



# A Guide to Working with Dining Services on Your Campus

*Tips, resources and best practices for how to successfully partner with dining services on campus*



## What's Inside?

General tips and best practices

Specific information and resources for working with Aramark, Sodexo, Bon Appétit & Chartwells (Compass Group)

Independent Food Service Case Studies: UC Berkeley, UCLA and UWSP





# General Tips and Best Practices

Working with your campus dining services is important for the success of your Fair Trade Campaign. Dining services plays a key role in making sustainable and ethical food and beverage purchasing decisions on campus and can support events by providing Fair Trade products or event space.

Approaching your campus dining services can be a bit daunting, we hope that these general tips and best practices help you feel more confident and prepared to partner with campus dining.

## 1) Be Prepared and Professional

- **Get their schedule:** Knowing dining services' availability is essential for scheduling meetings or quick check-ins. Make sure you know where their office is, if they have a phone number you can call and how to contact them via email. Ensure you have contact information for at least one dining staff member.
- **Understand the dining services decision-makers** especially your main point of contact i.e. do they work closely with the dining services manager? Do they have assistants or other staff that work under them? This ensures that if / when your main point of contact is not available, you can speak with their associates and they can relay any information or questions you have. This also helps you to build a reputation with the larger office and develop power mapping and stakeholder engagement skills.
- **Make sure they know what Fair Trade is**, the role of your campaign and why you need their support.
- **Brainstorm questions you think dining services will ask** ahead of meetings and formulate answers. If they ask questions in a meeting, on a call or via email that you are unsure about tell them you will get back with them with more information as soon as possible and consult with your committee, your Fair Trade Campaigns fellow and/or Fair Trade Colleges & Universities National Organizer, Kylie, to see how best to respond. Following up as soon as possible is important to avoid losing momentum.
- **Utilize Fair Trade Campaigns' resources** (all found at [www.fairtradecampaigns.org/resources](http://www.fairtradecampaigns.org/resources))
  - *Fair Trade myths & FAQ's:* <http://bit.ly/FTMythsFAQ>
  - *Purchasing Guide for Staff:* <http://bit.ly/FTStaffGuide>
  - *Coffee 101:* [bit.ly/FTCoffee101](http://bit.ly/FTCoffee101)
  - *Cocoa 101:* [bit.ly/FTCocoa101](http://bit.ly/FTCocoa101)
  - *Tea 101:* [bit.ly/FTTea101](http://bit.ly/FTTea101)
  - *Sugar 101:* [bit.ly/FTSugar101](http://bit.ly/FTSugar101)
  - *Fair Trade 101:* [bit.ly/fairtrade101](http://bit.ly/fairtrade101)
  - *Product list:* <http://bit.ly/FairTradeProducts>

## 2) Work Collaboratively, Not Combatively

- **Meet their needs**

Talk to your food service provider about what challenges they may be facing on campus. Are they struggling to sell certain products? Are they trying to figure out how to better engage students? What are their sustainability goals? Brainstorm ideas with dining services of where you can incorporate Fair Trade and assist them with any gaps they might be facing. This positions you as a thought partner who they know they can go to when they need help thinking of a creative event or assistance with student outreach.
- **Work to change their perceptions**

Show dining there is a demand for Fair Trade Products on campus; distribute a survey, have people sign a petition - give them tangible evidence and numbers that show students and faculty want more Fair Trade.

## 3) When You Can't Make Progress Vertically, Build Horizontally

Sometimes the perceptions of staff and admin are hard to change when they think that your campaign is the only entity on campus working on Fair Trade and/or sustainable and ethical purchasing. To push forward vertically, sometimes you need to build horizontally first. Work with other student groups seeking to improve food quality and ethical sourcing on campus (i.e. Real Food Challenge) or with professors and staff who work on nutrition, agriculture or food justice issues. Once you have a good understanding of your campus community, you will be better equipped to approach and successfully partner with dining services.



# Food Service Provider-Specific Information & Resources

There are four main food service companies that operate on college and university campuses in the USA: Aramark, Sodexo, Bon Appétit and Chartwells (Compass Group) If your campus food service is not operated independently, it's highly likely that one of these companies serves your campus.

Here is some general information on each company including links to their sustainability goals and previous engagement with Fair Trade Colleges & Universities and our programs. Leveraging these goals and programs can be a key way to build a relationship with dining services on your campus.

## Aramark

- 15 campuses with Fair Trade campaigns
- [Sustainability goals](#)
- [Responsible Sourcing](#)

- **Engagement with Fair Trade Colleges & Universities:**

Aramark has been a strong supporter of Fair Trade and Fair Trade Colleges & Universities' programs including Fair Trade Finals and Fair Trade Photofest. Aramark created a Fair Trade Finals implementation guide for staff in 2016.

## Sodexo

- 32 Campuses with Fair Trade campaigns

- [Sustainability goals](#)

- Sodexo is committed to nurturing corporate responsibility through abiding by their [Better Tomorrow Plan](#)

- [Environmental Sustainability](#): Sodexo works to enhance environmental sustainability by reducing environmental impacts of client sites, promoting sustainable sourcing practices, and optimizing natural resource consumption.

- **Engagement with Fair Trade Colleges & Universities:**

Sodexo has been a strong supporter of Fair Trade Colleges & Universities' programs including Fair Trade Finals and Fair Trade Photofest. Sodexo has launched their own brand of Fair Trade Certified coffee, tea and sugar (Aspetto).

## Bon Appétit Management Company (BAMCO)

- 6 campuses with Fair Trade campaigns

- [Sustainability goals](#)

- "Food service for a sustainable future": Flavorful food that's healthy and economically viable for all, produced through practices that respect farmers, workers, and animals; nourish the community; and replenish our shared natural resources for future generations.

- **Engagement with Fair Trade Colleges & Universities:**

Bon Appétit has been a strong supporter of Fair Trade Colleges & Universities' programs including Fair Trade Finals and Fair Trade Photofest. Bon Appétit created a Fair Trade Finals implementation guide for staff in 2016.

## Chartwells (Compass Group)

- 15 campuses with Fair Trade campaigns

- [Sustainability goals](#)

- Chartwells is dedicated to food education. They look to cultivate a "Simply Good" food agenda where they invest energy and resources into an annual food and nutrition education program to expand students' knowledge around nutritional facts, sustainability information and good preparation tips. This program aims to move the conversation about food from the cafeteria into the classroom, hallways, homes and the local community.

- **Engagement with Fair Trade Colleges & Universities:**

The best example of Chartwells' (Compass Group) engagement with Fair Trade Colleges & Universities is at the local campus level with prominent Fair Trade campaigns on several Chartwells campuses including: DePaul University (Chicago, IL - declared), UNC Asheville (Asheville, NC - in-progress), UNC Charlotte (Charlotte, NC - in-progress) and Texas A&M University (College Station, TX - in-progress).





# Independent Food Service Operator Case Studies: UC Berkeley, UCLA, UW Stevens Point

Over a third of Fair Trade College & University campaigns (more than 30%) are on campuses with an independent food service operator instead of one of the four major food service companies. Campuses with independent dining services have their own unique opportunities and challenges.

The following case studies offer tips and advice from three large public campuses that have active and successful Fair Trade campaigns and work in partnership with independent dining services.

## UCLA

- Students reached out to UCLA Dining when their campaign began four years ago and met with the Sustainability Coordinator. One of the co-chairs for Fair Trade at UCLA, highlights the importance of creating meaningful, long-term connections with dining services staff on campus.
- UCLA Fair Trade Co-chairs emphasize that there is usually a strong desire for student input from dining services. Leveraging this, their campaign was able to make significant progress, by gaining dining services' support and trust and finding alignment around common goals.
- To achieve Fair Trade status on a large campus with independent dining services, it is crucial to realize the potential for a reciprocal relationship with dining services and identify common goals.

***“As students, we don’t have the ability to make purchasing decisions ourselves, so it is important to build connections with key players in housing & dining who do.”***

- Co-President of UCLA Fair Trade

## UC Berkeley

- Cal Dining at UC Berkeley prioritizes transparency and always being available to students for questions and suggestions surrounding purchasing and products available at their dining halls.
- They ensure that all student emails are answered and encourage students to make meetings if they have additional inquiries. Petitions to provide more Fair Trade products are better received from students, especially if you find a cost effective switch and accompany it with marketing ideas.
- The Sustainability Coordinator for Cal Dining, explains the role of student advocacy by saying:

***“Students create demand and then we provide the resources.”***

- Sustainability Coordinator for Cal Dining

## University of Wisconsin Stevens Point

- UW Stevens Point (UWSP) Fair Trade has worked closely with UWSP Dining Services since their campaign started, resulting in UWSP becoming a designated Fair Trade University in Fall 2016.
- UWSP Fair Trade President and Specialty Projects Coordinator for the Sustainability Office says it's key to identify decision makers within dining and meet with them early on in your campaign.

***“Approach dining with ideas for collaborative projects, invite them to partner with you to reach specific goals instead of merely providing them with their requests or demands.”***

- Special Projects Coordinator, UWSP Sustainability

