

Xavier Cuts Waste

Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio, has worked hard to reduce the waste it sends to landfills, so much so that it was recognized this year by the National Association of College and University Food Services (NACUFS) Gold Sustainability award in the Waste Management category.

“It just proves that all the work was worth it, and hopefully we can get this to keep going forward,” said Ed Devoid, senior director of Dining Services with Chartwells, the campus foodservice provider. “My own quote is ‘There are a million reasons why the stuff can’t be done, and there is only one reason to do it, and that is because it is right.’”

One key reason why the school won the award, according to Devoid, was the recent installation of two EcoVim dehydrators from OnSite Waste Solutions. “We have two units, and each one is capable of handling 250 pounds of material per cycle. It extracts all of the water out of the mix, and we end up with basically a highly concentrated waste product that looks like coffee grounds. It is actually pretty dry. We collect it all and the physical plant brings it up to our urban farm, which has earth tubs. They mix it in with everything else they collect, and they produce some compost they can use all over campus.”

The school has always been ahead of the curve when it comes to sustainability, according to Devoid. “Six or seven years ago we started using to-go boxes that are returnable,” he said. “We have been using them, and students bought into that very quickly. It is just our culture now.”

When it came time to discuss reducing food waste, he spoke with other schools in the area. “We share a lot of information with Dayton and Miami of Ohio because we are all NACUFS folks,” he said. “That is how we got hooked up with OnSite Waste Solutions, and they had the product.”

Post-consumer food waste is captured by a food collec-



tor from Salvajor. That waste is collected and placed in the EcoVims. “The best use of the dehydrators, however, is the kitchen waste because we cut our own fruit like pineapple, honeydew and cantaloupe,” said Devoid. “That breaks down to just the best product at the end. It gets dehydrated really well. But the biggest amount of waste comes from the students. What we are working on now is how do we get the students to realize that ‘taste it, not waste it’ is important?”

Having two EcoVims allows them to stagger the production, with each machine having a 15-hour dehydration cycle. “I have a person who works overnight, so he is able to empty them so that when we get here first thing in the morning, we can load up again,” he said. “We are trying to get the maximum efficiency of trying to get one to empty out at 10 at night and reload it for the next cycle. We are basically getting 500 pounds a day on average. That takes care of about everything coming out of the kitchen.”

Devoid is proud of what they have been able to accomplish by reducing waste. “I think it is one of the best things that we do every day. Other than providing great service, I think the fact that we are focused on that part of it is amazing to me.”