

Marketing Opportunities in Food and Agriculture for The Evergreen State College

By Emily Dunn-Wilder, Class of 2016

Things Evergreen Already Does That Makes Us Competitive:

- Less Meat Mondays in The Greenery
- All-Campus Clambake
- [Shellfish Club](#)'s oyster garden, non-commercial, for academic integration and student research
- Organic Farm
- Twice weekly farmers market on upper campus, every day on farm
- ARAMARK programs like Healthy For Life
- [40% of food purchased meets AASHE-certification \(from 2011 scoring\)](#)
- 31% of food purchased meets Real Food Challenge criteria for 'real food'
- Grocery Bingo in the Corner Store
- [LEED Gold certification for CAB building](#)
- Annual Harvest Festival at the Organic Farm (since ~1978)
 - amateur oyster shucking competition
- Community Gardens (student-run for like 40 years) student club that provides the seeds, tools, garden plots, and advice for any student wanting to grow their own food
- Demeter's Permaculture Garden (Evergreen State Permaculture student group) by the Organic Farm
- RAD Sustainability aquaponics by the dorms
- [Sheep Club](#) (Evergreen Students for Sustainable Agriculture), a student group that raises lambs under the supervision of faculty Mike Paros DVM
- The Sustainable Agriculture Laboratory (SAL), one of the only food-grade labs in a college (maybe not true, but still impressive)
- green cleaning system that ARAMARK uses
- Trayless dining
- Outdoor BBQ lunches that ARAMARK did (when?)
- *Terroir* academic program about appreciation for and cultural/historical/environmental/labor aspects of place-based foods like oysters, chocolate, wine, chocolate, coffee, and tea
- Food Advisory Committee, a twice-monthly meeting to discuss ARAMARK campus dining, open to students, staff, faculty

- Student-led Food Systems Working Group governance committee, charged by the President through the signing of the Real Food Campus Commitment to create a Food Policy and a Multi-Year Action Plan for the whole campus food system
- [Evergreen Food Guide](#), a comprehensive print and online guide to food and agriculture opportunities at Evergreen
- All coffee at ARAMARK locations (except at Einsteins and at some catering events) is fair-trade, shade-grown, bird-friendly, and organic from Evergreen alumni local company Batdorf & Bronson
- Permaculture design courses (academics) and Demeter's Permaculture Garden (student club)
- Farmworker Justice Day (collaboration between CCBLA, academic programs, and student groups)
- [part of The American College & University Presidents Climate Commitment, founding member of the Steering Committee for the national initiative](#)
- [Evergreen also built the state's first public L.E.E.D. gold certified building-Seminar II](#)
- Campus dining highlights local purchasing on website
- TOP Outdoor Program!
- Challenge Course
- Outdoor rock climbing wall at CRC
- And many more!

Claims other schools are making that Evergreen can match or beat:

[CBU's "Composed Plate Program" uses small, tapas-like plates to reduce waste and encourage smaller portions, while still allowing students the option of an all-you-care-to-eat dining hall.](#)

[Thirty-two percent of all food purchases for the school's dining halls are sustainable \(University of California, Irvine, Irvine, Calif.\)](#)

[Sutter Hall, the main dining venue on \[California State University, Chico, Calif.\] campus, has received LEED \(Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design\) Gold Certification by the U.S. Green Building Council.](#)

[Cal State, Chico offers several student intern positions for sustainability initiatives, conducts **compost workshops**, and educates their students on the importance of environmental consciousness.](#)

[Each semester there are dozens of themed dining events.](#)

[a weekly farmers market is held on \[Tulane\] campus](#)

[produce is purchased from several local farms](#)

Colby College is serious when it comes to sustainability. They source their produce locally, send pre- and post-consumer waste to a composting facility, and send produce from the student-run garden to local food pantries.

Transparency is also very important to Wheaton, which is why they use visible **grills** and woks so students know exactly how their food is being prepared.

Davison Hall, the main dining facility on campus, has 11 different stations to accommodate pretty much any dietary preference you can think of.

The UW farm grows fresh produce right on campus and dining services sells what they harvest at the District Market.

An online menu and nutrition information system also allows students to see what's being served at every meal [Ball State University, Muncie, Ind.]

Through Healthy for Life, students learn how to maintain a healthy diet and create well-balanced plates each and every day.

[UNC Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, N.C.] nearly 20 percent is AASHE-certified as ecologically sound, fair, and humane

Bates College gives students a chance to make their voices heard with the **virtual napkin board**

the school's food advisory committee and sustainability committee make sure that issues like education and waste reduction are addressed

Organic fruits and vegetables are grown on the Dickinson College Farm

an annual harvest fest celebrates fresh local food. [Dickinson College]

they turn used cooking oil into biofuel, compost waste, and source ingredients exclusively from local vendors. [Washington University]

Cornell University offers many perks for students who choose to support sustainability, like coffee discounts for reusable mugs.

Gustavus Adolphus College's Dining Services consist of a committee dedicated to serving as an advisory body to the Dining Services Director. This committee, the Kitchen Cabinet, meets once a month and discusses the role of the Dining Services and how they can be improved.

[Middlebury College] There is soy milk at each dining hall for the lactose intolerant and vegan/vegetarian options at each meal.

[The \[Northeastern, Boston\] university became a founding member of the American College and University President Climate Commitment in 2007](#)

[\[UMass Amherst\] They pledge to their “Real Food Challenge Campus Commitment.” At least 20 percent of their food is locally grown and fairly traded.](#)

[Whenever possible at St. Olaf, though, the meat and poultry is antibiotic- and growth hormone-free](#)

[\[Stanford University\] The dining halls offer at least one vegan entrée and dessert at every meal.](#)

[\[Tufts University\] Their menu includes fine meats, organic food, locally grown produce, whole grains, low-fat foods, and trans-fat free foods.](#)

Claims that we might be able to match (require checking):

[20 percent of the food served on \[Duquesne University, Pittsburgh\] campus is sourced from 250 growers and food producers situated within a 150-mile radius of the school.](#)

[\[Boston College\] you can also take a virtual nutrition tour that assesses popular nutrition facts and topics, all with the intent of educating and encouraging students to lead a healthy and happy life.](#)

[disposables are recyclable, compostable, and unbleached. \[Ball State University, Muncie, Ind.\]](#)

[Tufts dining services also only serves 100-percent **cage-free eggs** and sustainable fish, like wild Pacific salmon and farmed tilapia.](#)

[All milk is **hormone-free** and locally sourced \[Harvey Mudd College\]](#)

[“mystery diner” program, which allows students, faculty, and professors to give feedback. \[University of Chicago\]](#)

[Columbia University has completely eliminated trans fat from their food, following the model set by surrounding New York City.](#)

[Rogers University uses only cage-free eggs and humanely raised beef](#)

[\[Johns Hopkins\] dining services use compostable paper products and to-go packaging](#)

[\[Northeastern, Boston\] Energy Star-rated dishwashers.](#)

[rBGH-free milk \[Cornell College, Iowa\]](#)

[\[Whitman College\]](#) The school's bike share program allows students to check out a two-wheeler from the library for 24 hours.

Things Evergreen *could* easily do (that other schools are doing):

[each student is given a reusable to-go cup at the beginning of the year and using it gives him or her discounts at dining locations around campus \[Purdue University\]](#)

[Bowdoin College — which traditionally sees its graduating seniors off with a lobster bake](#)

[\[UC San Diego\]](#) The school's Eco Tours for students and members of the community highlight the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) -rated buildings on campus, solar water heating, hydration stations, and water efficient landscaping, among other things, and are meant to educate students about the importance of living sustainably.

[Stanford University](#) gets students involved by hiring dining ambassadors who encourage wellness, sustainability, and healthy eating.

[University of California, Davis](#) students can participate in 'Take a Taste,' a program that allows them to sample dining hall food and offer their opinions.

[Grinnell College](#) offers a Culinary Intern Program, which gives students hands-on experience in various sides of college food service.

[\[Miami University, Ohio\]](#) an annual **Farm-to-Fork** dinner held on-site at a local farm

[Occidental College](#) students can face off during Oxy Iron Chef, a popular school-wide cooking competition.

Gettysburg College hosts an annual Thanksgiving dinner, where students have the chance to carve their own turkey.

[Local Chicken Dinner Day \[UMass Amherst\]](#)

[An all-campus picnic meal centered around the produce harvested from the campus farm \[Mills College\]](#)

[\[Boston University has\]](#) an on-campus bar/restaurant for all their 21-plus students

[\[Northeastern, Boston\]](#) a weekly hot cookie bar

[\[Roger Williams University\]](#) dishes served in freaking pumpkins

[\[Roger Williams University\]](#) the Eat Local Challenge, which includes oyster shucking

[\[Vanderbilt University\]](#) a Table Tent advertising service free to university offices, academic departments, and student groups

[\[Pitzer College\]](#) a Google Map featuring the locations of farms from which they source their local foods.

Advertise and increase food purchasing from Evergreen alums

[\[Roger Williams\]](#) an option for parents to make “Surprise Your Student” care packages

[regular faculty-student dining days and backyard barbecues for students and professors to interact in a more casual environment.](#) [\[VA Tech\]](#)

[\[University of Illinois\]](#) The school has also taken a high-tech approach to healthy eating by offering an app that filters items on the dining hall menus by allergen or food preference.

[\[Clemson University\]](#) The university has also proven how well it listens to students' needs and makes quick changes. Faced with increasing demand for mental health services, CU doubled the staff at Counseling and Psychological Services over the past few years to ensure all students have access to services including individual counseling and psychotherapy, psychiatry, group counseling, and skill-building workshops.

[Ithaca College](#) has taken steps to entice students to stay active. At the forefront: inexpensive personal training. Sessions cost about \$10 for an hour and can be done one-on-one or with a friend for even cheaper.

[\[Lewis and Clark College\]](#) The college also has dramatically reduced food waste by adding composting bins to the dining halls, and students can grab smaller bins for off-campus housing

Sources: “Top ____ Colleges for Food/Agriculture” Audit:

I took on an informal audit of “Top ____ Colleges for Food/Agriculture” lists around the internet and found Evergreen on none of the lists - even though I know we qualify to be there.

While it might not seem at first glance at all these Top 10 Schools for Food lists that we could position Evergreen as a competitor (Wheaton College serves “whole-wheat cheese-less pizza with balsamic marinated vegetables”! James Madison University donates unsold food to the local food bank and four of their dining halls are trayless! Muhlenberg College takes

sustainability very seriously and gets local produce as often as they can! Bowdoin College serves grilled organic tofu!), the schools on these lists become much less intimidating when understood that they are highlighting the best (and maybe the only) good aspects of their cafeterias.

When one starts to frame Evergreen's accomplishments in bragging terms, we become much more competitive. Evergreen's Greenery cafeteria is not only trayless, they donate used fryer oil (~150 gallons per week!) to Encore Oil to be converted to biodiesel. Not only does Evergreen serve organic tofu, we serve *local* organic tofu from Island Springs Organics on Vashon Island. Approximately one-fifth (21%) of the food purchased through our contracted food service ARAMARK in the 2013-2014 school year was sourced from within 250 miles of campus (a circle stretching approximately from Eugene, OR in the south to Ritzville, WA in the east to Vancouver, BC in the north). We have a student-run Café on campus that sources their food approximately 3x better (roughly 70+% *real food*) than our corporate dining services, and a student-led presidentially-recognized committee of campus stakeholders working to integrate all of Evergreen's sustainability, social justice, and environmental principles into one comprehensive campus food policy. The school's agriculture and food programs (utilizing our Organic Farm and Sustainable Agriculture Lab, a food-grade laboratory next to the farm) have inspired hundreds of Evergreen graduates to start innovative and conscientious food/farming businesses (Olympia Coffee Roasters, OlyKraut, Big Tree Farms, to name a few).

So, it would seem, The Evergreen State College is not on these Top Colleges for Food and Farming not because we lack the qualifications, but because we have not framed our accomplishments in a way that grounds our achievements in sustainable food/agriculture in the larger context of the college's commitments to progressively high ideals.

The struggle is to strike a balance between being honest and true about food/agriculture at Evergreen, and presenting what we do with the same slight inflation and bragging as the other colleges on these lists. We could tell one of these websites that our Greenery cafeteria serves "gluten-free quinoa & edamame salad", "gluten-free sun-dried tomato white bean salad", "ginger honey glazed carrots", "Thai red curry beef", and "vegan Caribbean-style coconut rice" (all actual lunch/dinner menu items on April 1st, 2016), and that sounds pretty comparable and as impressive as other schools.

A number of these 'Top' lists (College Factual, StartClass) rank schools that offer a Food Science/Technology degree - which we do not and never will. So, even though our food/agriculture students may get a comparable education in molecular cuisine and the science of fermentation, we will never be competitive in this regard.

Also, we will not make it on any "Top College Dining Hall" list (based largely on appearance) without a multi-million dollar renovation to our cafeteria and CAB building, which is unlikely to happen for at least thirty years.

Here's a list of the "Top" lists I've examined for clues about promoting Evergreen's food/agriculture better:

<http://www.businessinsider.com/20-colleges-with-the-best-food-in-the-country-2013-9>

<https://colleges.niche.com/rankings/best-college-food/>

<http://www.thestreet.com/story/13262140/1/10-colleges-with-the-best-campus-food.html>

<http://www.thedailymeal.com/best-colleges-food-america>

<http://www.princetonreview.com/college-rankings?rankings=best-campus-food>

<https://www.cappex.com/hq/cappies/food-dining>

<http://www.collegemagazine.com/cms-top-10-college-dining-halls/>

<https://www.thrillist.com/eat/nation/best-college-dining-halls-in-america>

<http://www.bestcolleges.com/features/best-college-dining-halls/>

<https://spoonuniversity.com/place/the-15-best-colleges-for-dining-hall-food/>

<http://www.hercampus.com/health/food/top-10-college-dining-halls>

<http://greatist.com/health/healthiest-colleges>

<http://www.besthospitalitydegrees.com/25-universities-with-the-healthiest-and-freshest-food/>

<http://www.menshealth.com/guy-wisdom/college-food>

<http://www.collegeconfidential.com/admit/colleges-best-food/>

<http://www.bonappetit.com/entertaining-style/trends-news/slideshow/college-food-scenes>

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2009/10/07/the-best-college-food.html>

<http://features.peta2.com/vegan-colleges-2015/>

<http://www.peta2.com/feature/vegan-college-ranking/college/the-evergreen-state-college/>

<http://www.bestcollegereviews.org/best-university-farms/>

<http://www.usnews.com/education/best-global-universities/agricultural-sciences>