

Food Provision and the Incorporation of
Sustainable Practices at Colgate University over
its 200-year History as an Institution of Higher
Learning

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Introduction

How do you get your food? Where was it grown and who decided what you purchase when you enter a grocery store or even a university/college dining hall? How much do you want to spend on this product and how do you measure the quality and general satisfaction with the food that you received? As personal food trends have changed over time, so has university food provision. With growing student populations at schools and a demand for a variety of options, food provisions at institutions of higher learning have also changed and followed overall US trends. We are at a pivotal time in our history where climate change, sustainability, and taking care of our environment has never been so important. As sustainability is at the forefront of our minds, higher education has started to implement sustainable practices throughout their institutions. As Colgate University looks forward to celebrating their bicentennial in 2019, there are many great advances that should be celebrated and our push towards becoming a more sustainable university is one of them. In order to measure where Colgate is now in regards to sustainable food provision, it is important to recognize Colgate's dining history and how it has changed in the past 200 years. This report is doing just that.

This project is a part of the bicentennial research that Colgate is conducting to see where they have been and where they could go in the future. Our main focus was on food provision at Colgate over the last 200 years and how Colgate has either used or not used sustainable food practices. It is important to look at the history so that we can continue to learn and so that we do not repeat the mistakes that have happened in the past.

For the purpose of this project, we mainly worked in the archives since the objective was to focus on Colgate's overall history and not the last 10 years when sustainability started to become a main focus in higher education and at Colgate. We also conducted interviews with John Pumilio (Director of Sustainability) and Steve Holzbaaur (Chartwells Sustainability

widely used rating systems to incorporate sustainable food into their rating system. In the section of the report labeled Food and Dining, it says that, “Dining

the importance of local/community-based food (Real Food Challenge, n.d.). The local food movement is of utmost importance when we think about sustainable food provision and how by using local foods we are actively supporting local farms. When we think about small farms that provide local food provision to universities, it is important to consider the law and how different laws affect small farms in comparison to the larger industrialized farms. In Ristino's, *Back To The New: Millennials And The Sustainable Food Movement*, she describes how legal needs of small and medium scale farms are different from large-scale producers because of "their size, localization, resource limitations, business goals, customer base, and liability risk" and these needs can include advocacy for: food safety, food marketing, processing, innovative technology,

practices. The first system they use in the AASHE STARS definition of a 250-mile radius around the campus, this stretches from Hamilton, New York to Pennsylvania, Canada, Vermont, Ohio, Maryland, New Jersey, Massachusetts and New Hampshire (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Local 250-mile radius around Hamilton, NY map.(Sustainable Food Systems Advisory Group, 2015)
<https://sites.google.com/a/colgate.edu/sustainable-food-systems-advisory-group/aashe-stars-definitions>

In addition to the 250-mile radius, Colgate University also uses a second tier to define local as “any food purchased within Madison County or any of the six counties that border Madison County (i.e., Oneida, Otsego, Chenango, Cortland, Onondaga, and Oswego)” they say that this would have a more “direct benefit to local farmers, our regional economy, and overall public relations” (Colgate University Sustainable Food Systems Working Group, n.d.).

Methods

For this project we have acknowledged the most widely used definition of sustainability that was previously mentioned in relation to the Brundtland report which stated that sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1982, p. 43). But, for this project we decided to use a sustainability definition that frames sustainability as an ethos to guide decision making while attempting to consider the three pillars of sustainability: social, economic, and environmental (Kates et al., 2005, p. 12). We used the three pillars as a way to guide our assessment of their incorporation into the decision making process of food provisioning at Colgate, specifically keeping in mind our research question: By using the idea of local sourcing, how has Colgate University prioritized sustainability with

After establishing the measurements of sustainability, we searched through the Colgate University Archives, looking at a variety of sources, such as letters and contracts and photographs, to create a kind of food history timeline. We used the archival database and searched with keywords like “food,” “dining,” and “meal(s)” to find source material related to past food provisioning. We specifically looked in archival boxes from the Buildings and Grounds Collection, President’s Office, and Dean of the College. Looking through the University’s archives proved to be challenging and limited how far back in time we were able to find information, so we shifted our approach to specifically searching the online archival database of school newspapers. Throughout Colgate University’s history, the school newspaper has been titled a variety of things: *Madisonesis*, *The Colgate Maroon*, or *The Colgate Maroon-News*. We used key terms such as “dining,” “food,” “eating,” “food provision,” “dining hall,” and “menu” to find older documentation of Colgate’s food practices. We specifically looked for information on pricing of meals, the priority of the food sources, and where students dined on campus.

In order to assess Colgate’s food history, we also needed to know and understand the university’s current practices of sustainable food management. In order to learn about Colgate’s practices, we contacted some of the key stakeholders in the University’s food sustainability. We formally interviewed both Steve Holzbaur, the Sustainability Manager of Dining Services, and John Pumilio, the Director of Sustainability, for about half an hour each (consent forms and questions in Appendix II). We also video interviewed them for half an hour again at separate times with more targeted questions (consent forms and questions in Appendix III). They provided us with information on Colgate’s current practices of sustainability so that we could compare present practices to the past archival information we gathered. In addition, we sought the guidance of Professor Jennifer Hull, the Bicentennial Research Fellow, and Professor Chris Henke, a sociology and environmental studies professor who specializes in promoting sustainable food choices both on and off campus. They were both able to help us hone our research in the archives and for our literature review, respectively.

P c ’

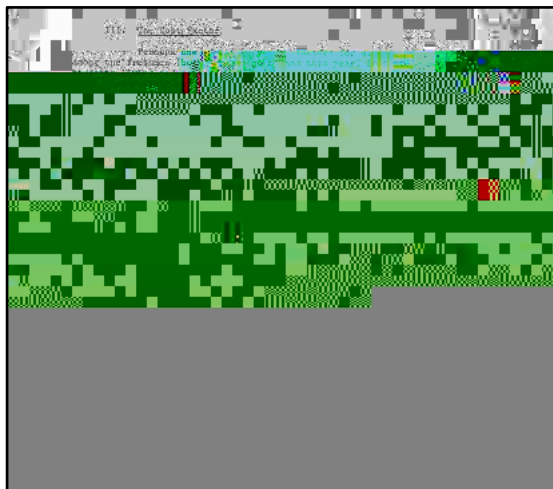
This project focused on archival research over the last 200 years since Colgate was established 1819. There are several different limitations to our study that have impacted the information that we were able to find, however. One such limitation is inconsistent documentation of what food was being provided in the 1800’s, how students were getting this food, and how much it cost them and the university to supply. Another limitation in our study is that such sparse documentation on the stewards, how often the stewards changed, and how the

The next mention of food we found was not until a century later, in a 1938 publishing of *The Colgate Maroon* where someone countered students' complaints about the quality of the food. In fact, the writer argued Colgate students were lucky because they were given unlimited bread, butter, and milk and their food only cost \$6.75/week as compared to Dartmouth's \$8.50 and Harvard's greater than \$10 prices ("Not Fit For A Dog," 1938, p. 2).



January 14, 1938, *The Colgate Maroon* Vol. 70, No. 27.

In 1969, students, particularly first-years, were unhappy with the quality of the food; many complained that they were paying the same as upperclassmen who had nicer dining facilities in the Bryan and Cutten Complexes while they were made to eat lukewarm food in the Student Union - James C. Colgate student union (Dix et al., 1969, pp. 3-4).



October 24, 1969, Task Force (Dix, Miller, & Schlesinger) to Dean Griffith and Mr. Krehel

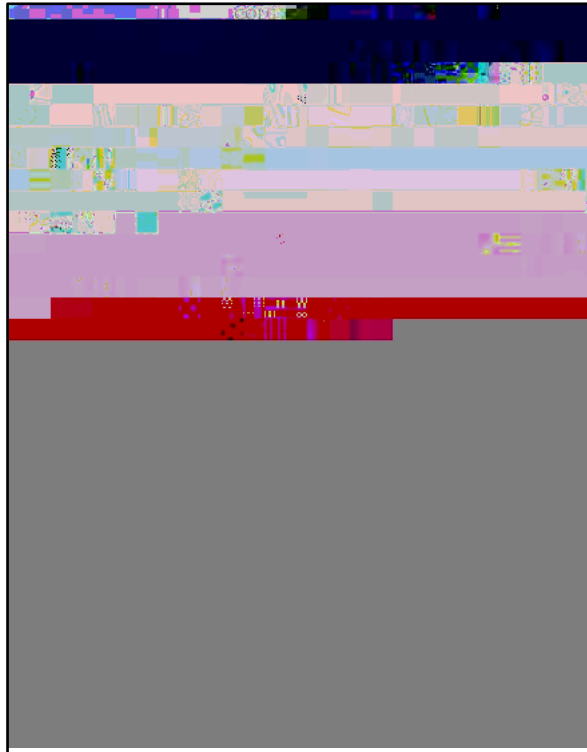
about addressing issues of unhappy first-years' dining experiences.

This prompted Colgate to employ a line of food service providers, the first being Servomation Mathias. Servomation was brought on in February 1970 and left in less than a year due to conflicts with contractual agreements and disrespect from students wasting food with food fights (Dix, 1970; see Appendix IV). In their proposal, they mentioned they would purchase from local sources when they could as long as the sources met their standards for price and quality (Servomation Mathias, Inc., u.d.).



Purchasing section from Servomation Mathias's contractual proposal to Colgate University.

Saga Dining Halls was hired in from 1971-1987. They increased the dining price from \$600/semester to \$700/semester and requested that students only take one plate at a time - although students could come back for more - in order to reduce waste (Martin, 1971; Saga Food Service, 1971).

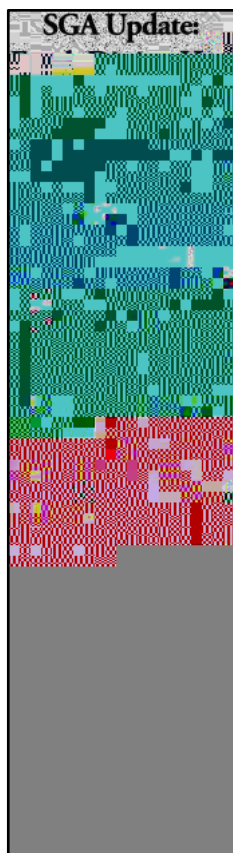


February 1, 1971, Dean of Students Guy Martin's letter to parents about increasing price for room and board.



Saga Food Service 1971 introductory pamphlet.

Sodexo followed after Saga, serving Colgate University for almost 30 years: 1987-2015. In 2012, ENST 390 students, with the help from the Director of Sustainability John Pumilio, pushed Colgate to move toward trayless dining in order to reduce food waste (Semrau, 2012, p. A5).



March 29, 2012, *The Colgate Maroon-News* Vol. 144, No. 20.

With time Colgate University continued to push Sodexo to be more sustainable; however, they could not meet demands and ultimately were let go after the spring of 2015. Chartwells Higher Education was hired for that fall of and is Colgate University's current food service provider, as of 2017. Chartwells prides itself in providing healthy meals for students through sustainable means and specifically created the position, a position unheard of in dining services, of sustainability manager - held by Steve Holzbaaur - upon Colgate's request and hiring of the company.

Food Provision Timeline of Colgate University

Analysis

Colgate University as an institution has always provided food in some capacity for its student body. Through evaluating instances where the institution's policies on food provision changed, a timeline of trends can be understood through mapping the general trends displayed. This timeline can be used to understand various stakeholders' stances regarding the food provision, specifically, how the student body, the institution itself, and trends across the United States potentially affected those decisions. Furthermore, by looking at the points of change throughout Colgate University's history, we can evaluate specifically how the environmental, economic, and social factors impacted those decisions.

E c ' a C G e T ' U '

When the institution first opened, it utilized stewards to provide food for the students and staff. Stewards were in charge of both acquiring and producing the food that the institution would sell. In 1835 a "coloured man named Peter Osborn" was the head steward for the institution. There are no records of Osborn's pay, and he was at the institution prior to the abolition of slavery in 1865. This may imply an indentured servitude role was in effect for the position in the early years of the position's inception. Juxtaposed with the position in 1945, a "Mr. Herbert A. Davis" was hired as the head steward, with no reference to his race, and notably an honorific with his name. This further implies there may have been a socially inequitable relationship with the stewards during the early years of the position's inception. With food provision at Colgate University probably having its roots in slavery, this would be a complete disregard for any notion of social sustainability with respect to food provision.

Economic considerations were the main driving force for decision making throughout the early time period. The usage of stewards, and prioritizing the cheapness of board, continued well into the 1900s for the institution. However, when coal-powered trains and trucking began to transport cheaper goods from further away, the reliance on local food began to diminish (Town of Hamilton, 2017). This led to sourcing food from further away, and simultaneously moving away from the institution's reliance on local food. While this does indicate a prioritizing of economic sustainability of food pricing, it does so at the direct expense continuing to support local communities as much as previously was. The local economies were now receiving less revenue from the purchasing power of the institution focusing on goods from further away. While there may not be any literature in the archives regarding what extent this impact had on the local economy, it undoubtedly had *some* impact in some way as money began to shift away to other communities.

Saga Food followed Servomation, and in their contract with Colgate University, Saga

work (Holzbaur 2017). This signals a shift from the earlier times where cooks would look down

being a part of the initial *The Tallories Declaration* and after much discussion, they did not sign the Real Food Challenge (Wright, 2002, p. 205; Real Food Challenge, n.d.). The economic aspects of decisions were the deciding factors, little regard was given to environmental or social aspects. Social parameters of sustainability were not actively considered, or if they were, preserved documents proving so seem to be missing from the archives. As mentioned above, allusions to unideal working conditions for stewards led to tension in the early years of Colgate's food provision systems for food providers.

As Colgate fully transitioned into a liberal arts institution in the 1970s, their stance on sustainable aspects with regards to food provision began to shift as well. The institution began to move towards a more regulated external food service provider system. Socially unsustainable practices while utilizing stewards led to discontent among the students and food service workers, which ultimately led to this shift. The demand for change largely coming from disgruntled students regarding how the steward system was operating. Along with the evidence of workers not being fully valued, and treated in poor working conditions, a socially unsustainable situation was evident. While the

Recommendations

As Colgate enters their Bicentennial in 2019 and a new chapter in its history, they can continue their upward trajectory on increasing sustainable food provision for students. As we have seen, Colgate is on the right path towards becoming a more sustainable school in terms of food provision, but that does not mean that they stop here and not continue to grow. They need to continue to improve and find new ways to incorporate sustainable food practices into their everyday dining experiences. With their hiring of Steve Holzbaur, the creation of the sustainable

are implementing sustainable practices at their university. One of the major programs that Tufts has implemented in regards to their dining services is that when they do have leftover food from either catered events or any food in general, they donate it to a local organization that has emergency food for free for the different community members (Tufts University, 2017, para. 5). In Madison county, a program like this would be a way to build community relationships between the school and the county inhabitant since the food that was donated would not only be edible, but also healthy.

Although Colgate University tried to implement a reusable container program in the fall of 2016, it did not take hold and made very few changes in regards to limiting food container waste. Many students were unaware of this program as is it was only open to first-year students. As a way to promote the reusable to-go containers, these containers could be given to students who are on the meal plan and when they use their reusable container they can receive points that could place them into a raffle to receive certain benefits such as reusable water bottles, mugs, Colgate clothing, and the big prize could be a discounted meal plan for people who use their container a certain amount of times over the course of the semester. Additionally, Chartwells or Colgate could charge a deposit for the reusable container and if you were lose the container, then you have to pay your deposit. A system could be implemented where students get two free containers a semester, but once you lose those, then you have to pay the deposit. As a way to reduce disposable cup waste, all students who pay for a meal plan could be given a reusable water bottle and mug at the beginning of the school year that can be used in the dining areas to receive discounted prices (Colorado State University, 2017).

There are several ways that Colgate can continue to maintain and further their goal of a sustainable dining program and these are just a few recommendations that other institutions of higher education across the country have implemented at their schools to promote sustainable dining practices. The Bicentennial is a way for Colgate to not only look at its past, but to also incorporate new ideas about sustainable dining practices into their future.

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Appendix I

http://blogs.colgate.edu/sustainability/files/2014/12/New-York-Map_opt1-444x350.jpg



Local 250 mile radius around Hamilton, NY map. (Sustainable Food Systems Advisory Group, 2015) <https://sites.google.com/a/colgate.edu/sustainable-food-systems-advisory-group/aashe-stars-definitions>



Land Grant Institutions in 1862 and 1890. (National Research Council, 1995, p. 8)



Real Food Standards 2.0 (Real Food Challenge, 2016, p. 20).
<http://calculator.realfoodchallenge.org/help/resources>



Map of the six surrounding counties(Sustainable Food Systems Advisory Group, 2015)
<https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=Y29sZ2F0ZS5lZHV8c3VzdGFpbmFibGUtZm9vZC1zeXN0ZW1zLWFKdmlzb3J5LWdyb3VwfGd4OjE1ZGZmY2VhYjEzNThlYWY>

Appendix II

Certificate of Informed Consent Interview- Colgate University

Date

Date

Questions for Steve Holzbaaur

1. Name, job position, how long?
2. What is your personal definition of sustainability and how do you apply it to food?
3. Where were you before coming to Colgate?
4. And how has that helped you work towards making Chartwells more sustainable here? What specifically drew you to Chartwells at Colgate? What does your job entail?
5. What is Chartwells approach to sustainability, how do they define it?
6. How has Chartwells worked to improve sustainable dining?
7. How does Chartwells define local?
8. How much food

Appendix III

Certificate of Informed Consent Video- Colgate University History of Food Sustainability at Colgate University

Overview and Procedure: We are a team of student researchers from the ENST 390, interested in learning more about the availability of sustainable food practices at Colgate over the past 200 years. We would like to ask you some questions concerning this topic. This video interview will take 30 minutes of your time.

Risks and Benefits: Your participation in this project is low risk, though some of the questions we ask might seem a bit personal.

Confidentiality: Your answers to all questions will be confidential and used only for research purposes---your name will be connected to any of the information that you provide, unless you tell us otherwise, then your name will be kept confidential and will be given a pseudonym. Results from this study will be made available to you should you desire and will also be published on the Colgate website.

Compensation: None

Your Rights: As your participation is fully voluntary you have the right to withdraw from this study at any point or decline to answer any question without penalty.

Contact Information: If you have any questions about this study or your rights please contact any of the principal student researchers: Geneva Leong (gleong@colgate.edu), Robert Howie (rhowie@colgate.edu), or Summitt Liu (sjliu@colgate.edu).

Please circle the appropriate choice for each of the following:

Yes or No: I give permission for my voice, image, name etc. to be used for your video component of your class project

Date

Date

Video interview questions for John Pumilio

1. Where do you see Colgate in the future and how can they realistically become more sustainable? What is the next step?
2. What is your personal definition of sustainability and how do you apply it to food?
- 3.



