

Transcript: Green Leek: Recycling at UNCG – Dining Services

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Presented by: Kevin Deans and Ben Kunka

Kevin: Well, welcome Ben Kunka, who is over all recycling and waste management

on campus. I'm Kevin Deans, director of dining services on campus

Ben: Yeah, and, a lot of people when they think of green they think of

my department, and how, you know, we do the recycling and we do waste

reduction education, but a lot of people overlook the fact of what

dining does. Dining does, has huge amounts of tonage that goes into

landfill diversion and the recycling, and I just wanted to talk to you a

little bit about the specifics that not everybody gets to see. A lot of

stuff is done, um, behind the scenes, so Kevin's group, Dining Services, has

a huge impact on the amount of recycling that we do. And we have a

good relationship, but they also have some programs that they do on their own.

One of the things that we work together on a lot is cardboard recycling.

Cardboard, we get, most of your deliveries at the EUC and dining hall come in in cardboard?

Kevin: That's right. A tremendous amount of cardboard, and boxed products.

Ben: And, um, a lot of tin cans, steel cans?

Kevin: Tin cans, plastics, all those are being worked to be recycled through the

campus waste management stream program, so they're diverted from landfills, and the

regular trash all out bins.

Ben: And I tell you this department is one of the biggest generators of

cardboard especially. We have their bins emptied five days a week with the

city and my contractor. I think sometimes you guys could even use

some more capacity, so, um, the cardboard at the EUC and dining hall

is huge. Another thing that we work together on is cooking oil. As a

food service you guys do go through a fair amount of cooking oil. Our company

Chartwell's is really keen on keeping quality control, so they change out

oil more frequently than our previous contractor, so we're getting more

cooking oil that we are recycling, um, so, we've got some bins at the

dining hall, at the EUC, so there's going to be a significant amount of cooking

oil, I think last year we were around the order of 1400 gallons of

cooking oil, and we're set to probably surpass that this coming fiscal year.

Kevin: Right, which is recycled into biofuel and diesel fuel.

Ben: Correct, yeah, and that is made into biodiesel and it's also a revenue

stream this upcoming year, so we're excited about that. Dining Services has set up

their first composting operation with a company called Brooks Contractor, and

Brooks, um, services your dumpster, three days a week?

Kevin: Three days a week, Brooks Contractor is a commercial

compost company out of Goldston, NC, and they come here three days a week.

Again, all food waste from dining, and also the biodegradable, compostable

products from catering are coming into the compost stream now.

Main stream catering will become all compostable products in the

Fall of 2011. So that's a tremendous change, and it's a change in a way

that we have to operate as well because trash will, which is, was trash is now

going to be compostable and it will have to come back to dining and into the compost stream.

Ben: Yeah, and when we say compostables, you're talking about the products,

he's also talking about the plate scrapings, so that includes...

Kevin: And the plates and the napkins and the plasticware which will be compostableware now.

Ben: So we're getting closer to zero waste with Kevin's effort, with catering,

and here at the dining hall too, all the food waste is composted.

Kevin: And some of the paper waste as well.

Ben: So that took some effort to realize, you know, what kind of

products you guys needed to purchase...

Kevin: That's correct, there's a change in our purchasing. That's absolutely correct.

Ben: ... so it's a good case study how a department on campus looked at

what they were generating as a waste, and thought about, well, if we start

buying these products instead, and handle it properly, we can divert

that from the landfill. So, I applaud you guys on that.

So, with this compost program just beginning,

you've been sending me the annual report, so we can include that and every

month is averaging around 7-11 tons of food and compostable waste that we're

diverting from the landfills, so that's significant.

Kevin: Some of the other initiatives that are going on on campus are the

reusable coffee mugs on campus, the reusable cold-cup glasses for soda,

water, reuse, and the reusable grocery bags in the convenience stores.

Ben: I'm not a fan of disposables, so I'm glad you guys are not only using compostables

with some of your operations, but then now encouraging reusables.

Kevin: Right, and the customer gets a break on the refill, on those cups and mugs.

Ben: How much of a break? How much people can save with...?

Kevin: About forty-percent.

Ben: Forty-percent savings, wow.

Kevin: Pretty significant

Ben: And that's in the EUC...

Kevin: Cold beverages.

Ben: ... and dining hall.

I'm glad that you guys are, again, taking the lead there, with offering

reusables, and then giving people a break on it when they're - an incentive to use reusables.

Kevin: There are also efforts around local, purchasing local, and using

local vendors in produce, and with the addition of Bojangles on campus,

a lot of their products will become more North Carolina local products.

So, there's definitely efforts in dining to use more and more local

suppliers, local sustained products, which are within, we consider local

within 150 miles radius of Greensboro, so um, we can see, and last year we

were close to ten-percent in use of local product, and in 2011-12 academic

year we'll go well over ten-percent. Dining's also proud to be a

part of the community gardens. We have two garden plots.

Ben: That's pretty local, isn't it?

Kevin: That's very local, about 100

yards away from the dining center.

So we have two plots, and we hope to have three plots in the Fall of 2011

into 2012. Those herbs are used primarily in Catering, but some are used also

in the Dining Center. So it's kind of a fun project for us in Dining.

Kevin: The next initiative will be into the retail. As we look to use

more of the compostable products into the retail for the future,

but that will be the future for us, and of course, more local initiatives

as far as purchasing local products.

Ben: Great.

Kevin: Some good steps in dining to help with the sustainable footprint on campus

Ben: You guys are reducing the amount of waste by going local, you're

reusing, items with your bags and your cups, and then you're

recycling through composting and through your cardboard container

recycling, so um, and I know at all the dining locations you can find a recycling bin.

Ben: So, again I applaud your efforts, and we look forward to what else we can do.

Kevin: That's right, we have a good team together.

Ben: Thank you, Kevin.

Kevin: Thank you.

