Consumer-Driven Food Sustainability: Making Our Choices Matter on Campus

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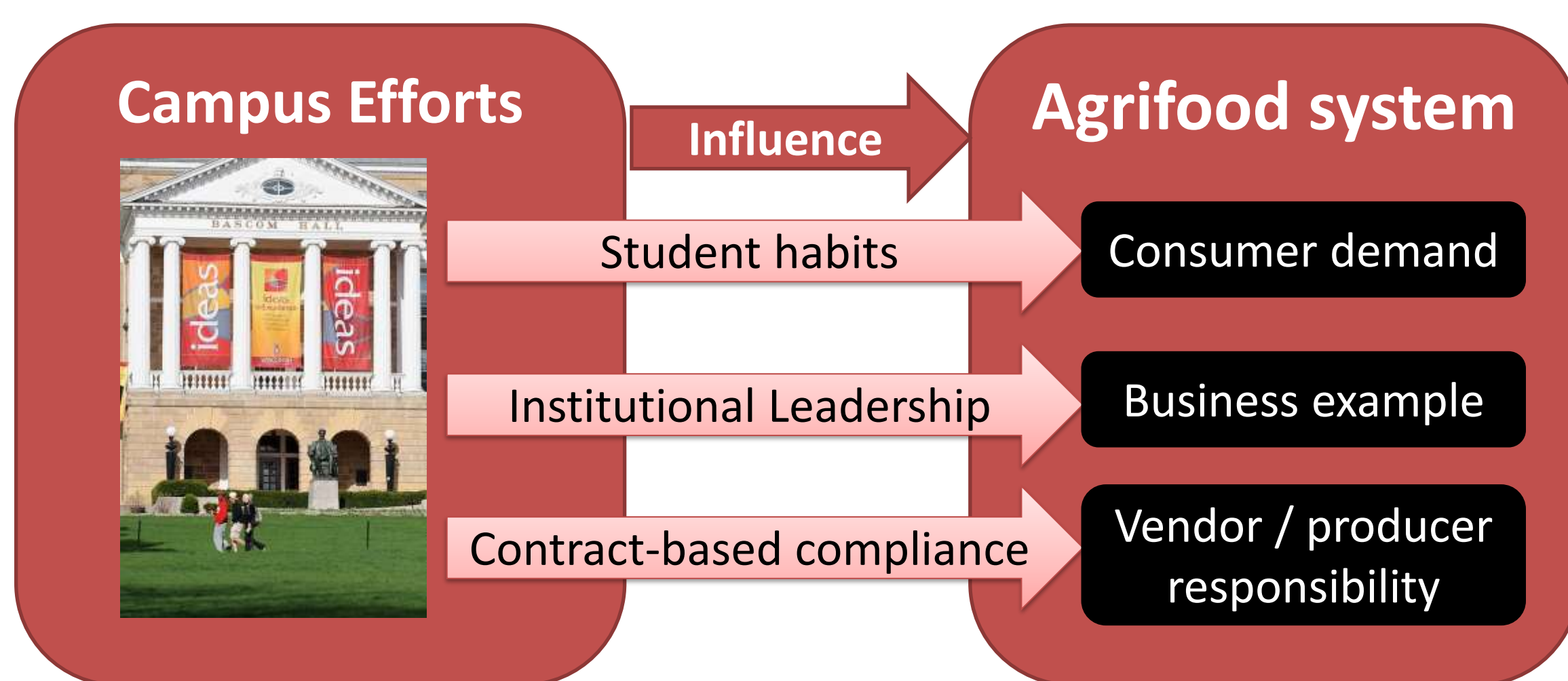[1]UW-Madison Nelson Institute, Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment
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NELSON INSTITUTE FOR Environmental Studies
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

UW-MADISON OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY PARTNER

Student-Driven Sustainability

- Students in the Environmental Studies capstone class will work on semester-long campus food projects that have the capacity to contribute to **transformational change** toward an alternative food system.

- Campus is a unique place—a microcosm of which to affect change—where **students form lifelong habits** that can influence the rest of the world. Experiential learning helps builds new coalitions and can reshape students' relationships with food and place.

- The emergence of sustainability rankings in higher education offers an opportunity to **extend the university's leadership to external entities** and showcase best practices.

- As a class, we are developing campus metrics around key food sustainability issues – student consumption trends, student food options, plastic bag consumption, and retailer receipts. We hope to highlight the current conditions and facilitate change across campus through student outreach emphasizing the power of their consumer choices.

- Results will provide a framework for future tracking and assessment of food-related sustainability goals not capture by other campus efforts.

Campus Efforts → Influence → Agrifood system

Campus Efforts		Agrifood system
	Student habits	Consumer demand
	Institutional Leadership	Business example
	Contract-based compliance	Vendor / producer responsibility

Acknowledgements

Senior Capstone Projects, Environmental Studies 600 Spring 2014

@EatSmartUW
Team members: Mia Haberkorn, Molly Ryan, and Jacob Wolf

uwfoodsustainability
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Follow us to get information about sustainable food on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus!

TWEETS 2 FOLLOWING 74 FOLLOWERS 27   Edit profile

Eat Smart UW!
An Educational Initiative for Sustainable Food on Campus

We aim to create a cultural shift among students to create an economically feasible market for more sustainable dining options on campus. To achieve this, we will:

1) **Develop a Campus Sustainable Food Guide.** We are developing a website to provide easily-digestible information about food sustainability focused on campus-specific issues to aid student decision making.

2) **Launch a social media campaign to increase awareness** about food sustainability issues and highlight places on campus that are already taking steps to provide students with green choices. *Follow us on twitter: @EatSmartUW.*

3) **Host a dinner in Rheta's dining hall highlighting local and seasonal options** to actively engage students in their campus food experience and encourage diners to seek out these foods.

As awareness and interest grows around food sustainability, we believe a unified group of students has the power to implement long-lasting change on our campus.

Bag-Free Badgers
Team members: Andrew Gleason, Curtis Salter, Colton Schara, and Jay Skinner

How big is our plastic bag problem?

Annually, consumers use:
- 75 million bags in Madison (Cap Times)
  - *Enough to fill every seat in Camp Randall with 933 bags!*
- 100 billion bags nationally (Wall Street Journal)
- Up to 1 trillion bags globally (Worldwatch Institute)

To address this problem we will initiate a cultural shift away from using disposable plastic bags using the following educational approach:

THANK YOU THANK YOU GO GREEN THANK YOU THANK YOU Have a nice day.

1) **Develop an informational flowchart** illuminating the environmental impacts of a student's choice to use plastic, paper, or reusable grocery bags. Flowcharts will be posted on bulletin boards across campus, targeting bag decision-making populations and locations.

2) **Create web content and blog** including commentaries, links, and summaries of relevant videos and reports to serve as a student hub.

3) **Quantify UW student bag consumption baseline**, and show the potential of small changes by individuals to have large effects across campus (metrics!)
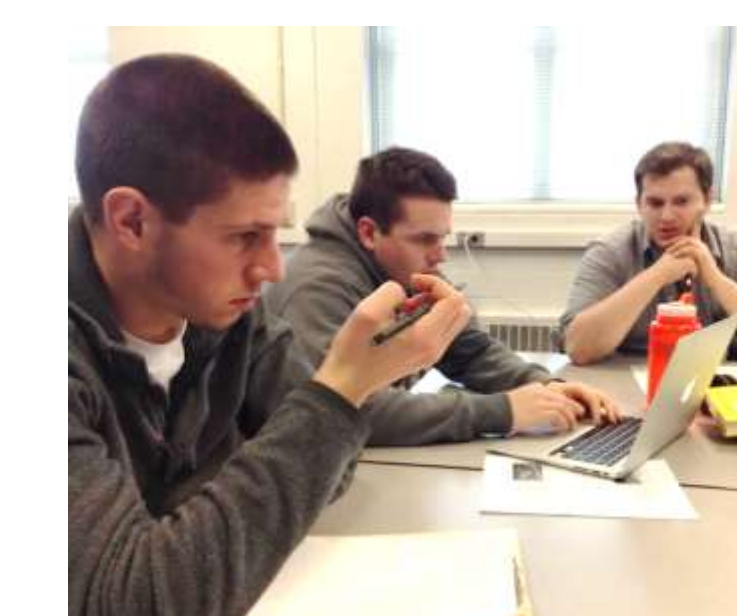

Food Sustainability Map
Team members: Danielle Caputo, Jennifer Tirella, Russell Wagner

Student Sustainable Dining Options Revealed! In 2013, $168,560.95 of grass-fed beef patties were in consumed in UW Madison dining halls, and most students didn't even know it! After learning about this success, we wanted to know more about sustainable foods offered on campus and find a way to help other students learn about them too!
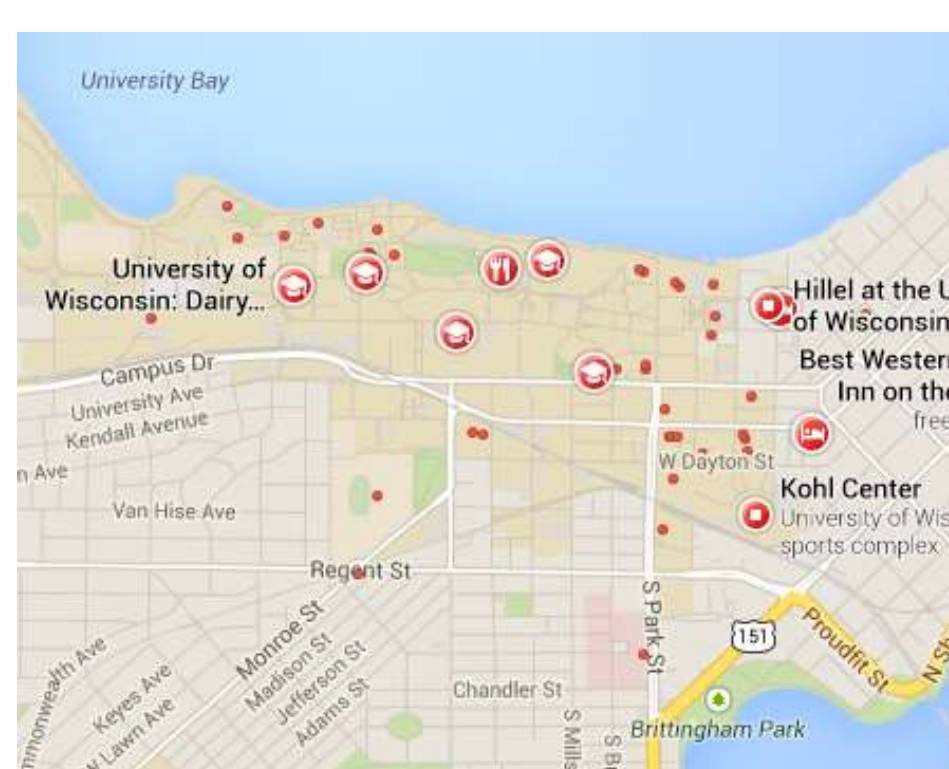
A Campus Sustainable Dining Map will be created to empower students to evaluate their food choices and provide them with the right tools to make sustainable decisions on campus.

We will quantify current student consumption trends and food choice options, and assess dining options based on the following criteria to inventory and rank UW's sustainable eatery options:

Post-consumer composting	Local	Free Range	Fair-trade
Pre-consumer composting	Organic	Gluten Free	Vegan
Recycling	Reusable to-go containers	Grass-fed	Dairy Free
Reusable Dishware	Reusable discounts	Vegetarian	Humane

Receipt Reduction
Team members: Rachel Feil, Ben Stansbury-O'Donnell, and Chris Taylor

"Do you want your receipt?"

Usually, the answer is "No". Receipts take up space in your wallet, litter the floor of your apartment, and frequently the only information you want is your account balance when using a campus card, which gets displayed on the register's LED screen anyways. So if you don't want the receipt, *why do they print it at all?*

UW entities and businesses have various reasons for printing receipts—to keep a transaction log, allow easy resolutions to customer charge disputes, or simply because it is the norm. To help overcome these issues, we will develop and distribute a **Receipt Reduction Resource (R3) guide** to help campus businesses go paper free.

To support this effort, we will launch a social media campaign and work to quantify the amount of receipts that UW produces, with an eye on potential savings. With these goals in mind, we hope to help reduce the amount of paper that the University and businesses consume, which is good for both the environment and business' wallets.