal case statement with all of the elements we have described here. But preparing a template of a case statement of the kind outlined in this chapter, will prepare you to submit a proposal response that is well-conceived, sincere and convincing.





Conclusion


Themes for a promising future

In concluding this Guide, we would like to share with you several broad themes that we believe contribute most to the success of our Local Healthy UMass Food System Initiative:

Alignment with the mission of our institution. As the foodservice sustainability program within a large public research university, we make sure that our vision, values, plans, and actions are consistent with the higher-order mission of the university and its leadership. In our case, our Chancellor envisions our university to be a destination of choice for the best and brightest minds from a broad and inclusive spectrum of society. While UMass Dining may not be an academic department, our local healthy food system initiative forwards the Chancellor's vision: by promoting health and wellness through nutrition; by enlivening life at UMass with special events and interesting culinary programs; by offering fascinating co-curricular opportunities that engage the minds of our Millennial customers, and by bringing prestige and recognition to our university through national and international awards.

Values. We keep strong and consistent commitments: to sustainability, to the health and wellness of the people we serve, to the programmatic and financial contributions we make to our institution, and to the social and economic vitality of the region in which we work. Our vision of future success is a very tangible reflection of these values, and we reinforce that picture each and every day into the culture of our operation, top to bottom at UMass Dining: from Directors, to mid-level managers and supervisors, right down to line workers and part-time employees.

Strategic Thinking and Planning. Our decision-making process is marked by the basic strategic question, "What is the best attitude, behavior, action, resource or relationship that will get us where we want to go?" We are in a continuous planning mode to be best-in-class; always cognizant of the road map we've drawn, and always checking whether or not we are headed along the best route and direction to our destination (i.e. our vision). The status of our goals and targets is constantly in our thinking. We are vigilant and diligent about gathering and tracking accurate, timely, and complete data. We carefully assess and interpret what the data is telling us, and what adjustments and changes we need to make to accommodate the challenges and opportunities in our environment.



Organizational Capacity. We are mindful of three questions regarding our ability get the job done in alignment with our values and vision: Do we have a *structure* that is efficient and effective; do we have the *resources* we need; and are the *people on the team* being given what they need to flourish in their work. Our ability to secure major philanthropic revenue has opened a new dimension of revenue enhancement to our dining services program. By manifesting itself as a living laboratory for serious scholarly research and community impact, UMass Dining not only aligns itself with the core academic mission of the university, but we become a significant element of the university's resource development (fundraising) equation. In the setting of a large public research university, it is never easy to put in place everything we would like to have, or give our team all it wants; and often we have to deal with emergencies that divert our energies away from long range planning. In these moments, our vision and values, and our attention to planning and evaluation keep us grounded. Our commitment to our work keeps us motivated in the face of daunting situations that always seem to arise.

Relationships. Plain and simple, our local healthy food system initiative could not flourish without the attention we place on our stakeholders, partners and supporters. As you read this Guide, we hope you notice the way we speak about and deal with farmers, vendors large and small, students, grant funders, up-line leaders within our institution, and peer colleagues, organizations, and institutions. You can build productive and resourceful relationships for your local, healthy food system initiative by being flexible with local foodservice suppliers, by providing impeccable service to your customers, by making sure your local sourcing is traceable and your systems transparent, and by maintaining communication that is two-way, respectful and sensitive to others.

Storytelling. This theme is part of everything you do and part each of the above five topics. Telling your story confirms your *alignment with your institution*. It is a *strategic* activity that shapes your initiative's identity in the eyes of others. The narrative of your initiative *builds organizational capacity* by bringing resources to the table, and by creating a positive shift in the culture regarding local, healthy, sustainable food. Lastly, the communication channels you maintain with your stakeholders, partners and supporters enhances the impact of your *relationship-building* process.

UMass Dining | Focusing on our Future

The pilot project for the Local Healthy UMass Food System Initiative is just a beginning. In addition to the short-term goals that UMass Dining developed for this project, we also have a number of long-term aspirations, several of which we are currently implementing:

- Transformation of UMass Dining into a Living Laboratory for co-curricular research and learning
- Leadership in a campus-wide Health and Wellness Engagement Initiative
- Building a fully thriving local food economy in which at least 50% of food comes from New England. Whenever local sourcing is not possible, all other foods and beverages would come from a humane/sustainable source. (this is the “50 by 60” challenge proposed by Food Solutions New England (FSNE)).
- Increasing accessibility of local food to institutions and individuals across New England. The work we do to source local and sustainable foods will increase the capacity of the New England food system to provide fresh, healthy food to all people.
- Ensuring transparency in what we purchase by partnering with UMass Amherst students to audit our invoices
- Building a foodservice culture that encourages, engages and rewards all foodservice employees to invest our vision of *Healthy, Sustainable, Delicious*
- Achieving food literacy on campus by incorporating the healthy, sustainable, delicious concept into the standard curriculum and campus experience for all students.
- Becoming a dynamic and innovative model that can be replicated by every New England foodservice provider, including K-12 schools and healthcare systems
- Growing the New England food economy, by mobilizing high-volume foodservice providers to focus on the vitality of mid-sized enterprises in the food supply chain and building relationships with all food system stakeholders

Envisioning the Future of Local Food

While we cannot predict the future, UMass Amherst and its institutional counterparts throughout New England are well positioned to be the change we seek. At UMass alone, we are on pace to re-purpose annually, more than \$3 million of our conventional food budget to purchase local, sustainable items. We have a dedicated team that is constantly looking for ways to increase local and regional sourcing. From our vantage point, we see the following trends emerging in the near future:

- More emphasis will be placed on sourcing lean local proteins which are as essential to the success of our initiative as the sourcing of local produce.
- Food hubs will continue to gain in popularity to meet growing demand for locally sourced items. As prices drop, the demand will grow even more.
- Foods once considered seasonal will become available year-round through more and better value-added products and preservation processes.
- Demand for local, healthy, sustainable food will continue to grow among our student customers as their “Food IQ” continues to rise. Students will increasingly insist on local and ecologically sound sourcing, as well as humane treatment in animal products.
- *Local* will increasingly be equated with *healthy*. Seventy percent our customers already identify healthful living with eating locally. This preference will continue to grow.

In short, sourcing locally is not only important but essential to the vitality of the food system of the Northeast USA. As unprecedented levels of storms and drought disrupt the supply of the most basic food items, it becomes imperative that a rich and robust regional food system be developed so that future populations don't have to rely on food being sourced thousands of miles away.



Sharing Best Practices

For sustainability to be truly successful and beneficial in the grand scheme, it must be implemented far and wide, beyond our own Hampshire Dining Commons, and even beyond the six-state New England region. In telling our story, we are sharing what UMass Dining has learned and what works for us. We know, however, that there is no cookie-cutter method for implementing strategies of sustainability. So much depends on the people and culture of an institution, and no two institutions are alike. What we know is that by sharing our experience with other institutions, we can at least provide guidance, if not an overall solution. As we said earlier, there is no need to reinvent the wheel every time an institution wishes to start a farm-to-institution initiative.

At the end of day, what matters is that sustainability work is *the right thing to do* -- that it supports a just and environmentally sound food system that benefits *everyone*. That being the case, our first instinct must be to share our stories and progress with as many people as possible.

A Final Word

The relationship of food to humanity and personal well-being has been explored for thousands of years. As Hippocrates said, "Let food be thy medicine..." Our intent today is not to elevate local, healthy, sustainable food as a fashionable trend, or to extend its popularity to future generations. Yet we do expect the impact of our efforts today to have an impact for many years to come, and as such, we must be mindful of the cause and effect that our collective behaviors, patterns and habits will have in relation to food consumption. Food is not an option to take or leave; rather, as framed in Maslow's hierarchy, food is one of the "physiological essentials" -- most fundamental to survival.

We thank you for using this Guide and trust that your local healthy food system initiative will benefit from it. Our hope is that you take the tips, hints and lessons of this Guide, make them your own, and implement them. We all are citizens of the earth and collectively, we are responsible for its stewardship.

University of Massachusetts

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