

EXTRA CREDIT

Food Waste

What does your school currently do with its leftover food?

- According to Sheri Lang, the Resident Dining Manager at Belmont University, in Belmont's cafeteria, the food that is left over from plates, or thrown in the garbage, is composted in a system that removes water from the food and then burned to make fertilizer for soil. The water is used as irrigation and the fertilizer is used in Belmont's gardens and lawns.
- However, in the other dining establishments on Belmont's campus, all waste is sent to a dump. The food waste is not separated from other types of waste aside from recycling.
- Food that is not consumed, but is prepared and set out for students, such as items in the salad bar, is set out until the day it expires, after that it must be composted as well.

Does dining services donate any food to the school pantry or local community? (Is there a food pantry on your campus?)

- Food that is left over from the Student To-Go section of the cafeteria is donated to the Veteran's Kitchen on campus

Is your school part of the [Food Recovery Network](#)?

- Our school is not a part of the Food Recovery Network, however it is a part of *Lean Path*
- Belmont must report to *Lean Path* the amount of food waste collected each day.

What percentage of students from your school are food insecure?

- I talked to two managers of Belmont's Dining Services, Sheri Lang and Tim Stout, neither one of them knew how many students at Belmont are food insecure, so I emailed Kara Miller, Belmont's Dietician who works for Sodexo, but I have received no response.

Food Insecure Students: (I talked to one student from my campus and one from a Nashville community college to compare)

Nathan S.



Nathan has been a student at Belmont since his freshman year. As a freshman, he lived on campus with 15 meals a week as part of his meal plan. He did not have to worry about paying rent or buying food until his junior year of college. Nathan moved off campus after his freshman

year, but was still receiving payment from his parents for housing. After his sophomore year Nathan was responsible for his rent, most of his food, and his textbooks, but could not find a job that paid more than \$10.00 an hour. As a full-time student, it was hard for him to make enough money to support himself. He still had 5 meals a week at the cafeteria, but that is not enough to survive. On weeks such as fall break and Thanksgiving break, Nathan can remember having to skip eating because our school cafeteria was closed and there was nowhere else he could afford. In terms of school, the biggest problem for Nathan is that he had to build his schedule around his work schedule so that he could make sure he was earning enough money for both food and rent. Having to work and go to school and do work for school outside of class, while also wondering if you are going to have enough money to buy dinner can be very stressful, but Nathan makes it happen.

Kenneth E.



Kenneth is a student at Nashville State Community College. Kenneth had dealt with the struggle of food insecurity for far longer than his college career. Kenneth and his twin brother moved around a few times as children—not because they wanted to, but because they couldn’t really afford their home. There was a day that Kenneth remembers where he didn’t even have a home. They left their house and were lucky that a friend of his mom answered the phone and let them stay with her until they could find somewhere else. The first time that Kenneth had his own bed was when he was 17. Before that he slept on a sofa or on the floor in blankets or a sleeping bag. Money has always been an issue for him. However, throughout high school, Kenneth consistently made good grades. He graduated in the spring of 2017 with the intent of majoring in physical therapy in the fall. Over the summer he enrolled in a physical therapy class, but due to the fact that he had to get a fulltime job, he was unable to finish the class. In the fall of 2017 he started attending classes at Nashville State, but with no car, no money and a need to get to both work and school, Kenneth quickly had to pick between one or the other, so he dropped out of Nashville State. Kenneth considered a number of other career paths since he dropped out of Nashville State, including the police force, real estate, and working at Home Depot, but at the end of the summer he decided he would go back to Nashville State and that is where attends school now.

There have been plenty of times when Kenneth has skipped meals. However, most of the time Kenneth skips meals because of loss of appetite. After going for a few days with only having one

meal, he no longer feels like he needs to eat the others because he is no longer hungry. He said that over the summer he went a week with only having Ramen noodles every day and only eating them once or twice on those days.

Write up a plan with some solutions to reduce food waste on campus based on your research.

- Belmont already has a compost system in place to reduce food waste from the cafeteria. To further reduce waste, I think the next step should be to have the Belmont dining establishments outside of the cafeteria compost their food waste as well. By setting up compost bins next to the trash cans outside of the restaurants, students can separate their food waste from their recycling/nonperishable waste. Then, the compost can be taken to the cafeteria. Composting bins can also be set up outside of dorms so that people who eat in their rooms can also reduce food waste. In order to make these compost bins useful, someone would have to take the separated food waste to the cafeteria from the compost bins. If the dining services could find one person to collect the compost on the same days that they collect the trash and recycling and bring the food waste to the cafeteria, then the amount of food waste on our campus would be dramatically reduced.

My Plan in Action:

- I met with three different supervisors of the Belmont Cafeteria to discuss food waste. First, I met with Sheri Lang, the Resident Dining Manager, who informed me that the Belmont Cafeteria has a highly developed composting system.
- Then I met with Tim Stout, Production Chef, who explained how the composting system operates. He also expressed that only the cafeteria uses this composting system. None of the other dining establishments on campus use this compost.
- I later met with Grant Khemkhajon, the Executive Chef, who said that he would be willing to let the other restaurants use the composting system if his managers and the other dining establishments could reach an agreement about the transportation of the waste to the cafeteria.

My Photos:



- Photo 1: This waste was found outside of McAlister's. It is a mixture of recycling, food waste, and nonperishables. While currently the food waste has to go in the nonperishable trash can, adding a compost could eliminate a lot of the waste in that trash can. It may even allow people to recycle more. A lot of people don't want to throw their food waste in the recycling bin, so they just throw everything in the nonperishable bin.
- Photo 2: The trash was found in the hallway exiting the Curb Café. It is mostly food waste and nonperishable waste. Another way we could reduce our food waste would be to have compostable containers such as plates/bowls. If the containers were compostable then, again, people would not have to separate their trash and would be more willing to compost it.
- Photo 3: This trash was found right next to the exit of the Chik Fil A. There is no recycling or compost bin next to this trash can. A good start to reducing waste would be adding both of these things.

My Instagram Post:

