

## Zero Waste Team Meeting: Reusables in Dining

Monday, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021

**Attendees:** Thurman Etchison, Justin Holding, Meredith Moore, Alexa Smith, Avery Maloto

- Thurman's To-Go program
  - Have purchased 10k containers, Cooks Campus Dining (double check name)
    - Container has 8x8x2.5 dimensions
    - Silicone type seal on the top, not 100% sealed, liquid can spill out
    - Relatively deep to contain food without spillage
    - Color: Green and Gray
    - Cost: \$40,000
  - Idea is that students have the ability to purchase the container for \$5, and are able to reuse as much as they want
    - They can turn in their used one, and will be given a clean one upon arrival at the dining area
    - \$\$\$ is difficult to deal with in this situation, easy to take money but not easy to give it out
    - Drop it off at POS and collected in a bin
    - Take it for next use or take it to service
    - Students are not tied to using it each time they go in
  - Starting at 3 locations: ISR, Ikenberry, LAR Field of Greens
    - Initially going to serve at one particular area in each of the locations
    - Expecting to expand to whatever they want early on, once they get a feel for the situation
    - Collaborated & conversed with Student Affairs
    - Labor intensive to clean/wash, dry, and stack for reuse
      - Have to place on a rack to dry (drying racks have been purchased already)
  - Timeline
    - Ikenberry and LAR are going to be started immediately upon the start of the school year, ISR will be held off for a little bit of time before the program is launched
  - Food truck is ready to go, logo is going to be green and gray like the containers
  - Outstanding Questions:
    - Whether or not plastic cutlery will be handed out
- Tokens / Container Tracking:
  - Do not know whether or not they are going to track number of usage (Through the use of "tokens")
  - Northwestern University struggled with this, as they lost a lot of containers and didn't know how many uses they got out of the containers
  - 1-in-1-out?
  - Oregon State University ran into a problem with contamination of containers.

- We will know how many are sold and how many are being returned (could potentially happen in the back-of-the-house by counting when the containers are being washed)
- How are the 10,000 containers going to be distributed amongst the 3 dining halls?
  - Going to put a few hundred in each unit
  - The rest will be put in Food Services storage until the containers need to be taken out, cleaned, distributed, etc.
- How many people visit the dining hall?
  - If 10% of the student population visit the dining hall, estimated that 250 containers will be used for dinner at Ikenberry
  - Unsure what to expect
- How will the word get out about the program?
  - Information provided at POS, at the minimum.
  - Still unsure
  - Suggestion: Near the POS, ask and advertise the reusable containers and ask students if they want to deposit money to use one.
  - Want to explain in as few words as possible to get the jist of the program out
- How to regulate excessive meal usage?
  - Eating a meal with regular plates, and then packaging a second meal with the reusable containers would cost a ~\$14M loss
- How will students be able to collect the containers?
  - At Point of Sale, a token will be given. The token will be taken to Point of Service and the reusable containers will be handed out then.
  - If students lose their plastic token, they wouldn't be able to receive a reimbursement. The token is their responsibility.
  - Is it possible to track the token on their University account?
    - It is possible to track the transaction, however it is difficult for the individuals at Point of Service to track the tokens when distributing the containers.
- Tracked Metrics Regarding Waste
  - Track plate waste
  - Track consumer waste
  - Marketing campaign to collect baseline measurement of waste we have and make an impact
  - Overarching Question: Where will the waste go? Landfills, Grind2Energy?
- What if a student drops and cracks/breaks the container?
  - The container will be turned in, taken out of service, and the student will receive a replacement.
- Will the student workers be trained to deal with the containers?
  - 40% of the workforce will be new employees
  - There is a high turnover rate that may make it difficult to standardize the information being handed out
  - Training for the containers/program will be incorporated into the routine training already being held
- How will student opinion be tracked?
  - No official plan yet

- Usually use Webtools, a survey platform, to send surveys to students
  - Seeing student responses is something they are always interested in
- Would dining be interested in collaborating with Gies to solve/answer any sustainable business problem?
  - Dining is always happy to help academic programs & to help students
  - Unsure what question they would like Gies students to work on, will follow up in the upcoming week
- Dining App?? *[[Missed the beginning question for this conversation topic]]*
  - Will be in use at 57 North
  - Pizza-to-go concept at FAR
  - Urbana South Market
  - Terabyte
  - Static Menu locations will incorporate this, especially places that heavily utilize to-go containers
- What will the tokens look like?
  - Blue
  - 1.5 inches, with an imprinted logo in white
  - Easily identifiable
  - Something that we can wash
  - IDEA: Something like the Safer Illinois app
    - Potentially to incorporate this idea later down the road
    - The time and energy may not be feasible at this current moment, with the small turnaround time before the launch of the program
- Can café credits be used to buy the containers?
  - No, the containers are not food so they are taxable.
  - They would need to purchase with credit/debit card.
  - There may be giveaways of the container, such as in different events throughout the school year.
- Future Ideas:
  - Union and other food service locations incorporating the program into their dining services
  - Develop a best practice guide to incorporate/start the program in other locations
  - Newman Hall is also interested in buying a reusable container
    - Related to Hendrick House
  - Standardize the containers and receptacles across all locations, to avoid several different programs conflicting with one another
  - Collaborate and incorporate other vendors such as restaurants
    - Potential health concerns with utilizing third-party containers
  - Using the containers as prizes for individuals to use. (EX: In contests, competitions, campaigns, etc.)
- Current Concerns:
  - Still unsure how to deal with the washing/cleaning of the reusable containers, a new system will need to be adapted in order to account for all of the containers