

Updated CAP overview and goals (December 5, 2024)

"Waste Not, Want Not: A Food Waste Initiative"

- Overview

- Mission: creating digital content/social media campaign to help people reduce food waste at the household level
- I will encourage participants to conduct a household food waste audit, which will help establish a baseline understanding of what foods are wasted and how people can utilize these ingredients
- Two main mechanisms include:
 - #CookFromTheCupboard Challenge where people send a few ingredients they have in their fridge to create unique recipes utilizing leftovers and would be food waste
 - Weekly meal pack shopping guides which allow people to shop, prep, and cook multiple meals throughout the week using a single grocery haul
- Additional infographics, educational materials, and outreach visuals will be shared
- Anonymous survey forms will be used to gather insights and feedback throughout the project
- Alongside digital outreach efforts, I will continue working on policy advocacy and sustainability initiatives at the University, state, and federal level with partner organizations

- Goals

- Engage 100 people to complete a household food waste audit
- Reach 500 #CookFromTheCupboardChallenge submissions
- Produce 25 weekly meal plan packs from major US grocers (QFC, Safeway, Trader Joes, Whole Foods, Kroger)
- Incorporate cultural variety and user feedback into recipes
- Make progress on long-term food waste and food security legislation

CAP team members and advisors, including faculty advisor

Mentor: Mary Jane Chandler, maryjane.chandler@wwfus.org

Ambassador: Kathryn, [kathryn2568@gmail](mailto:kathryn2568@gmail.com)

Faculty Advisor: Michelle Averill | Director, Food Systems, Nutrition, and Health Program at the University of Washington - **still pending final confirmation**

CAP timeline and deliverables

December

- Program development and preparation
 - Develop Instagram and Facebook Account Graphics
 - Create Link Tree for Food Waste Audit Hosting
 - Batch plan posts for January
 - Develop 5 food waste infographics/Instagram carousels
- Establish partnerships
 - UW Faculty Advisor
 - Seattle Public Library to host in person events
 - Community wide partnerships

January

- Publish explainer for Household Food Waste Audit
- Launch #CookfromtheCupboard Challenge
 - 20 Challenge submissions each month from me plus more via participants
- Launch 7 weekly meal plans
- Post 3 Infographics

February

- 20 #CookfromtheCupboard Challenge submissions
- Launch 7 weekly meal plans
- Post 3 Infographics

March

- 20 #CookfromtheCupboard Challenge submissions
- Launch 7 weekly meal plans
- Post 3 Infographics
- Travel to DC or Sacramento for Hill Days (Policy Advocacy)
- Conduct final review of survey feedback for participants

April

- Launch 4 weekly meal plans
- Finalize CAP Report
- Design Final CAP Presentation for PGC Finals

Initial CAP Proposal (Updated Oct. 31, 2024) - Just for Reference

Marria Peduto mpeduto University of Washington

1. Refine Your Project Focus

Mechanism for Change: "Waste Not, Want Not: A Food Waste Initiative"

Advocacy Strategies

1. Collaborative Partnerships: Partner with local food banks, community organizations, and environmental groups to amplify the message about food waste and its impacts. This collaboration can help pool resources and reach a wider audience.

2. Digital Advocacy: Engage with people online to promote choices that encourage food donation and reduce waste.

Communication Methods

1. Social Media Campaigns: Utilize platforms like Instagram, Facebook, FB Live, and TikTok to share impactful visuals, statistics, and personal stories about food waste. The #CookFromTheCupboard challenge will encourage community participation and engagement.

2. Email Newsletters: Develop a monthly newsletter that includes tips, recipes, and updates on food waste initiatives, fostering ongoing dialogue and engagement with the audience.

Educational Approaches

1. Workshops and Webinars: Host cooking workshops and informational webinars to educate participants on meal prep, creative uses for leftovers, and food donation practices. These interactive sessions can empower individuals with practical skills.

2. Resource Guides: Create and distribute digital guides that provide information on food storage, planning meals, and understanding expiration dates, making it easier for individuals to reduce waste at home.

Innovation and Creative Tools

1. Interactive Digital Content: Use infographics, videos, and stories to make learning about food waste engaging and accessible. This content can be shared across social media and community platforms.
2. Mobile App Development: Explore the possibility of a community app that allows users to track their food waste, share recipes, and connect with local food donation resources - would definitely need some workshopping from folks in tech if this is enough time to launch a soft product.

Contribution to a Healthy and Just Future

- Empowerment: By educating individuals on food waste reduction, the initiative empowers them to make informed choices that positively impact the environment and their communities.
- Community Resilience: Fostering a culture of sustainability encourages community members to collaborate and support one another, enhancing local resilience against food insecurity and climate change.
- Behavioral Change: The combination of advocacy, education, and innovative tools can lead to lasting changes in behavior, reducing food waste and its associated environmental impacts.

Resources Needed

- Funding: Seek grants and sponsorships to support workshops, promotional materials, and event costs - potentially can bear some costs associated for things I would do cost-share on this one.
- Volunteer Support: Recruit volunteers from UW, Seattle's Environmental clubs, and larger community organizations to assist with event planning and execution.
- Marketing Tools: Utilize graphic design software and social media management tools to create and distribute engaging content.

2. Identify Key Stakeholders

Key Stakeholders

Academic Partners

Professors in Environmental Science/Food Systems: Their expertise can provide valuable insights into the complexities of food waste and sustainability. They can also help design educational materials and workshops.

Graduate Students: Students from relevant fields (e.g., Environmental Studies, Public Policy) can assist with research, outreach, and project implementation. They may also bring fresh perspectives and innovative ideas.

Community Organizations

Local Food Banks: They can help distribute food donations and provide insights into community needs related to food security.

Environmental NGOs: Organizations focused on sustainability can provide resources, networks, and marketing support for the initiative.

Marketing and Communication Professionals

Social Media Experts: Individuals skilled in digital marketing can help develop effective campaigns to reach a wider audience, especially on platforms popular among younger demographics.

Graphic Designers: They can create visually appealing educational materials, infographics, and social media posts that resonate with the target audience. Could it be done independently with Canvas?

Culinary Experts

Chefs or Culinary Instructors: They can lead cooking workshops, teaching participants how to creatively use leftovers and reduce food waste in their kitchens.

Mentors and Advisors

Community Leaders: Local leaders who are passionate about sustainability can provide guidance and credibility to the initiative.

Industry Professionals: Individuals with backgrounds in sustainability consulting or food production can offer practical insights and networking opportunities.

What's Next

Desired Outcomes

Increased Awareness: Enhance understanding of food waste issues within the target community, leading to more informed consumer behavior.

1. Community Engagement: Foster a sense of collective responsibility for reducing food waste through collaborative events and challenges.
2. Behavioral Change: Encourage participants to adopt sustainable practices in their kitchens, leading to measurable reductions in food waste.

Participation Rates: Track attendance at workshops, engagement in social media challenges, and sign-ups for newsletters.

Impact Surveys: Conduct pre- and post-project surveys to measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding food waste.

Partnerships Established: Count the number of collaborations formed with local organizations and academic partners.

2. The narrative will center around transforming the culture of food waste into one of creativity and sustainability. It will highlight personal stories of participants who have successfully reduced their waste and discovered new ways to use food creatively. This project will be framed as a community-driven movement, showcasing how small changes in individual habits can lead to significant environmental impacts. By documenting the journey and sharing successes, the initiative aims to inspire others to join the cause and create a ripple effect of positive change.

3. Identify Your Project Focus

Climate Action Project: "Waste Not, Want Not: A Food Waste Initiative"

Project Overview

This project aims to address food waste at the household level by raising awareness and encouraging sustainable practices among students. Over the next five months, I will implement digital educational campaigns, cooking workshops, and a community challenge that inspires people to creatively use leftovers and reduce waste.

Target Audience

- Primary Audience: US based consumers - most likely mid twenties since I can relate most to them, but not exclusively. These tips can apply to anyone
- Secondary Audience: Local community members, including nearby residents and food banks that could benefit from reduced waste. This will be relevant should I be successful in organizing locally hosted events

Identified Need

Food waste is a significant issue not only on college campuses, with many students unaware of the environmental impact of their habits, but also the average consumer at home who wastes nearly 40% of the food they purchase. This project will address the challenge of food waste by educating people about its consequences and providing practical solutions for minimizing it.

Impact Areas

- Education and Awareness: Increase understanding of food waste issues among the public.
- Community Engagement: Foster a sense of responsibility and community through collaborative events, held online and in person.
- Sustainability Practices: Encourage long-term behavior changes that benefit the environment.

Project Construction Steps

1. Research: Gather data on current food waste statistics on UW's campus, Seattle community, and of the US consumer as a whole and identify key areas of improvement.
2. Collaborate: Partner with campus dining services to try and implement better food waste reduction models. Partner with local food banks to incorporate food security into the conversation of food waste and inspire creativity in the kitchen through education.
3. Plan Events: Organize workshops focused on meal prep, leftover cooking, and food donation practices - hold these both in person and online so people have access!
4. Launch Campaign: Initiate the #CookFromTheCupboard challenge on social media, encouraging folks to share their leftover recipes and ideas.
5. Evaluate Impact: Track engagement and reduction in food waste through surveys and feedback before and after the program.

My "Why"

I am passionate about this project because I believe that small changes in our daily lives can lead to significant environmental impacts. I've seen firsthand how my own management of food waste has evolved throughout time, especially once I learned how to plan my meals effectively to reuse and repurpose ingredients creatively. Building confidence in the kitchen and accountability in your cupboard is what allows people to reduce food waste since they can navigate the otherwise intimidating arena of the kitchen. Food waste reduction is often overlooked in climate discussions as plant-based diets or regenerative agriculture are a little more attention grabbing, yet it contributes to larger climate issues. This initiative is not just about reducing waste; it's about creating a culture of sustainability that empowers folks to take responsibility for their impact on the planet.

4. Reflect on Key Questions:

Who Will Benefit from Your Project?

The primary beneficiaries will be digital followers who will gain knowledge and practical skills to reduce food waste via my virtual outreach, education, and event initiatives. Additionally, students at the UW, local food banks and community members will benefit from potential food donations and changes that I can advocate for locally. Most importantly, the environment will see positive impacts from reduced waste!

What Specific Need or Challenge Are You Addressing?

This project addresses the significant issue of food waste from a holistic economic, sociological, and environmental perspective. By fostering awareness and providing practical solutions, I aim to minimize waste at home and institutionally and promote sustainable practices in the kitchen.

Where Do You Envision Your Project Having the Greatest Impact?

The greatest impact will be in the lives and homes of people who engage with this project. While my goal is to focus on food waste in the United States, the partially virtual nature of this project allows for engagement around the globe. Once people recognize the impact of their food waste and learn how to address the root causes of their wasted food, they will hopefully implement my project's ideas for long term change so as to create a culture of sustainability that extends beyond the project duration.

Second, if I am successful in implementing some of these changes institutionally at the University of Washington, I think large scale food waste reduction measures could be incredibly impactful at the school wide level. That might be a longer battle, but the impact will surely be greater.

What Is the "Why" That Ignited Your Passion for This Project?

My passion for this project stems from a desire to make a tangible difference in combating climate change, but also feeling overwhelmed on where to start. Witnessing the excessive waste generated in daily life, especially among peers, ignited a determination to raise awareness and inspire action in the kitchen. I believe

that everyone can contribute to positive change, starting with their own habits and also advocating for larger, system wide change.

What Draws You to This Challenge or Opportunity?

I am drawn to this challenge because it combines my interest in environmental sustainability with sustainable food and marine systems - one of my undergraduate majors. The opportunity to educate and empower my peers resonates with my belief that collective action can lead to meaningful change and that through taking tangible actions, community members will increase their involvement in local food politics, waste systems accountability measures, and voting with their dollar to reduce waste.

What Existing Skills or Experience Do You Have That Will Support You in This Effort?

I possess strong communication and outreach skills, enabling me to effectively engage with peers and organize events. I successfully applied for a grant from the U.S. State Department's Citizen Diplomacy Action Fund Grant to launch a project focused on food insecurity during the pandemic, so I feel like this is a new variation of that idea, but expanded and shaped to address the issue of food waste. I also have spent the last 10 years cooking for my family and myself using the principles I've developed over time to reduce our household food waste to almost 0, so I feel confident in my ability to share and educate others about those actions and how to try and implement them at home.

Who in Your Network Has Complementary Skills or Expertise That Could Add Value?

I can tap into a network of friends and colleagues involved in environmental clubs, culinary arts, and community service organizations. Their expertise in event planning, food sustainability, and social media engagement will be invaluable in promoting the project and reaching a broader audience. I also will be reaching out to professors within the College of the Environment, UW Dining, and UW Campus Farm to discuss food waste on an institutional and individual level. They can add value to this project through expert opinions, academic input, research partnerships, and collaboration to implement these ideas at the university.

How Does This Connect to Your Passion or Academic Studies?

This project aligns closely with my studies in environmental science and food sustainability. I am currently pursuing my masters degree in marine affairs where I am researching food security and food sovereignty among Alaskan Native and Tribal communities in the Coastal Fisheries Ecology Lab. This is highly interdisciplinary work and I draw upon my undergraduate degrees in International Studies, East Asian Languages and Cultures, and Sustainable Food and Marine Systems to conduct meaningful work in the lab. This project addresses similar ideas including stewardship of natural resources, food systems, and it allows me to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world challenges.

Goals for 5-Month Timeline

Month 1: Awareness Campaign Launch

- Specific: Create a digital campaign to raise awareness about food waste.
- Measurable: Reach 500 followers across social media platforms.
- Achievable: Utilize existing networks and promote through campus channels.
- Relevant: Educates the community on food waste.
- Time-bound: Launch by the end of Month 1.

Month 2: Launch the #CookFromTheCupboard Challenge

Specific: Initiate a social media challenge encouraging participants to share leftover recipes. #CookFromTheCupboard Challenge

- Measurable: Aim for 100 unique posts using the hashtag.
- Achievable: Promote through influencers, community partners, and campus organizations.

- Relevant: Encourages creativity and awareness about food waste.
- Time-bound: Run the challenge throughout Month 2.

Month 3: Cooking Workshops

- Specific: Organize 2 cooking workshops focused on using leftovers creatively. Potentially livestream cooking sessions. People can share what leftovers they have and I can create recipes with them.
- Measurable: Engage at least 20 participants per workshop/live.
- Achievable: Collaborate with local chefs and culinary students.
- Relevant: Provides hands-on experience in reducing food waste.
- Time-bound: Complete both workshops by the end of Month 3.

Month 4: Community Engagement Event

- Specific: Host a community event focusing on food donation practices and sustainability.
- Measurable: Attract at least 100 community members.
- Achievable: Partner with local food banks and community organizations.
- Relevant: Fosters community involvement and awareness.
- Time-bound: Plan and execute by the end of Month 4.

Month 5: Evaluate Impact and Plan for Sustainability

- Specific: Assess the effectiveness of the project through surveys and feedback.
- Measurable: Analyze engagement metrics and waste reduction data.
- Achievable: Collect data from participants and partners.
- Relevant: Ensures long-term behavior change and sustainability.
- Time-bound: Complete evaluation and develop a report by the end of Month 5.

Instagram Post:



🌱✨ Excited to provide a sneak peek of my project: Waste Not, Want Not! Over the next five months, I'll be raising awareness about food waste and sharing sustainable kitchen practices with my peers and the local community.

By hosting workshops, launching the #CookFromTheCupboard challenge, and partnering with local food banks, I aim to inspire others to creatively use leftovers and reduce waste.

Food waste is a massive issue, but small changes can lead to big differences. Let's turn our awareness into action! ❤️

@turninggreenorg #PGC2024 #FoodWaste #Sustainability #WasteNotWantNot #CookFromTheCupboard #ClimateAction

Final Presentation Notes:

The beauty of Project Green Challenge was on full display last night as we gathered for a meal (FLOSN of course) after careful and somewhat chaotic preparation, engaged discussion, and teamwork. I julienned jicama while asking Barbara to say CILANTRO "just one more time" or attempting to roast the butternut squash while Godfred told me about his favorite Ghanaian dishes.

As you can see, my PGC experience was imbued with international connections and global perspectives in my climate journey. And while acting locally is incredibly important and oftentimes the most effective way to see change occur in real time, the climate crisis requires a global village to create meaningful impact in our world.

I first learned about PGC through a friend while attending Indiana University, but by the time October came I was no longer in school and my bags were packed to move halfway across the world. This year in grad, I was excited to bring a depth of perspective from my travels to each day's challenge, but soon realized it was the global perspectives of my peers that I was gleaning so much from -- I'm even meeting up with the climate hero who I wrote my day 7 prompt on Marcel Gomez, in Brazil later this December.

And thus, the culmination of 30 days of challenges has renewed my excitement for collaborative and globally engaged efforts and helped me reflect on my position as an American within the climate crisis and the direct actions we can take to address one of the most glaring climate issues: food waste.

It all started with some shakshuka... and my dad. A true Italian we always have tons of marinara at home and so one day after raiding the fridge for any vegetables on their way out and of course some harissa, I whipped up my favorite meals. He kept saying how resourceful I was for making this dish and I told him I was merely substituting a few things and drawing upon the incredible culinary traditions of the Middle East and North Africa. He now makes all the time and even sends me a little picture when he does.

And I tell you this because truthfully, he's not an incredible cook, but he is a great learner and recognizes the value and importance of not wasting food. So that is why I'm launching Waste Not, Want Not: A food waste initiative focused on enacting change through a holistic approach.

And I know I'm preaching to the choir a little bit, but FOOD WASTE IS A PROBLEM. While it exists everywhere, it is a uniquely troubling problem in the US where nearly 60 million tons of food is discarded each year. Imagine going to Farmer Al's farm and

cutting down nearly half of his fruit trees, that's essentially what we're doing when we let produce rot in our fridge.

Food is the single largest component in US landfills and as those piles of garbage heat up they release greenhouse gasses like methane, CO₂ and more. This is not only an injustice for the farmer, but also the millions of Americans especially children

So I have to ask, why do we waste so much food? Here are some of the responses I gathered from friends and colleagues:

1. We don't have enough time to cook with the ingredients we bought or we purchased too much
2. We don't want to appear stingy or inhospitable
3. We just don't like leftovers

In response to this, I designed my climate action project to address three areas of concern: 1) Identifying negative habits 2) offering household solutions 3) advocating for institutional and policy change

For the food waste audit, you should have a copy of the template at your table. I'm asking that 100 households print this template and track their habits for a week to establish a baseline understanding of their food waste. You can keep it by your trash can or compost bin and so every time you discard food you'll write down its name and the estimated amount. You shouldn't change your habits just yet because I really want people to understand the true cost of their current ways so we can identify their needs together and propose solutions.

Part two of this project is the #CookFromTheCupboardChallenge where people can ask about a few items they have in their fridge and either I'll design recipe cards for them based on a few pantry staples or they can create their own dish and share their success with others! The goal is to create a community supported recipe forum providing healthy and inventive meal ideas from commonly wasted items. Mouthwatering photos of dishes and accompanying cooking instructions will all be posted to Instagram and Facebook as a sort of recipe repository.

And for those who may need more help planning and shopping for zero waste recipes, I'm launching weekly meal kits with a pre-budget grocery list and recipe ideas that are culturally relevant and provide multiple uses for that one ingredient a recipe called for once and you don't know how to use again. Zero waste cooking is a bit of a puzzle and it takes practice to build skills to identify flavor combinations that you like and creative uses for leftovers, so these meal kit plans do a lot of that heavy lifting while teaching people how to think about how these ingredients fit together.

I will have anonymous surveys to provide solutions that are relevant to my audience -- maybe they always throw out their broccoli stems or don't know what to do with that last bit of peanut butter that always sticks to the jar.

Second, this project will not just be me talking to a camera about food waste, but rather an interactive educational experience for people to take action. Print out the food waste audit or an ingredient substitution poster

Most importantly, I want to build a community where people share ideas and recipes of their own and feel empowered to tackle the challenge of food waste.

That leads me to my final step, which is to address the larger institutional players at the table in this system. Now I recognize change is slow so this is work I'm doing alongside some incredible colleagues as part of my role as Co-Chair of the U.S. Youth Action Council for the UN Ocean Decade and with the Washington State Legislature. Hopefully my CAP community can engage with and support this work as newly informed and empowered citizens to advocate for system wide change.

You can see some of the goals for this project here

Hopefully I have thirty willing participants in this very room to take the first step. This is my call to action to you all. Spread the word of this challenge, follow me @Marriaskitchen, and suggest materials that you think would be helpful in the kitchen and at the market.

Everyone can do their part to reduce food waste, you just have to take the first bite.