



## **GSO Senate Resolution 24.10**

### **A Resolution Establishing the GSO Catering Policy**

**Author(s):** Dominic Wilkins (Senator At-Large & Climate Action Committee Co-Chair)

**Sponsor(s):** Amos Bungei (APS, Environmental Engineering); Katherine Robinson (Climate Action Committee Co-Chair); Lawrence Lam (Climate Action Committee Member); Mai Nguyen-Jeanneret (Climate Action Committee Member); Cooper Olds (Climate Action Committee Member).

**Date(s):** April 3, 2024 (Introduced)

**Action(s):** Passed (30 Yes, 3 No, 2 Abstentions)

**Chair of the Senate:** CJ Arnell

**President Pro Tempore of the Senate:** Roger Rosena

**Parliamentarian:** R. Luke VanderSchaaff

**President of the Student Body:** Daniel J. Kimmel

**Whereas** Resolution 23.11 directed the Climate Action Committee to develop catering guidelines for the Graduate Student Organization; and,

**Whereas** food production and disposal constitute one of the primary ways that institutions, including Syracuse University, can advance or frustrate social and environmental justice; and,

**Whereas** advancing sustainability and environmental justice is a necessary and crucial part of fulfilling Syracuse University's efforts to form engaged citizens and leaders; and,

**Whereas** the GSO organizes and funds scores of events where food is purchased served by caterers, including often SU Catering; and,

**Whereas** current food management practices at Syracuse University, including those which the GSO has participated in, organized and funded, produce unnecessary food waste; and,

**Whereas** other colleges and universities have instituted sustainable catering guidelines and event certification policies; and,

**Whereas** Resolution 24.07 and its surrounding debate underscored the need and desire for improved food service worker training; and,

**Whereas** prior GSO organized events have seen caterers provide food far in excess of what was ordered or the numbers provided by GSO organizers; and,

**Desiring**, in the interests of both animal welfare and reducing greenhouse gas emissions resulting from industrial livestock production to reduce meat consumption; and,

**Desiring** that the supermajority of menu items purchased directly or indirectly by the GSO be plant-based by 2030; and,

**Desiring** that the University's catering and dining services budgets fund and, as necessary, provide administrative and logistical support for the Food Recovery Network; and,

**Desiring** that all GSO and indeed Syracuse events reduce, and when possible eliminate, wastes sent to landfills and incinerators; and,

**Desiring** that the GSO contributes to the broader University's sustainability goals; and

**Recognizing** the limits of the GSO to individually and directly effect the changes required to achieve sustainability and environmental justice; so be it,

**Resolved**, that Officers and Staff rely upon the "GSO Catering Guidelines," listed below as Appendix A, when planning events where food will be served; and be it further,

**Resolved**, that the Comptroller or their designee distributes the "Best Practices for Sustainable Events" checklist, listed below as Appendix B, when approving funding requests from member organizations; and be it further,

**Resolved**, that the Director of External Affairs brief the Senate at least once per session on their and the Outreach Committee's efforts to achieve sustainable catering; and be it further,

**Resolved**, that the President will strive to ensure that Sustainability Management, Catering, and/or Food Services properly train their staff in sustainable food procurement, management, and service practices; and be it further,

**Resolved**, that all Officers, Staff, Senators, and Committees commit to supporting these efforts and to continued advocacy which advances sustainability and environmental justice, within and beyond the University, as appropriate.

**Resolved**, that given the constraints to which the GSO is bound due to University policy, that when working with SU Catering and other vendors, the inability to fully adhere to the guidelines in Appendix A not be construed as an impeachable offense.

## Appendix A

### GSO Catering Guidelines

Pursuant to GSO Resolution 24.[xx], which the Senate adopted on [date of passage], all events organized by the GSO should strive to adhere to the following guidelines. While total fidelity may not be feasible in all cases, such as when overridden by University policy or because such practices require structural changes beyond the power of the GSO to redress, adhering to these practices will help ensure that we as a GSO advance sustainability. These guidelines should also be used when collaboratively planning events with extra-GSO caterers to ensure our organization's commitment to sustainability is maintained.

#### All GSO-organized events should:

1. Serve water and, as appropriate, other drinks in large quantities as opposed to single-use containers. This may include five-gallon coolers, large pitchers, and other dispensers. Attendees should be encouraged to bring their own drinking vessels.
2. Use seasonal and locally-sourced produce when feasible. Industry-standard definitions consider local food as that which is produced within a 250-mile radius of the event location.
3. All seafood consumed should be listed as "best choice" or "good alternative" by the Monterey Bay Aquarium on their Seafood Watch or an equivalent organization.
4. Any meat products should come from suppliers who are verified to demonstrate high standard for animal welfare.
5. All stages of catered food (ex. appetizers, hors d'oeuvres, entrée, desserts) should include at least 50% vegetarian or vegan options.
6. Culturally relevant and varied foods should be purchased by the GSO, both within single and across multiple events.
7. Food should be clearly labeled with an ingredients list, including especially a list of major allergens (e.g. dairy, eggs, shellfish, fish, wheat, tree nuts, peanuts, soy).
8. To minimize food waste, only appropriate portions should be purchased. This will likely include ensuring catering orders are submitted and held to real expected attendance figures.
9. The event organizers should prepare and file a procurement list demonstrating fidelity to these guidelines with the GSO Executive Board, who will make that material available to the Senate and/or individual Senators upon receipt of any request.
10. Temperatures should be properly maintained, checked, and recorded for all hot and cold food.
11. Every reasonable effort should be made to ensure that food not consumed during the event does not go to waste. This may include donating extra food through an organization such as the Food Recovery Network which worked to redistribute food.

12. Plates, flatware, service dishes and utensils, and other products should be compostable and or reusable, and plans to ensure their composting and/or re-use as appropriate should be clearly established.
13. Recycling and compost pathways be prepared for all wastes produced during an event, to the degree that is structurally feasible. Signage should instruct attendees as to proper disposal methods, and a member of the event organizational team should be tasked with ensuring such guidelines are followed.
14. All paid event and catering staff should receive wages which match other roles on campus.

## Appendix B

### Best Practices for Sustainable Events

Congratulations on having received approval for your upcoming event, [event name here]! On behalf of the GSO, I wanted to share a few best practices and suggestions for making your event more sustainable.<sup>1</sup> We hope these will help ensure your event is as accessible and welcoming for as many people as possible. Additionally, for first time event planners, this list may help you holistically consider the various facets of event planning.

1. When inviting attendees, have you asked whether any accommodations are needed in terms of accessibility, dietary restrictions, and allergies? This includes major allergens including dairy, eggs, shellfish, fish, wheat, tree nuts, peanuts, soy.
2. When scheduling your event, have you taken into account any potential holidays it may conflict with?
3. Do you encourage carpooling or using public transportation? Who could organize rides?
4. Do you have options of roughly equivalent complexity, flavor, and nutritional value which are vegan and/or vegetarian? Is more than 50% of your planned menu plant-based?
5. Will all food be labeled, and will these labels include ingredient lists?
6. If you plan to obtain outside catering, are you supporting a locally-owned business?
7. Is your food sourced locally, i.e. within 250 miles of Syracuse? To the degree you can ascertain, has it been sourced sustainably? This might include being organic, fair trade, or produced through humane practices? If seafood is served, is it considered a “best choice” or “good alternative” on the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s watch list?
8. If you are purchasing decorations or other materials, are you able to reuse these for future events? How will they be cleaned, if necessary, and stored?
9. How will you reduce total waste from your event? Can you ask attendees to bring reusable containers to use both as plates and for taking home leftovers?
10. Do you encourage folks to bring reusable water bottles? Can you serve drinks in bulk, such as from pitchers or large dispensers, rather than through individual, single-use products?
11. Are you planning on recycling or composting any of your waste? How and who will take care of this?

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask me or [current chair of the Climate Action Committee, or their designee], a member of the GSO’s Climate Action Committee. On behalf of the GSO, I want to express my thanks for your commitment to increasing our institution’s sustainability.

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<sup>1</sup> These tips are derived from the Sustainable Event Certification Guide prepared by the Office of Sustainability at SUNY ESF.