

Zuleica Prado

Professor Gooptu

EN121 315

17 May 2023



TO: Jessica Orangeo

FROM: Zuleica Prado

DATE: 07 May 2023

RE: A Proposal to Implement a System to Reduce Food Waste at FIT

PURPOSE

“Unconventional minds,” is the FIT saying that many know FIT for, and with my own unconventional mind, I am proposing a solution to the global and campus problem that is an issue every year, food waste. Food waste occurs at shockingly high rates, and is defined as food that is intended for human consumption but is wasted and lost, including the food and material losses in the farming, harvesting, transportation, and storage stages of production and consumers not finishing their meals in restaurants, food being thrown out due to expirations, and food being thrown out because of ignorance. Now, food waste can be reduced especially in a defined community, like at FIT, and FIT’s current policies can and should be modified to address this concern and reduce the thousands of pounds of food thrown out each academic year.

I recommend that for the new academic year, 2023-2024, FIT should implement a food system that involves the dining hall staff and implements changes within the student body’s

attitudes to combat food waste together. In the following year, FIT would implement an internal tracking system that tracks and uses work-in-progress visibility to view real-time inventory, record and manage expiry dates for products in the dining facility, and manage supply traceability from source to fulfillment to view where exactly food gets lost in the stages of production. It would also include tracking how many students enter the dining hall and how many meal swipes are used per day to determine the timeline of when more supplies of ingredients should be ordered. And to analyze how much quantity of food should be made available per day based on automated reports.

Such change and initiation would improve the large amounts of food wasted per year at FIT, reduce the amount of wasted resources, and such action would comply with the NY State Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling Law, as the solution would include keeping excess food in proper storage to then be donated to possible distribution outlets at the end of a day.

PROPOSAL RATIONALE

Each year, hundreds of meal swipes go unused by FIT students, and even more meals are actually wasted when students overpile their trays, overestimate how much food will fulfill their appetite, leave leftovers or food in a fridge and let it become expired, as they are not educated on their wasteful behavior leading to ignorance and the cycle of food waste continuing in an endless circle. This is unacceptable, as it negatively impacts our ecosystems, uses resources that could've been salvaged, and worsens the less fortunate's food security. Food that goes uneaten is trash, is a poor mindset and unfortunately it's one that many FIT students have without knowing. Awareness needs to be brought up, and a message must be spread to get word out about these

negative mindsets and attitudes, which is why I've created a digital campaign and am writing this proposal with a solution.

Each year, a third of all produced foods end up in landfills which only does bad. And FIT shows that their dining facility does not effectively combat this issue at the moment. There are thousands and thousands of pounds of food wasted from the 8,150 students at FIT, while there are barely enough implementations that work to reduce food waste, compost food, or donate edible food to food banks, donations centers, recycling facilities, or food pantries, when there are so many in the Chelsea and NYC area. Each night, food is just dumped and then it happens again and again since there is no one to stop it, and because there is no solution in motion to put an end to this. This is why I am writing to you, and I hope you collaborate and use the available resources at FIT to change the dining hall's policies as the food services director. My proposal won't put an end to world hunger and the global issue of food waste, but it will contribute for good and to work on reducing food waste, while promoting awareness, a positive mindset, and starting a movement at other SUNY campuses like SUNY Cortland has done earlier this year.

If a system as proposed is implemented, I believe it would benefit the less fortunate, fight against the throw away culture, and be an opportunity and stepping stone for FIT as a school who promotes and strives for sustainability. A small win can be a big win down the line, and for generations to come. And this could be a big winner to reduce food waste at FIT and keep edible food out from dumpsters, landfills, and the trash cans of the Dubinsky dining hall.

THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION PLAN

My proposed solution involving both the dining hall staff and the FIT student body, will ultimately reduce food waste. It will educate students on the importance of thinking before

purchasing, how being ignorant affects the environment, how small steps can be taken to achieve the ultimate goal, how they can take initiatives to reduce food waste outside the campus, and it can spread awareness to reach President Brown, who can send out an additional message on how FIT will collaborate with composting facilities and other SUNY universities to reduce food waste as a community. Thus our community will be able to see what works from a global perspective. As FIT sees the world unconventionally, so does my plan with an atypical yet effective and possible solution.

The steps of my plan first include gathering financial resources, or using the dining hall's connections to collaborate with *aactivate* food distribution software to gain better understanding of where food is lost and wasted, to gain better inventory, manage and record expiration dates for products in the preparation spaces, and track product availability to not order too ahead or too much. It then proceeds to track how many students enter the dining hall cafeteria per day, what is the conversion rate of number of entrants vs. number of students buying food, and what are the amounts of food **and** meal swipes used in total by students. It will be important to not track these numbers as a whole, but separately and per day, because each day varies since students commute and don't have school certain days, students work and eat at other locations on certain days, and because some students go home on the weekend and thus only use the dining hall services on weekdays, amongst other factors.

Next, when it comes to getting these audit and report results, the staff, services manager, and you, as the food services director, can meet and revise these results to set an estimation number for each day and properly prepare and make a certain amount of food per day instead of overproducing. This would accurately calculate the food demand at FIT's dining hall, and thus it

would reduce food waste. These reports would also calculate how much supply of ingredients should be ordered, what is the timeline of when to order these ingredients, and what is the timeline of expiration for certain food items so that better ways of storage can be found as well.

By taking these actions and steps, it would also reduce the amount of natural resources used which will make the environment better and benefit all. However, in food waste there are two perspectives, the suppliers and the consumer's. This plan can further be initiated by FIT students if we spread this proposal on social media networks to make the public talk, educate ourselves on food waste, think about how hungry we are and how much food we actually need to consume, and stop our ignorant behaviors on the amounts of food we waste per day (outside the campus as well.)

Lastly, to stop edible foods from ending up in landfills, and to better comply with sustainability laws and the NY Law of the Food Donation and Food Scraps Recycling Law, which took effect on January 1, 2022 and states that "it is required for large businesses and institutions that generate an annual average of two tons or more of wasted food per week to donate edible food to the maximum extent practicable and to recycle remaining food scraps in an organics recycling facility (1)" from the Department of Environmental Conservation. FIT should and has to donate foods to food pantries, donate to donation centers, and send scraps to composting sites to repurpose these scraps and food.

This plan can succeed, but it means a change in policy, and it must be succeeded by our food services director, the dining staff, and the student body. Food waste will be a lot easier to try and solve, if we work together as a community, and so I count on every FIT student, every dining staff employee, and the food services director to take responsibility and be unconventional.

EVALUATION MEASURES

If this solution goes into effect and motion, which I hope it does for the benefit of FIT and the earth, we can gauge the impact made by seeing how much food was composted and saved compared to this academic year, comparing how much food was wasted compared to this year's numbers, see how much food became expired before use compared to this year, and by looking at the audit reports from the *aactivate* system; which will give us a snapshot of the supply chain, documentations, results, incidents, and trends over time. I look forward to seeing the impact that this solution could have on the FIT community for the next academic year, to combat the close issue of food waste as this system/ solution has the potential to make a massive impact and spread the impact onto other institutions.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter,

Zuleica Prado

FIT

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zuleica Prado', is written over a horizontal line.

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