

Sustainability in the UNC Food System

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Abstract: At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Carolina Dining Services (CDS) has been working for ten years with the Real Food Challenge (RFC), a third party organization which developed a sustainability metric and auditing process for institutional dining systems. In recent years, as CDS has advanced its sustainability goals and progress, constraints of the RFC standards have become apparent. This Undergraduate Research Consultant Team (URCT) project “takes stock” of the options available to CDS and revisits and identifies the sustainability priorities of key food system stakeholder groups. The research team conducted intensive data collection in the form of interviews and literature review in order to consider the past, present, and future of the UNC food system, and to develop recommendations for future sustainability measures--with or without RFC--that will enable CDS to continue to advance the sustainability needs of our campus, state, and planet. Results CDS should continue to use the RFC standard while sharing its progress on food sustainability with stakeholders to continue to define and advance campus food sustainability goals.