

# Sustainable Food Procurement at the Institutional Level

MFIN Virtual Network Meeting  
April 9, 2024



Photo: MSU CRFS

# Michigan Farm to Institution Network

The Michigan Farm to Institution Network (MFIN) helps people across the farm to institution supply chain learn, connect, and collaborate.

## MFIN supports:

- Institutions that are responsible food buyers and community members, and
- Local and regional food supply chains.

## We work in the space that connects the values of:

- Diversity, equity, integrity and
- Local food, environmental sustainability, and business viability.

Learn more about these values and priorities in the [Michigan Farm to Institution Network's Framework for 2022 and Beyond](#)

# Chat Introductions

- Name, pronouns, affiliation/organization, location
- What is your favorite thing about spring?

# Agenda

- Welcome
- Presentation
  - University of Michigan research
- Panel Discussion and Q&A
  - Keith Soster of University of Michigan
  - Amy Gautraud of Gordon Food Service
  - Tom LaGrasso of LaGrasso Bros. Produce
  - Dale Lesser of Lesser Farms and Orchard
- Closing Announcements
- Adjourn



Photo: MSU CRFS

# Zoom Polls

1. Does your institution or business have any sustainability goals for food procurement?
2. Does your institution or business have any experience with sustainable language in food contracts?

# PACLSHR Projects W24

# Team Introductions



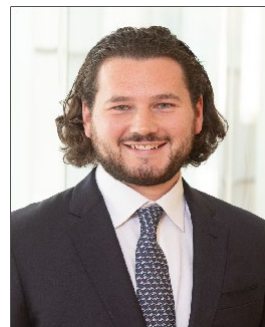
Ashley Martinez  
MBA / MS 2024



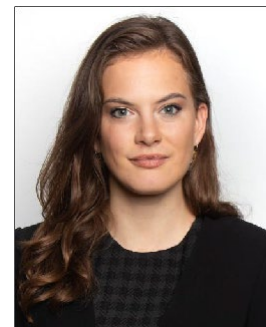
Lars Panquin  
MS 2024



Navya Yagalla  
BS 2025



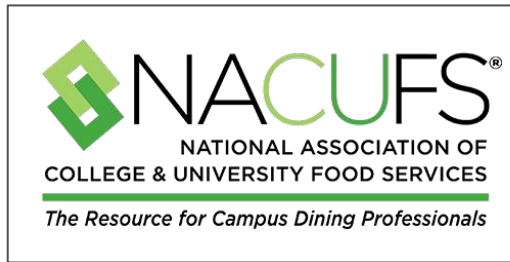
Jake Reynolds  
MBA 2025



Isabel Bonnyman  
MBA / MS 2025

# MDining - Sustainable Procurement Strategy

MDining seeks to increase its knowledge and execution of sustainability best practices across procurement practices and share these learnings with other universities and institutions



- Conducted audit of MDining operations against NACUFS Sustainability Benchmarking Tool
- Identified opportunities to improve procurement contract language



# PACLSHR - Research Projects



## Phase I - Procurement Contract Language

Industry best practice standards for sustainable procurement contract language by food categories

## Today's Focus



## Phase II - Sustainable Certifications

Most recognized sustainability certifications across food and food packaging and potential impact to suppliers



## Phase III - TBD

Evaluating opportunities to incorporate more sustainability practices across the procurement process

*Sponsored by President's Advisory Committee of Labor Standards & Human Rights*

# Implementing Phase I Learnings

## Summer 2023

In response to the *Sowing Sustainable Food Systems & Procurement* report:

- University of Michigan Central Procurement initiates ongoing collaboration with MDining
- A working group is formed to develop:
  - New university-wide sustainable procurement guidelines
  - New sustainable procurement contract language
- Related research projects developed for:
  - PACLSHR
  - SEAS Capstone project

# ESG Certification Review

Jake Reynolds & Navya Yagalla

# Project Overview



“The challenge is that there are a lot of different sustainability certifications, and we don’t know what to look for our trust. Very few are regulated [by the government], and many are voluntary.”

- Sandra Goldmark

Senior Assistant Dean, [Interdisciplinary Engagement](#), Columbia Climate School

# MDining Overview

- 9 Dining Halls + 18 self operated retail cafes and convenience stores
- Serves 2.5M+ meals annually
- Feeds over 9,000 diverse students
- Sources 40,000 ingredients
- Digital menus with icon transparency

## Planet Blue Goal #4

Purchase 20% of U-M Food in  
Accordance with U-M Sustainable Food  
Purchasing Guidelines



Icons indicate to students the nutrient density on a scale of 1-5.



Carbon icon to indicate the carbon impact of each dish



# Research Method

## *Explored 84 Different Certifications*

Consideration Criteria:

- Widespread industry & university usage
- For profit vs nonprofit organizations
- Transparency in standards & guidelines in audit process
- Certification Fees
- Renewal Timeline
- Other U of M benefit

Sources
U-M Approved Certifications
Certification Websites
9 Universities' Sustainable Procurement Standards
Industry Standards: AASHE STARS OP 7: Food and Beverage Purchasing & Healthcare without Harm
Supplier Database

# Sustainability Certification Research Findings

“Best In Class”

Animal Care	Sustainable Agriculture	Sustainable Seafood	Livelihood
<p>Certified Humane Raised and Handled</p> 	<p>U.S.D.A. Organic</p> 	<p>Marine Stewardship Council (MSC)</p> 	<p>Fair Trade Certified</p> 
<p>Global Animal Partnership*</p> 	<p>Food Alliance Certified</p> 	<p>Monterey Bay Aquarium: Seafood Watch**</p> 	<p>Rainforest Alliance Certified</p> 

7 of these 8 classify as “Sustainable Food” under current U-M’s *Sustainable Food Procurement Guidelines*

# Sustainability Certification Research Findings

Good  
Alternatives

	Animal Care	Sustainable Agriculture	Sustainable Seafood	Coffee
	<p>Animal Welfare Approved (AGW)</p> 	<p>Protected Harvest</p> 	<p>Best Aquaculture Practices (BAP)</p> 	<p>Bird Friendly</p> 
	<p>American Humane Certified</p> 	<p>Protected Harvest Certified</p> 		



# Opportunities

Once baseline is set, can aim to achieve higher standards:

- Regenerative Agriculture



- Stricter Guidelines for Organic:
  - The Real Organic Project
    - Grown in Soil
    - Animals Raised on Pasture



# Dietary Restrictions Certification Research

"Best in Class" Certifications
 V-Label Vegan
 AMERICAN HALAL FOUNDATION American Halal Foundation
 Orthodox Union Certified Kosher
 Certified Gluten Free

Good Alternatives
 American Vegetarian Association Certified Vegan / Vegetarian / Plant-Based
 Certified Vegan
 Halal Food Standards Alliance of America
 KOF-K Kosher Certification

# Opportunities & Future Plans

- ❖ **More interviews with suppliers and MDining sustainability staff**
  - Focusing on interviewing with diverse range of suppliers in terms of size & scale of business, level of production / distribution
  - This will provide us with different perspectives on certifications and insight into challenges or roadblocks in becoming certified
- ❖ **Create roadmap for suppliers looking to increase their certifications**
  - Identify how institutions like MDining can support suppliers in the process of acquiring more certifications
- ❖ **Develop recommendations for MDining to build upon their sustainability strategy**
  - Pinpoint new certifications for MDining to pursue

# Further on the Horizon: Phase III

Isabel Bonnyman

# Phase III

## Objective:

- Identifying value-add opportunities to drive more sustainable practices in UM procurement

## Current stage:

- Exploratory interviews and scoping

## Your part, now:

- Recommend possible next steps, or
- Stay tuned for updates!

Thank you!

# Panel Discussion

- **Keith Soster, University of Michigan**
- **Amy Gautraud, Gordon FoodService**
- **Tom LaGrasso, LaGrasso Bros. Produce**
- **Dale Lesser, Lesser Farms and Orchard**

# Closing Announcements

- Lake MI School Food System Innovation Hub applications due April 30<sup>th</sup>: [innovateschoolfood.org](http://innovateschoolfood.org)
- Second Wave News Articles
  - Health care systems & local food: [bit.ly/3vrD85u](http://bit.ly/3vrD85u)
  - Potato processing project in NW MI: [bit.ly/4aE7jVN](http://bit.ly/4aE7jVN)
- MFIN Member Sign Up: [bit.ly/MFIN-SignUp](http://bit.ly/MFIN-SignUp)

- UM Sowing Sustainable Food Systems and Procurement Report: [bit.ly/UMDiningReport](http://bit.ly/UMDiningReport)





# Thank you for joining us!

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Photo: MSU CRFS