



Fair Trade Student Action Toolkit

Colleges & Universities

In today's world, everything is global. A decision as simple as buying a cup of coffee can make a difference in the life of someone a world away. Through ethical and mindful consumerism, we can fight inequality and foster justice with each purchase we make.

Colleges and universities are at the forefront of this growing movement. As a college student preparing to become a future global leader, **you** have the power to change harmful economic practices that keep billions trapped in poverty. Choosing Fair Trade coffee is only the first step.

Thousands of Fair Trade products are available to consumers—as well as to your campus—and purchasing them contributes to better livelihoods for the hardworking people in the Global South who produce them. In addition to coffee, Fair Trade cocoa, sugar, tea, fresh fruit, gifts, clothing, bags, and more are available to help schools around the United States go Fair Trade and take **concrete action** to support communities around the world.



Since the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh became the first US Fair Trade University in 2008 similar efforts have sprung up on campuses across the country. The education and advocacy efforts of these groups promote social justice and economic empowerment for farmers, workers, and artisans in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

Within this Guide you will find...

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Why Become a Fair Trade University?

Make an Impact

By promoting Fair Trade on your campus, you increase both the demand and sale for Fair Trade goods. You are helping raise the standard of living for producers and their families and communities. You are allowing producers to be independent, send their kids to school, and access healthcare.

Strengthen your Campus Community

The **five goals** required to become a Fair Trade College or University ensure the development of a broad-based effort involving many voices. There is great potential to create partnerships around a common cause among student activists, faculty, and administration.

Create a Campus Legacy

Becoming a Fair Trade University demonstrates your campus's commitment to issues such as environmental sustainability and labor rights. This action will inspire others to continue to make changes on campus in support of social justice.

Earn Recognition

Fair Trade Colleges & Universities are recognized for their leadership in taking steps to increase fairness, transparency, and sustainability in global trade. Fair Trade Universities attract positive media attention from the community and public officials.





Goal 1: Form a Fair Trade Committee

The Fair Trade committee provides leadership and direction for your campaign.

1. Create a Small Group

- Find one or more friends or colleagues who share your interest in Fair Trade and begin following the steps below. If you are already part of an existing group that is concerned with social justice issues, you may want to create a subcommittee to work on Fair Trade.

2. See what's already happening on your campus

- Assess your campus's willingness to engage in sustainability and Fair Trade issues. Research past efforts of other campuses to get a sense of what has worked best.

3. Reach out to other colleges and check out Fair Trade

- Create an account on www.fairtradecampaigns.org to connect with other colleges and universities going through the same process and gain access to resources.
- Educate you and your team about Fair Trade by learning about labeling organizations [here](#).

4. Form the Committee

- Invite others to join you, and form a leadership team comprised of members with different backgrounds, ages, and skill sets, to ensure diversity and that the campaign will continue when some members graduate. Ask faculty members and other stakeholders to serve as members or group advisers. Need an example? Manhattan College has an outline [here](#).
- Create leadership positions, descriptions, and set clear expectations.
- Establish regular meeting times for your committee.

5. Set SMARTER goals

- Identify priorities and set goals that you can reasonably accomplish in the academic year, goals that are:

Specific: What exactly will you do, with whom, and how?

Measurable: How will you know when you have succeeded?

Agreed upon: Does everyone on your team support the goal?

Realistic: Is success possible, what are your obstacles and how can you overcome them?

Time-based: When exactly will you start and finish?

Evaluate: Compare your progress with your original goals.

Reward: Remember to set rewards for you and your team as you accomplish your goals.





Goal 2: Make Fair Trade Products Available On Campus

Work with vendors and food service providers to offer at least two Fair Trade products (e.g. coffee, tea, sugar, gifts) in each outlet on campus.

The end goal of education and community efforts is to increase demand and sales – in turn supporting Fair Trade farmers, artisans and workers around the world. This focus area seeks to measure the impact of our efforts and explore new areas Fair Trade sales.

1. Understand the Concerns of your Food Service Provider

How can you address concerns prior to approaching your Food Service Provider? They might not understand the principles of Fair Trade or why you want Fair Trade on campus. Be patient, acknowledge what has already been done, and then discuss how to increase Fair Trade options.

Concern: An Outlet business has limited staff and valuable time.

Response: Offer to take responsibility for as much of the necessary work as possible.

Concern: A business is worried increases in cost of goods, which decreases profits.

Response: Show the vendor the prices of your suggested products—many are less expensive than non-Fair Trade products. Additionally, BBMG explains that 90% of Americans describe themselves as “conscious consumers” who seek out ethically made products (click [here](#) for the article). Meanwhile NYU reports that 60% of consumers are willing to pay a 17.2% premium for socially responsible products (click [here](#) for the article).

Concern: A business is concerned about the quality or taste of Fair Trade products.

Response: Fair Trade specialty coffees, teas and chocolate have gained widespread recognition for high quality and have won many awards for excellence. Offer to help with marketing, in-store promotional events, or listing the business as a sponsor of your next event.

2. Set Up Meetings and Follow Up

Set up a meeting with your campus dining manager. Follow up to answer questions, continue to develop a healthy working relationship and keep Fair Trade on their agenda.

3. Read the Procurement Guide

Fair Trade Colleges & Universities has developed materials to institutionalize Fair Trade Purchasing. First look at the Campaigners’ Guide to Procurement [here](#). In addition, if you begin working with a purchasing official, make sure they have access to the Purchasing Guide [here](#).





Goal 3: Source Fair Trade at Events and Meetings

Serve up Fair Trade coffee, tea and other products in offices, at events and through catering.

1. Collaborate on Existing Events

Offer to source Fair Trade refreshments at different events and leave note cards describing the importance of Fair Trade on the refreshments' table. Collaborating with different types of clubs allows you to spread the Fair Trade movement to more people.

2. Replace Non-Fair Trade products with Fair Trade products

Substituting to Fair Trade coffee in faculty lounges is a simple way to get Fair Trade in the conscious of influential people on campus. **Below are more ideas for quick switches on campus:**

Product Type	Faculty Lounge	Catering	Major Events	On-Campus Dining
Coffee	X	X	X	X
Tea	X	X	X	X
Sugar	X			X
Other			<i>Gifts, Apparel</i>	<i>Chocolate, Ice Cream</i>



Additional Materials and Resources: There are a number of supplemental resources you should use as you go through your campaign for Fair Trade. Here's a list of the most important:

- Fair Trade Campaigns Website ([Click Here](#))
- Fair Trade Colleges & Universities Toolkit ([Click Here](#))
- Case Studies and Strategies – Keys for Meeting the 5 Goals ([Click Here](#))
- Fair Trade Colleges & Universities Procurement Guide ([Click Here](#))
- Event Promotion Best Practices ([Click Here](#))
- Fair Trade Fundraising Resources ([Click Here](#))
- Fair Trade Campaigns Branding Guide ([Click Here](#))





Goal 4: Commit to Fair Trade Education

Sponsor Fair Trade educational events and activities on campus and work with faculty to bring Fair Trade into the classroom.

1. Get Fair Trade in the Classroom

- Explore your school's course guides and find out if any classes (sociology, economics, environmental studies, business, international relations, etc.) already touch upon Fair Trade. If there aren't, then ask professors teaching relevant topics if they would be interested in developing a Fair Trade component/addition to their course.
- Host a seminar to bring together faculty from various disciplines for a day to discuss how Fair Trade relates to their field.
- Try to get a faculty member to teach a course on Fair Trade. A compilation of Fair Trade Syllabi that can be used for courses and seminars can be found [here](#). Meanwhile use [this](#) animated short video for shorter presentations.
- Get the word out about your group through lightning presentations – presentations designed to inform students about the importance of Fair Trade and your efforts on campus, all within a brief 2-3 minute period at the start of a class. It's especially important to reach freshman as they are eager to get involved and are the future of the movement at your campus. A sample and customizable presentation can be found [here](#).

2. Host Events to Promote Fair Trade Products

- Create events centered on Fair Trade producers and share the story behind the product. Come up with a quick way to explain Fair Trade—for example “Fair Trade is respect for human labor.”
- Check out what other colleges are doing at fairtradecampaigns.org/events

Event Examples and Ideas

- Host a [Fair Trade Study Break](#)
- Show a [Documentary on Fair Trade](#) (make sure to have samples!)
- **Table** and hand out Fair Trade tea, coffee, and chocolate
 - Show off with a [Fair Trade Fashion Show](#)
- Create a Fair Trade **store/cart/table** to sell Fair Trade goods.
- Bake and **Decorate** Fair Trade Cupcakes
- **Paint** Fair Trade Soapstone Products. You can even design your own Fair Trade mascot! Email fairtrade@fordham.edu
- **Team up with RA programs** to educate on the merits of fair trade and do chocolate tastings with different brands.
 - Host a [Fair Trade Bake-Off](#) with your Food Service Provider
- Invite **Guest Speakers** who work with Fair Trade to share their experiences.
 - [Fundraise](#) with a Fair Trade Products
- Host a [Regional Conference](#) for Fair Traders in your area
 - Hold a [Fair Trade Spa Night](#)
- Fair Trade **Tie Dye** – using Fair Trade T-Shirts
 - [Chocolate Covered Bananas!](#)
- Partner with other groups to 'Fair Trade' their events on campus
- Get **orientation** to include a Fair Trade component
- Looking for more ideas? Head here.



Goal 5: Pass Fair Trade Resolution

Draw up a resolution that reflects the college/university's commitment to Fair Trade and pass it through the appropriate decision-making bodies for approval.

• Passing a Fair Trade Resolution can seem like a herculean task, but know that it doesn't need to be! If you prepare well, connect and enroll the right point people on campus, and are confident in yourself then you should have few if any problems.

How do you tackle passing a resolution?

• Read through the Fair Trade Colleges & Universities [Sample Resolution](#), you can use this as a template to build your own. For your resolution read through your institution's mission statement and draw connections between points that reflect the principles of Fair Trade.

• **Talk** through the process of passing a resolution with a staff or faculty ally. Institutions change policies with high frequency and usually have a standard process for doing so, make sure you understand the process from start to finish by meeting with someone who can advise you on the specifics and quirks at your campus.

• Talk with, and **enroll stakeholders** before a resolution gets presented. Individually reach out to student government representatives and administration officials to make sure they understand what Fair Trade is, why your group is looking to pass a policy, and to answer questions.

• **Thank people** every step of the way. A hand written note of appreciation can go a long way!

Once you have passed a resolution...

1. Celebrate!

• Reward your team for the tremendous achievement. Each year, have a celebration on your Fair Trade Anniversary remembering your work over the past year. Thank everyone!

2. Publicize your achievement

• Make sure that the campus community is aware of your school's Fair Trade resolution and the new Fair Trade products available to them. Work with your institution to put out a press release.

3. Recap

• Go over the successful strategies with your leadership team. Discuss what worked well or did not work for this project. Make sure that all stakeholder contact information, meeting notes, and copies of policies are saved and accessible to the group.



Going Above and Beyond – Set up a Sustainable Movement for Change

Principles for a Sustainable Campaign

- Turning your campus into a Fair Trade University may take time. Here are some solutions to obstacles you may encounter along the way:

Obstacle: The first generation of student leaders graduates. Who will carry on?

Solution: Recruit younger, excited and energetic students early on, and prepare them for leadership. Set up a system where your leadership turns over halfway through the academic year (in January) so retiring leaders can act as mentors for new officers.

Obstacle: The administration stalls the process, maybe just before the school year ends.

Solution: Ask the administration for a projected timeline. Set up conference calls with administrators during the summer and planning meetings for the beginning of the next school year. Push the campaign forward even if school is not in session.

Obstacle: Food suppliers are not immediately able to provide Fair Trade products.

Solution: Work with existing suppliers to identify potential product sources.

Obstacle: Vendors are unwilling to sell Fair Trade products because of cost.

Solution: Phase in Fair Trade products so that the cost increase is spread out over a number of years. Some students have also implemented a Green Fund to pay for sustainability initiatives.

Expand the Movement

- Have Fair Trade competitions with other schools. Encourage and push each other!
- Share Fair Trade knowledge with off campus cafes, supermarkets, and restaurants and encourage them to carry Fair trade products and host Fair Trade events. This is beneficial to students and faculty members who live near, but not on, campus.
- Work with to start a Fair Trade [School](#), [Town](#), or [Congregation](#) campaign in your local area.

