

Dining Sustainability Report

2025-2026 Academic Year

Dining Services at the College of William and Mary
& ARAMARK Corporation

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Written and Compiled by Dining Sustainability Interns

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About Us

William & Mary's campus-wide composting program is currently ranked second nationally for a school of our size. It is our goal to continuously improve upon our own success and implement better ways to improve our composting program and other initiatives related to food sustainability. The program is run by the Dining Sustainability interns, a group of 18 undergraduate students employed by Dining Services. Interns bring unique perspectives from all domains of campus majoring in Environment & Sustainability, Integrative Conservation, Public Policy, Psychology, Biology, Linguistics, Sociology, Geology, Neuroscience, and Art History. Dining provides an avenue to make sustainability accessible regardless of student interests and experience.



This year, the interns were led by Lead Interns Aayla Kastning ('26) and Harriet Ramasamy ('27).

Compost

Public Composting program



The current public composting network consists of 31 96-gallon compost bins located across campus at twenty-three sites. These bins are managed by the interns, who utilize a Green-Fee funded electric golf cart to move bins to and from loading docks, where they are emptied by NOPE Organic Compost Co, who transports the organic waste to McGill Regional Composting Facility in Waverly, VA. The compost bins can be found via the [digital compost map](#).

This year, two compost bins were added to our inventory to support compost at the Wesley House Campus Ministry and Hillel Shenkman Jewish Center. Dining Sustainability was also awarded **\$770 in Green Fee funding to purchase 5 additional bins** to expand composting sites. This funding will also support purchasing can couplers to **increase the number of bins that can be towed with the Golf Cart.**

Compost Credits



Seventy-two bags of compost (equivalent to **2880 lbs.**) were returned via the NOPE Compost Credit program and distributed across campus at no charge. Student organizations and individuals were able to request bags for pickup via an online form. Half of our credits were given to the W&M Grounds & Gardens team to be used for

landscaping on campus. The Dining Sustainability team also used the compost for planting pop-ups during events, including Earth Day Bash and Farm Fest. The remaining bags were given to the W&M Campus Garden and 8 student organizations: Minorities Against the Climate Crisis, Ecoreps, Botany Club, Greenhouse, Compost Club, Keck Lab Garden, and Williamsburg Engagement.

Compost at Events

During the 2025–2026 academic year, 35+ on campus events requested compost bins for both indoor and outdoor events. One of these events included Day for Admitted Students, where Interns sorted prospective students and families' waste at lunch while educating them on compost. Additionally, the interns created an informational video to include on the event bin request form which answers many commonly asked questions such as what to do with the bins after the event, and what can be composted in the bins!



Off-campus Compost

To increase composting accessibility for students who live off campus, the interns collected household organic waste from 16 student households every Sunday. To expand this program we are cooperating with a local ice cream shop, Kilwins, to reuse ice cream containers as compost receptacles! Additionally, we partnered with **Governor's on North Henry**, a nearby apartment complex that houses many students, to **pick up their residents' compost** each Sunday. We hope to expand this program to other apartment complexes near campus.

CCM Compost

Dining Sustainability started bringing indoor compost bins to the Catholic Campus Ministry (CCM) to be used for their weekly “Sunday Suppers.” These dinners feed over 100 students every week and therefore produce lots of food waste and green waste that can be composted. We were able to provide this service to them, bringing them indoor bins to be used before, during, and after their dinners and then picking them up the next day.

Town Center Cold Pressed and Column 15

We supplied both of our on-campus coffee shops with recycled Kilwins compost bins that they could use for coffee grounds and other compostable waste. Both coffee shops now empty their bins into the large green or black compost bins around campus, to be picked up by us.

Compost in Staff Kitchens

Dining Sustainability interns piloted a staff kitchen composting program starting during Fall 2025 in The Hive, a collaborative workspace that houses the Global Research Institute, Institute for Integrated Conservation, and the Whole of Government Center of Excellence. Interns requested **\$75 of Green Fee funding to expand compost services to staff kitchens on campus**. These funds will go towards small compost pails and lids, which will be offered to staff offices once received.

Panorama Paydirt Visit

On February 27th interns visited Panorama Paydirt, an industrial composting facility in Earlysville VA that partners with NOPE. Interns toured the grounds and learned about the processes Panorama uses to turn W&M food waste into commercial compost as well as the logistics behind running a composting business. Panorama Paydirt supplied the compost credits returned to W&M in 2025.



Hydroponics

The dining interns have successfully produced **over 300 harvests, yielding more than 400 pounds of fresh produce across 45 plant varieties**, including leafy greens, herbs, and edible flowers. Growing food with a hydroponics wall uses 90% less water than a traditional farm through recirculating systems and requires no arable land, which helps reduce deforestation and agricultural pollution. Additionally, it operates on a closed

nutrient circuit that prevents runoff and significantly lowers fuel consumption by minimizing the need for packaging and transportation.



The fresh produce is made available to students weekly in the Commons Dining Hall. This year, the interns launched the **“Hydroponics Crop Drop”**, a weekly newsletter informing people about the produce grown and when it would be available for pick up. We also grew basil for sustainable recipe events hosted by Grace Barbaro, the campus dietician, and provided microgreens for the head chef of Commons, Dominique Whittaker, to be used for upscale dining events.

On October 24th, 2025, the interns visited the headquarters of Babylon Micro-farms in Richmond, VA. Interns toured the facilities and explored the horticultural process, data monitoring, and shipping logistics. Some highlights included seeing the William & Mary farms virtually, a sneak peak of new crop varieties, and learning about the possibility for pollination science within the hydroponics design! The unique tour gave us the



opportunity to explore sustainability innovations and potential career paths at the intersection of science, technology, and community.

Outreach

Farm Fest



Farm Fest aimed to teach students about why local food sourcing matters and how Aramark contributes to these systems. Broadly, getting dining hall ingredients from Virginia and other nearby suppliers

limits travel-related carbon emissions, supports local economies, and boosts community health with more fresh and in-season food. Aramark **sources as many local ingredients as possible using 4P foods**. This organization connects us as students to 200+ regional farms.

In Fall 2025, we hosted the second annual Farm Fest. The event featured tabling from 13 campus and external organizations:

- Office of Sustainability
- Keck Lab Honey Tasting
- Veggie Society
- Cheese Club
- Wesley House Campus Ministry
- Student Culinary Council

- Branch Out Alternative Breaks
- Institute for Integrative Conservation
- Fermentation Club
- 4P foods
- Williamsburg Farmer's Market
- Williamsburg Community Growers
- Greens-N-Things

To encourage student participation in engaging with our tabling partners that provided information about sustainable and local food systems, we designed Farm Fest tote bags, which were printed locally in Williamsburg at Parkway Printshop. The first 100 students to visit seven educational tables and fill out their punch card were able to receive a tote bag.





Dining Sustainability Interns worked our own educational tables, including compost education and a food miles game. Students were able to paint their own pots and take home over 200 plants grown in our hydroponic walls. Locally-sourced cream was churned for students to make their own butter. There were also yard games, such as Donut on a String, potato sack races, tug of war, and horseshoes.



Attendees with Dining Dollars were also able to purchase Farmer's Market vouchers and use them at the nine Williamsburg Farmer's Market vendors who joined us at Farm Fest. Students also enjoyed live music from the Appalachian Music Ensemble. Life with Pigs returned with the famous sanctuary cow, Annie.

Campus Clean-ups

Interns led cleanup events with different groups on campus to inspire sustainability efforts and make the campus a greener place. This year, we hosted cleanup efforts with campus clubs and organizations such as APO, the Club Frisbee B team, Club Field Hockey, Climbing Club, and the Wesley House.



Waller Mill Elementary Sustainability Club

Dining Interns mentor the Waller Mill Elementary Sustainability Club. This year, we met with the group of 15-20 students 10 times throughout the year. The students in kindergarten to 6th grade learned about earth science, waste

disposal, gardening, biodiversity, and how to be a good neighbor! The long-running bi-weekly program allows interns to develop and administer youth curriculum to foster environmental ideals within younger generations.

This year, we planted tomato plants, grew bean sprouts, played online and outdoor games about sustainability, picked up trash, and went on nature walks. Some of the topics we covered were invasive species, pollination, plant growth, composting, food waste, sustainable holidays, and the importance of bugs.

IIC Trivia

Dining Sustainability and the Student Leadership Council (SLC) for the Institute for Integrative Conservation (IIC) collaborated twice in the Spring semester of 2026 for two fun and informative trivia events. The first trivia, held jeopardy style, was in celebration of World Wildlife Day on March 3rd and featured trivia concerning terrestrial and aquatic wildlife as well as the history of World Wildlife Day. The second event was a trivia held in celebration of Earth Week on April 24th. Both events were open to the public and received great turnouts. Winning teams were rewarded with awesome prizes and glory.



Interns On The Street

To gauge general awareness of campus composting and sustainability initiatives, the interns interviewed students to educate students about what you can and can't compost. For [Food Waste Action Week](#), March 2-6, Dining

Sustainability Interns created an “Interns on the Streets” educational – and fun – video that was posted to William & Mary’s Dining Instagram. The video consisted of interns asking students various trivia questions about food waste, such as how much food waste was created in the United States each year, what percentage of food gets wasted, the methane emissions that are created by food waste, as well as whether or not they were aware that William & Mary composts. The video acted as an educational tool for students and followers of the Instagram account as well as a promotion for our campus’s lovely compost system – a great way to redirect food waste from landfills.

International Day of Awareness for Food Loss and Waste

Through tabling in campus hotspots, food waste tracking events like Wipe the Waste, compost education events, and infographics in the dining halls, the interns educated students about composting and food waste at William and Mary.



Dorm Compost Guide



To further educate about and promote composting on campus, Dining Sustainability created compost guides for all 52 on-campus dorm buildings. Compost guides are tailored to each dorm building and detail what materials are compostable on campus as well as the locations of the three compost bins that are closest to any given dorm. These materials were created to address patterns of consistent contamination in compost bins near dorms.

Ongoing Compost Education

Throughout the semester, interns held over 10 tabling sessions on Sadler Terrace to educate the campus community about compost practices on campus. Tabling occurred monthly and on highlighted occasions (IDAFLAW, Food Waste Action Week). Interns also educated the attendees of campus events such as Earth Day Bash and Meet the Greens.

During tabling, interns engaged with students and other visitors by using the **Wheel of Waste**. Participants spun the wheel and then tried to guess whether the waste item it landed on was compost, recycling, or trash. This method both educates and starts conversations about how much



waste is actually compostable! Additionally, it helps to raise awareness of the campus' use of greenware and other compostable diningware. Many students were shocked to discover how much Dining Sustainability and Aramark are already doing to reduce waste in the dining halls.

Bin of the Week

We collaborated with the Aramark marketing team to start a recurring “Bin of the Week” Instagram story series on the @WMDining account. This project highlighted specific campus compost bins to spread awareness about their location and the compost system overall. The goal of “Bin of the Week” is to encourage students to use compost bins more frequently and effectively, reducing contamination.



The story posts include a picture of the bin and title (ie: Washington Hall Bin) to demonstrate the location, systematically introducing individual bins to the W&M community each week. The post also includes a short description of why it is the winning bin (ie: no contamination all week / full bin / specific compost item) to communicate correct compost etiquette. Interns worked with Aramark marketing to devise a consistent graphic for this recurring post.

New Student Orientation

Dining Sustainability interns are currently collaborating with students from the EcoRep program to create an informative video to implement into new student orientation programming. The focus of the video was waste management and Dining Sustainability interns wrote a script for, filmed, and edited the compost portion of the video. This video will be a part of new student orientation in the 2026 Fall semester and will inform incoming students about what compost is and how to compost at William & Mary.

Recycling

This Fall, interns launched a program to provide recycling services in Zable Stadium during football games. \$3,700 of Green Fee funding was used to purchase 45 recycling bins, bin liners, gloves, and a wagon to empty the recycling bins. During games, interns worked to decontaminate recycling bins, divert recyclable materials from trash cans, and educate football fans about recycling, **diverting 1014 lbs. of waste from the landfill.** After piloting this program in the 2025 football season, another Green Fee of \$2,990 was placed to purchase 20 additional recycling bins as well as bin lids to reduce contamination for future football seasons.



Interns also provided recycling services to mitigate concession waste during the AMP 2026 spring concert. This successful effort opens the door for future and larger-scale collaborations with concessions at events inside Kaplan Arena.

Farmers Market Exchange

Dining Interns work weekly to facilitate dining dollar exchanges for farmers market tokens. **More than \$36,000 in tokens were spent by students supporting local farmers**, sustainable practices, and making fresh food accessible for undergraduates.

Wipe the Waste

Wipe the Waste events are tabling events that show how much total waste is generated per person during a meal period. During the course of a meal, all of the waste is sorted into three categories: consumable waste (untouched food), non-consumable food waste (leftover or partially eaten food), and napkins/other. The waste is collected throughout the duration of the event and is compared against the total number of guests.

The goal of these events is to clearly show the amount of unintentional and/or avoidable post-consumer food waste that is generated in a dining location. By clearly showing the amount of unintentional and/or avoidable waste we all generate, we can spark conversation about food waste as a collective issue that consumers & dining providers can work together to solve. Not only do these events provoke thoughtful conversation and reflection around waste, but they also can be a tool for gaining culinary insight into the menu items we are serving (portion, seasoning, etc.).

Campus Gardens

Dining Sustainability operates three garden plots in the Campus Gardens. We get our hands dirty growing produce for educational purposes and providing a site for environmental wellness. For our Spring 2026 growing we started by weeding their plots, and then planted a variety of crops including milkweed and chamomile, which act as bug and pest repellents, as well as tomatoes, lettuce, onions, and spring peas. It has been a great way to feel connected and rooted to the Earth, as well as to produce healthy vegetables.

Goals for 2026–2027

Dining Sustainability's goals for the next academic year center on expanding awareness of our program on campus. We hope to make it clear that composting is operated by Dining. This includes strengthening our social media presence, increasing outreach events, and expanding volunteer opportunities for others to get involved.

We also hope to minimize compost contamination by establishing a clear bin-contamination protocol and back-of-house staff training. We will collaborate with Facilities to ensure their Big Belly Triple Waste Stations are properly composted, as well as increase awareness of these stations. Additionally, we hope to work with Catering to advertise their zero waste option and explore an automatic compost bin request for catered events.