

CMC Sustainable Food Policy Guidelines

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Why a college-wide Sustainable Food Policy?

Why should you change your day to day business practices?

As an institution that prides itself in academic excellence in an accessible medium, it is important that CMC takes seriously its potential to drive development of socially and environmentally responsible services and products.

On September 25th, 2009 the President of Colorado Mountain College, Stan Jensen, signed the American College and University President's Climate Commitment. Since that time, CMC has devoted a considerable amount of money and energy towards sustainability efforts. In addition, the Real Food Challenge commitment, signed by the Alpine Campus in 2014, holds the campus accountable to source 20 percent Real Food in their food service by 2020. By combining these efforts and making them an integrated part of college-wide business practices, CMC will be using its considerable purchasing power to support a healthy food system that strengthens local economies, respects human rights, ensures ecological sustainability, and facilitates community involvement and education.

By adopting and mobilizing a formal sustainable food policy CMC would bridge the gap between isolated projects sustained by the interest and involvement of students and faculty and an institutional framework for understanding and making change towards a more sustainable food system.

Benefits of a Sustainable Food Policy

- Demonstrate CMC's commitment to sustainability
- Improve public/community relations
- Meet or exceed quality and cost expectations by using more thoughtful menu planning and product ordering
- Participate in and support local economies
- Attract a more diverse student population
- Minimize CMC's global footprint
- Realize marketing advantages over less proactive competitor schools
- Boost AASHE STARS rating (should the college join this rating system)
- Set a positive examples for stakeholders
- Raise morale and deliver health benefits for students and staff
- Reduce waste and waste disposal charges

- Create and rationalize incentives for change by food and food service suppliers.
- Build support and unity from campus-campus and faculty-dining

Possible Limitations to Implementation

- Contractual stipulations with current food provider, Sodexo.
 - Other schools have had success in negotiating contract terms during renewal periods.
- Compliance and participation of dining managers and employees
 - Would require enthusiasm and effort of already busy managers
- Organization of efforts between segregated CMC campuses
 - Leadership role could go to student interns or a sustainability coordinator (paid position).
- Regional weather barriers.
 - Seasonal menu planning would be necessary to reach higher real food percentages, again requiring participation from dining staff.
- Research of possible product shifts would require student or faculty time.
- Efforts to make product shifts must be consistent in order to keep community perception of school high.

CMC's Advantages and "Low Hanging Fruit"

- Serving small student populations will allow CMC to use smaller producers
- Campuses that have a Culinary Arts Programs have potential to integrate dining services to provide experiential learning as well as cut costs
- Small number of dining halls allows for faster and more efficient implementation
- Proximity to cattle country and Palisade, CO farmers allow for easy "local" product shifts
- Successful shifts and processes can be replicated at various campuses

Standards of Sustainable Food Purchasing

1. College-Wide Goals

Following the lead of the Alpine Campus, CMC as a whole will adopt the Real Food Campus Commitment, pledging to switch to 20 percent real food by 2020, by dollar value. After 2020, real food purchases will increase by 3 percent a year, eventually reaching 100 percent real food.

2. Defining Real Food

What is Real Food?

“Real food” will be used as a holistic term to describe products that are healthy as well as local, fair, ecologically sound, and/or humane. Local and fair refer to *who* produced the food, and ecologically sound and humane refer to *how* the food was produced.

For CMC, “local” products should include products that come from within the state of Colorado OR within a 100 mile radius of the dining service.

For the purposes of assessment and tracking, real food should be defined by a particular set of third party certifications and other independently verifiable criteria.

Disqualifiers

Transparency within all stages of the food system is of utmost importance when considering sustainable food purchasing. Products with unclear origins or coming from sources unwilling/unable to verify or provide data should be considered disqualified.

In order to maintain high and clear standards of what sustainable food is, food products coming from companies or distributors that have been found to exhibit *unsustainable* behavior should be avoided at all costs. Products coming from these backgrounds should be considered disqualified from real food status. Examples unsustainable behavior include (but are not limited to):

- Producer is known to be found guilty of or cited with charges of slave labor, indentured servitude, OSHA violations, or the like.
- Producer is known Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO)
- Product is likely to contain GMO's (e.g. non organic corn, corn products including high fructose corn syrup; soy and soy products; canola and canola products)

Further specifications and disqualifiers may be found at:
<http://www.realfoodchallenge.org/sites/g/files/g809971/f/201509/Real%20Food%20Guide%20Sept%202015.pdf>

Real Food A vs. Real Food B

Those food items that can be verifiably identified as satisfying one of the four core real food criteria above is given a “Real Food B” designation (e.g. Food that is grown by a local family farm but sprayed with pesticides or a food item from a foreign company that is certified organic – good but not the best option). “Real Food A” is defined by those food items that meet two or more of the real food criteria (e.g. Coffee that is organically produced *and* fairly traded, or meat that is humanely *and* locally raised and processed – that is the ideal).

Dietary Standards

Campus Food Services will provide a wide selection of nutritious meals with a healthy balance of whole grains, lean protein, fruits and vegetables. School will make available well-labeled meals that are:

- free of trans-fats
- free of high fructose corn syrup
- free of artificial growth hormones and sub-therapeutic antibiotics
- free of pesticides and herbicides

2. Procurement

Purchasing Prioritization

CMC will work with distributors to identify Real Food A and B among its purchasing options and will automatically give preferential status to Real Food A or B products where price competitive. In all other cases, the school will work to prioritize Real Food options to the extent possible.

Direct Purchasing

CMC will give preferential status to direct purchasing relationships with local producers and will purchase from them directly whenever possible.

CMC will work to establish contract growing agreements in which the price and quantity of the product that will be purchased are arranged with the local producer before the season starts.

Local Collaboration and Liaisons

CMC will identify local extension educators and other agricultural professionals that can assist existing or interested growers with the tools they need to effectively meet institutional demand – including food safety, distribution, product aggregation, liability insurance, etc. The school will serve as an active partner in this process.

Liability Insurance

CMC and local collaborators will help individual farmers work together to develop a group approach for addressing food safety and product liability insurance requirements. Where possible, the institution will lower the amount of product liability insurance coverage required so as to make this requirement feasible for small- to mid-scale local farmers and ranchers.

Cost-Saving Measures

CMC will pursue creative cost saving measures in order to devote greater funds towards real food priorities. Cost-saving measures may include, but are not limited to: (1) Switching from brand-name to generic items whenever possible (e.g. breakfast cereals), (2) Reducing portion sizes or utilizing portion-control service techniques (especially with meat), and (3) instituting “Meatless Mondays” or similar menu alterations.

Seasonal Food Items

CMC will alter menu cycles so as to feature local, seasonally available foods as a way to accustom cooks and eaters to cooking with the seasons and ensure that food being used is as fresh as possible.

RFPs and Contractual Processes

Large scale distributors and food service management companies are essential partners in successful implementation of any dining service changes, whether they be grass roots or administrative. Therefore, Requests for Proposals and contract renewal processes are important mechanisms for aligning an institution's procurement criteria and expectations with the transparency, purchasing and educational targets mandated by the Real Food Campus Commitment and the Sustainable Food Policy. Real food language in contracts further establishes accountability measures and a way for policies to be institutionalized over five and ten year spans.

1. Food Service Operator Selection

- All future RFPs or contract renewals will include the requirement that contracted providers comply with CMC's Sustainable Food Policy and all associated policies (including the Real Food Campus Commitment)
- CMC will involve student and faculty leaders for RFP drafting and bid selection process. Should a formal selection committee be formed, at least one student seat will be designated. Should a student be unable to fill this seat, a faculty involved and in support of the sustainable food policy will be designated.
- Preference will be given to price competitive bids that that best meet or exceed the standards of this policy.
- Bids should include any approved vendor compliance rates that will be enforced. Price competitive bids with lower compliance rates should be prioritized over those with higher rates.
- School may not allow school's food service provider to claim exclusive right to all food service on campus. School will ensure that students can opt out of the food service meal plan and will allow dining cooperatives run by students or other third parties, should there be interest.

2. Broad-line Distributor Selection

Broad-line distributor contracts will be granted to the price-competitive entity that can best comply with CMC's Sustainable Food Policy. Additionally, RFPs, contracts and other standards laid out for Broad-line distributors will include the following provisions:

- Distributor will be expected to meet an overall real food percentage goals, as set by CMC, measured in dollars, over the course of the year.
- Distributor will provide clear invoicing that highlights the real food status of items purchased.

- CMC reserves right to withdraw whole food categories (e.g. fresh produce, dairy) or specific items, at will, where Distributor is not meeting the real food needs.

3. Individual Vendor Selection

Direct contracts with major food or beverage companies (e.g. Coke) will include the following provisions:

- All vendors will consistently supply at least one product that meets real food criteria: healthy, local, fair, ecologically sound, and/or humane.
- Preference in choosing vendors will be given to price competitive bids that offer the largest number of items meeting the greatest number of real food criteria.
- All contracts will allow the school to rescind and redirect spending at will where real food procurement and transparency requirements are not being sufficiently met.

4. Other Contract Stipulations

National Volume Discounts and Rebates (Kickbacks)

CMC may add stipulations mandating that volume discounts and rebates accrued by food service operators must be regularly (1) documented, (2) communicated to school and (3) returned in full to the dining operation's budget.

Contract Termination

CMC may, in relevant contracts, reserve the right to terminate the contract if real food targets are not met over time.

Statement of Purpose

CMC may include language about the goals and values of the real food program at the beginning of relevant contracts.

Reporting Progress

Determining Baselines and Yearly Progress

PLAN A:

- Each campus will individually complete the Real Food Calculator to determine a baseline of sustainable food purchasing
- Each campus will individually repeat the Calculator after X academic years to determine progress.
- Would require strong leadership and follow-through from central offices to ensure completion.

This will allow each campus to target problem areas based on individual needs. Extra processing time would be necessary to combine results for all campuses.

PLAN B:

- CMC will complete a baseline Real Food Challenge Calculator survey of the entire institution.
 - CMC will repeat the Calculator after X academic years to determine progress.
- This will provide combined data for all CMC campuses, streamlining results. This may make it more difficult to target specific campuses that are not performing as well as others.

Annual Report (Assuming Plan A, easily adjusted for Plan B)

Campuses and retail food service operations should provide an annual progress report on CMC Sustainable Food Policy goals using a standardized, provided form. Annual reports should include any individual campus goals as well as the progress and timelines for the programs being implemented to reach those goals. Annual reports should whenever possible include the participation and involvement of students (Student organizations, students from class, student government). Report may include a section for difficulties and concerns, in order to accommodate when possible.

Resources

Sustainable Food Policies of other institutions

[California State University](#)

[Emory University Sustainable Food Purchasing Guidelines](#)

[Portland State University Food Service Sustainability Goals](#)

[PSU's guide to developing Sustainable Food System purchasing](#)

Resources used for creating this policy

[A Guide to Developing a Sustainable Food Purchasing Policy](#)

[Real Food Campus Commitment](#)

[Real Food Guide](#)

[Best Practices for Real Food Guide](#)

Sustainablefoodpolicy.org