

**The Sustainable Dining Resolution**  
**Thelomathesian Society, St. Lawrence University**

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The food we eat is an important part of our daily lives and plays a major role in how the University operates. Although St. Lawrence University provides the students, faculty, and staff with many food choices year round, our food system is based on agriculture and transportation systems that are not sustainable. In light of the Environmental Resolution, the Environmental Action Plan, and President Sullivan's signing of the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment, we feel that a consideration of increasing local<sup>1</sup> and sustainable<sup>2</sup> foods on campus is crucial.

**Whereas** By purchasing local foods, St. Lawrence University will reduce its ecological footprint by minimizing the energy used to transport, package, refrigerate, and process the food we purchase and;

**Whereas** 93% of the St. Lawrence students surveyed<sup>3</sup> (March 6, 2008) have shown concern about the environmental impact of their food choices in relation to their carbon footprint;

**Whereas** the purchase of local foods will increase the University's support of the local economy. Studies have shown that by shifting customer expenditures by just 1% to a direct purchase of local foods could increase farmer's incomes by as much as 5%<sup>4</sup>;

**Whereas** 96% of St. Lawrence students surveyed have shown interest in supporting the local economy by increasing the amount of local foods on campus and;

**Whereas** the Environmental Resolution<sup>5</sup> states that St. Lawrence University should continue to promote a more sustainable lifestyle, locally and sustainably produced foods furthers this lifestyle;

**Whereas** this food movement will enhance St. Lawrence's reputation as a university that offers educated and conscious dining;

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<sup>1</sup> Local Food: For a given product, the shortest possible distance between the producer and the buyer.

<sup>2</sup> Sustainable Food: A way of raising food that is healthy for consumers and animals, does not harm the environment, is humane for workers, respects animals, provides a fair wage to the farmer, and supports and enhances rural communities (Sustainable Table).

<sup>3</sup> See attached survey

<sup>4</sup> FoodRoutes Network. (<http://www.foodroutes.org/buy-fresh-buy-local.jsp>)

<sup>5</sup> Environmental Resolution, "Whereas the University understands the importance of both individual and institutional commitment to living and promoting a more sustainable lifestyle through daily actions as well as comprehensive decisions;"

**Whereas** as the production and consumption of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) may pose significant environmental and health risks<sup>6</sup> , the university should investigate options for reducing the purchase of such items;

**Therefore**, let it be known that increasing the University's purchase of locally and sustainably grown foods would have environmental, social, health, and economic benefits for students, faculty, and the local economy. Increasing the percentage of locally and sustainably produced food is possible through our current practices or through creating an alternative dining option.

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<sup>6</sup> Food First: Institute for Food and Development Policy  
(<http://www.foodfirst.org/progs/global/ge/isp/summary.html>)

On March 16, 2008, 416 St. Lawrence students participated in the following survey:

**Sustainable Foods Survey – St. Lawrence University**

1.) On average each food item travels 2015 miles before it reaches your plate (World Watch Institute “Home Grown” 2002). How concerned are you about the environmental impact of your food choices in relation to your carbon footprint?

Not at all concerned                      Moderately concerned                      Very concerned

Results:

*Not at all concerned: 7.0% (29 students)*  
*Moderately concerned: 49.0% (204 students)*  
*Very Concerned: 44.0% (183 students)*

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2.) Over 93% of SLU’s current food budget leaves the local economy. How interested are you in supporting the local economy by increasing the amount of food on campus?

Not at all interested                      Moderately interested                      Very interested

Results:

*Not at all interested: 3.8% (16 students)*  
*Moderately interested: 29.3% (122 students)*  
*Very interested: 66.6% (277 students)*

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3.) How much extra are you willing to pay per meal to have local foods served on campus?

0¢                      10¢                      20¢                      30¢                      40¢

Results:

*0¢: 8.9% (37 students)*  
*10¢: 15.4% (64 students)*  
*20¢: 25.2% (105 students)*  
*30¢: 15.4% (64 students)*  
*40¢: 35.1% (146 students)*

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4.) Currently many students are advocating for a new pub on campus. If there were an alternative space on campus offering all local foods, how often would you eat there?

Never                      At least once a month                      At least once a week                      At least once a day

Results:

*Never: 0.2% (1 student)*  
*At least once a month: 11.5% (48 students)*  
*At least once a week: 54.1% (225 students)*  
*At least once a day: 33.9% (141 students)*