

# Students to audit dining center food waste on Sept. 16

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The Syracuse University Sustainability Division will be conducting a food waste audit throughout the day on Friday, Sept. 16, at Shaw Dining Center.

As a part of its “Year of Recycling” initiatives and in collaboration with Shaw Dining Center, the *Eco-reps pilot program*—a peer-to-peer sustainability outreach program—and the *Society for Public Health Education*, along with student volunteers from various disciplines, the food waste audit will focus diners’ attention to the issue of food waste on campus.

“From September 2010 to May 2011, while students were on campus, we averaged seven to eight tons of post- and pre-consumer food scraps per week (35-40 tons per month), all of which was sent to the Amboy Composting Site,” says Melissa Cadwell, marketing manager for the Sustainability Division.

“One of the main goals of the food waste audit is to make the Syracuse University community aware of waste reduction on campus,” says Hannah Morgan, research intern for the Sustainability Division. “Before throwing away an object, students and staff should think about whether the waste material could be diverted from the waste stream. Is it compostable or recyclable? Was it necessary to produce the waste in the first place?”

Shaw Dining Center’s food waste audit will begin at breakfast and end at dinnertime. The results will be readily available so students can see the volume of waste generated from their food choices that are left on trays and destined for composting. Volunteers will collect and weigh the food waste, and display it on a table in order to create awareness about food management from tray pick-up to tray return.

When asked about simple ways to reduce food waste at dining centers, Cadwell recommends “taste-testing” foods before taking large quantities. She says, “Place a small amount of a food item you have not tasted before on your plate, then taste the food item to find out if you like it or not, and if you still want more then serve yourself a larger quantity. You can always go back later for seconds or thirds.”

For more information about sustainability visit the *Sustainability website*, follow *@SustainableSU* on Twitter, and check out the *Syracuse University Sustainability* Facebook page.