

Sarah Cipollini
Green Queens

Champlain College
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Greenest



I decided to dive deeper into Meatless Monday for the greenest portion of today's challenges. Partially due to the lack of accommodations for vegan and vegetarian folks, after my first year at Champlain I promptly moved off-campus and have been making delicious meals for myself ever since. A lack of variety in vegan and vegetarian foods available both in the dining hall and during school-sponsored events with food is a huge misstep on Champlain's part as far as I'm concerned. Agriculture is responsible for nearly $\frac{2}{3}$ of human water use and and over 30% of earth's land area, a rate which is unsustainable for much longer. In addition to a general lack of options, there is a lack of education and understanding amongst those who are not studying these types of subjects each day during class. By teaching people more about what is going on, we can hope that they may change their mind in a positive direction.

So far, Champlain dining hall staff have worked with a student who has graduated now to coordinate more vegan and vegetarian options, which have been delegated to a large space right in the front area of the dining hall that states simply, "VEG." They also began stocking more options for vegan snacks in the school store, which I was very grateful for. However, there are still very limited/no options in an on-campus cafe area, which is disappointing especially if you don't have a meal plan and can't access the dining hall. I usually combat this by bringing meals and snacks from home, which in the long run saves me money and cuts down on waste- but that shouldn't be an excuse for them to ignore the problem. Students I have spoken to who are dairy-free, vegan, or vegetarian consistently, even with the new VEG bar, have issues getting food on time, eating a variety of types of food, and with quality of food produced.

I have spoken to the dining hall staff and head chefs multiple times, and at this point they are aware of the shortcomings but do not have either the knowledge, resources, or time to change the norm. Additionally, they have worked very hard to bring up the quality of service significantly since I was a first year.

However, I have brainstormed a collaborative change opportunity that could strike up conversation on campus about this topic again. See below for the draft of my

email, which I plan to send out tomorrow afternoon. I will email a screenshot to info@turninggreen.org once I do that! For now, check out the draft below:

email to Valerie Esposito(vesposito@champlain.edu)/Christina Erickson (cerickson@champlain.edu) →

Hello Val + Christina!

I hope all is well with you both. I am reaching out in regards to an opportunity to promote positive change on campus fueled by engaging education and interactive information. Since coming to Champlain four years ago, I became a vegetarian and later fully vegan. While I am happy with the choices I've made and lifestyle I'm living, there have been times I doubted whether or not it was worth it. Most of those times came in the dining hall or in Eats, when I was hungry but didn't have time to go home, and there were no meal options for me on campus. I could have fixed that for myself by meal prepping and bringing lunch to campus with me, but at the time I hadn't done that much so it didn't come to mind. You're probably wondering where you come into this story.

Since my first year, I have worked as an orientation leader as well as multiple other student leader and engagement positions. A common theme I have noticed is that most vegetarians or vegans I speak with also have a hard time finding options on campus for food, despite Champlain's "commitment to sustainability." I think one of the roots of this issue comes from a lack of campus community-wide information and knowledge surrounding

- a) vegan and vegetarian diets*
- b) industrial/mainstream agriculture vs. regenerative agriculture*
- c) organic vs. conventional*
- d) impact our diets have on the environment/people*
- e) env. justice issues w/agriculture*
- f)etc.*

I was thinking it could be really cool to have a teach-in type of campus-wide sustainability education workshop day/fundatory event centered around food systems, food waste, different types of diet choices, how they impact people/environment differently, campus choices + community choices

- catered w/FLOSN + VG food (sodexo if they can do that, if not-pingala, b.good, zabby and elf's, knead bakery, etc.)*
- get people excited and on board with this type of lifestyle*

- *example meal plans (Tatum made one already, as did my friend Julia Leonard), places to shop for groceries, sample budgets (Holly), eco rep encouragement, “lunch buddy program?”, info sheets (online + physical), etc...*
- *SMALL panel? or speakers? would there be a possible budget?*

GOALS:

- ↳ *get everyone on a baseline knowledge of environmental justice issues involved in industrial agriculture*
- ↳ *educate the campus community about positive developments including organic regenerative farming - **signup for gleaners!***
- ↳ *educate the campus about the harmful implications of our massive and ever growing mainstream agriculture industry.*
- ↳ *educate the campus about alternative diets*
- ↳ *tie in other sustainability themes/social justice themes + show interconnectedness - reach out to Faith/Patti/Tarn/other divisions/EHS people? who would be interested that you know of?*

Basically, this is still really just a preliminary idea I had but I wanted to bring it up with you both so we could get started on planning soon if you liked the idea! Maybe it could be right in the beginning of Spring Semester, so everyone is coming off holiday time and is still possibly in the New Year’s Resolution spirit. Holly and I can sponsor/run the event in partnership with the center (I’m hoping), with our Net Impact club! I know there will be a shift in employment that new semester, so if you think it would be wise to do it this semester we could too. Let me know what you think, I’m excited about this! I’d be happy to come in and chat in person to discuss next steps or clarify anything.

Kindly,

Sarah C.

Implementing a Meatless Monday on campus is a very simple first step. On top of that, not only providing vegan and vegetarian options in the dining hall and at all school-sponsored events, but providing enough for all participants and encouraging others to try it out as well as educating campus community members on making smart consumer choices, like purchasing their food from our local farmers markets or co-op grocery stores can really make a lasting difference in the lives of others, and offset an overworked system as well.