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# VASSAR COLLEGE SUSTAINABLE EVENTS PLANNING GUIDE



COLLEGE COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABILITY  
VASSAR COLLEGE | SPRING 2015



Whether you're planning an open dinner, a small meeting with your department, or a large all-campus event, there are steps you can take to make the activity more sustainable.

Please use this guide as a toolkit for turning your event into an environmentally friendly event by reducing resource use and waste.

If you have any questions, please email  
[sustainability@vassar.edu](mailto:sustainability@vassar.edu)

# EVENT PLANNING 101

## STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR EVENT GOALS

- ▶ What kind of event do you want to have?
- ▶ What do you want your event to achieve?
- ▶ How does it fit your organization/department's mission or goals?
- ▶ What do you want attendees to come away with?



## STEP 2: HOW DOES SUSTAINABILITY FIT IN?

- ▶ Will 'sustainability' be a *central theme* or more of an *operational practice*?  
We're happy to work with you on both approaches!

# EVENT PROMOTION

## POSTERS

The copy center can laminate signage for \$1-\$2 depending on the size of the poster, but keep in mind that **laminated posters are not recyclable.**

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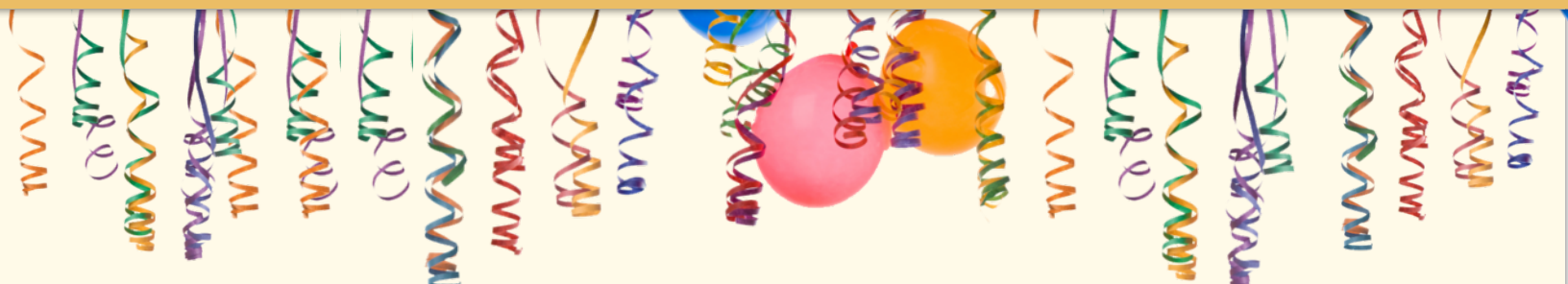
## ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF PROMOTION

Promote the event primarily through internet based platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Vassar Events emails, etc.), rather than excessive flyering.

## EVENT GIVEAWAYS

When doing promotion, **limit the number of give-aways.** Most 'freebies' often end up in the garbage or the 'forgotten drawer of stuff.' Instead, get creative about ways people can remember your event.

# DECORATIONS



**Before purchasing decorations for your event, please consider the following:**

## **1. WHAT WILL HAPPEN WITH YOUR DECORATIONS WHEN THE EVENT IS OVER?**

Think about the lifespan of the decorations you choose to purchase. We hope that if you do choose to buy decorations, that they may be reused at future events. If this is an event your organization hosts regularly or annually, think about durable decorations that could be saved and reused.

## **2. WHAT MATERIALS ARE THE DECORATIONS MADE FROM?**

Ideally, decorations are not made from hard to dispose of materials. Aim for decor that is biodegradable or recyclable.

## **GET CRAFTY**

- ▶ Shipping and Receiving has tons of cardboard boxes for creative decoration projects
- ▶ Lighting is a great way to create ambiance without the waste

## **RECYCLABLE/ BIODEGRADABLE**

- ▶ Plastic tablecloths without food residue are recyclable
- ▶ Paper streamers (recyclable)

## **NON RECYCLABLE/ BIODEGRADABLE**

- ▶ Mixed material decorations
- ▶ Balloons (unless you specifically buy biodegradable ones)
- ▶ Plastic or metallic confetti and streamers

# WATER

## DID YOU KNOW?

**17 million barrels of oil** are involved in producing all of the U.S.'s single-use plastic bottles, not including the overwhelming amount of oil used in their transportation.



OR



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## SAVE YOUR MONEY: THE BOTTLE AND TAP ARE THE SAME

Vassar College receives its tap water from the Town of Poughkeepsie water supply, a system that is regularly monitored and tested for safety. Most bottled water companies take their water from the same municipal water systems, meaning, **you end up paying for the same product you can get free from your tap.**

### FOR SMALL TO MEDIUM-SIZED INDOOR EVENTS

(5 to 100 people)

- ▶ Offer **pitchers of tap water** - Reserve through Campus Catering
- ▶ Offer **air-voids with tap water** - Reserve through Campus Activities and/or your SARC intern

\* Remember: The larger the event, the more time you need to plan and make these arrangements

### FOR LARGE OUTDOOR EVENTS

(upwards of 100 people)

- ▶ Multiple **air-voids**
- ▶ Reserve **Flexi Fountain** portable outdoor water fountains - Reserve through Campus Activities
- ▶ Bring a **Water Truck\*** to campus
- ▶ Bring a **Water Monster system\*** to campus (large, mobile water distribution system)



# FOOD



In Fall 2014, the College Committee on Sustainability adopted a vegan menu policy for all catered events we host or co-sponsor

The inextricable ties between livestock consumption and environmental degradation do not allow us to support the livestock industry with good conscience; therefore, by moving to a plant based diet, we hope to do our part to alleviate some pressure on the environment, and educate others along the way.

**We encourage organizations and departments to also forgo animal products and offer a vegan and/or vegetarian menu.**

## LOCAL ESTABLISHMENTS OFFERING VEGAN CATERING

### ALL SHOOK UP

44 Raymond Ave  
(845) 485-1955

<http://allshookupcafe.com/>

### BABYCAKES

1-3 Collegeview Ave  
(845) 485-8411

<http://www.babycakescafe.com/>

### BACCIO'S

7 Collegeview Ave  
(845) 486-8080

<http://pizzeriabacio.com>

### FRESCO TORTILLAS

1 Collegeview Ave  
(845) 485-6650

### KISMAT

50 Raymond Ave  
(845) 473-5850

### LOVEFEAST

Kamini Oppenheimer  
kaminislovefeast@gmail.com

### THAI SPICE

28 Raymond Ave  
(845) 486-8888

<http://thaispicy.com/>

### TOKYO EXPRESS

8 Lagrange Ave  
(845) 452-5033

<http://tokyoexpressny.com/>

### TWISTED SOUL

47 Raymond Ave  
(845) 454-2770

<http://twistedoulconcepts.com/>

# FOOD



## LOOKING FOR SNACKS?

Seasonal fruit, hummus with crackers and vegetable sticks, or make-your-own trail mix are always crowd pleasers!

## SEASONAL FOODS

Eating seasonally and locally also helps support local farmers, and shrinks our carbon footprint by reducing the number of miles food travels to reach our tables.

Check out GrowNYC's guide to find out what's in season each month:

<http://www.grownyc.org/greenmarket/whatsavailable>



## QUESTIONS or CLARIFICATIONS?

For more information on specific vegan and vegetarian offerings, feel free to request VARC's "Guide to Vegan Foods Around Campus"

## LOCAL FOODS

Check out the weekly Farmers' Market for great local produce, baked goods, breads, drinks, jam, meats, & cheese!

### Arlington Farmers' Market

- ▶ Active in the summer and fall
- ▶ Every Thursday, Alumni Lawn
- ▶ 3pm-7pm

### The Indoor Farmers' Market

- ▶ Active in the winter
- ▶ Every Thursday, College Center
- ▶ 10am-4pm

## AFTER THE EVENT

To ensure no food is wasted, set up a pickup from campus dining to donate leftovers.

# WASTE AND



## SERVINGWARE

- ▶ Make sure all cups, bowls, plates, silverware, and napkins are biodegradable (Campus Activities will help you!)
- ▶ Encourage attendees to bring their own water bottles or reusable mugs to reduce the number of disposable cups
- ▶ When applicable, encourage attendees to bring their own flatware and silverware (i.e. dorm events)



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## WASTE MONITORS

Have event volunteers monitor food and drink areas to manage supplies, and to keep an eye on waste contamination.

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## AWARENESS

Help raise awareness for your sustainable practices in food choices, composting, recycling, and waste reduction by posting signs provided by the Sustainability Committee. Increasing awareness helps attendees become accustomed to the regular integration of environmental practices into campus events.



**Clearly label** compost, recycling, and trash bins to minimize chances of contamination

**GOOD LUCK, AND HAPPY EVENT PLANNING!**

QUESTIONS? EMAIL US AT [SUSTAINABILITY@VASSAR.EDU](mailto:SUSTAINABILITY@VASSAR.EDU)