

CAMPUS SUSTAINABILITY

SUSTAINABILITY | from cover

the three Ps, which is people, planet and prosperity, and ... we need all three of those things to be fully sustainable."

This week, the Office of Sustainability has partnered with organizations on campus such as Elon Dining, Elon Outdoors, the Student Professional Development Center (SPDC) and various organizations to educate students and community members about sustainability, the collaborative efforts on Elon's campus and how individuals can do their part.

Party for the Planet, which will be held from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. April 20 at Lakeside Plaza, involves the most collaboration across these organizations.

"The SPDC will be there talking about green jobs. Elon Outdoors will be there talking about how nature and being outside is good for your mental health and physical health," Harer said. "We'll have a smoothie bike there, ... that you'll pedal to power the blender, and you'll make your own smoothie and see how much energy it actually takes to make that smoothie."

In addition to these topics, the Office of Sustainability is also bringing to light the amount of waste students produce, much of which comes from food.

According to Somini Sengupta of The New York Times, 1.3 billion tons of food are wasted globally per year. This is about one third of all food grown.

So from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on April 18 at Lakeside Dining Hall, students will have to weigh their waste.

"The most food waste that we have is from post-consumer," Harer said. "We measure all of our food waste at Elon, ... the stems of peppers and those kinds of things, and ... when a student comes and eats half of a sandwich and throws out the rest."

Rather than placing plates on rotating dish racks, students will first have to scrape their plates into a bin, quantifying not only the amount of food they wasted during lunch but also the amount of food students waste every day.

"We did this last month as well, and we wasted 131 pounds of food waste in ... just that one lunch period," Harer said. "We decided to try to do it every month. We thought that would have a

bigger impact on the student body." But efforts to minimize food waste and sustain production don't end there. Elon's Loy Farm utilizes Grow Bio-intensive methods, which focus on soil health and organic materials for optimal harvests.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. wastes more than \$160 billion a year in food. But Loy Farm provides food for Elon Dining and for Campus Kitchen, a club that harvests those crops and uses them to cook meals for the Allied Churches of Alamance County.

"They don't waste any food, and they receive donations from Elon Dining," said sophomore Jordan Horton, a cook team leader for Campus Kitchen. "They compost all food waste that they do have, like any stems and plant parts like roots, etc. ... and all the food ... is donated to Allied Churches, so there's nothing going to waste."

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I THINK THAT OFTENTIMES INDIVIDUALS DO NOT KNOW EVERYTHING THAT THE UNIVERSITY IS DOING TO BE MORE SUSTAINABLE AND TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR STUDENTS TO BE SUSTAINABLE.

KATE PEARCE
SENIOR, ECO-REPS
COORDINATOR

Since 15 percent of people in Alamance County are food-insecure according to Southern University Consortium, this is a prominent way in which the university addresses sustainability in the social regard.

"Last year, they harvested 4,600 pounds of food that went right out into Alamance County," Harer said.

But food that inevitably goes to waste goes to Brooks Contractor, a commercial compost center, along with food containers from dining locations on campus such as Lakeside and Qdoba.

"We can compost things like chicken bones and meat and dairy. A lot of times in a backyard composting, we wouldn't be able to compost

those, but we can here," Harer said. "And Elon Dining, ... the majority of the things they give out is compostable, like the to-go containers, ... green plastic utensils, anything that will say 'compostable' probably in tiny little letters."

Note that the black utensils at Winter Garden are not compostable, though the food and drink containers are.

Also on Wednesday, the Office of Sustainability will continue spreading the spirit of sustainability by partnering with Elon Outdoors for Sustainable S'mores Outdoors. "We'll have some Eco-Reps who are there to talk about sustainability, and we bring sustainable food, so fair-trade certified chocolate, vegan marshmallows and all that good stuff," Harer said.

And on April 19, Harer will lead a tour of Schar Hall and Steers Pavilion, two of Elon's newest buildings, at 1 p.m.

"We have a green building policy on campus, so any new buildings that come along are required to be LEED-certified, which is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design," Harer said. "This is our 27th certified project on campus."

Elon's green building policy states new construction projects and renovations that occupy 8,000 or more square feet will achieve at least LEED Silver certification.

LEED-certified buildings are ranked based on aspects that make a building sustainable, including energy efficiency, low-flow water fixtures, the use of local and recycled materials, temperature regulation and ensuring that post-construction materials were recycled.

"There's a lot of work behind the scenes with energy use," Harer said. "For example, we are in a pilot program for energy conservation action, which is where we're piloting 10 buildings. After a certain time, we raise the temperatures — we put the temperature higher in the summer and lower in the winter to conserve energy so that the heating and cooling won't be running constantly. It will only run when people are actually in the building."

Elon's master sustainability plan includes a comprehensive plan to become a carbon-neutral campus by 2037. Students can learn more about sustainability by visiting the Office of Sustainability's website, www.elon.edu/sustainability, and get involved with sustainability events by visiting the office's social media outlets.



FILE PHOTO BY ELON NEWS NETWORK

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ELON FOOD WASTE

131

Lakeside Dining Hall generated 131 pounds of food waste from one 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. lunch period on April 18.

GLOBAL FOOD WASTE

1.3B

According to the New York Times, 1.3 billion tons of food are wasted globally per year. This is about one third of all food grown.

LOY FARM HARVEST

4,600

Last year alone, Loy Farm harvested 4,600 pounds of food that was then donated to the Allied Churches of Alamance County.



Top: Crops such as lettuce and peppers grow in Elon's greenhouse to be distributed to local churches. Bottom: Though Elon may be cold, plants don't have to worry as the greenhouse provides suitable conditions for them to grow.

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