

Marquis Hall Food Services – Trayless Dining for Waste Reduction

Many universities across Canada and the United States have made the decision to go trayless in their cafeterias and dining halls. They are experiencing many benefits including a lessened environmental impact, a higher level of social awareness and reduced costs.

Most universities report that, during the first few weeks of being trayless, they experienced a small amount of resistance but once students and faculty were informed of the positive effects that the change would have for the environment and for the school they were happy to participate.

Marquis Hall Food Services would like to implement the change to trayless this fall in order to promote more sustainable practices on campus and reduce the costs associated with tray use.

Benefits of Trayless Dining

Benefits of going trayless according to an Aramark study done in July 2008 include:

Environmental

- Conserves energy by eliminating the need to heat water for tray washing.
- Reduces dependence on fossil fuels.
- Saves one-third to one-half gallon of water per tray.
- Reduces chemicals, detergents and drying agents used to wash trays.
- Decreases discharge into landfills, incinerators and wastewater treatment facilities.
- Lessens the ecological footprint.

Social Awareness

- Supports education and awareness of environmental issues.
- Reinforces institutions' sustainability initiatives.
- Encourages students to participate in a "green initiative" that has both personal and community impact.
- Reinforces sustainability awareness on a daily basis.

Economic

- Saves on cost of water and energy.
- Saves on cost of detergent and rinse/drying agents.
- Eliminates cost of trays.
- Reduces food-waste removal costs.

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<http://www.aramarkhighered.com/assets/docs/whitepapers/ARAMARK%20Trayless%20Dining%20July%202008%20FINAL.PDF>, on June 11, 2010

According to the estimations of water savings Marquis Hall would save between 530 – 800 gallons of water each day (based on serving 1600 people per day). Food savings and waste reduction would have to be gauged once the change is implemented but results comparable to the other universities are expected.

Universities That Have Made the Change to Trayless Dining

The University of Maine went trayless in February 2007. They participated in the Aramark study and reported the following benefits.

<p>Trayless Impact</p> <p>Environmental</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced waste by 5 ounces per person (46 pounds per person per year)• Reduced overall waste by 65,000 pounds• Conserved 288, 288 gallons of water• Saved energy to heat water• Reduced dish detergent and sanitizer <p>Social</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Created greater awareness about food waste and environmental impact• Improved image of dining experience• Recognized by the community for reducing wastewater to treatment plant• Students appreciated the sustainability initiative• Students reported a better dining visual experience without the trays <p>Economic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total estimated annual economic impact : \$57,000

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Many other universities reported similar results including three Universities around Halifax: University of Kings College, Acadia and Saint Mary's University. Attached is a list of other Universities that participate in a trayless program.

Anticipated Difficulties with Trayless Dining

Universities that have been interviewed about the change to trayless dining have also stated that there were some difficulties that arose but they were short lived and did not outweigh the benefits of making the switch. These problems included difficulties balancing a plate with a cup and cutlery, resistance from diners that eat more than one plate and general resistance to change from staff, faculty and students. Overall, once people were used to the change and explained the positive benefits of trayless dining they were receptive.

Marquis Hall plans to address these possible problems by developing educational material such as pamphlets, posters and tent card and having the cutlery station in the dining hall as well as a water station.

People with disabilities that require the use of a tray will be provided with one so that dining at Marquis Hall is as easy and as comfortable as possible for them.

Conclusion

Switching to trayless dining will benefit the campus and the community. There are many benefits and very few downfalls to making the change. Such a change will represent a positive step for Marquis Hall and the University towards a higher level of social responsibility.