



2021-2022

FOOD AT OXY

*A Resource Guide to
Dining and Engaging with
Occidental College's Food System*

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WHY FOOD AT OXY?

The Food at Oxy Guide is a comprehensive resource guide that is written and updated annually by members of the Food Systems Working Group’s Core Team. The Food at Oxy Guide serves as a resource for members of the Occidental College community to easily access all information related to Oxy’s food system. This document is designed to help students and staff find sustainably sourced food on campus, learn about the evolution of campus food and sustainability initiatives, and navigate related opportunities for student and faculty involvement. This document informs present and future members of the Oxy community about the power of cross-campus collaboration and student-driven change, and provides resources to help create the connections needed to foster a strong network of people committed to building a more sustainable and equitable food system.

How to read this document:

- If you have a specific question about food, sustainability, or how to get involved, click on any of the titles on the Table of Contents page.
- Each section has an "Annual Summary" sub-heading at the end of the section. To know what challenges were faced and overcome during the 2021-22 academic year, scroll to the Annual Summary at the end of each section.

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I. THE FOOD SYSTEMS WORKING GROUP

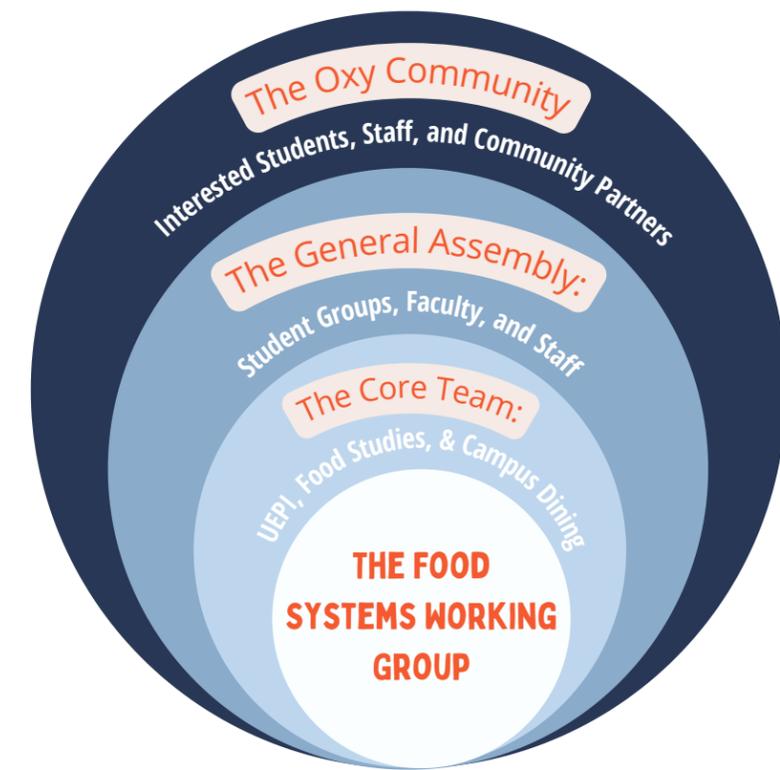
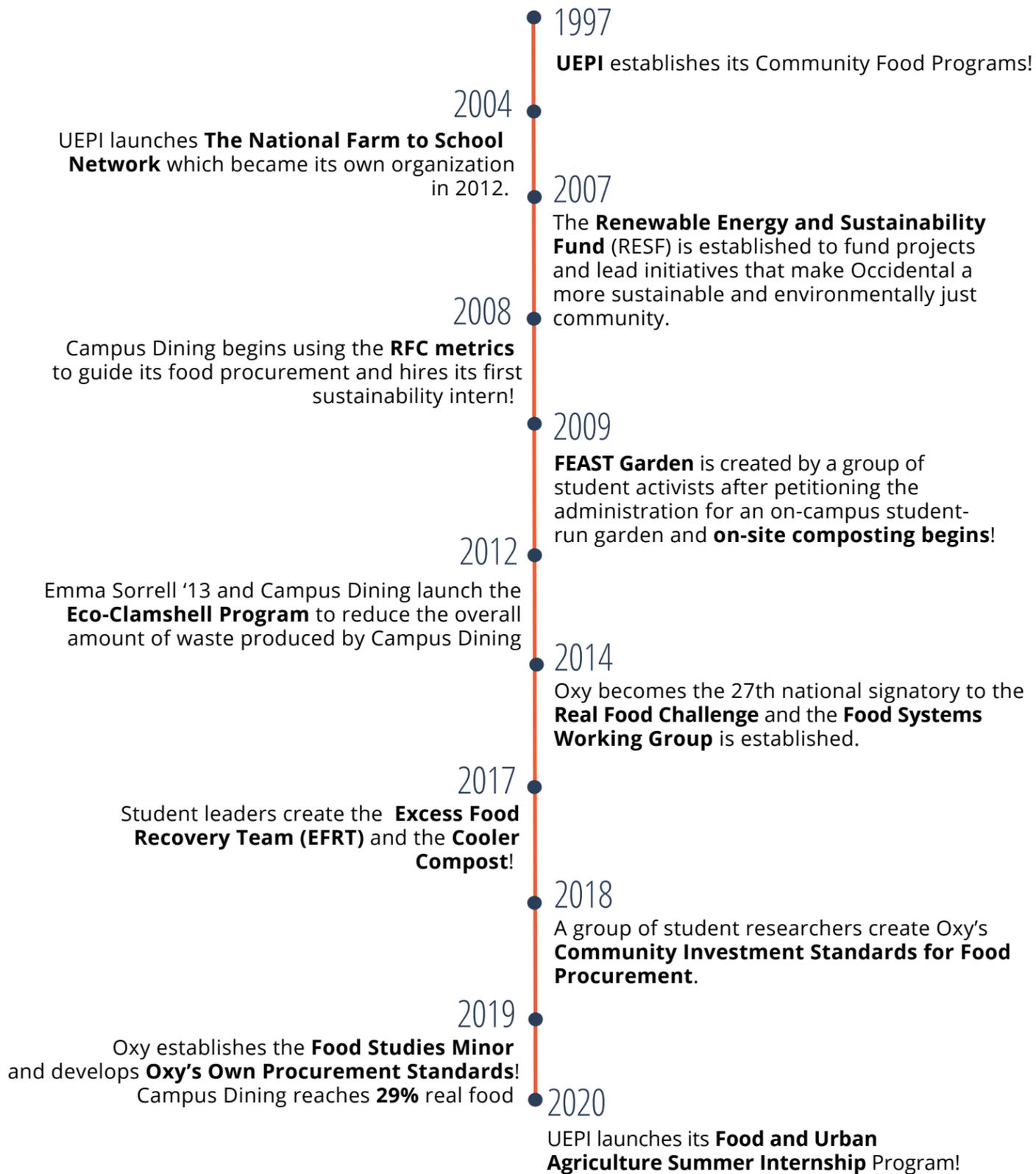
The Vision and Purpose of the Food Systems Working Group

The Food Systems Working Group (FSWG) is a collaborative effort that leverages the knowledge and resources of the various campus entities engaged with food at Occidental College. In 2014, Occidental signed on to the “Real Food Challenge,” a national program that offers procurement guidelines for higher education institutions. In addition to auditing purchases, RFC required that signatories develop a policy document outlining their institutional purchasing goals. This was the impetus for starting the FSWG. Rather than focusing strictly on purchasing, representatives from Campus Dining, the Urban & Environmental Policy Institute, the Food Studies Minor, and representatives from student groups saw this as an opportunity to form a “Food Systems Working Group” that would align goals and resources across campus to strengthen connections between procurement, academics, student activities, and community engagement related to food. The FSWG meets twice per semester to discuss ongoing projects, share ideas, and make recommendations as needed.

The FSWG is co-chaired by Assistant Vice President for Hospitality Services, Erik Russell; Regional Food Systems Director at the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute, Sharon Cech; a representative from the Food Studies Minor; and the FSWG and Sustainability Liaison student intern. This diverse group brings a wide array of perspectives and experiences to campus food issues. Collectively, these entities oversee, update, and execute the mission of the FSWG as detailed below.

The mission of the Food Systems Working Group (FSWG) is to work collaboratively with the campus community toward increasing socially and environmentally responsible practices through production, research, education, and engagement in our food system, by developing and implementing an official food resource guide and a multi-year action plan for the implementation of its goals and recommendations.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF FOOD AT OXY



Annual Summary

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the FSWG's meetings primarily focused on Oxy's post-pandemic transition back to campus and addressing new pandemic-related challenges. From Campus Dining's operations to student organizations reestablishing themselves after a year and half of virtual learning to waste management challenges with the increase in to-go meals, the FSWG served as a meeting place for students, faculty, and Campus Dining staff to collectively brainstorm solutions and share updates on their current work relating to Oxy's food system. In January, AVP Amy Munoz retired, leaving a gap in the Core Team until May. The FSWG also introduced a new monthly newsletter to highlight individual contributions to Oxy's food system and share information about food and sustainability with the greater Oxy community. Read the latest Food & Sustainability Newsletters by clicking the links below.



[November 2022](#)

[October 2022](#)

[September 2022](#)



To view the full library of Food and Sustainability Newsletters (2020-Present), click [here](#).

FSWG Goals for 2022-2023

- Hold 4 meetings in the 2022-2023 academic year
- Engage representatives from all food-related student organizations
- Update the Food at Oxy Guide by the Spring of 2023.
- The FSWG Intern will publish monthly food and sustainability newsletters.



II. DINING AT OXY

Oxy's Own Dining Service

Campus Dining is proudly self-operated by Oxy optimizing the department's ability to respond to student needs, select vendors that align with Oxy's values, and demonstrate the value of their employees by providing fair wages and premium benefits. The result is a culture of care for one another, and a close-knit community of students, faculty, and staff.

A La Carte vs. All-You-Care-to-Eat

Oxy meal plans are an all-debit system, which facilitate a wide range of sustainable menu offerings. This makes eating at Oxy more equitable, is useful in promoting Oxy's commitment to the Real Food Challenge, and assists in reducing food waste by allowing students to more effectively "vote with their dollar" and only take what they need.

During the summer, Campus Dining operates an All-You-Care-To-Eat (AYCTE) dining program in the Marketplace for 12 weeks to accommodate summer conferences, summer research students, and other guests.

Valued Workforce and Employment

Reflecting the colleges core values of equity and community, Campus Dining's full-time employees are valued for their hard work through **fair wages, a unionized workplace, and a range of full benefits** including [Oxy's Tuition Exchange Program](#).

Pro's of A LA Carte

1. Students can more easily vote with their dollar
2. Less food waste is created!
3. Students only have to purchase what they would like to eat!
4. Campus Dining chooses who and where they procure their food!
5. Oxy provides Campus Dining employees with full benefits!



Campus Dining Full-Time and Part-Time Employees

As of April 2022, Campus Dining has 78 full-time employees and 2 regular part-time employees. Employee retention in Campus Dining is stable with a median average union tenure of 12 years. Campus Dining’s non-supervisory, non-clerical employees are unionized as members of Teamsters Local 911.

Campus Dining Seasonal “Casual” Employees

Campus Dining also employs approximately 70 seasonal (August through May) “casual/on-call” employees for part-time work during peak workload periods and special events. Casual employees are paid union scale and receive daily meal allowances. They are eligible for sick leave benefits (as required by law), but do not receive other benefits.. Campus Dining’s seasonal employment constitutes an important recruiting mechanism, evidenced by the fact that casual employees often apply for and are hired into union vacancies.

Student Employees (Tiger Cooler and Green Bean)

Student employees working in direct customer service positions include a staff of 50 at the Tiger Cooler who serve as baristas, grill prep assistants and cashiers, and a pool of 20 at the Berkus Bistro. The Green Bean staff, made up entirely of students, numbers about 51 in managerial, supervisory and barista positions. The Green Bean Managers receive training, mentoring and support from SLICE pro-staff for the student experience (employee and customer) and Campus Dining managers in the areas of finance, food, equipment and facility best practices, and sanitation. Student job postings for the Tiger Cooler and the Marketplace can be found on Oxy’s Human Resources page under [Student Employment](#).

Annual Report

As Oxy welcomed students back to campus in the fall of 2021, Campus Dining faced several challenges with employee hiring and retention, similar to national labor trends. According to the National Restaurant Association, “three out of every four restaurant owners now report employee hiring and retention as their greatest difficulty.” Throughout the fall semester of 2021, Campus Dining struggled to fill eight regular staffing positions that became vacant due to five employees retiring and two not returning from furlough. As a result, Campus Dining had to limit its hours of operation at the Tiger Cooler and delay the opening of the Berkus Bistro. To address the labor shortage, Campus Dining shifted two employees from Conference Services to assist HR with recruiting.

After nearly 40 years, Amy Munoz, Associate Vice President for Hospitality and Auxiliary Services, retired in January 2021. A search for a new AVP happened throughout the Spring semester, resulting in the hiring of Erik Russell, who started formally in May once students had left campus. Campus Dining and the FSWG welcome him to the Oxy community!

1 National Restaurant Association



Above: Former Associate Vice President for Hospitality Services, Amy Munoz



III. FOOD PROCUREMENT

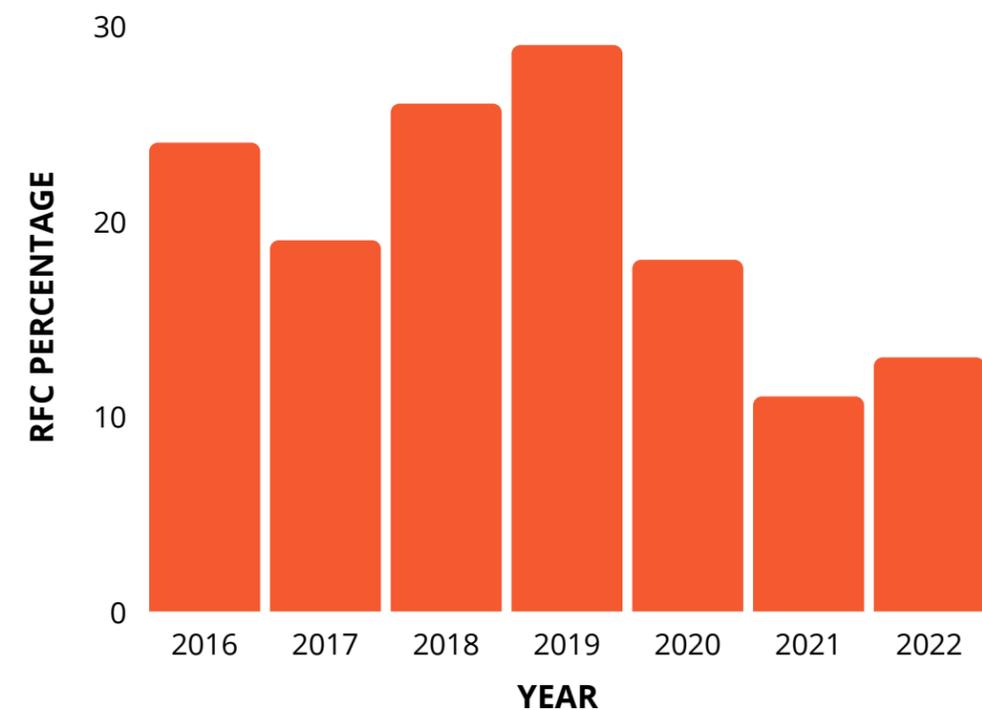
About Food Procurement at Oxy

Food procurement refers to the process of how and where food is purchased for institutions, organizations, government agencies, and other entities with significant purchasing power. At institutions like Occidental College, food procurement is an important opportunity to contribute to a more just and equitable food system. By adopting food procurement standards to drive purchasing decisions, institutions can harness their purchasing power to help support and advance local economies, fair labor practices, environmental sustainability, and health equity. Currently, Occidental College relies on two frameworks to guide and inform its food purchasing: the **Real Food Challenge** and **Oxy's Own Procurement Standards**.

What is the Real Food Challenge?

Established in 2008 by a group of committed student activists, The **Real Food Challenge (RFC)** is a national campaign that inspires and supports students to secure real food purchasing policies in their campus dining halls. The goal of the RFC is to shift \$1 billion (20%) of existing university food budgets away from industrial farms and unhealthy foods and towards local and community-based, fair, ecologically sound, and humane food sources. In 2014, Occidental College became the 27th signatory to RFC's nationally recognized Real Food Campus Commitment, promising to dedicate 30% of the college's food budget to sustainable sources by 2020. This surpassed the national RFC goal of 20% real food by 2020, thereby cementing Occidental's place at the forefront of institutional commitment to fostering a socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable food system.

OXY'S RFC "SCORE" OVER THE YEARS



The Real Food Challenge defines 'Real Food' as:

Local and Community Based: Grown/produced within 250 miles of Oxy and comes from a small business. Items made locally must also contain 51% organic ingredients to qualify.

Ecologically Sound: Organic, responsibly managed (fisheries), or certified by a legitimate third-party environmental certification program.

Humane: Cage-free, free-range, grass-fed, or certified by a legitimate third-party animal welfare/humane certification program.

Fair Trade: Certified Fair by a legitimate fair certification program (fair wages, working conditions, etc.).

Struggles with RFC Metrics

Oxy's independently owned and operated dining service has the unique ability to build relationships with several local businesses to source its ingredients. While Campus Dining values a "closer is better" principle, products only qualify as "local and community-based" by the RFC if all ingredients are sourced within a 250-mile radius and are at least 51 percent ecologically-sound. As a result, these standards can be difficult for local and family owned businesses to meet and even when products from local businesses do meet these standards, small businesses do not always have the time and resources to provide documentation of their ingredients for the RFC. The Real Food Challenge's metrics do not include a way to measure Campus Dining's carbon footprint.

While the "local and community-based" category of the RFC rewards supporting a localized food system, the RFC's metrics do not assess the amount of plant-based products an institution purchases. With food production and agriculture responsible for roughly 25 percent of the world's greenhouse gas emissions and over 70 percent of freshwater use, our global food system is intimately tied to climate change. Campus Dining actively recognizes this reality, and the Marketplace's chefs have worked diligently to offer more plant-forward meals and plant-based meat and dairy alternatives. Campus Dining's Student Intern Team hopes to find additional metrics to better understand Campus Dining's overall carbon footprint and help customers understand the environmental impact of their food purchases as consumers.

Oxy's Own Food Procurement Standards

In the fall of 2019, Campus Dining and members of the Food Systems Working Group worked to develop **Oxy's Own Procurement Standards**. These standards allow Dining to more accurately assess Oxy's role in local food systems while complementing Oxy's participation and usage of the RFC's food procurement metrics. Inspired by the [Good Food Purchasing Program](#) standards, Oxy's Own Procurement Standards expand on the RFC's metrics to assess the sustainability of the entire food product - **the food item, its packaging, and the business that produces it**. Furthermore, Oxy's Own Procurement Standards acknowledge the importance of investing power as locally as possible through Oxy's Community Investment Procurement Standards and adopting a revised version of the RFC's local and community-based standards. Lastly, Oxy's Own Procurement Standards are not as strict as the RFC about third party certifications. While Oxy's Own Procurement Standards prioritize third-party certifications, they acknowledge that it can be difficult for local farms and businesses to receive third party certifications due to being expensive and resource-intensive. After thoroughly researching and vetting first and second party certification, Oxy's Own Procurement Standards counts integrated pest management (IPM) programs, grass-fed, free-range, or antibiotic free animal products when assessing products.

Below are Oxy's Own Procurement Standards, expanded from RFC standards, defining the five main ways by which a product can qualify as sustainable:



The Five Areas of Oxy's Own Food Procurement Standards

1 Valued Workforce and Fairly Traded

This standard is meant to support supply chains that value the workforce involved, prioritizing fair treatment and equitable pay over higher profits. In order to meet this standard, individuals involved in all parts of the product supply chain – from production to processing to distribution to preparation – work in safe and fair conditions, receive a living wage, have the right to organize and the right to a grievance process, and are ensured equal opportunity for employment. Moreover, the profits of the product should not fund the mistreatment of humans, animals, or the environment. Prioritizing fair food can build community and promote socially just practices throughout the food chain.

2 Ecologically Sound

To qualify as Ecologically Sound, all operations involved with an item's production must take into account a keen sense of environmental stewardship, from conserving biodiversity and preserving natural resources – including energy, wildlife, water, air, and soil – to using production practices that minimize the use of any toxic substances, as well as reduce direct and indirect petroleum inputs as much as possible.

3 Humane Animal Treatment

Humane animal products are produced in a way that allows animals to express natural behavior in a low-stress environment, and as much as possible are raised with no added hormones or unnecessary medication.

4 Local and Community Based

This standard is based on a “closer is better” principle, prioritizing products with closer points of origin and management structures investing power as locally as possible. Ideally, these items can be traced to producers and processors that are owned and operated within 250 miles, thereby supporting the local and regional economy by keeping money in the community. Moreover, the food is seasonal, travels fewer miles to reach consumers, and is often much fresher and has a higher nutrient content.

5 Community Investment Procurement Standards

In addition to prioritizing businesses based on their distance from Occidental, Campus Dining would like to invest in the local community by purchasing items from businesses that are accessible to all residents and reflect the historic character and culture of Northeast Los Angeles. In 2018, these metrics were developed by two students and advisors from UEPI and the former Office of Community Engagement. In 2019 the metrics were implemented in Campus Dining.

Supplier and Producer Profiles

As part of Campus Dining's commitment to investing power locally and prioritizing businesses that reflect the historic character of Northeast Los Angeles, here are some local businesses that Campus Dining partners with! For a more complete list of Oxy's suppliers and producers, please visit [Campus Dining's website](#).

Annual Report

RFC Results and Discussion

For the 2021-2022 academic year, Oxy's final RFC score is **13 percent!** This score is notably lower than past years and is a reflection of ongoing challenges relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and the limited capacity of small businesses. Several major contributors to our real food score were not counted during the 2021-22 academic year, including Debbie's Dinners, Four Cafe, and a few Red Shell Sushi products, due to reporting issues. These small businesses were unable to provide detailed ingredient lists, which prevented the Dining Intern team from successfully reporting their use of ecologically sound ingredients in their foods. Because the “local and community based” RFC category requires proof of at least 51 percent ecologically sound ingredients, the Dining Intern team had to omit those three vendors from our RFC calculation.

Additionally, due to the limited capacity of the Campus Dining Student Intern team, the 2021-22 Real Food score was based on the purchasing months of August and March, whereas the usual analysis is for October and March. Because there are not many students on campus during the month of August, this month's invoices were not representative of our usual purchasing habits and thus altered our results heavily.



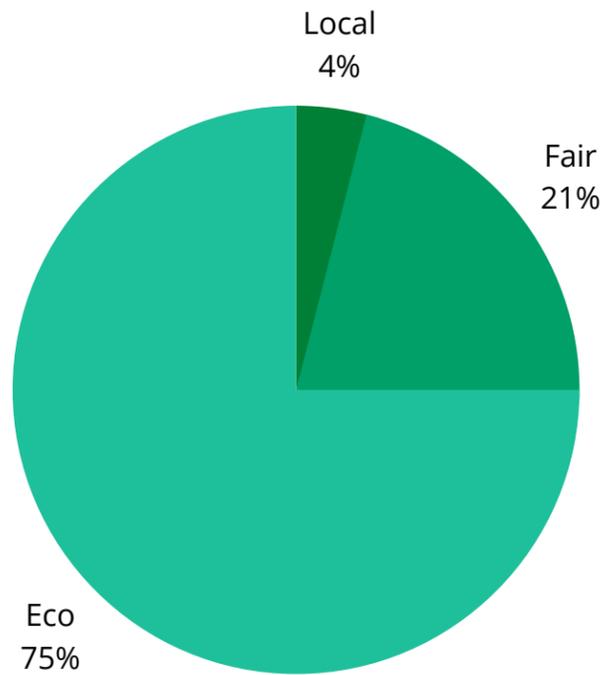
Lastly, Abbotsford Farms eggs were not counted as “humane,” per the Real Food Challenge 2.1 standards, despite being American Humane Certified, because they are not cage free eggs. In previous years, RFC had allowed Oxy to count this product towards our score because of the fluctuation in standards, but during the 2021-22 year the standards were more strictly enforced.

Despite these challenges, Oxy's RFC score improved by 2 points over the last year. While our latest RFC score is far from where it started at the onset of the pandemic, it is important to celebrate the small victories.

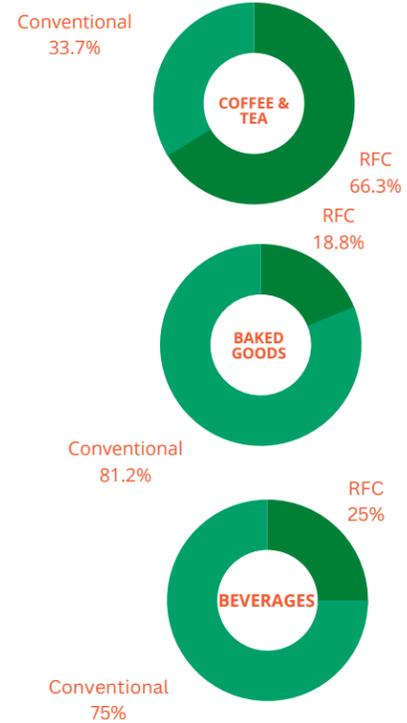
Photo Credits: Occidental College, The Occidental Newspaper.

2021-22 RFC Highlights

SCORE BREAKDOWN BY CATEGORY



ITEMS WITH THE HIGHEST RFC SCORE



Impacts of the Global Pandemic

Since the onset of the global pandemic in March of 2020, Oxy's RFC score has suffered due to global supply chain shortages, the pandemic's impact on food suppliers and local businesses, as well as the drastic decrease in Oxy's student body with remote learning! Since students and faculty returned to campus at the beginning of the fall semester, Campus Dining has continued to navigate unprecedented circumstances created by supply chain disruptions and labor shortages. With guidance from former AVP of Hospitality Services Amy Muñoz, Campus Dining and their intern team decided to pause transitioning to any new RFC products until staffing challenges resolved and Campus Dining's standard procurement became less difficult.

Goals

Each year, Campus Dining assesses its score and develops specific areas for improvement and a time-bound set of goals to raise our score. This year, however, due to changes in leadership, the release of Real Food Challenge 3.0 standards, ongoing food supply chain challenges, and the expiration of Oxy's signed commitment to the Real Food Challenge in 2020 (see the [Real Food Campus Commitment Campus Implementation Plan](#)), Campus Dining is in the process of reassessing, updating, and establishing new commitments to the Real Food Challenge. Specific and time-bound goals regarding sustainable food purchasing will be released in the 2022-23 Food at Oxy Guide.



IV.
THE DINING
EXPERIENCE

🔍 WHERE TO EAT AT OXY? ✕

At Occidental we take dining seriously, and our community consistently gives Oxy's on-campus dining high marks in guest satisfaction. Students, faculty and staff have dining options including the Marketplace, the casual Tiger Cooler Cafe, and the Green Bean the student-run coffee shop on campus!

THE TIGER COOLER



THE MARKETPLACE



THE GREEN BEAN



Photo Credits: Occidental College

For our latest hours, menus, and meal plan pricing, visit oxy.edu/campus-dining

Dietary and Nutritional Support

Campus Dining is currently in the process of developing a catalog of Oxy's Own recipes with their **nutritional information** and identified allergens. Since Oxy does not have a team of personnel dedicated to this task and the Marketplace's large and frequently changing menu, updates are made in response to individual requests as they come in. To access Campus Dining's nutrition guides, Emmon's nutritional counseling, and more information about the systems in place to support students with special dietary needs and allergies, you can find more information on [Campus Dining's website!](#)

Weekly Sustainable Themed Meals

The Marketplace features a rotation of sustainable meals each week. Because of the limited capacity of the kitchen staff during the 2021-22 academic year, only Meatless Monday was offered, but continued to be highly anticipated by students. Meatless Mondays feature an array of plant-based vegetable and lentil curries served alongside samosas and rice!



Themed Meals

In addition to weekly sustainably themed meals, the Marketplace's chefs prepare themed meals each semester in celebration of holidays, Food Justice Month, Earth Month, and to support students during finals season!

Food Justice Month

Featuring: Mushrooms in Kombu Broth, Daikon and Cabbage Salad, and Short Grain Rice!

St. Patrick's Day

Featuring: Corned Beef, Reubens, and Guinness French Onion Soup.

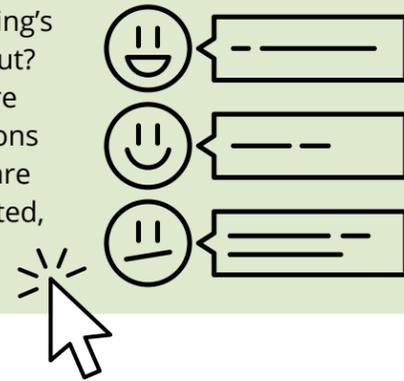
Valentine's Day

Featuring: Burger Bombs, Enchiladas, Shrimp Pasta, and Red Velvet Cake!

Have a question for Campus Dining?

Have questions about Oxy's food system? Want to ask Campus Dining's chefs about a recipe or have a recipe you would like them to try out?

Check out Campus Dining's dynamic online suggestion box where students and other stakeholders can leave comments or suggestions relating to campus food topics! Responses to signed comments are sent within 7 days; unsigned comments and suggestions are updated, usually bi-weekly or at least monthly on the Campus Dining.



Annual Summary

As the college welcomed students back to campus from over a year of virtual learning, labor shortages required Campus Dining to limit the Tiger Cooler's operating hours and delay the opening of the Berkus Bistro until November of 2021. While this was less than ideal, Campus Dining prioritized staffing the Marketplace, its largest dining facility, and limited the Tiger Cooler's hours of operation to close at 8pm (instead of the pre-pandemic usual 2 am closing time).

Similarly, Oxy's student run coffee shop, the Green Bean, delayed their reopening until the Spring of 2022 to allow their remaining student managers with time to hire additional students and managers, train student employees, and allow Campus Dining to use the space for Tiger Takeout operations.

Tiger Takeout, Campus Dining's take-out service operated from the GET App, was established during the pandemic to provide students with a contact-less option to order and pick-up meals. Tiger Takeout operated for a majority of the fall semester, but transitioned to accommodating only covid isolation meals for the remainder of the academic year. In addition to labor shortage challenges, capacity limits set by LA County restricted indoor seating in the Marketplace and Tiger Cooler for the majority of the fall semester; however, Campus Dining collaborated with college administrators to provide students with more outdoor seating options. Due to staffing and food procurement challenges, the Marketplace was not able to consistently offer its Thursday Organic bar. With that being said, Chef Martin Fernandez hopes to have this offered on a regular basis in the future.



Students return to the The Green Bean for the first time since its closing in 2020.

V. SUSTAINABLE WASTE MANAGEMENT

Food Recovery

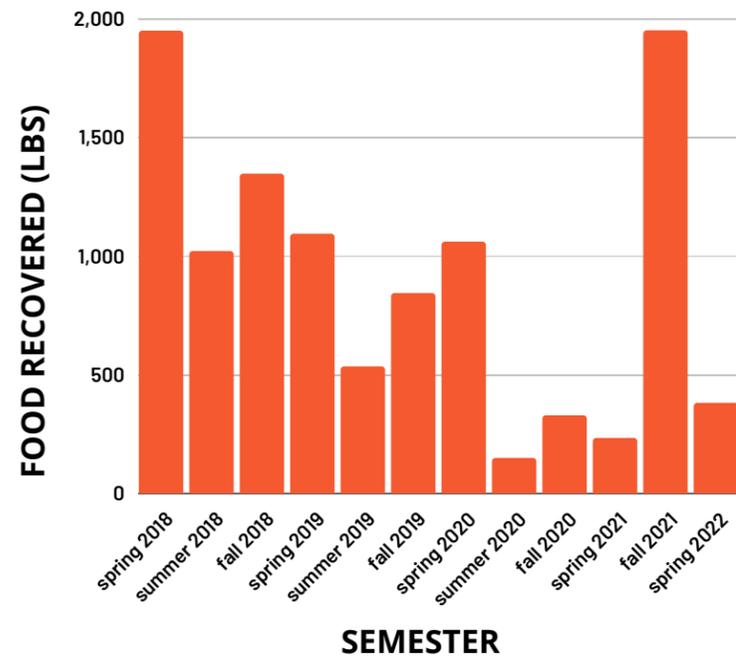
Campus Dining internally works to prevent and minimize post-consumer food waste through a variety of tactics. The Marketplace supplies a limited number of trays to prevent guests from overloading their plates/trays and wasting food. Lastly, Campus Dining reduces and repurposes frying oil through its contracts with [FiltaFry](#) and [Baker Commodities](#). After FiltaFry filters the oil so it can be reused at least once, Baker Commodities collects used oil and repurposes it for bio-diesel, feeding fats, tallow, and more! This often-forgotten byproduct of cooking makes a significant difference in how much grease we use and repurposes our waste into other uses instead of throwing it out.



In order to prevent excess prepared meals from the Marketplace from going to waste, Student Affairs partnered with Campus Dining in 2017 to create one paid student position and a volunteer program to support [Oxy's food redistribution program](#), named the **Excess Food Recovery Team**, or **EFRT** (pronounced "effort"). Oxy's EFRT is also a member of the national [Food Recovery Network](#), a nationwide coalition of higher education institutions committed to reducing food waste and working to end hunger. With the help of student volunteers, EFRT redistributes frozen dishes from the Marketplace to organizations across Los Angeles that feed houseless and hungry LA residents. Some of these organizations include the Hollywood Food Coalition, Recycled Resources, Union Station Homeless Services, and others. **To date, EFRT has redistributed over 10 tons of food and during the 2021-2022 academic year EFRT redistributed approximately 10,895 pounds of food from the Marketplace.**

Photo Credits: EFRT Instagram, Lena Sullivan '23

EXCESS FOOD RECOVERED BY SEMESTER



Since Spring 2018, the Excess Food Recovery Team (EFRT) has redistributed 11,500+ pounds of food.

In the 2021-22 academic year, EFRT redistributed 2,332 pounds of food.

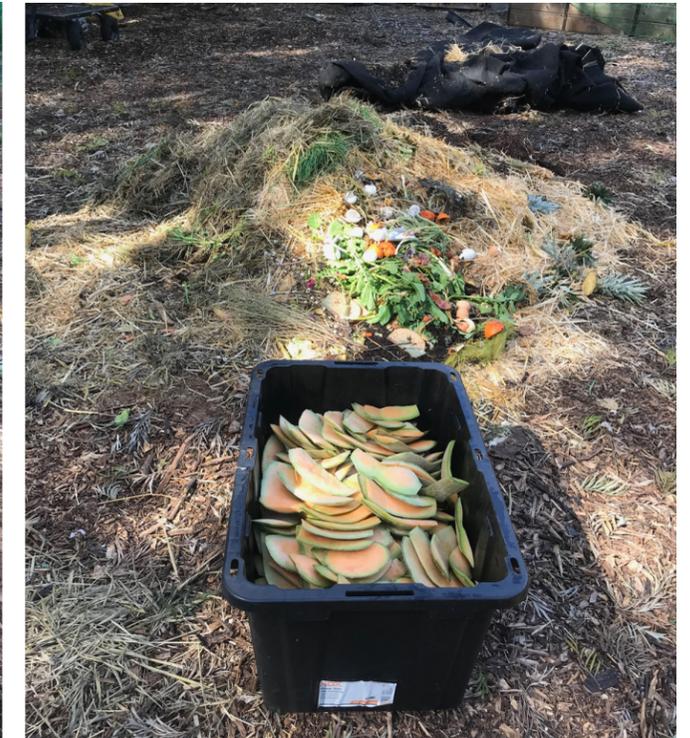


Photo Credits: Jakob Barton '23

Landfill Diversion

In 2009, the FEAST student garden established Oxy's first on-site closed loop composting system where pre-consumer food scraps (or the food scraps produced in the preparation of food) are collected from the Marketplace and composted on-site in the student garden. Student workers pick up fruit and vegetable scraps that are produced in the kitchen weekly and add them to the garden's compost piles, or "windrows" which is a technique used for larger-scale composting operations. The finished compost - rich in soil nutrients - is then used in the garden beds. During the 2021-2022 academic year, the students and staff that coordinated these efforts include Executive Chef Martin Fernandez, Chef Lisa Loya and Food, Energy, and Sustainability Team (FEAST) Student Workers Jakob Barton, Emily Crouse, Olivia Haga and Jackson Beerman.

In 2019, the FEAST Student Garden began a collaboration with LA Compost to expand Oxy's on-site composting efforts. In addition to Oxy Dining food scraps, the Oxy community, including the Child Development Center drop off their food scraps in the cold bins. As part of the partnership with LA Compost, they mentor FEAST students on compost best practices and in Spring 2022 hosted Compost 101 workshops. A 4-week series is planned for Fall 2022, that upon completion, students will receive a training certificate. For the upcoming 2022-2023 academic year, Maggie Smart-McCabe, a recent Oxy alum, will serve as FEAST's point of contact at LA Compost!

All other organic materials, including post-consumer food scraps and paper products, are picked up by Universal Waste Systems (UWS) and composted off site. After leaving Oxy, organic waste is processed through an anaerobic machine, operated by [Anaergia](#) in Rialto, CA, where it is turned into biogas and bio-char. Universal Waste Systems, the RecyclA hauler for Northeast Los Angeles, provides trash, recycling, and organics hauling services to the Occidental Campus as well as the off-campus Oxy Arts Building.

UWS also offers the services of Zero Waste Representatives (ZWRs) for outreach and education on which materials can be diverted from the landfill by being recycled or composted, as well as up-to-date information on waste related laws. ZWRs also help perform waste audits to determine whether customers like Occidental are properly disposing of all materials generated on site. Besides providing services, UWS strives to help its local communities achieve their diversion goals by fostering great relationships within the community and a greater positive impact on the planet.

Other Landfill Diversion Efforts

At the Marketplace and Green Bean: Dining staff members are trained to sort waste into three streams: compost, recycling, and trash. They have an annual refresher course on waste separation, including updates on any new compostable items added to the inventory. The Campus Dining staff sorts waste generated in food preparation and food deliveries - e.g. cases of tomato sauce in cans. Furthermore, when customers return their dishes and leftovers on the tray conveyor inside the Marketplace, Campus Dining sanitation staff sorts the waste - they scrape off food waste into compost bins and separate the remaining items into recycling bins and the trash bin. The food waste is placed in the compactor located behind the Johnson Student Center to then be hauled by Universal Waste Systems (UWS).

At the Tiger Cooler: The Tiger Cooler's composting program began in 2017 by students, and is still currently sorted and emptied by the Occidental Student Composting Actions for Remediation (OSCAR) Club. These bins collect less than 7 pounds of compostables per day, but the club is working to increase education and awareness about composting at the Cooler.

Residence Halls: Thanks to the hard work of students in the OSCAR Club, compost bins are located in three of Oxy's fourteen on-campus residence halls (Braun, Chilcott, and Haines). These bins are emptied and sorted by paid student workers through the OSCAR Club, funded by the Associated Students of Occidental College (ASOC) Sustainability Fund, and the contents are composted at the Universal Waste Services off-campus compost sites

The Green Bean staff are also trained to do the same in their food preparation and deliveries. In the past, the Green Bean has worked with the FEAST Garden to compost all of their coffee grounds on-site in FEAST's compost piles. While the pandemic paused this initiative, the Green Bean's managers and FEAST student workers are currently in the process of restarting this partnership. For post-consumer waste, the Green Bean has their customers separate their waste by providing a three bin system (i.e. a compost, recycling, and trash single waste station).

Reusables at the Marketplace

The most effective way to reduce waste from going to landfill in the food system is to reuse it! Thus, most meals at the Marketplace are served in reusable containers, unless students request their food to go. Additionally, students are given the option to use stainless steel silverware instead of disposables, as well as reusable coffee mugs and water cups. In order to incentivize students to bring their own reusable containers for drinks, the Marketplace offers a \$0.15 discount for using your own water bottle or coffee mug.

The Marketplace also offers a reusable to-go container program, known as eco-clamshells, which began in the spring of 2012 by Lead Intern for Sustainability Research and Implementation, Emma Sorrell '13. All students are automatically enrolled in the program upon entering Occidental, which works by exchanging a token for the reusable clamshell containers when students get their food to go. At checkout, students are given a \$0.25 discount for using the eco-clamshell. Clamshells are then rinsed and returned to the cashier stands, where students are given a new token. Tokens are used in order to ensure students are returning the clamshells after use, and are required for students to use the clamshells in the Marketplace. To date, the program has prevented over 35,000 takeout boxes from going to landfills!



Not sure how to participate in the eco-clamshell program?

Check out this video featuring Isa Merel '23, Campus Dining's Lead Intern for Research and Implementation, to guide you through retrieving, using, and properly returning your eco-clamshell in the Marketplace! This video was generously directed and produced by Angelina Lee, Class of 2022!

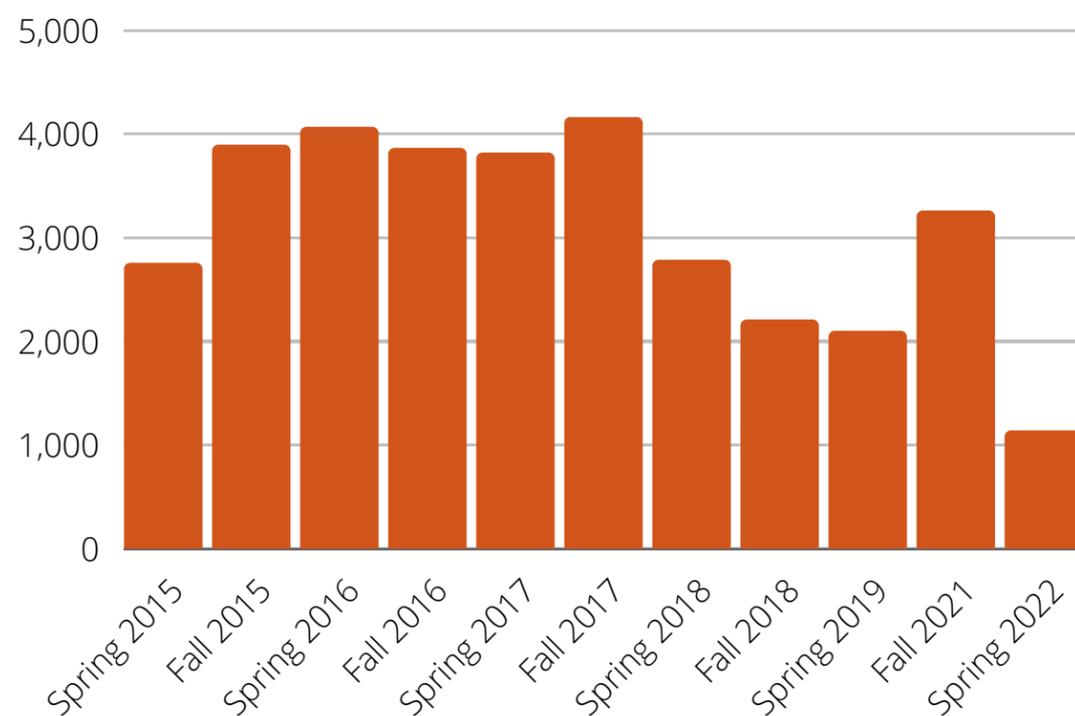
Photo Credit: Campus Dining Interns

Annual Summary

During the 2021-2022 academic year, Oxy's waste management initiatives faced challenges due to restrictions from LA County Public Health Guidelines and ongoing labor shortages. To ensure the health and safety of Oxy's students and staff, LA County Public Health Guidelines required Campus Dining to serve all food in disposable containers and not allow students to bring their own cups or reusable mugs to dining facilities. When LA County lifted restrictions on reusable serveware, Campus Dining had to delay reopening its sanitation room until November 2021 due to challenges with hiring sanitation staff. As a result, Oxy's facilities and grounds staff frequently became overwhelmed with the amount of waste generated by the Marketplace each day, chiefly with the increased use of cardboard takeout boxes.

At the beginning of the fall semester 2021, Campus Dining also discovered its Waste Management Provider (UWS) cannot process compostable take out containers made out of PLA-7, a plastic-like material made of a plant-based resin that can degrade under certain conditions. While PLA-7 is technically compostable, few compost facilities in Greater LA County have the necessary infrastructure to break down PLA-7. This discovery caused confusion amongst Oxy's student body on how to properly sort their waste, creating new pressure from the student body for more clarity. To address this discovery, Campus Dining worked with OSCAR to update signage about what is compostable on campus and began replacing PLA-7 take-out containers with a compostable cardboard alternative. Likewise, the Green Bean's student managers began phasing out their PLA-7 cold cups with compostable paper cup alternatives.

**ECO-CLAMSHELL USAGE BY SEMESTER
2015-PRESENT**



As a result, these challenges prompted several conversations about the importance of reducing waste on campus and diverting as much compostable material from the landfill when possible. These conversations ultimately led to the creation of Waste Diversion Awareness Week, Oxy's Zero Waste Working Group, and Oxy Dining's first waste audit. During the week of September 27th to October 1st, Campus Dining Interns and representatives from EFRT and OSCAR celebrated Waste Diversion Awareness Week (WDAW) by hosting a Quad Fair to spread awareness about waste diversion and how students can play their part in diverting waste on campus.

To translate these conversations into action, Isa Merel, Lead Intern for Campus Dining, organized and hosted the first meeting of Oxy's Zero Waste Working Group on March 29th. At the meeting, student leaders, Campus Dining employees, and zero waste representatives from UWS planned Oxy's first waste audit and discussed plans for expanding Oxy's eco-clamshell program. For more information about Oxy's Zero Waste Working Group, please contact imerel@oxy.edu.

To find out what is compostable, recyclable, and landfill at Oxy, visit [this link](#).

Waste Diversion By the Numbers

4,385
to-go boxes
diverted from
landfill

3,384 lbs
of food scraps
composted on site
at the student
garden

2,332 lbs
of prepared meals
redistributed to the
Hollywood Food Coalition

Goals Identified by the Zero Waste Working Group

1. Work collaboratively with student groups and campus departments to develop comprehensive policies and goals relating to sustainable waste management.
2. Improve student knowledge and awareness of waste management.
3. Increase the use of eco-clamshells amongst the student body.
4. Increase organic waste diversion rate by working with Facilities to provide compost bins outdoors.
5. Work with SLICE to develop a low- or zero-waste event policy for on-campus events and vendors.



VI. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ON-CAMPUS AND IN THE COMMUNITY

Student Services

At Oxy, students have the opportunity to engage with the local food system and sustainability initiatives through a variety of student services overseen by SLICE, student clubs and organizations, as well as on-campus and off-campus internship opportunities.

Food, Energy, and Sustainability Team

FEAST is an officially recognized Student Service that maintains numerous gardens around campus, including: The Bruce Steele garden located by the UEP center, a native pollinator garden by Norris, and a butterfly garden by Stewart-Cleland Hall. In the Spring of 2022, FEAST hired 16 student workers to manage and oversee composting operations, the Bruce Steele gardens, the chickens, and community engagement. To get involved and join FEAST's volunteer network, contact feast@oxy.edu, follow FEAST on instagram at [@oxy.feast.garden](https://www.instagram.com/oxy.feast.garden), or come to daily open garden hours.



Renewable Energy and Sustainability Fund

The ASOC Sustainability Fund was established by students of Occidental College in 2007 to fund projects and lead initiatives that make Occidental a more sustainable and environmentally just community. RESF is now one of the four branches of Occidental's student government: the Associated Students of Occidental College (ASOC). As of the Spring of 2022, RESF has approximately 12 paid student representatives that include a president, secretary, treasurer, and several representatives from each class. RESF are chosen through an application process. For more information on RESF, please follow RESF on instagram [@oxysusfund](https://www.instagram.com/oxysusfund) or email RESF at asocsustainability@oxy.edu with any questions or concerns.



Photo Credits: Occidental College, FEAST Garden's Instagram Page, and Ashley Muranaka-Toolsey

Excess Food Recovery Team (EFRT)

As a member of the national **Food Recovery Network**, the Excess Food Recovery Team is a food-recovery program where students coordinate with campus dining to collect and donate excess food from the Marketplace to three local community partners. EFRT members also partner with **Food Forward** to become **Glean Team Leaders** who volunteer at local farmers markets once a month. EFRT includes one paid student position for EFRT's Program Coordinator who is overseen by SLICE and a large network of trained volunteers. To learn more about EFRT or to get involved, check out [@oxy_efrt](#) on Instagram or contact the Program Coordinator Lena Sullivan at sullivanl@oxy.edu.



Photo Credits: Lena Sullivan '23

Clubs and Organizations

Occidental Student Composting Actions for Remediation (OSCAR)



In the fall of 2021, the residential housing compost program and Cooler Compost Project, both student-led clubs, combined to create a new student organization named the Occidental Student Composting Actions for Remediation (OSCAR). OSCAR now oversees composting operations in residence halls and in the Cooler Compost. During the spring semester of 2022, OSCAR hired eight student workers to sort, weigh, and oversee compost bins in residence halls and the Tiger Cooler. Since OSCAR is a student organization, OSCAR applies and receives money from RESF to pay its student workers. For more information on OSCAR, please reach out to OSCAR via email at oscar@oxy.edu!

Photo Credit: Lena Sullivan and EFRT

Campus Dining

Student Intern Team

The campus dining student intern team is composed of four student interns that work under the supervision of the AVP of Hospitality Services. Under the leadership of the Lead Intern for Sustainability Research and Implementation, the four campus dining interns work on maintaining metrics for sustainable food purchases, the Real Food Challenge, procurement of new food items, developing and updating the Food at Oxy Guide, marketing, organizing FSWG meetings and events, as well as planning meaningful food-oriented events to help educate the campus community!

1. **Lead Intern for Sustainability Research and Implementation** supervises the Campus Dining's student intern team and is an important liaison between dining and the greater Oxy community. The Lead Intern helps in maintaining Campus Dining's Real Food Challenge database, the eco-clamshell program, waste management efforts, and serves on the FSWG.

2. **FSWG and Sustainability Liaison** serves as the student co-chair on the Food Systems Working Group and as an intermediary between Campus Dining and the student body. The FSWG intern works closely with Sharon Cech, UEPI's Regional Food Systems Director, to plan and facilitate two FSWG meetings each semester and publish the Food at Oxy Guide each year. The FSWG intern is also responsible for publishing monthly newsletters to the campus community and assisting the Lead Intern with other sustainability related initiatives.

3. **Data Entry Assistant and RFC Research Intern*** is responsible for Campus Dining's Real Food Challenge data analysis and works diligently to improve Oxy's real food procurement. When not running the RFC calculator, the RFC Data Intern conducts research for Campus Dining related to external food systems and supply chains, works with the Lead Intern on the eco-clamshell program, and collaborates on other sustainability-related initiatives.

4. **Marketing Intern*** is responsible for bridging the gap between students and Dining services through creative marketing to promote understanding of Oxy's dining services and sustainability programs. In particular, the marketing intern oversees and manages all of Campus Dining's social media accounts and designs the Marketplace's Chalk Wall.

***These positions are no longer available after 2021-22 academic year**



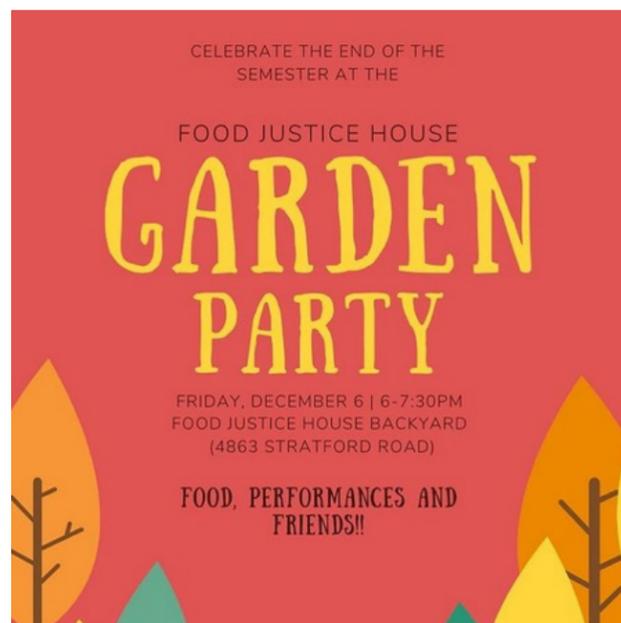
Photo Credits: Campus Dining Intern Team

Residential Education

The Food Justice House (FJH) is one of the themed-living communities that students can apply to live in after their first-year at Oxy. The FJH is a co-operative living community and an intentional space for students committed to food justice, living sustainably, and rebuilding their relationships with land and food. Founded by Oxy students, the FJH and its residents are committed to local food production, environmentally-conscious eating habits, urban gardening, and community outreach and awareness. As a co-operative living community, the FJH is dedicated to healthy, communal meals, and values quality ingredients and gourmet cooking as much as it does just production. Oxy's Food Justice House has back and front yard vegetable gardens, and also attempts, whenever possible, to purchase its food from independent grocers, organic producers, and local farmers' markets. To learn more about applying to live in Food Justice House, please visit [REHS' website](#). For more information about Oxy's Food Justice House and the events they hold, check out Food Justice House's Instagram [@food_justice_house](#).



Photo Credits: Food Justice House Instagram



UEPI and In The Community

The Urban and Environmental Policy Institute (UEPI) is a community-oriented research and advocacy organization housed within Occidental's Urban and Environmental Policy (UEP) Department. UEPI advances community-driven approaches to achieving equity and social and environmental justice through program and policy work in the issue areas of food, goods movement, the built environment, and public health. UEPI has been working on innovative food programs for over 20 years, such as incubating the National Farm to School Network. Their current food justice programs focus on improved food access, farmers' markets, nutrition education, Farm to School in Los Angeles, and strengthening local food economies and community food systems. As a part of the FSWG core team, UEPI brings their long history of community food advocacy and policy work, as well as an established network of leaders in the food movement. These assets can be utilized to inform food systems within Oxy and also to connect the FSWG to relevant food initiatives outside the Oxy community. For more information on how to get involved with UEPI's Food Programs, contact Sharon Cech at cech@oxy.edu. The Urban and Environmental Policy Institute offers several internship opportunities to engage students with the local food system, urban agriculture, and food justice.

Student Internships: UEPI employs Occidental interns each semester to work on their Farm to School and Farmers' Market projects, and UEPI staff routinely provide guidance to students and connect them with food-related independent research projects, internships, and volunteering opportunities.

UEPI Urban Agriculture Summer Internship In the summer of 2020, UEPI launched an Urban Agriculture internship program that places Oxy students at urban farms in the greater Los Angeles area for a 10-week summer internship. Interns participate in a 2-week orientation course to learn about issues of urban agriculture and food justice in Los Angeles through a combination of classroom lectures and discussions as well as field trips to each of the participating urban farms. For more information, check out the [UEPI Summer Internship Program's website!](#)



About the Food Studies Minor



Going beyond what is served at campus eateries, or the policy work done by UEPI, the Food Studies Minor seeks to promote the interdisciplinary critical examination of our relationship with food. Uniting many existing efforts on campus under a common banner, the Food Studies Cluster was officially created in 2012 in recognition of the fact that stronger programs, projects, and courses would be possible with more collaboration across disciplinary lines. Established in 2019, Oxy's [Food Studies Minor](#) is a burgeoning, interdisciplinary, inherently politicized field of scholarship, practice, and art that examines the relationship between food and all aspects of the human experience, including culture and biology, individuals and society, global pathways and local contexts.

The Food Studies minor provides students with the ability to study complex food-related issues across a broad range of departments and opportunities to engage with food-related groups in the local community. In using food as a lens for academic exploration and critical thinking, students minoring in Food Studies have the opportunity to think critically about the current state of our food systems and develop recommendations for agricultural challenges and ideas about how they can contribute to food system solutions. From a student-run organic garden, to research on flavor and how the human mind processes it, the Food Studies Minor at Occidental seeks to critically examine our relationship with food. While the classroom provides many opportunities for students to learn and formulate their ideas on the importance of food with a variety of perspectives, a number of initiatives have also been pursued by students with the guidance of faculty advisors. The Food Studies Minor continues to develop and expand today, as we explore the critical ways in which food studies permeate across disciplines.

Food Studies Minor Core Classes

To minor in Food Studies, students are required to complete 20 units of approved food-related coursework. In particular, students must complete at least one of the following courses: Kinesiology 210: Nutrition and Homeostasis, Sociology 240: The Sociology of Food, or UEP 306: Food and the Environment. For more information about course offerings and minor requirements, please visit the Food Studies page on the Oxy website or email foodstudies@oxy.edu.

KINE 210: Nutrition and Homeostasis

Taught by Professor Marcella Raney, this course introduces students to the science of food and nutrition. Students learn how macronutrients and micronutrients are assimilated into the human body from both dietary and supplement sources. This course also focuses on understanding the science behind the USDA dietary guidelines and how to prepare meals for optimal health depending on age, sex, and physical activity levels.

UEP 306: Food and the Environment

Through lectures, field trips, discussion, guest speakers, and class exercises, students will examine the history and evolution of community and economic development strategies in urban neighborhoods and communities and link these approaches to the field of sustainable development.



Photo Credit: Sharon Cech and Rosa Romero

SOC 240: Sociology of Food

Sociology of Food looks to question the connections that the preparation, consumption, production, and distribution of food has with culture and society. In doing so, students will try to understand how the issues and problems of daily life reflect larger social forces and how our understanding and actions shape the social world. As a result, several major questions facing sociology will be examined including inequalities and identities based on national racial/ethnic class and gender positions; work and family; the environment; globalization; and cultural change.

