



Departments across Humber College Converge in Local Food Efforts

The 3P Mentorship Program cultivates champions in public institutions who use their buying power to be leaders in sustainable food purchasing. Participation in the program launched a campus-wide conversation about integrating local, sustainable food into Humber College's food service, culinary program, and curriculum. **FEBRUARY 2015**



Lindsay Walker and Don Henriques say talking local is a victory for their campus.

When Sustainability Manager Lindsay Walker decided to expand her focus on campus from waste and recycling to food sustainability, she started a whole new conversation at Humber College. "At first we thought we would be able to set a goal like 'Humber will increase local food purchases by such-and-such a percentage this year.' However, once we started looking more closely at our food procurement, a strong and attainable goal emerged: let's keep digging to get clear reporting of all foods procured by both the Culinary program and from Food Services vendors." Over the course of the year Lindsay engaged players across the campus and was able to establish a baseline and launch a campus-wide conversation about the future of sustainable food procurement at Humber.

Starting to track local food purchasing meant confronting the varying definitions of local food on campus. On one hand there was the Foodland Ontario definitions that identify local food as being grown and processed in Ontario, whereas Chartwell's defined local as being from Canada. "Just having this conversation is a victory!" said Walker. "The college continues to

develop its capabilities to track local foods. This is just the beginning." Don Henriques, Humber's Manager of Campus Services, Retail Operations, observed that, "This past year we have seen a tremendous increase with the conscious inclusion and promotion of local food offerings in our food venues across campus."

By May 2014, **Chartwell's** produced its first report for Humber to identify the percentage of foods grown and processed in Ontario. "The 3P Program has created more awareness about food origins throughout our kitchen, which resulted in us buying more local products than we were before," said York Tang of Chartwell's. "There will be spillover effects from the 3P Mentorship Program and Humber College to our other Chartwell's accounts as well... the 3P values around sustainable purchasing will become the new normal."

“There will be spillover effects from the 3P Mentorship Program and Humber College to our other Chartwell's accounts as well.”

Building partnerships across campus was key in Lindsay's success. Unique as the only cohort member without direct influence over purchasing, Lindsay focused on discovering where her 3P program-driven interests aligned with those already on campus. She worked with the **School of Hospitality, Recreation, and Tourism's Culinary Program** to discuss

Humber College
Institute of Technology and
Advanced Learning in
**Northwest
Toronto**

3P Cohort Members

Lindsay Walker

Humber's Sustainability Manager

and **Don**

Henriques

Humber's Manager of Campus
Services, Retail Operations

27,000

full-time students

Home to the School of
**Hospitality,
Recreation
& Tourism**

\$4 million

annual food budget

Chartwell's

Food Service Contractor
to April 2015

April 2014

Started tracking local food

2.5% annually

committed increase in local food
content in new RFP.

Lindsay's favourite local food:

**Local cheese
and apples**

...preferably together!

possibilities to include local food in their curriculum. She hosted a campus-wide event that brought out students, instructors, the food service team, and even the President of the college to discuss their visions for food on campus. In November, Humber College co-hosted the Toronto Collaboration on Local Sustainable Food workshop with My Sustainable Canada, which brought together food producers, processors, distributors, caterers, purchasers, and community members from across the GTA – along with their own staff. The event provided the occasion for students in the Culinary Program to show off their local menu by serving up an exquisite three-course local lunch in the campus restaurant, the Humber Room.

“A strong and attainable goal emerged: let’s keep digging to get clear reporting of all foods procured.”

Given the building culture around local food on campus, Lindsay took a leap out of her own comfort zone and joined the campus procurement team’s Request For Proposal (RFP) Committee to identify the next campus food service contractor. Participation in the 3P Mentorship Program aligned with the last year of Chartwell’s contract at Humber. On the committee to select a food service operator she worked closely with Don Henriques, Humber’s Manager of Campus Services, Retail Operations. They worked to introduce sustainability criteria to the RFP. “I thought that adding local and sustainable food purchasing strategies would be amazing,” said Don. “When customers know that meals are made with local ingredients, they automatically think health and freshness.” **This winter Humber issued an RFP for the provision of Food Services with sustainability evaluation criteria that includes benchmarks for annual increases in local food procurement and a commitment to tracking this progress.** The contract for the successful Food Service partner is set to begin in May 2015.

“We are way farther along than we’d ever be without this program... We may not have done any of it at all this year,” says Lindsay. “The best advice I have for other facilities is to just start asking questions! It’s amazing the information that is gathered purely by asking a question. If you don’t ask, it’s assumed it’s of no interest, and things will stay the same.” She also reinforced the importance



Above: Humber staff and guests discuss the business case for supporting local sustainable food at the November workshop. Below: Lindsay, Wendy, Hayley, and an inner circle of institutional food buyers talk local procurement strategy in a lively fishbowl discussion.



of learning with her cohort peers. “I think the best support we have is sharing our progress and how we do things with each other... it helps us all do better.”

After nine months at the helm, Lindsay is now venturing into a new journey of motherhood – but not without handing the reigns over to Don Henriques. “I think he’s even willing to help mentor next year!” It’s a testament to the growing culture of sustainable food at Humber College.

The 3P Mentorship Program is lead by Hayley Lapalme and Wendy Smith. To get involved in the community of sustainable food purchasers, check out the program at mentorship.mysustainablecanada.org, apply to be in the next cohort, or contact hayley@mysuscan.org.

