

UBC Social Ecological Economic Development Studies (SEEDS) Sustainability Program

Student Research Report

Scholar's Zero-Waste Catering

Rachel Chew, Emily Chin, Jessica Wong

University of British Columbia

LFS 450

Themes: Food, Procurement, Waste

April 11, 2019

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Rachel Chew, Emily Chin, Jessica Wong
LFS 450: Land, Food and Community III
Waste Management and Sustainability
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Food service systems generate high levels of waste in many areas, but especially in the area of single use items as our society depends more on convenience and efficiency in their dining services. Vancouver has acted on this by implementing a plan to reduce waste by 2020 (City of Vancouver, 2018). UBC has created their own initiatives with their Zero Waste Action Plan to increase waste diversion. As a participant in UBC's initiatives, Scholar's Catering is looking to decrease their single use item waste overall.

Scholar's current initiatives towards sustainability include sourcing sustainably, using electric trucks and using almost all compostable single use items. However, with regards to single use items, they wanted to know how they could improve their waste diversion. Scholar's currently charges for some single use items to attempt to decrease waste. In this project, we looked to find out how this charge was being received by clients, as well as looking into other solutions for Scholar's to decrease waste from single use items by identifying problem areas.

Numerous literature reviews, an online survey for superusers, visual audits, and five in-person interviews amongst volunteered superusers were utilized to come up with potential solutions for Scholar's to decrease their waste output. The project began more focused on the current charge, whether it was effective or not, but through time identified other problem areas. These areas included an excess accumulation of non-charged items for super users, an excess of saran wrap and unnecessary single use items besides the items being charged.

Our research culminated in the creation of a three-tiered Action Plan for Scholar's including immediate actions that required little change in Scholar's current procedures, such as an order form and website revision and a review of all automatically included single use items. The second tier included short term actions that required small changes and investment in current systems that could grow into larger changes, such as utilizing reusable trays for coffee orders and creating refillable sugar services. The final tier included long term actions that require research and system overhauls, such as creating a deposit program for reusable items and finding effective alternatives to saran wrap.

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INTRODUCTION

The food service industry often generates high levels of waste, mostly due to food safety, convenience and efficiency. In a society where everyone is constantly on the go, convenience is a necessity, but with that comes a price for our environment. Like any other food service or establishment, catering services often serve their clients using single-use items, so clean-up is made easy, storage is not an issue, labor is minimized, and overall service is more time efficient. However, it is evident that this type of practice is not environmentally sustainable, and steps have been taken to raise awareness of this issue within Canada and beyond. In this project, challenges and approaches to reducing single-use items are identified and examined before proposing a set of best practices that can be implemented with the goal of creating a more environmentally sustainable UBC campus that can extend outside campus boundaries.

In our everyday lives, waste is a huge problem. We see it in every aspect of our lives, but especially in the food service industry. This industry in Canada is especially problematic as we continuously choose convenience over sustainability. Single use plastics and materials are an everyday occurrence; our food is served in paper bags or take out containers, everything is given to us in plastic bags, and of course, our daily coffees coming in cups that we toss when we finish. We live in a society dependent on single use items and it shows in the amount of waste produced. Canadians produce 490 kg of waste per person annually, putting it 18th out of 29 nations measured by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (Boyd, 2001).

Scholar's Catering at UBC takes issues of sustainability seriously. They source locally as much as possible, ensuring the use of Fair Trade and organic coffees and teas, Ocean Wise seafood, as well as using compostable containers, cutlery and coffee cups. They have an additional charge for single use items in order to decrease the volume of single use items going out into the public. By not providing items free of charge, the clients are able to think more about whether or not they need the single use items. However, Scholar's wants to take initiative to step further in achieving higher levels of

sustainability. To do so, they need to find out what kind of initiatives their clients would accept, in order to balance customer satisfaction with benefiting the environment.

Through this project, we worked with Scholar's to understand their client's opinions about their sustainability initiatives, specifically to do with their charge on single use items and to give informed advice on how they could do more to decrease their waste from events. Through surveys, interviews, literature reviews, and research on other catering and food service companies, we hope to provide Scholar's a few possibilities to further their initiatives. With our recommendations, we hope Scholar's becomes a leading example on being a sustainable catering company.

PROJECT CONTEXT

Reduction of single-use items fall under the umbrella of the overarching goal of sustainability in both the global and local context in the form of policies, strategies, guidelines, and frameworks. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal number twelve is to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (United Nations Development Program, n.d.). They would like to substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse, as well as to encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices and to incorporate sustainability data into their reports (United Nations Development Program, n.d.); indicators of these targets would be the review of national recycling rates and to measure the amount of materials recycled, in addition to the number of companies releasing sustainability reports (United Nations Development Program, n.d.).

In the local context, the Vancouver Greenest City 2020 Action Plan works with regional authorities with the intent of expanding regional disposal bans to all disposable cups and take-out containers (City of Vancouver, 2012). The target is to reduce solid waste from going to the landfill or incinerator by 50% from the numbers in 2008 (City of Vancouver, 2012). In order to do so, the City is strategizing to nurture Zero Waste culture, which means prioritizing reducing and reusing of materials,

increasing efforts in composting, plus keeping recyclables away from landfills and incinerators (City of Vancouver, 2012). These targets align with the Zero Waste Action Plan at the UBC Vancouver campus, which is working toward increasing diversion rates to meet the Metro Vancouver regional diversion targets of 80% diversion by 2020 (UBC Sustainability, 2018). This is a target in conjunction to the goal of decreasing operational waste disposal to landfill and incinerators, despite the growing populations of staff, faculty, and students (UBC Sustainability, 2018).

Relevance to Sustainability on Campus & Beyond

Scholar's Catering is one of the main delivery catering services at the UBC Vancouver campus, providing both full-service table catering, and pantry delivery catering. Many faculties, student groups, and staff regularly utilize their services for events happening throughout campus and beyond. UBC has always been one of the leading institutions for their sustainability initiatives, and this project specifically targets the Zero Waste Foodware Strategy goals, which is an addendum to the UBC Zero Waste Action Plan. One of the targets of this plan is the reduction of waste generation, primarily through procurement changes and reuse systems of all food, beverage, and catering businesses on campus ("Zero Waste Foodware Strategy DRAFT", 2019). By working with Scholar's Catering, we can make advances toward the following goals included in UBC's Zero Waste Foodware Strategy (2019):

- Transition from single use to reusable food ware, resulting in reductions of single use items
 - Reduction of single use cups by 50% by 2021
 - Reduction of single use food containers and cutlery
- Transition to more sustainable materials of single use items

In 2014, UBC proposed a 20-year Sustainability Strategy which includes a vision to increase our community's well-being, and to reduce harm to our environment. As a leading university in post-secondary institutions and in sustainability, UBC's goal is to share innovative practices with others around the world to better their sustainability practices. By proposing strategies for UBC's main catering service to achieve zero-waste, we are incorporating two of three areas in which UBC is hoping to advance

in sustainability; teaching, learning and research, and the UBC community. Not only are we, as students, learning by conducting research, but we will also educate Scholars' clients regarding sustainability to emphasize its importance and to ensure it is prioritized by UBC's community. Scholar's is part of UBC's food system, which models high levels of sustainability, and it is essential for them to equally reflect on those values through food procurement, transportation, and waste management. By conducting our research, we hope to address waste management issues on campus in order to minimize impact on our environment and well-being.

Many UBC-affiliated clubs, events, staff, and faculty use Scholar's Catering services, mostly through Scholar's Pantry. Scholar's Pantry is a drop delivery service where food items such as baked goods, platters, and salads are served on single-use platters and bowls, while hot food items like soups and lunch entrees are served in reusable hotel pans and service wares. While the serving platters for hot items are reusable, all cutlery, plates, and napkins are single-use; they are requested for by the clients and they are charged a small fee of \$0.75 aside from single-use items for coffee/tea and soup.

Scholar's commitment to UBC's Zero Waste Action Plan means that they are devoted to using compostable containers, recyclable cutlery, and compostable coffee cups for all their delivery orders. They are also committed to other sustainability initiatives as well, including procurement practices such as locally sourced and Fair-Trade ingredients where possible. Because Scholar's is aware and participates in UBC's composting and recycling initiatives, they contribute in UBC composting and recycling initiatives to the diversion of campus wastes from landfills, as opposed to many other catering services that may not necessarily have the same sustainability mission.

On campus, this means generation of less waste and taking part in UBC sustainability goals of creating a zero-waste campus. Scholar's commitment to sustainability also brings awareness and prepares students and future leaders in understanding and mitigating environmental issues that involve waste management within campus and daily life. The focus on sustainability within a university campus has the

potential to “set examples for behaviors and policies that affect other sectors of society” (Posner & Stuart, 2013).

Beyond campus boundaries, Scholar’s also caters to clients within the Vancouver community; thus, their sustainability initiatives will have positive effects in diverting more waste from landfills and in nurturing a zero-waste culture. Vancouver has an action plan in place to become one of the greenest cities by 2020, and one of the targets focuses upon reducing solid waste going to the landfill or incinerator by 50% from the levels in 2008 (City of Vancouver, 2018). With this plan, the city is prioritizing reducing and reusing; instead of focusing only on recycling, more effort is emphasized in preventing the procurement and the usage of single-use items.

This project allows us to take part in coming up with viable solutions to allow Scholar’s Catering to phase out the utilization of single-use disposables, as regional authorities are currently working with Metro Vancouver to expand regional disposal bans to all disposable cups, plastic straws and take-out containers.

On a larger scale, developing more sustainable catering options for Scholar’s Catering can possibly help other catering companies to work toward the same goals. Organizing any big event or even a small team meeting inevitably generates waste, and much can be done to reduce the amount we use for convenience sake. Looking to reduce waste generated by catering services can work toward UN Sustainable Development Goal 12, which is to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (United Nations, 2018).

Project Goals and Objectives

Project Goals

The purpose of our project is to achieve zero-waste catering practices through the reduction of single use catering materials and enhancement of waste management practices

Research Objectives

The specific objectives include:

- Assessing client’s opinions on whether current charges on single use items are reasonable and whether these charges have been effective in decreasing single use item usage
- Assessing desire and feasibility for further initiatives such as reusable platters and containers

- Assessing possibility of clients bringing their own containers to event and challenges around this
- Determine challenges clients face in waste management; for example, infrastructure and understanding of disposal streams
- Providing recommendations on methods to further improve zero waste initiatives

LITERATURE REVIEW/BACKGROUND

Approaches to Reducing Single-Use Items

There are several different approaches that have been established with the goal of reducing the use of disposable items amongst many companies in varying places around the world (Loschelder et al., 2019). Approaches are often targeted to changing consumer behavior with measures such as regulations, financial incentives, information campaigns, and bans (Kaufmann-Hayoz et al., 2012). One common approach used by larger international coffee shop chains offer a discount for those with their own reusable cup (Loschelder et al., 2019). This example of an incentivized approach has found to somewhat alter consumer behaviors, but also unsuccessful in attaining a long-term broad-scale behavior change (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002; Schultz, 1999).

Using Nudging and Social Norms to Increase Sustainable Behavior

One approach studied by Loschelder et al. (2019) is the use of social norms and nudging to achieve substantial consumer behavior change. A nudge is a small change that is made in attempt to guide a consumer to a desired direction (Thaler & Sunstein as cited in Loschelder et al., 2019), which in this case, is to refrain from using disposable items. Nudges are found to be widely successful because the act itself doesn't prohibit them from any options or bring any economic incentive; this results in a predictable behavior in consumers that can be sustained in the long run (Thaler, & Sunstein as cited in Loschelder et al., 2019).

Research pertaining to changing human behaviors for sustainability initiatives has confirmed that there's a natural tendency for humans to follow social norms (Miller & Prentice, 2016; Moloney et al., 2010; Schultz, 1999). One limitation of this is that the desired behavior has to first be established by a population of people in order for it to create the desired ripple effect (Loschelder et al., 2019). In today's

society, ordering food to-go in disposable items is the norm, so instead of it pushing toward more sustainable behaviors, this norm increases unsustainable behaviors.

While social norms can result in positive behavioral change to digress consumers from reaching for their single-use items, knowing the norm can also drive those who are currently performing the positive behavior in the other direction (Schultz, 1999). For example, knowing that “Students on UBC campus bring their own reusable coffee mugs on an average of two out of three coffees they purchase” might drive those who bring their reusable mugs all the time to unwanted sustainable behavior because they do not want to deter from the norm. On the other hand, those who bring reusable coffee mugs on an average of less than two out of three purchases may increase their use of reusable mugs in order to meet the norm. This phenomenon is explained by Bohner and Schluter (2014) as the “boomerang effect”.

Using Environmental Messaging and Providing Alternatives

Environmental messaging through the use of infographics and visual posters is a way for consumers to gain more awareness of their consumption patterns and have potential for behavioral change. In a report on a field experiment conducted at 12 university and business sites to determine whether the use of reusable coffee cups can be promoted through simple implementation measures, Poortinga & Whitaker (2018) found that the combination of environmental messaging in addition to providing alternatives to single-use coffee cups increased the use of reusable cups.

An example of providing alternatives to the disposable coffee cup that has been proven to yield positive behavioral change is through distribution of reusable cups (Poortinga & Whitaker, 2018). They found that the use of reusable cups increased by 33.7% across 3 cafes on campus upon the distribution of the cups (Poortinga & Whitaker, 2018). These results, however, may differ if performed in a setting other than within a university campus, as students regularly frequent the same cafes within their routinely schedules that may not mimic customer patterns of cafes outside campus boundaries.

Using Discount and Cost-Recovery Methods

Consumers are often motivated by financial incentives. In several studies, it has been found that some financial incentives yielded higher positive responses than others. While providing a discount can be enticing for consumers, not having to pay a fee is shown to be a better incentive for behavioral change, even if savings are the same. While Poortinga & Whitaker (2018) found that a charge on single-use items such as containers, cutlery, and cups increased people's use of reusable items, a discount on using reusable items did not have effect. These results align with the prospect theory, which notes that consumers are more responsive to losses than gains when making decisions (Barberis et al., 2012). This means that customers will put more effort in avoiding a loss for paying for a single-use item than they will to gain a discount by bringing a reusable item (Poortinga & Whitaker, 2018). This also brings back to the previous discussion of this review that the first option of avoiding a loss implies that using a single-use item is out of the norm, which may be also one of the reasons why the tactic is more successful as opposed to the discount.

Charging for single-use coffee cups mean that those who do not bring reusable items will be made aware of the charge placed upon them at purchase. Because one of the challenges of discounts is merely from the lacking awareness that such incentive exists, charging solves that problem as it's easier to take notice than a discount. Discounts also cater more toward for those who are already performing sustainable behaviors by bringing their own reusable items, and those who continue to use disposables are left without repercussion. In the UK, public awareness of discounts and effectiveness are low because less than 1% of customers make use of discounts offered at cafes (Poortinga & Whitaker, 2018).

Importance of inclusion in decision making

Lynch et al. (2018) suggested that in order to achieve shared benefit amongst those affected by the ongoing issue, all stakeholders and clients must be included in decision making. Focus groups were also used in their study to determine participant knowledge on waste, barriers to achieving zero-waste, and ideas to achieve higher levels of sustainability (Lynch et al., 2018). Researchers found the most common barriers to be waste prevention and production, methods of waste disposal and household waste

management. Participants mentioned that it was difficult to be sustainable when everything purchased comes in an excessive amount of plastic packaging, it was inconvenient to have multiple waste disposal bins and it required too much money, time and effort to sort out waste. They also found a lack of waste disposal collections around the city. Former SEEDS project conducted by Crolla et al. (2018) identified food packaging items that were commonly missorted in waste disposal bins on campus and found that 80% of these items were of paper coffee cups, plastic bags, plastic lids, plastic cutlery, plastic containers and cups. All these suggested barriers from literature reviews were considered as a possibility preventing Scholar's clients from achieving higher levels of sustainability.

Catering Best Practices

Zaman et al. (2011) suggests that there are five principles that are necessary in order to achieve zero waste; this includes responsible production and consumption, behavior change, recycling of solid waste, recovery of resources before it reaches landfill, and policies to restrict landfill and incineration use. EcoSet Consulting, a business that partners with companies to achieve higher sustainability levels, suggest reusing items before disposal ("Catering Best Practices", n.d.). With catering companies, they suggest to supply reusable items, and to revamp menus to avoid single-serve items, such as granola bars, and chips, and to replace them with foods that require minimal service ware, and with more finger foods, such as wraps ("Catering Best Practices", n.d.).

RESEARCH APPROACH/ METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

The approach used throughout this project for guidance is the Community-Based Action Research (CBAR) approach. This is a collaborative method that involves all stakeholders throughout the entire process from the development research questions, to data collection and to findings and recommendations; this ensures that their needs are met, and their opinions are considered (Burns et al., 2011). The community-based portion of this methodology aims to target research objectives to

community issues and needs in order for them to be addressed. The action-based portion ensures that the research leads to community and organizational changes to address community needs established at the beginning of the project.

The CBAR method follows the look-think-act routine; this project started off at the look phase which consisted of learning about Scholar’s current level of sustainability, their initiatives and the issue to be researched. This allowed us to determine specific objectives of the project, and to establish research methods to meet the objectives. We also took a tour of Scholar’s kitchen to assess their current situation including the space they had to use and the current single-use items they were using. In the think phase, we reviewed literature to determine current sustainability standards throughout the world, and to determine best practices of other companies. This provided us with necessary background knowledge and standards and best practices that were currently taking place locally and globally. Lastly, during our act phase, we reached out to clients and collected primary data before developing recommendations for Scholar’s. This was done via an online survey and in person interviews to ensure client opinions are considered in regard to strategies that they would be content to participate in.

Methodology

Secondary Data Collection

At the beginning of the project, we met with our main client, Kerensa Wotton, the General Manager of Scholar's Catering. We learned more about the background of Scholar's, their sustainability initiatives and their current level of sustainability. We talked about attempted strategies in the past and why it did not work out; for example, Scholar's tried to switch their recyclable cutlery to a compostable bamboo product, but their clients were not pleased with its fragility and its texture on their mouths. This allowed us to understand the difficulties of adapting sustainable practices, and the importance of their clients' needs

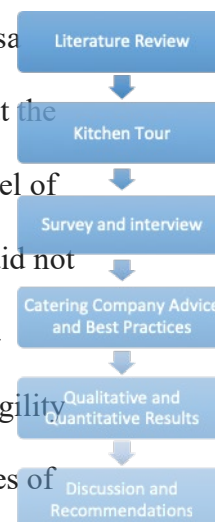


FIGURE 1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

and opinions. In defining stakeholders and the community in regard to our project, this included our main project client, Kerensa Wotton, our secondary project client, Bud Fraser, and Scholar's Catering super-users, those who ordered from Scholar's most frequently, ranked by the highest dollar amount spent.

Literature Review

The second step of the CBAR approach is to compile data from literature and websites of various catering companies. We conducted literature reviews on a range of topics regarding single-use items from incentives on an industrial level, to behavior change, to single-use coffee cups on an individual level. Some key words used to locate literature included "zero-waste", "waste-management", "diversion of waste", "sustainability initiatives", "single-use items" and "behavior change". Before deciding to read the entire article, the abstract was read to determine whether the article is relevant to our research. If information was relevant, we would read the article in detail and notes were taken and sorted in terms of central ideas. The methods section was then read critically to ensure the research was conducted rationally and that the results section is logical and avoided bias opinions. These literature reviews provided a strong foundation of background knowledge regarding zero-waste and single-use items and allowed us to identify common opportunities and barriers to achieving higher levels of sustainability. The literature review also identified best practices occurring on a micro and a macro level to understand the acceptable level of sustainability today.

Catering Company Best Practices

Throughout the project, we reached out to catering companies locally and abroad as a potential client to inquire about their services and their level of sustainability. Contacted catering companies included Drew's Catering, Railtown Catering, Dan the Man Cooking and Events, Lupii Catering and more. This allowed us to compare competing catering companies to Scholar's and to ensure our recommendations will allow Scholar's to achieve high levels of sustainability in the industry.

We came across two catering companies that stood out to us in regard to their sustainable practices. Dan the Man is a catering company located in Australia and are aiming to be the first zero-

waste catering company in the country. They state that "waste is a failure of the imagination" ("Our Journey to Zero Waste", n.d.). Their zero-waste accomplishments include returning cardboard uses to food suppliers for reuse, using linen cutoffs for reusable napkins, repurposing cooking oil to soap and many more ("Our Journey to Zero Waste", n.d.). We admired the sustainability practices in which Dan the Man participated so we reached out to them via email with an attachment of a few questions for guidance in achieving higher levels of sustainability as a catering company. We brought up certain limitations that Scholar's has, such as space, budget and use of saran wrap in regard to food safety, and how they would advise Scholar's to work around those barriers. Lupii, a local catering company who we also reached out to, only hosts events that are vegan and zero-waste. We approached them with the same questions provided to Dan the Man, but their company has a slightly different mind-set. They refuse to cater at any event that will have create any waste, and their menu varies depending on the season in order to source only local foods to decrease carbon emissions.

Primary Data Collection

Our project's primary data collection included a tour of Scholar's kitchen, an online survey (See Appendix 1) and in-person and/or telephone interviews (See Appendix 2). During the second week of our project, we took a tour of Scholar's kitchen which allowed us to see the space Scholar's has to use, the single-use items used and to understand their business procedure. Our survey was created on Qualtrics, UBC's online survey tool, and was sent out to approximately 110 super-users. We asked questions that helped us determine their understanding of sustainability and their willingness to do certain things as event planners, such as an increase in price per order of single-use items, asking guests to bring reusable mugs, plate ware and cutlery, and their interest in a rental service for reusable items. Lastly, we opened up the opportunity for survey respondents to participate in an in-person or telephone interview with an incentive of \$5 for UBC Food Services. These questions were reviewed by our main client, Kerensa Wotton, our second client, Senior Planning and Sustainability Engineer, Campus and Community Planning, Bud Fraser, and our project support team before it was sent out to super-users. We received 21

responses from the survey and 6 respondents who were interested in taking part in the interview.

Unfortunately, two respondents replied with "yes", but did not provide any contact information, and due to anonymity of the survey, we were unable to conduct interviews with those two respondents. This survey was left open for about two weeks, but we started conducting interviews the week after we received results.

The interviewee had the choice of participating in the interview via a phone call, or in-person, whichever was more convenient. Three in person interviews, and two phone interviews were planned; however, the two phone interviews were not carried out successfully as we were not able to get a hold of them. We conducted three in person interviews which lasted about 30 minutes in length and were all recorded to be later coded and transcribed. Before the interview began, we asked the participants to sign off on a consent form that outlines the purpose of the interview and asked them for permission for the interview to be recorded. We then continued by asking the participant about their relationship with UBC, their frequency of ordering with Scholar's, and the type of event for which the catering orders were for; this provided us with some background information on who they were and the type of events for which they ordered Scholar's. This was followed by asking about their level of awareness regarding the charge on single-use items and their opinions on the current charge and the possibility of a future charge increase. To determine strategies that clients may be already using to achieve sustainability, we asked about their frequency of ordering these single-use items, what they use instead if they did not order the items, and whether they have experienced any difficulties with ordering with Scholar's. After that, we proposed possible recommendations strategies Scholar's could adapt to achieve higher levels of sustainability, and whether these practices would suit their events and their event attendees. Their opinion in our possible recommendations are important in ensuring that they would be willing to engage in proposed practices, which is required for Scholar's to make changes in their sustainability levels. Lastly, we allowed the participant to propose any ideas they might have to minimize the waste produced at events

and for Scholar's to achieve higher levels of sustainability, and any barriers that may prevent their events from being more sustainable.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

To determine best practices of other catering companies, we reached out to five local catering companies and one catering company located in Australia. For four of the local catering companies, we reached out as a potential client looking to host a zero-waste event at UBC and inquiring about their sustainability options; these included Christine Catering Company, Lazy Gourmet, Drew's Catering and Raitown Catering. The results are summarized below.

TABLE 1 OVERVIEW OF RESULTS FROM CATERING COMPANIES

	Single-Use Items	Coffee Cups	Food Served on	Rental Service
Christine Catering Company	Compostable trays and platters	Compostable	Foil container (not eco friendly)	n/a
Lazy Gourmet	Complementary and compostable plates, cutlery, and napkins	n/a	n/a	Additional cost for reusable china and flatware
Drew's Catering	Compostable plates, forks, napkins, knives & spoons (\$0.75/serving)	Compostable cups included in order	Reusable chafing dishes, platters and big bowls with serving utensils	Free pick up service following business day (same day pick up for additional fee)
Raitown Catering	Compostable plates, napkins, cutlery (additional fee)	Compostable cups included in order	Ceramic dishes, wooden boards, silver serving pieces	China and silverware can be coordinated with external company



FIGURE 2 COMPOSTABLE TRAYS AND RECYCLABLE LIDS FOR FOOD ORDERS

The two other catering companies we contacted, Lupii and Dan the Man, were participating in outstanding practices regarding sustainability, so we contacted them as researchers looking for advice. Lupii is completely zero-waste and vegan, thus they do not participate in any events that produce waste or serve animal products. Because all items are reusable, items are picked up and washed in commercial dishwashers. Saran wrap was identified as a challenge for us to find alternatives, so we asked Lupii for advice; they responded with vegan food having a fraction of precautions in regard to time until food spoilage compared to animal products but did not provide

any further details. Dan the Man, on the other hand, mentioned that they are not quite there yet in finding a solution, but has been using big sheets of silicone and attaching bulldog clips to the platter to ensure safety of the product during transport. Their big message was to take small steps and to try and iterate rather than make a drastic change to begin with. They offer compostable cutlery if the client does not want reusable items, but these items are taken back with them to be composted at the community garden. Reusable napkins are also offered, which is made from cutoff materials from a fashion designer.

Kitchen Tour

The project's first step of primary data collection was an observational tour with Kerensa Wotton at Scholar's Kitchen. We walked through the space and learned about their system and the materials that they used for pantry catering. This gave us a better understanding of what we were working with and the space that they have to use to achieve higher levels of sustainability. We first saw the space used to make cold items such as salads, sandwiches and fruit platters. For easy identification of sandwiches on a platter,



FIGURE 3 FOOD ORDERS WRAPPED WITH SARAN WRAP TO ENSURE FOOD SAFETY

each sandwich is individually packaged in paper sleeves with the name of the sandwich stamped on. We then explored the rack of single-use containers that their food is served on and delivered (Figure 2). These items are made of a compostable tray and a recyclable plastic lid. This entire package is then wrapped with saran wrap to ensure safety of the lid, and to ensure food is safe and not exposed during delivery (Figure 3). By the back door, where the food orders are picked up by Scholar's electric delivery trucks, are their trays of single-use items, which holds coffee cups, stir sticks, individually packaged sugars,

plates made of fallen leaf product and plastic cutlery. To ensure food safe, coffee cups are in plastic sleeves, stir sticks

and plates and cutlery are wrapped in saran wrap, and the entire tray is wrapped again with saran wrap (Figure 4). We then moved on to their storage of beverages of water, juices, and pops that were mostly single served, except milks and some juices which were sold in one liter cartons. Lastly, we saw their storage of hot water and coffee carafes which were brewed in house and picked up post-event.

Survey Results

Sustainability

When asked if sustainability matters in catering, 47% said “a great deal”, 42.9% responded “a lot” (a level below a great deal), and 9.5% responded “a moderate amount”. No clients stated that catering mattered “a little” or “not at all”, the two lowest levels provided.

Scholar's charges

66.7% were aware of the reason behind the charge on small wares. 57.1% found the current charge reasonable (\$0.50 per person for napkins and plates, \$0.75 per person for napkins, plates and cutlery), with 33.3% finding it unreasonable and 9.5% responding other - either they were unsure, or they wanted to add additional comments. When asked whether they were willing to pay more if the charge increased in order to support the zero waste goals, 52.4% said no, 14.35% said yes, and the others were all either neutral, wanted to see other sustainability initiatives instead, or would decide based on how much the price would increase.

Improvements

The most popular area for waste management improvement was the idea of zero waste options being provided by Scholar's; items such as reusable plates, cups and cutlery, with 36% of respondents wanting to see this change.

33% responded that signage of disposal could be improved for single use products. Those responding other both responded with a need for less saran wrap in packaging of the food and single use items.

Desire for a deposit program for reusable plates was measured, with 52.4% responding "definitely yes" to being willing to pay a deposit for reusable items, 38.1% responding "probably yes" and 9.5% responding "might or might not". There were no "probably not" or "definitely not" responses. However, the concern was brought up that if this program resulted in clients having to do their own dishes and clean up, the deposit program would be less favorable.

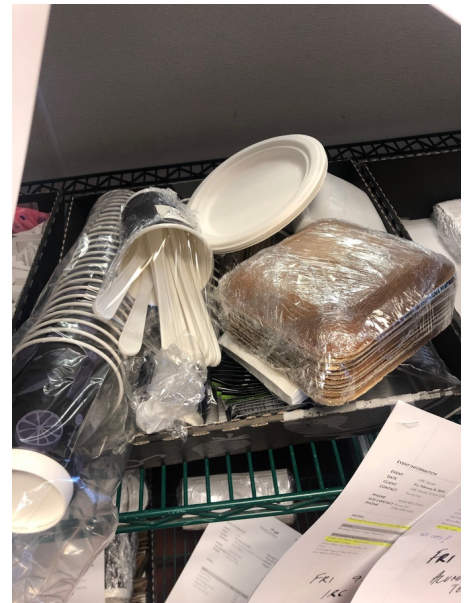


FIGURE 4 STIRSTICKS, CUTLERY AND PLATES WRAPPED IN SARAN WRAP THEN PLACED IN A CARDBOARD TRAY



FIGURE 5 EXCESS CUPS, NAPKINS AND CUTLERY IN DRAWERS

Potential Initiatives

Willingness to bring reusable mugs, cutlery and containers to events where food was being catered was measured. Bringing reusable mugs was the most popular option with 47.6% extremely willing and 28.6% somewhat willing - only 23.81% were unwilling. Bringing reusable cutlery was slightly more favored than containers with 23.81% extremely willing, 33.3% somewhat willing and 42.86% unwilling.

Reusable containers had the least favorable response with 23.81% extremely willing, 28.6% somewhat willing and 47.6% unwilling.

When asked if clients would be willing to ask their guests to bring their own containers, only 28.57% responded favorably, 57.1% responded probably not and 14.3% responded definitely not. Lastly, we asked about a potential rental service for clients to be able to rent out dinnerware and cutlery for a deposit that would be refunded after the items were returned to Scholar's. We found that over 52.38% responded with definitely yes, 38.1% responded with probably yes, and the remaining 9.52% were unsure.

Interview Results

While we were unable to conduct as many interviews as we had wanted, the insights given from



FIGURE 6 EXCESS SUGAR PACKETS IN DRAWERS

interviews gave great ideas and highlighted problem areas. One aspect that arose from interviews was that an excess of single use items accumulating for super users. This excess was mainly in the form of cups, napkins and sometimes cutlery. Sugar packets were another big area of excess; however, these are all items that are provided free of charge automatically with orders. Two out of three interviewees stated that they bought their own plates rather than purchasing Scholar's for some events and sustainability is not always the first concern in these purchases. While in

the survey, many responded that sorting could be clearer, interviewees found it easy to know where to sort single use items. After the interviews, we did visual audits of the excess of single use items accumulating in the offices of the interviewees. Interviewees showed us napkins, cups and sugars that filled their drawers in greatest quantities, as well as some plates, plastic tongs, cutlery and stir sticks (Figure 5 and Figure 6).

DISCUSSION

The survey provided a lot of interesting insight into the clients desires at Scholar's catering. For one, the clients seem to be concerned about sustainability, which may be influenced by the presence of UBC's sustainability initiatives and environmental goals. The idea of social norms from the literature review may come into play here, as there is a culture of sustainability on campus. While clients were more or less okay with the current charge, any increase in charges was not looked upon favorably. Instead patterns of clients asking about other sustainability initiatives arose. From this, we can determine that increasing the charge for single use items is an action that does not align with client desires and would not be the right pathway for Scholar's to decrease single use item waste. Excess plastic waste during the unpackaging of food products came up multiple times during interviews, which showed client frustration in this area of sustainability. Feeling that the charges were already enough, and that plastic needs to be focused on instead tells us that clients may feel that the charge offloads responsibility onto budgets of the client's rather than on Scholar's for decreasing waste initiatives. Bringing it back to the literature, there may be some benefits to using discounts rather than charges, which may help foster a positive environment around the idea of sustainability, rather than a punishment. Areas of excessive plastic usage with saran wrap, as well as any single use items that can be eliminated should be critically analyzed. Our solution of clients asking guests to bring their own containers to events was not looked upon favorably by respondents, however as many clients themselves were extremely willing to bring their own mugs, there

may be opportunity in this area. Already in society, bringing travel mugs is becoming so common that if Scholar's were to tackle one area of single use item reduction, this may be the first area to analyze.

The visual audit component of the interviews allowed us to see what kind of single use item excess was accumulating. The majority of the excess came from the free of charge items, suggesting that the charge may be reducing the waste from events, but that this is an area that needs to be considered. The excess of automatic free of charge items showed that there is an issue occurring in ordering. The only area to opt out of these items is a textbox for additional comments on the order form, but many clients may not be thinking about free items when ordering. Scholar's provides excess items to clients, such as napkins, sugars, single-use ware, to ensure their clients have adequate amounts of these items, which is an idea that evidently needs to be challenged from interviewing superusers. An idea that arose from the interviews as well was the fact that the charge was successful in decreasing ordering of single use items because it made clients consider twice if they actually needed the item. However, this same effect could be achieved by just having a button available to opt in to items. Though the charge would be more of a deterrence as it would create visible consequence to adding on single use items, the fact that some client's just buy their own single-use cups, plates, and cutlery in order to spend less creates an issue as these items may be less sustainable than those provided by Scholar's.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After the analysis of our online survey with superusers, in-person interviews and visual audits, we concluded few key issues that were mentioned most frequently during our data collection. As some issues are more easily resolved than others, we have divided up our recommendations in three tiers (See Appendix 4). Recommendations mentioned in Tier 3 are the most attainable and changes should start from this tier. On the other side of the spectrum is Tier 1; these recommendations are more difficult to attain, and further research may be required before these changes can occur.

Tier 3 - Single use item revision + website edit

The very first action that can be taken by Scholar's is a simple revision of how single use items are being supplied with every order. Currently, some single use items are being provided free of charge to improve customer experience such as napkins, serving utensils with different platters, coffee cups, sugars, milks, spoons with yogurts, likely among others. While these are helpful for some clients, some items may be unnecessary. We recommend that Scholar's creates an inventory of all single use items being given for free and evaluates whether or not every item is necessary. Then, with this inventory, a single use item order form can be created on check out form for orders. The order form would allow clients to choose whether they need the items or not. We would recommend that the clients would have to click to opt in to the item, rather than clicking if the items are unneeded, to allow the clients to think carefully about whether they want the item or not. If there are too many minor items to fit on a form, they could also come up when clients are ordering items. For example, with the fruit cups, when choosing the quantity of items, there could also be a button to opt in for individual spoons or not - and this could be verified on the checkout page. In addition to this revamp of the website, it may be helpful to add a page on sustainability. Based on the idea of environmental messaging from the literature review, creating a page could help communicate information effectively. The page could include information of all of Scholar's efforts, including information on how to dispose of all their single use items and what kind of actions clients could take to reduce their impact. This would be an area to bring up the possibility of bringing reusable mugs to events.

Tier 2 - Small changes in current systems

There are a few small changes in current systems that could act as catalysts for further actions. For example, the ability to provide all reusable serving platters and serving utensils could be a good first step towards all reusable wares. However, we know the difficulty comes in that this would be an entirely new addition to the process of systems for Scholar's. To start, reusable platters could be provided at events that order coffee or beverages that need a pickup service anyways. Coffee carafes already have to be

picked up, so adding on the platters should not create a large amount extra work. This would also allow Scholar's to test out systems with reusable platters and troubleshoot. Even if they were only able to provide reusable platters for events with coffee orders, they would be lowering impacts from single use platters. Another small change could be trying reusable systems for super users instead of the general public. An example would be creating a refillable sugar service for coffee orders rather than giving single use sugars with every order. The clients could purchase a sugar container once that would be refilled with sugar when requested. In a similar vein, if Scholar's wanted to start testing out deposit systems for reusable wares but were concerned about space, they could start with providing superusers with reusable items such as plates or cutlery to start. They could have reserved amounts of dinnerware for super-users and have single-use items for backup in case they receive a larger amount of orders for the day. The last recommendation would be to eliminate a few items from the current menu that contribute to waste from single use items. This would include any chips, single serve beverages, individually packaged fruit cups - anything that would be served individually. These could be replaced with bulk items, beverages made in house served in carafes, chips bought in big bags and served in bowls, and fruit platters.

Tier 1 - Investments in Further Research

This tier of recommendations are areas that will require research from Scholar's. For one, saran wrap needs to be considered carefully. Saran wrap is often not recyclable and goes directly to landfills the majority of the time. If possible reducing how much saran wrap is used for every product would be beneficial. Further research would include looking into other possibilities for keeping foods Food Safe. Using reusable containers is an option other companies use, as well as using silicone covers. Looking into alternatives would require research to uphold Food Safety standards. The next area for research would of course be creating the deposit program for reusable items. This would require looking into spaces for storage, logistics of cost, specifics with post event pickups and materials that would be most effective to reduce breakage risks, trying to mitigate theft or loss of products. It would be a larger undertaking but would be an ideal to work towards.

Future research

This area overlaps with our tiered approach to recommendations for Scholar's. Our third tier is all strategies that involve future research. However, there is one area for further research that does not necessarily fit into our zero waste with regards to single use items but would work towards Scholar's sustainability as a whole. We would recommend an entire menu revamp as an area for Scholar's to research in the future. The focus would be on creating a menu that puts sustainability in the forefront, and less sustainable options (such as meat options) as alternatives. This could work as a future LFS 450 project - they could help identify the most sustainable items currently on the menu, through using definitions of Climate Friendly foods created this year. They could also identify locally available items throughout the year and help curate options. Creating icons on the menu of the most sustainable items could help clients make clearer choices and having meat completely off the menu except by request could shift expectations in the clients. This would also require work with distributors by Scholar's to try to lower their impact, and possible changes in suppliers.

CONCLUSIONS

Through this project, we have found problem areas in Scholar's current single use item practices, and potential solutions to these issues. In addressing our objectives, we found that the charge is found to be reasonable by most clients and that the charge has likely decreased some single use item usage. However, for some it has just resulted in using alternatives that are less sustainable, suggesting the charge is not completely successful. The amount that is being charged or not may not be as important as the fact that there is an option to choose, which lead us to our most immediate solution of creating an opt in/opt out service for all single use items. There is a desire from clients to look into further initiatives around reusable items. Reusable serving platters and utensils are a great starting point, while a deposit program for plates, cutlery and cups should be looked into in the future. It does not look like a reliable approach to ask clients to get their guests to bring their own containers, however mugs are a common part of culture

and could be used as a starting point. Clients do not face many challenges with infrastructure in waste management. Unexpected findings included the usage of saran wrap and how to combat saran wrap usage while maintaining Food Safety standards. From this project we have created a three-tiered Action Plan for Scholar's to help address areas to improve immediately, some areas that require changes in systems and some recommendations that will require long term research. Overall, Scholar's has made great strides towards sustainability, but critical analysis of current procedures and a commitment to improving them will make huge changes in their impacts.

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APPENDIX

1. Survey Questions

1. What is your relationship with UBC?
 - a. Faculty
 - b. Staff
 - c. Undergrad
 - d. Graduate student
 - e. Alumni
 - f. Community member

2. What do you use Scholar's Catering for?
 - a. Meetings/Conferences
 - b. Events
 - c. Celebrations/anniversaries
 - d. Office parties
 - e. Breakfast
 - f. Morning breaks
 - g. Lunches
 - h. Snacks
 - i. Others

3. Are you the main organizer of the event?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

4. Do you manage the budget for the events you order Scholar's Catering?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

5. How often do you order from Scholar's Catering?
 - a. A few times a week
 - b. Once a week
 - c. Once a month
 - d. 1-6 times a year
 - e. Less than once a month
 - f. Other

6. How much does sustainability in your catering services matter to you?
 - a. A great deal
 - b. A lot
 - c. A moderate amount
 - d. A little
 - e. Not at all

7. Are you aware of Scholar's Catering cost-recovery model for some single-use items?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

8. Are you aware of the reason behind the charge on small wares (plates, cutlery, napkins, cups, etc.)?
- Yes
 - No
9. Do you think that the current charge for single-use items (\$0.50 per person for napkins and plates, \$0.75 per person for napkins, plates and cutlery) are reasonable?
- Yes
 - No
 - Other
10. Are you willing to pay more for single-use items to support Scholar's Catering zero waste goals?
- No, I'd rather not see an increase of price for sustainability reasons
 - Neutral
 - Yes, I support Scholar's Catering contribution to reducing waste
 - Other
11. What would you like to see as an improvement in waste management with catered events?
- Recycling and composting infrastructure nearby
 - Signage of what products can go into each disposal stream
 - Zero waste options (ie. reusable plates, cups, cutlery, etc.)
 - I'm happy with the service I currently receive
 - Other
12. How willing are you to bring your own reusable mugs to an event where the food is being catered?
- Extremely willing
 - Somewhat willing
 - Not willing
 - Not at all willing
13. How willing are you to bring your own reusable cutlery to an event where the food is being catered?
- Extremely willing
 - Somewhat willing
 - Not willing
 - Not at all willing
14. How willing are you to bring your own reusable containers to an event where the food is being catered?
- Extremely willing
 - Somewhat willing
 - Not willing
 - Not at all willing
15. Would you be willing to ask guests to bring reusable containers for food?
- Definitely yes
 - Probably yes
 - Probably not
 - Definitely not

16. Would you be willing to pay a deposit for reusable plates, and have that deposit refunded once those items are returned?

- a. Definitely yes
- b. Probably yes
- c. Might or might not
- d. Probably not
- e. Definitely not

17. Would you be willing to pay a deposit for reusable cutlery, and have that deposit refunded once those items are returned?

- a. Definitely yes
- b. Probably yes
- c. Might or might not
- d. Probably not
- e. Definitely not

18. Would you be willing to pay a deposit for reusable mugs, and have that deposit refunded once those items are returned?

- a. Definitely yes
- b. Probably yes
- c. Might or might not
- d. Probably not
- e. Definitely not

19. At what point will you choose a different caterer as the cost for sustainability purposes increases?

20. Are you interested in a phone interview for more input on the situation? If yes, please provide your contact information (phone number and/or email) and the best times to contact you.

2. Interview Questions

Preamble:

As you know we're working with Kerensa to help Scholar's further advance their sustainability initiatives. This initiative is part of a course-based research project with the SEEDS Sustainability Program. As part of this project, we are conducting interviews with a selection of Scholars "superusers" (frequent clients) to help us identify any challenges experienced and opportunities for Scholars to enhance zero-waste catering practices. We'll be focusing mainly on gathering information on single use items and how to effectively decrease single-use item waste. Please note that all your responses will be anonymous in the report, and they will be used to compile common issues that superusers are facing. Before we begin:

1. We have an interview consent form; can we get an email to send it to for you to read over it and sign
2. Would you prefer to remain anonymous in our report?
3. What is your relationship with UBC?

Interview Questions:

First, we're going to ask some **questions specific to the single use item charges and your usage of single use items at catered events**

Theme: Awareness and user behavior with single use item charges

1. Are you aware of the charge for single use items and why it exists?

- o If yes: Please explain
 - o If no: The charge exists to attempt to deter unnecessary consumption of single use items. Scholar's hopes to decrease how much waste is being produced.
- 2. Does the charge deter you from getting single use items from Scholar's?**
- o If yes: in what ways? [prompts: Budget limitations, having the option to opt out]
 - o If no: why not?
- 3. What kinds of things would discourage you from getting single use items:**
- a) Implementation of a higher single use item charges?
 - o If so: What level of charge would discourage you? Right now it's \$0.50 per person for napkins and plates, \$0.75 per person for napkins, plates and cutlery.
 - b) Having an opt in or opt out button?
 - c) Any other initiatives?
- 4. Have you ever opted out of single use items?**
- If no: why not?
 - If so: What led you to opt out?
 - Mainly the charge? Sustainability issues?

b) We would like to learn more about how you managed to host an event without Scholars single use items, what your guests used instead for their meal, and if any issues were experienced.

- i. Do you ask guests to bring their own reusable containers?
- ii. Do you or someone else from your team bring reusable items to the catered event for the guests to use?

If so, what types of reusable items do you bring - glasses, mugs, plates, cutlery, etc.

- iii. Do you supply single use items?

If so, are they compostable/recyclable?

5. If you have not asked your catered event guests before, would you be willing to ask your guests to bring reusable items?

- o If not, why not?

6. If you have asked guests to bring reusable items to an event before, we would like to learn more about your experience and how have you done it. [

- i. How did people react when asked to bring their own reusable items?
- ii. Have you experienced any issues when you have asked participants to bring reusable items? (ie. Was the turnout of reusable items good or did a lot of people forget? Were there any other issues)

7. Have you experienced any issues stemming from placing an order without single-use items or the charge for single use items?

If so, what kind of issues? For example (have you received single –use items even when you have not ordered them? Issues finding the option to opt out, other issues?

Questions specific to Theme: Opportunities to decrease single –use items waste:

Currently we are looking to expand zero-waste initiatives regarding single use items and catering practices. At the moment, single use cups are being given out for free with every coffee order.

8. What kind of actions do you think Scholar's could take to decrease their waste from coffee cups?

- Would an extra charge similar to the charge for cutlery decrease your usage of coffee cups?
- Would an opt in/opt out button be sufficient for users to decrease their use of coffee cups?

9. If Scholar's were to move away from single use items entirely, with only the option for you to rent reusable cutlery and plates through them, how would you feel about this change?

- If no: Would you be less likely to use Scholar's?

We've been informed by some clients that they get too much when receiving single use items from Scholar's, especially with regards to coffee cups and other single-use items.

10. Do you have an excess of single use items from Scholar's in your office/place they cater to?

a. If yes: Do you know what the cause of the excess is?

i. Do you ever receive single use items that you did not ask for (coffee cups)?

ii. Do they give too much?

There are other barriers to achieving zero-waste at catered events, and we would like to gain more insight from you about this.

11. Is it clear as to how each single use item should be disposed/recycled/composted?

a. If no: how could this be improved or be more clearly communicated? [More signage, information included in emails to clients?]

12. Could the online ordering form be improved in any way with regards to reducing your use of single use items?

a) In what ways could the form be improved?

b) Would you like a button to opt out of coffee cups/other single use items?

13. Are there other barriers you've noticed or experienced with being sustainable at events where you order from a catering service?

- other prompts?

14. Are there other opportunities you see to help your event be catered as zero-waste?

- other prompts?

-Opportunities for waste reduction –

Plastics: Saran wrap, trays, jams/butters; lists, water cups

Paper: Sugar

Food: amount of milk, sugar, tea, etc.

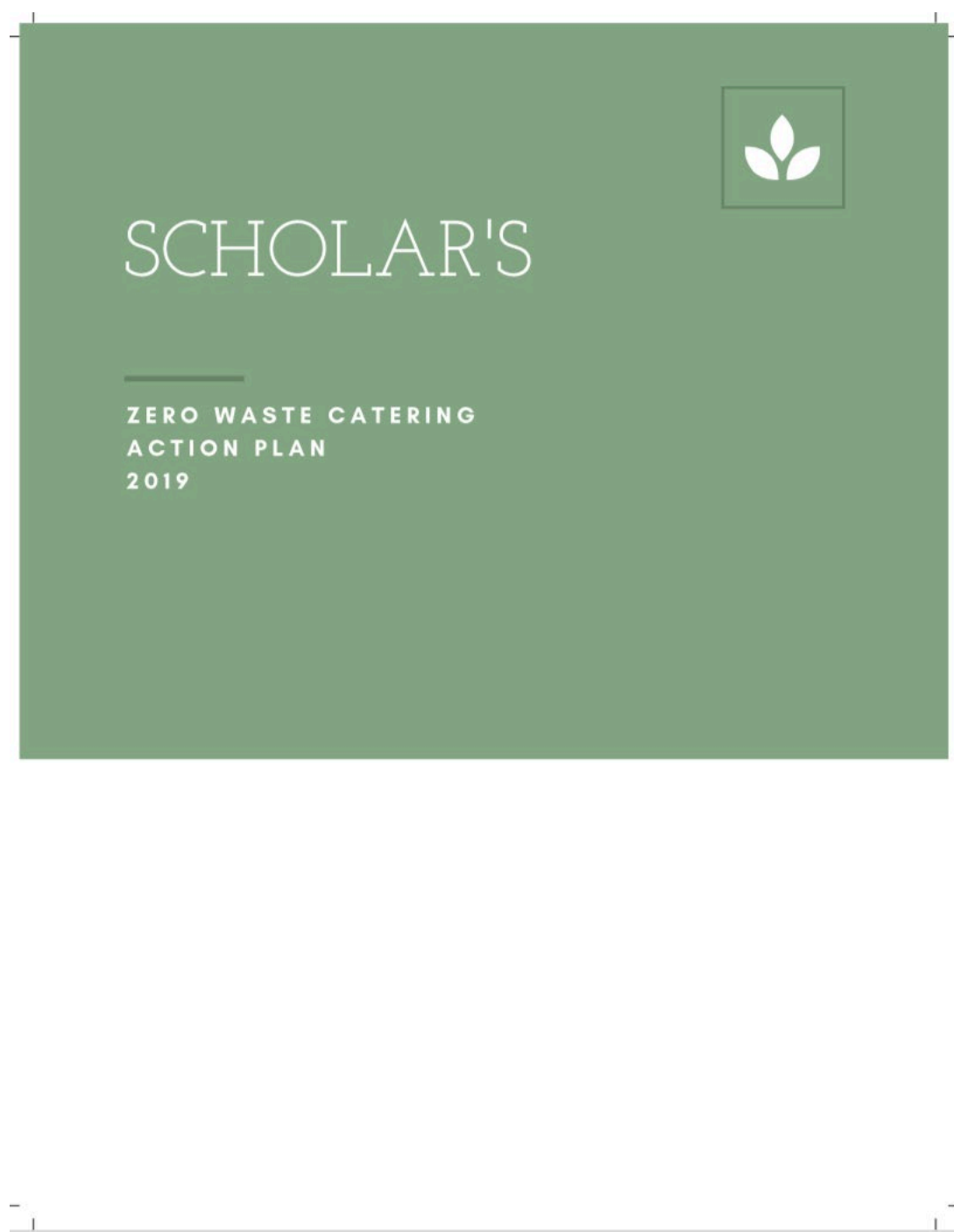
Interview closing questions:

15. Are there any other thoughts you'd like to share (ie. other barriers or opportunities)? Any other considerations?

3. Catering Company Questions

1. What are some simple changes catering companies can make to improve their sustainability?
2. How would you advise a company who says they have limited storage space and limited funds to purchase reusable wares?
3. How do you minimize plastic waste while being food safe (ie. saran wrap)
4. Do you offer any single use items at all (napkins, plates, cutlery)? If not, how do clients deal with this - do they often bring their own? How do you ensure they're not just using their own disposable plastics?
5. How do you minimize waste in your drop-off style events? Are you there to clean up the event afterwards and to pick up all reusable items? How do you avoid your items from being stolen?

4. Action Plan



SCHOLAR'S

ZERO WASTE CATERING
ACTION PLAN
2019



PREFACE + THANK YOU

First and foremost, we would like to thank you for letting us work on this project with you. Scholar's has made such great strides towards sustainability, and we really hope this plan can make an impact. We understand how hard it is to run a business and balance making profits and efficiency while trying to help the environment as much as possible, so we are very grateful to you for being open to this project. At the end of the day, you know much better than us what is possible and what's not, but hopefully this will open up new ideas on what is possible!

Thank you so much for letting us work on this.

Rachel, Emily and Jessica



INTRODUCTION

This action plan was created through LFS 450 with SEEDS sustainability. The recommendations created in this action plan are an accumulation of external literature research, emails from various catering companies, survey responses, and interviews with Scholar's super-user clients. These strategies are to provide guidance for Scholar's Catering to achieve their sustainable zero-waste initiatives, and to become a leader in the catering industry.

These recommendations are ranked in three tiers in terms of viability. Tier 1 is the Gold Standard and will require further research to implement; however, Tier 1 recommendations are to be set as long term goals and for Scholar's to work towards to achieve zero-waste catering events. Tier 2 recommendations are small changes in current systems that could lower environmental impacts. They may require more time for research and troubleshooting before they can be fully implemented. These suggestions should be set as short-term goals. Lastly, Tier 3 recommendations are the most achievable and should be implemented as soon as possible in order to decrease the amount of waste produced at events catered by Scholars.

SCHOLAR'S

ZERO WASTE CATERING
ACTION PLAN
2019



THE GOLD STANDARD

GOLD

- Only cloth napkins
- No single use items available at all
- Working with suppliers to get deliveries with reusable containers
- Using reusable containers to eliminate need for plastic wrap
- Using plant based options only
- Not doing events where single use items could be available

Here are some actions that other catering companies are taking to be as green as possible. These are not necessarily our recommendations for Scholar's but are good practices to be aware of.

SILVER

- Napkins made from recycled materials
- Only compostable single use items available
- Client's have to ask for single use items to receive them
- Having a deposit system available for reusable wares
- Getting reusable trays for drop off services - picking up the next business day
- Use reusable signage for items that require labelling
- Sugar served in reusable containers - either liquid sugar in squeeze bottles or dispensers
- Having only bulk beverages available - no single pops or juices

BRONZE

- Having an opt-in opt-out system online for all single use items
- Having reusable wares available as an option to be rented by the catering company
- Having single use items available but they are all compostable or recyclable
- Using compostable trays and bowls for drop off services



RECOMMENDATIONS TIER 3

Here are the solutions that we think you can implement without opposition or difficulty

REVIEW AND REVISE WHAT SINGLE USE ITEMS ARE PROVIDED AUTOMATICALLY



Do a critical review of all the single use items being currently provided with different food, and ask if they're necessary. Make an inventory of single use items that are provided automatically, and eliminate any that are unnecessary.

ADJUST THE ONLINE ORDER FORM



Adding a page all about opting out of single use items in the order form is a simple change that could have a big impact. Creating opt in opt out options for single use items beyond the charged items will allow for more control for the clients. Using the inventory from the single use item review will help create this form.

ADD MORE INFORMATION ON SUSTAINABILITY ACTIONS FOR CLIENTS



Tell clients about what items you are using, how to dispose of them, what kind of impacts are being decreased and how much more could be decreased by simple actions such as bringing their reusable mugs to work events.

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Icons made by Freepress from Flaticon.com
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RECOMMENDATIONS TIER 2

Here are the some ideas that may be harder to implement, but could make a big change

LOOK INTO A PICKUP SERVICE FOR TRAYS AND SERVING UTENSILS



Reusable trays are used by many caterers and could decrease a lot of plastic waste. Try to first provide reusable trays for services that you already pick up items such as coffee services that also have pastries. Then expand the initiative to all orders.

ELIMINATE INDIVIDUALLY PACKAGED ITEMS



Individually packaged items create unnecessary waste and eliminating the option will decrease the amount of packaging used and waste produced. Replace individual fruit cups on the menu with only offering fruit platters.

PROVIDE SUPER USERS WITH REFILLABLE SUGAR TINS



Instead of providing individual packets of sugar, which was often found to be provided in excess, super users could purchase cans that are stored in their office, and could be refilled when needed.

RECOMMENDATIONS TIER 1

Here are the some ideas that may require more research, but could be set as a long term goal

CREATE A DEPOSIT PROGRAM FOR REUSABLE ITEMS



Create a rental service program that allows clients to order reusable cutlery and dinnerware with a refundable deposit once items are returned to Scholar's. This could be done with a partnership with UBC Food Services that allows clients to drop off items at the most convenient food service outlet.

FOOD SAFE ALTERNATIVES FOR SARAN WRAP



Instead of using saran wrap to hold container lids in place during transportation, look at alternatives such as silicone stretch lids, bees wax, or lids that sit securely on the reusable trays.

REVAMP THE MENU



Make sustainable food items the only option on the menu, and provide an alternative menu by request. Have meat options as an alternative, ensure there is no single-use items such as chips or fruit cups, and feature the most sustainable item with icons.

A CLOSER LOOK

Some in depth information about our Tier 3 recommendations

SINGLE USE ITEM REVISION: QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What single use items are included with this product
- Is this item necessary? Do other items do the same job?
- Is this item made of plastic? Can we get an alternative?
- What quantity is provided? Should we provide less?

Use this information to create an inventory of all the necessary items to be able to build an order form for clients

SAMPLE ORDER FORM

Scholar's CATERING

Single Use Items

We are trying to reduce the waste we produce by minimizing usage of single use items. Consider carefully and let us know which items you need, which you don't and how much you'll need. Quantity refers to how many guests you're going to have. If you don't check off an item, we will assume you don't need it!

Plates and Napkins (priced per person) \$0.50

Quantity

Plates, Napkins and Cutlery (priced per person) \$0.75

Quantity

Napkins Only Free

Quantity

Coffee Cups (free with orders of coffee and tea) Free

Quantity

Sugar and Sweeteners (free with orders of coffee and tea) Free

Quantity

Milk and Cream (free with orders of coffee and tea) Free

Quantity

Plastic Tongs and Serving Utensils Free

Spoons for Fruit Cups Free

Total **\$0.00**

[Buy Now!](#)

Scholar's

— CATERING —

SCHOLAR'S SUSTAINABILITY

Scholar's is committed to sustainability and hopes to help create a Zero Waste campus with UBC. We are currently revising our systems to try to decrease single use item waste. Currently, we have a charge on our single use items such as plates, napkins and cutlery to try to eliminate an excessive waste of these single use items. Single use items are a big contributor to waste in oceans and landfills.

DID YOU KNOW?

All of our single use items are compostable. However, watch out for single use compostable "plastics" - items that look like plastic, but claim to be compostable. They actually are not compostable in Vancouver systems! [You can add any helpful did you know's here]



HOW CAN YOU HELP?



A simple change for our clients would be to start considering bringing their own containers and mugs to events. While we hope to one day have a program full of reusable items, we don't currently have all the space. If you want to help us decrease our single use item waste, consider bringing your reusable travel mugs to all events serving drinks.

SAMPLE SUSTAINABILITY PAGE FOR WEBSITE