

My final project is meant to be viewed as a trifold pamphlet. If the pamphlet segments are labeled from 1 to 6 with 1, 2, and 3 being the three segments on the first page from left to right and 4, 5, and 6 being the three segments on the second page from left to right, when folded, the pamphlet will read 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2.

Logic of Recommendations:

Recommendation 1 is to implement a poster campaign around campus at food vendors such as Memorial Union and Gordon's dining hall that raises awareness about the issue of food waste in our community and the negative social and environmental effects it can lead to. This strategy is empirically supported by a study by Whitehair et al. (2013) that showed simply placing written messages in a college dining hall discouraging food waste led to a 15% reduction in the amount of food that was discarded. The logic largely boils down to the availability heuristic: most of the time, food waste is simply not on our minds. Putting up posters that remind us that food waste is an issue that we should be cognizant of keeps that thought recent, and thus available, in our minds. This leads to reduction of wasteful behavior. This recommendation also utilizes moral nudging, which has been found to increase altruistic and cooperative behavior (Capraro et al., 2019). By placing messages that make clear the moral imperative to reducing food waste, individuals are nudged to reduce wasteful behavior.

Recommendation 2 is to reduce the portion sizes at food vendors at UW-Madison. A specific example is Ginger Root. As delicious as it may be, their heaping portions are bound to lead to both waste and overconsumption. This strategy is empirically supported by a study by Freedman & Brochado (2012) which showed that decreasing french fry portion sizes at a university dining hall led to significant decreases in both food waste and consumption. It also showed that total french fry production was also positively correlated with increased food waste. Smaller portions will lead to less consumption and waste because of the Delboeuf illusion, a well studied cognitive phenomenon in which larger plate sizes create larger portions - leading to increases in waste and consumption. Therefore, reducing these plate and portion sizes will decrease waste.

Recommendation 3 is to institute fines against UW-Madison food vendors who don't donate their excess food waste to food banks or homeless shelters. In a 2016 study by the Food Waste Alliance, it was found that restaurants donate only 2% of their food waste. Barriers to donation of food likely include the financial, time, and resource commitment required to keep that food fresh and donate it to accepting agencies. Thus, it may seem that incentivizing restaurants to donate their excess food would be the pertinent strategy. However, the cognitive principle of loss aversion tells us that people are more worried about monetary losses than potential gains (Kahneman & Tversky, 1977). Individuals (and therefore businesses) will place exaggerated importance on the possibility of losing money if they don't donate their excess food over the potential of gaining money if they do. Therefore, instituting fines against UW-Madison businesses that don't comply with excess food donation will be more effective than rewarding those that do.

SUGGESTION 2: REDUCE PORTION SIZES

Smaller portion sizes means that individuals will be more likely to consume all of the food that they purchase: leading to decreases in both waste and overeating.

Why?

A study that examined how different portion sizes affected french fry consumption and waste at a college university dining hall found that smaller portion sizes led to significant decreases in both consumption and waste (Freedman, 2010). This likely is due to the Delbouef illusion: where larger plates lead to larger portions.



For details, contact UWSagainstwaste@wisc.edu, or visit www.UWagainstwaste.com.

SUGGESTION 3: FINE FOOD VENDORS WHO DON'T DONATE EXCESS FOOD

While individuals certainly have their role in reducing food waste, the onus largely lies on the producers. According to a 2016 report by the Food Waste Alliance, restaurants only donate 2% of their excess food. The city of Madison should fine food vendors who refuse to donate their excess good food to food banks.

Why?

Most restaurants don't donate their excess food because of both the financial and time costs of doing so. Thus, it may seem that incentivizing restaurants that do donate their food would be the strategy to take. However, the cognitive principle of loss aversion tells us people are more worried about losses than potential gains (Kahneman & Tversky, 1977). Therefore, instituting fines against businesses that don't comply with donating excess food will be more effective than rewarding those that do.



HOW TO REDUCE FOOD WASTE AT UW- MADISON



1

2

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BACKGROUND

- Food waste is a pervasive issue throughout the United States, and one of the biggest culprits are college campuses.
- Every year, college campuses in the U.S. waste over 22 million pounds of food according to the Food Recovery Network. That's a whopping 142 pounds per student!
- Despite this massive excess of food which goes to waste, roughly 1/3 of college students have faced food insecurity; which is when individuals have limited access to consistent, nutritious food because of monetary or other resource constraints. (Laska et. al, 2020).
- We need to find ways to get food out of landfills and to the people who need it.
- Speaking of landfills, food which is thrown away to decompose in them generates greenhouse gases which contribute to climate change.
- 6% of all greenhouse gas emissions can be attributed to decomposing food waste.

3 WAYS WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE AT UW



SUGGESTION 1: AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The first step is to implement a poster campaign throughout campus dining facilities such as Memorial Union and Gordon's that raises awareness of the amount of food we waste and the negative effects it has on our communities and environment.

Why?

Many students likely aren't even aware that this issue exists. A study from the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics showed that simply placing slogans discouraging waste in a college dining hall reduced food waste by 15% (Whitehair et. al, 2013). This likely occurs due to moral nudging, which has been found to increase altruistic and cooperative behavior (Carparo et. al, 2019).



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Pamphlet reads 3, 4, 5, 6, 1, 2 when folded

Works Cited

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