

# BOSTON COLLEGE

Preventing food waste across the campus

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**B**oston College dining program is rated among the top 75 colleges for food in America by The Daily Meal. Unique in design, all residential dining halls offer retail, à la carte options. The dining team supports a total of 14 operations that are open to anyone and that experience over 23,000 transactions per day.

The BC dining program is also well-known for its sustainability initiatives, with 28% of its purchases locally produced/sourced, robust recycling and composting programs, and a volunteer student food recovery group.

### Focus on Food Waste Prevention

In 2014, the Boston College dining team was evaluating food waste and determined they needed a better way to track and manage all of their waste. They visited a school utilizing the LeanPath program and soon after decided to test the program for themselves in Corcoran Dining Commons, one of their largest facilities.

*"Food waste can't be fixed just by management. We had lots of great ideas but unless you get your team to buy in you certainly can't do it."*

**MEGAN O'NEILL // ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR**

The teams found the set-up and launch process to be very easy. A LeanPath trainer came on-site to train the front-line staff and managers, and they started the program immediately. Setting the right tone from the start was

critical. Some team members felt they might get reprimanded for recording waste, so the managers quickly made clear that the LeanPath program was a positive, collaborative process about getting good data and coming up with solutions.

## Spotting Opportunities for Reduction

Two of the biggest waste reduction opportunities that were unveiled by the data were the salad bar and bakery. The team knew they were throwing away a substantial amount of food from the salad bar at the end of the night, but they didn't realize just how much until they started scrutinizing their data. Front-line staff members came up with a creative idea to scale back the salad bar after peak time by using different merchandising, displaying upside-down pans as the centerpiece and using smaller pans for the product. This allowed them to maintain the same culinary options for the first and last

customer, but with significantly less waste. Within two weeks after making these changes, salad bar waste was down 50 percent, and the dining team continues to maintain those levels.

Staff members also suggested that they rethink the bakery display, since so many of the fresh-baked in-house bakery items were getting composted at the end of the night. They started adjusting the display after dinners, shifting platters horizontally to give the perception of a full space, while cutting back the number of platters from five to three without impacting customer satisfaction.



## Nearly 60% Reduction in Waste, Prompting Expansion

After using the LeanPath 360 program for 12 months at Corcoran Dining, the Boston College team saw a 60% reduction in pre-consumer food waste and very quickly determined that the system was paying for itself.

With managers in other campus locations asking for LeanPath, Boston College decided to expand the program to two additional dining halls and the catering department in August 2015. They have already begun to experience additional savings in those areas.

*"It was our staff that came up with all these ideas—they were excited and starting competing with each other. They realized that if we waste less, it means they have to produce less—so it was making their job easier – and that really got more staff engaged.*

**MEGAN O'NEILL // ASSOCIATE  
DIRECTOR**

To learn more about LeanPath programs for food waste reduction, visit [www.leanpath.com](http://www.leanpath.com).