

ON-CAMPUS HOSPITALITY

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Sustainability

2010

Report

Plus: NACAS Preview

SUSTAINABILITY

A GREEN BUFFALO

Green Directory

THE UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO (UB) IN NEW YORK MAKES DOING ITS PART TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT A PRIORITY.

“UB has been a very proactive environmental college doing a lot of things, whether it is environmental or through the engineering program, to look at ways to improve the environment and lessen our impact on the community and the environment overall,” said Raymond Kohl, marketing manager with UB Campus Dining and Shops.

A recent initiative has been the move away from polystyrene containers over the last three years. “We listened to our stakeholders and it was a priority for them to get out of the polystyrene business,” said Jeff Brady, executive director for Campus Dining and Shops. “We knew that we couldn’t do it all in one year because of the cost incurred. We are just about at the end of that road right now because of all the changes we have done but again, there is a cost incurred, so we spread that out over the last three years. We have spent more than \$100,000 in the transition. A lot of these products are now starting to come down in price. At first, when it was a hot topic out there at a lot of universities, we were paying some prime prices for these products. We are starting to see a movement in the market where the prices are coming down.”

Part of the plan was to approach manufacturers with whom they were already doing business. “We went back to Solo and told Solo here is the issue at stake: ‘This is the cup that we are using now, it is wax coated,’” he said. “We want to be out of that business and we want to be able to supply our units with a cup that is much more sustainable, made from compostable material.” They went back to the drawing board and gave us a couple of samples and said here is what we can offer. We looked at it, we brought it back to our stakeholders, asked them what they thought, gave them all of the background about the product itself, decided on that product and went forward.”

In addition to speaking to manufacturers, the school spoke with other colleges and universities. “What’s great about the university community is that a lot of people are willing to share what is working on their campus and what is not working, whether it is from NACUFS (National Association of College and University Food Services) groups or NACAS (National Association of College Auxiliary Services) groups,” said



The demand for sustainable products and services in college and university food service remains very high. Students, faculty and staff have an increased interest in knowing how their schools are working to meet this demand.

Letting them know what programs you are undertaking on campus is a start, but being able to provide them with the green initiatives your suppliers have implemented will help you to broaden your students’ understanding of the total efforts you are taking on campus.

On the following pages, selected suppliers tell you what they are doing to make sure the products and services they provide are just what you need to help meet this demand.



SUSTAINABILITY

AT A GLANCE

University at Buffalo — Buffalo, N.Y.

Enrollment: 29,050

Type of operation: Self-Op

Number of dining facilities on campus: 4 Residential Dining Centers; 23 Restaurants/Cafés

Approximate number of meals served daily: 11,000

Annual food/beverage purchases (in dollars): \$5,515,000

Key Staff:

Jeff Brady, executive director

Tony Demola, director of operations

Kenneth Germain, assistant director, dining services

Delanda Kent, corporate chef, dining centers

Jean Stone, corporate chef, restaurants/cafés

Kohl. “Everyone is very willing, because everyone is dealing with the same issues on other campuses, which is nice.”

They got in touch with one school after reading an article in *On-Campus Hospitality* to help their search for an eco-friendly take-out container. “The eco-clamshell that we are using in our residential dining center is one that *On-Campus Hospitality* featured in March of this year,” he said. “I reached out to Alabama and we talked to them about how the program worked for them and what the students thought of it.”

After speaking with them, they test marketed the containers on campus during the spring. “When the students came back in the fall, we completely rolled it out,” said Kohl. “If they were going to get a meal to go, that is the container they would get; it would allow us to completely eliminate polysty-

rene containers. Students have received it very well. Last year, 109,000 containers ended up in the landfill, and that has gone by the wayside now.”

To help introduce the program to freshmen students, UB put other students at the register area. “We felt that the students could get the message across a lot cleaner than if we had managers up there,” said Brady. “Sometimes they don’t tend to listen to managers, but when they have another freshman explaining that this is great for the environment, they will. It was received very well. Right from the start, the students bought into it.”

To introduce all of its sustainability efforts to incoming freshmen, the school also holds an annual “Farm to Fork New Student Picnic” when the students arrive on campus. “We had 4,200 students on campus for their first time,” Kohl said. “We were really showing them that we are very involved in local buying. We decided to put together this picnic where 90 percent of the product was grown here in western New York. We developed a menu around that, and we showcased to the students that we are very involved in the community and also support the community. With the sustainability piece, again you have the freshmen coming in, starting off right from the get-go that we are serious about sustainability, about recycling everything that was used at the picnic. It helped us develop that culture and it was received really well.”

The school also hosts an annual Pride of New York Showcase event during the fall semester, showcasing a number of the local vendors that supply the school. “One of the best ways to appreciate the diversity and abundance of New York State food products is to talk with the people who actually produce them,” he said. “Supporting local businesses, reducing transportation emissions; there are so many benefits to buying local foods. This is a great way to give our consumers the opportunity to talk to our farmers and food producers, and learn more about the Pride of New York.”