

BENNINGTON COLLEGE

August 20, 2020

To: Jason Carter, Aramark District Manager
From: Meredith McCoy, Associate Vice President for Institutional Initiative
Cc: Steve Bohrer, Director, Dining Services
Tatiana Abatemarco, Visiting Faculty, Food Studies
Susan Sgorbati, Director, Center for the Advancement of Public Action

Dear Jason,

In 2019, Bennington College was awarded a \$1 Million grant from the Mellon Foundation to address food insecurity. The grant has facilitated the creation of a Food Studies academic program at the college. The grant has also facilitated new networks of food banks, schools, non-profits, food businesses, and farms. It's an exciting time at the college, where students are studying the food system in collaboration with our local community. As such, Bennington College has a renewed commitment to local, sustainable, humane, and just food in our dining hall.

We are incredibly grateful for the work done by Steve Bohrer to help our dining hall reflect our college community's values. Students want to see their education reflected in their dining hall experience. Bennington students don't just want to know the institution is walking the talk, they demand it. This is important for both admissions and existing students. Steve has been actively engaged in the food studies program, meeting with students to answer questions and discuss college dining. As the current numbers reflect, Steve has done great work listening carefully to the ethics and goals of our community to move the dining purchasing in the direction that reflects Bennington College's values. We are deeply appreciative of this.

Still, there is much more to be done. Bennington College is working to be a leader in the development of a regional food system and to have a groundbreaking food studies program. We want to get national attention and set a new standard for how colleges can be part of a sustainable food system. Our goal, as an institution, is to achieve 50% local food purchases by 2030, and we would like this goal to be accomplished through the new Regenerative Food Network that we are a part of.

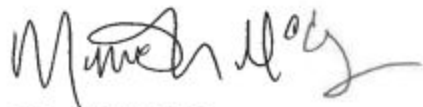
The Food Connects Food Hub distribution based in Brattleboro, VT is supported by the Regenerative Food Network and the Food Connect's Farm to School Program aligns with Bennington College's educational model. This is a new model of regional food systems, where food maintains its farm identity all the way from soil to plate to classroom.

We are looking to Aramark to continue to be our partner in progress as we lead these efforts. Here is a brief overview of our immediate and future goals:

- For the FY20-21 academic year, we want to achieve 35% of local food purchasing, 20% purchasing from minority owned businesses, and 60% overall sustainable purchasing reflective of AASHE and Real Food Challenge standards.
- By 2030-31, we need those numbers to look closer to 45% of local food purchasing, 30% purchasing from minority owned businesses, fair trade purchasing for items that cannot be grown regionally, and 100% humanely produced dairy, egg, and meats.

We appreciate all that Aramark has done thus far to support our goal of being a leader in higher education and look forward to an even more robust and deliberate partnership going forward. This is incredibly important work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Meredith McCoy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Meredith McCoy
Associate Vice President, Institutional Initiatives