

**STARS Advisory Committees Focus Call**  
**Friday, November 16, 2007**

**Topic: Food & Dining Services**

*Participants:* Katherine Carmody, Joe Curnow, Jeff Darling, Mark Foley, Tim Galarneau, Steve Guenther, Elaine Hills, Nancy Levandowski, Matt Malten, Jacob Park, Marilyn Pollack, Cam Schauf, Chris Stemen, Amy Teligman, Rick Turner

*Present from AASHE:* Julian Dautremont-Smith, Judy Walton, Scott Hollis, Stephanie Sims

## **Agenda**

### **1. Operations Credit 7: Sustainable Food Purchasing**

*QUESTION 1: How should we define "local"?*

Could use "150 mi. radius" but doesn't allow for regional variation. Challenge when speaking nationally. "1-day drive" might work, but can still be problematic. For some, local may mean "in-state" (ex: NY). Problems with fixing any radius. Step back and ask "what are we looking for in "local"? Large-scale, local processing facility? Local mono-cropping? Specific criteria embedded in question might be scale, relationships. Desired outcome for using "local" is both supporting local producers and reducing carbon emissions. **Tim Galarneau will send materials from other national initiatives trying to identify and define "real" or sustainable food.**

Rather than binary (local/non-local) maybe have a broader definition comprised of several factors (local, indigenous, etc.). Perhaps a matrix. Or ask 2 separate questions, each being binary. Avoid inflating credits by double-counting. Real Food Challenge design team looking at many variables that add up to what we want. Carbon issues, producers, organic/conventional, etc. Multi-variable assessment. Challenges institutions to go from 2% to 10% sustainable food services. On-line calculator, with many different pathways. Institutions tend to overlook food issues; will benefit from a learning tool. **Tim Galarneau will share assessment tools produced (Beta testing for 1.5 yrs), and connect us to advisory body.**

*QUESTION 2: What certification standards should count as "otherwise environmentally and socially preferable?" Are there any food "eco-labels" that explicitly shouldn't count?*

Fair Trade should count; also Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Guidelines. Check out **ecolabels.org**; consider ethical treatment of animals (rBST, hormone-free, etc.); look at most comprehensive labels. Many labels would set too low a bar, for example, Rainforest Alliance for agricultural commodities not as good as Fair Trade. Also UTZ Certified. Compare to non-meat dining options; maybe give credit for not purchasing meat. Expect you could receive 1-4 points for each label. Have multiple options, and perhaps % of goals met for each dimension. **Nancy will send label research from Leopold Center**

*QUESTION 3: Should we modify the percentages of sustainable food purchasing necessary for each extra point? Note: there is already at least one campus that serves 100% sustainable food (Maharishi University of Management)*

Some support changing scale; offer bonus for reaching 100%. Mirror LEED's bonus or innovation point. Allows room to raise bar later; otherwise doesn't give you room to adjust scale up.

Need to deal with different-sized institutions analytically by controlling for size. Use proportion of expenditures. We don't yet know how many are at any %. Could wait to see what we get during pilot period. Maharishi is 100% organic; but does that mean sustainable? Careful what 100% means. Consider social factors.

During pilot phase we should probably ask for percent for each eco-label we include. Can use data gathered from pilot to suggest standard. Sounds good in theory. But how to count labels that overlap? e.g., "local" + "organic." Might get paralysis by analysis. May complicate setting thresholds if we measure each factor separately. Probably need a statistician; someone experienced in data collection and institutional research. Will know how to achieve goal meaningfully.

*QUESTION 4: How should we define "Food Expenditures"? Can we agree on common meaning?*

No standard. Some include paper and chemicals in food expenditures; some take straight costs. Done many ways. May have to draw some boundaries – e.g., include football program?

Maybe say all “edible” food, or all food “designed to be eaten.” Would include residential dining halls, catering. Exclude vending, convenience stores, concessions, fast food restaurants (colleges can choose whether or not to have franchise; but can’t control franchise), student unions (definitely a separate entity from dining services). Or include these as separate line items. This opens up possibility for more credits, for concessions, convenience stores, vending, etc. Maybe we could ask if they use reusable v. disposable utensils.

*QUESTION 5: What kind of documentation is reasonable to request from campuses claiming this point?*

Current plan: sign-off from dining services director; total food budget; how much was spent on sustainable foods. Maybe provide list of what items they’re buying. All info would be public.

Sounds good, though just listing dollars won’t be very educational; maybe include some narrative. Maybe calculate \$ per student. Or just % of total sales; and not judge on \$ per student (my bias toward smaller schools). Can turn dollars per category into a matrix; have people fill out table. Type of food (dairy, meat, etc.) on one axis, eco-labels on other. Will give good idea of where people satisfy multiple categories. **Steve will send us an example matrix.**

## **2. Operations Credit 8: Non-meat Dining Options**

*QUESTION 1: Are there any campuses that wouldn’t get this point? Is it important to include anyway for its educational value?*

Maybe make Tier 2, because pretty standard at many campuses; not as important as other measures; limited room in Tier 1. Maybe make it harder - say “vegan”? But incremental impact from vegetarian to vegan. Maybe make vegan extra point in Tier 2; and define veganism better.

## **3. New Credits**

*QUESTION 1: Are there any other credits related to Dining Services that should be considered for inclusion in STARS? Please be as specific as possible.*

Include anything that is excluded in other questions; be sure to ask about it somewhere else so as not to narrow scope. Maybe include credit about animals being treated humanely.