

A stylized illustration of a zombie with a pale, greenish face and wide, staring eyes. The zombie is holding a teal plate with spaghetti and three meatballs. A silver fork and knife are placed vertically in front of the plate. The background is a solid orange color with black and white outlines of the zombie's body and limbs. The overall style is graphic and high-contrast.

# ARE YOU a FOOD ZOMBIE?

How can we make better choices

A FOOD & SOCIAL JUSTICE UNCONFERENCE  
Mon. March 4/13 • Drop in 10am - 3pm • 280N York Lanes

- An unconference is a participant-driven meeting
- Cost: Free! -Lunch provided!

This unconference is brought to you through the joint efforts of:  
IRIS - Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability  
the Centre for Human Rights (CHR)  
the President's Sustainability Council, York University  
YorkU Food Services (CSBO)

[www.iris.yorku.c/unconference](http://www.iris.yorku.c/unconference)

**YORK**  
UNIVERSITÉ  
UNIVERSITY

The logo for York University, featuring the word "YORK" in a large, bold, black serif font, with "UNIVERSITÉ" and "UNIVERSITY" in a smaller, black sans-serif font below it. To the right of the text is a red square containing a white stylized letter "U".

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## Participants

### Faculty and Lecturers

- Mary Louise Bat-Hayim, Writing Instructor, LA&PS
- Dawn Bazely, Director of IRIS, Professor in Biology
- Darryl Reed, Associate Professor, Business & Society, LA&PS
- Mark Vicari, Contract Faculty/Sessional Lecturer, Science

### Undergraduate Students

#### LA&PS

- Lada Kotova
- Enrique Miranda
- Ramsen Yousif

#### Environmental Studies

- James Mozotto
- Bushra Noureen

#### Fine Arts

- Jennifer Evola

#### Schulich

- Hao Yang

#### Science and Engineering

- Sarah Al-Dulaimi
- Lina Al-Qaissy
- Jennifer Angoh
- Mirna Asham
- Salma Farah
- Kita Navalyal
- Netta Untershats

### Graduate Students

- Alli Floroff (FES)
- Melanie Goral (Science)
- Shishir Handa (Science)
- Darnel Harris (FES)
- Michael Kenny (FES)
- Caileigh McKnight (FES)
- Jessica Reeve (FES)

### Other Students

- Phantasma Levesque
- Nader Mirabdolbaghi
- Steven Typa
- Edgar Ilyasov
- Joseph Baines
- Amina Enkhbold
- Trevor Grosse
- Cat Ashton

### Staff

#### President's Sustainability Council

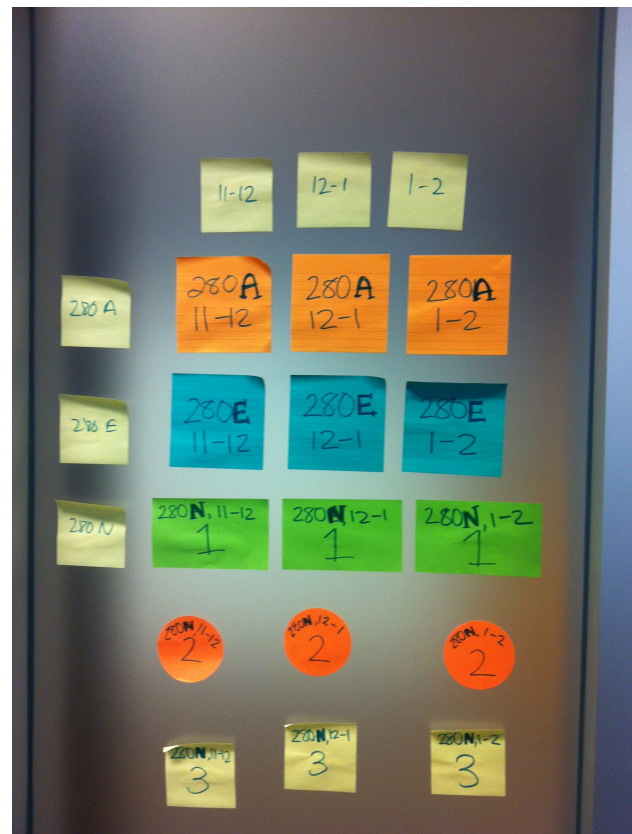
- Pavel Graymason
- Andrew Plunkett

#### Centre for Human Rights

- Noel Badiou

#### IRIS – the Institute for Research and Innovation in Sustainability

- Annette Dubreuil, Facilitated the day



## Opening Speaker: Vanessa Hunt – President of YFS

### Task Force on Campus Food

- paper and online survey – Keele and Glendon campuses
- open forum town hall
- have conversations with students to be able to have open comments and dialogue
- report should be released soon
- hoping to get recommendations to engage faculty, staff and students
- one of 15 recommendations already accomplished: 25 cent charge on debit transactions removed
- one of biggest issues is food options and timing between the two campuses – off hours

### Recommendations:

- drafting a master plan for food services – set short, medium, and long-term goals – involve students, faculty and staff in consultations on what food options will be provided
- establish a permanent campus food oversight body
- give students voting rights on food services board
  - student centre has students on their board
- install kitchens in residences
- extend hours of campus food facilities – weekends, late night options – healthy options
- post nutritional information of food being served
- create standard signage for food vendors – options – identify what they can choose from – so that you don't have to wait in line to find out what is being offered
- negotiate prices with food vendors
- introduce campus wide fair-trade policy – guidelines for standardization across university
- work to bring a grocery store to the keele campus
  - having student run initiatives and good food boxes
- expand the YFS foodbank and good food box program at York
- lower the threshold on meal plans to \$1000 instead of \$1600
- work to introduce farmer's markets on both the Keele and Glendon campus
- increase number of microwaves on campus

## 11am – 12pm Sessions

### Session #1 – Student-run Sustainable Businesses

**Location:** 280N York Lanes

**Initiator:** Darryl Reed

**Who Participated?** Phantasma, Alli, Steven, Bushra, Nader, Hao, Edgar, Mike, Sisor, Andrew

### Summary of the Discussion/Main Facts:

- Description of the Green Campus Co-op, how it was formed, the various student and co-operative networks that they have formed partnerships
- The GCC is linking students who concerned about sustainability to engage in sustainable businesses
- Have been working with the university to figure out the relationships
- The cafe will be the launching pad for other student-run sustainable business initiatives
- How do we create with businesses that embody sustainability but still compete with conventional business models?
- Looking to also set up a fair-trade, organic t-shirt printing company



- The GCC also working on mobilizing a local, organic food distribution network between student-run businesses at Ontario universities with local, organic food and farm co-operatives
  - There is importance of marketing and knowing the audience and to communicate what you're doing with your audience effectively
- How do you develop marketing campaigns around sustainable food?
  - While social media is important, it shouldn't be the only method of reliance
  - Grassroots and face to face marketing is more effective in making those connections
- How do we integrate marketing practices in an experiential educational capacity?
  - Have to be mindful of the sensitivities of pricing, etc. that exist at a university campus
  - There has to be a meaningful story behind it that people can connect with it
- For instance, the t-shirts would have tag with a bit of the story behind
- Importance of being connected and creating networks to create economies of scale
- How do we engage the different programs, student organizations, etc. on campus and draw them into the sustainable businesses and provide them with experiential education opportunities?
  - How do we do this in ways that do not overburden students?
    - Integrate class projects into initiatives in the sustainable businesses so there is a trade-off where students get the credit and the practical experience and the co-operative has some work accomplished
- What are your prospective on student-run businesses? How can they be successful?
  - Have to engage the student community and find out their needs and what they're looking for
    - What would it take for students to purchase sustainably?
  - Surveys show that organic, fair-trade, etc. while preferable, a lot of students won't necessarily change their purchasing practices with price differentials, lack of education (around pricing, etc.)
    - Crafting the survey in a specific method of surveying that really tap effectively into the student community
    - In some cases, there isn't student demand for sustainable practices and how do we utilize the university infrastructures to generate it?
    - Is this a question of education?
    - Humans are social beings and you have to ask, what they want/need? That's ultimately need
    - Different types of capital; sustainable businesses can provide this but how do you get people to appreciate this exchange?
- The GCC was looking to set up a cafe as an initial project because cafes are a social hub and isn't strictly based on consumerism
  - How do we set up a structure that allows people with different interests the opportunities to engage?
    - Being a co-operative with democratically organized structures helps with this objective
    - Using different participatory techniques (contests, etc.) to draw people
- GCC is a campus co-op which involves faculty, staff, and students because students are only on campus for a limited time whereas faculty and staff are there for longer and have more established connections
  - Using the board of directors to bring in connections and form partnerships
- GCC has placement courses to provide undergraduate students the experiential education opportunity through internal and external partnerships

### **Solutions and Recommendations Proposed / Action Plan:**

- Could explore the sustainable business opportunities with creating supply chains to feed communities in food deserts

## Session #2 – Price differences between healthy and unhealthy options

**Location:** 280N York Lanes

**Initiator:** Jennifer Evola – jenniferevola@hotmail.com

**Who Participated?** Jessica Reeve, Noel Badiou, Annette Dubreuil, Pavel Graymason

### Summary of the Discussion/Main Facts:

- Healthy food is expensive on campus—limited inexpensive options when on campus late at night
- Solutions – bring food from home
- price parody between fast food chains on campus and off – limits at on campus locations
- options for renegotiation when signing contracts
  - people signing contracts are only interested in money when signing those contracts – to ensure that they will be more viable on campus
  - more diversity and perhaps more pull in the student centre – but not necessarily any cheaper
- seems to be a leadership gap – not committed to serving community as part of model
- at downtown universities there is competition with surrounding restaurants
- expand Tim Hortons options on campus
- have university run or student run food court or food option
- don't have competition and don't run them ourselves
- if we ran them ourselves we would just have to break even
- food services loses money as it is

### What action can we take at York?

- need to identify who the contract negotiators are and encourage students to pressure those people (because student will see the difference)
- ensure that prices are similar to off campus options – specials are offered
- do a mandatory \$6 meal that has nutrition basics in it at every location – protein, vegetable
- create a hashtag for good food options on campus that are a reasonable price – if a bunch of organizations supported that maybe it would take off
  - get Food Services on board and encourage vendors to get on board
- could be a subject for social justice and human rights working group
- putting the carbon footprint on food being served
- having organic or local options being served on regular basis – instead of having to specifically request for special events
- Jennifer to write an article for Excalibur or blog post for IRIS on the day and this topic

## Session #3 – Who is growing our food?

**Location:** 280E York Lanes

**Initiator:** Caileigh Mcknight - caleighmcknight@gmail.com

**Who Participated?** Marylouise Bat-Hayim

### Summary of the Discussion/Main Facts:

- who locally is growing food, how are they doing it and how does it get to the market? The industrialized system and how does it get to us?
- government supporting 'what is cheapest' translates to both industrialized system and thus cheapest labour possible
- labour in Canada: wwoofers, interns, Canadians, migrant workers

- Vicki's Veggies ex. of a farm that transitioned from wwoofers to around 5 Canadian employees
- sustainable, grassroots, ethical farms basically dependent on free labour (wwoofers, interns, friends) at least in initial stages
  - ➔ perception that large farmers have towards higher Canadian labour vs. migrant labour is that Canadian workers are not going to be as good, hard, long. Is this real or just being pushed by agri-business? Don't think that it is necessarily true
- everything and issues to integrated: time to grow, time to cook, knowledge, processed foods subsidized etc. but still see hope in shift towards more people shopping local, and interest in food cultures so finding positive ways to expand on this and translate it into food production and thus labour
- \*labour is part of what is used to subsidized agri-business by allowing cheap, disposable labour

### **Solutions and Recommendations Proposed / Action Plan:**

- incentives for farmers to higher students and/or other Canadians employees from government
- place food/ag into school system to help embed values of food/ag that can be translated both into valuing farmers and getting more growers
- small farms, urban gardens, etc. have people taking more control of their own food, less reliance on agri-business
- publicly recognizing the important contribution that New Canadians who grow/make their own food make
- requiring agri-business to employ percentage of Canadians (will argue against, but they should at least require to try)

## **12pm – 1pm Sessions**

### **Session #1 – Conscious design of food environment**

**Location:** 280E York Lanes

**Initiator:** Steven Typa

**Who Participated?** Annette Dubreuil, Edgar Ilyasov

### **Summary of the Discussion/Main Facts:**

- Locate healthy/fair trade in most convenient locations
- Design of York Lanes feels like a highway – feels like you should just keep walking
- Items aren't positioned to favour more responsible choices
- Make fresh food available in multiple locations
  - Bicycle carts selling fruit
  - Vending machines with fresh food
- Mindless Eating Book – environmental cues that make people over or under eat

### **Solutions and Recommendations Proposed / Action Plan:**

- That a study be done of campus to see what social and environmental cues are being transmitted to students – consciously and unconsciously

### **Session #2 – How to mobilize the student body around issues of sustainability, like food**

**Location:** 280A York Lanes

**Initiator:** Alli Floroff - alli.floroff@gmail.com

**Who Participated?** Jennfer Evola, Andrew Plunkett, Marylouise, Darryl Reed, Phantasma, Hao, Enrique, Annette, Kita, Lada

### **Summary of the Discussion/Main Facts:**

- Sustainability has a somewhat negative connotation, so how do we deconstruct that stigma?

- Because students' lives are so regimented, you have to engage them within their academic life, because they don't necessarily have time otherwise
  - If there are mechanisms out there that cause changes to their lifestyle there is almost this immediate rejection of it
  - Students being engaged in class engage in prolonged discussions around sustainability issues then this begins to sink in a bit more and they become more aware of their need to change
- How do you engage students that are really busy, especially at York, which is a commuter campus?
  - There are a lot of students interested in these issues throughout the various university programs, how do we mobilize students?
    - Experiential education opportunities might be a good method of engagement
- Jennifer: surveying first students on sustainability within theatre and broader context as part of her Sustainability Co-ordinator position in the theatre program's production of Midsummer Night's Dream
  - Theatre can be sustainable through employing other technologies and students need to be trained on these technologies
- How motivates students to share information to friends about certain events?
  - Events that strike personal interest will be shared with like-minded friends
  - Things that you are deeply passionate about you want to draw other friends into
  - Events have to jump out and catch your attention
  - Friends will come out to support you even if they have no personal interest; if it's something that you don't have any involvement in and you want to go, it's a different sale to convince students to go with you
- Students often don't have time
- Students are bombarded with events and there are a lot of schedule conflicts; techniques other than events that can share information or perspectives might be more realistic
  - Because of this bombardment of events, students aren't necessarily going to have the opportunity to attend these events, let alone filter through these events, or seek out new ones
- Why do we want to have events?
  - Events are done in a more passive way and is there a way to more effectively and actively engage in students
  - There is a TedX talks happening at York, an opportunity to engage students
- Having multiple mediums in the Internet is effective in terms of generating interest about an event
  - There are multiple avenues of engagement and sometimes the most random reach might prove to be the most effective
- How do you get students to commit to volunteering and get them to see the meaningfulness in it?
  - The carrot and stick analogy and with experiential education there is a bit more incentive
  - Students have their attention diverted between so many student initiatives how do you attract their attention?
  - How do you make linkages from the students' studies, life, and involvement and concentrate it back on sustainability?
    - How do you do this more organically, rather than having it a course and forcing it to happen?
- Going back to connecting the dots between students and initiatives
- How is the sustainability branch at York reaching out to students?
  - TREES- Teaching, Research and Experiential Education in Sustainability
    - Modelled after UBC's SEEDS model
  - Have to have a staff champion it and bring students on board



## Session #3 – Urban agriculture – farmer’s markets

### *Maloca, World gardens, Black Creek Farm*

**Location:** 280N York Lanes

**Initiator:** Jessica Reeve – jreeve@yorku.ca

**Who Participated:** Caileigh Mcknight, Enrique Miranda, Dawn Bazely, Bushra Noureen, Andrew, Steven, Netta Undershats, Melanie, Mark, Salma, Mirna, Lina, Sarah

#### **Summary of the Discussion/Main Facts:**

- Maloca garden, community integration, capacity of urban agriculture to supplement food provision at York
- greenhouse grants at Trent University –guerilla landscaping (grant) at Trent
- Urban Chickens – illegal in Toronto – guerrilla chicken movement in the city
- front yard gardens – bylaws in the city to govern
- lots of restrictions to urban agriculture on personal property
- growTO action plan
- maintaining pesticide free city bylaws
- permaculture advocacy
- food education in town of Markham – growing art - art exhibit – Landslide - Andrew
- Fresh City Farm

#### **Solutions and Recommendations Proposed /Action Plan:**

- supporting existing urban agriculture initiatives
- support for good businesses
- honey coop on campus – support for beehives on roofs (utilizing the progressive greenroof policy)
- garden share programs
- world garden on the Ross building
- increasing public awareness – awareness on campus
- increasing expansion for Good Food Box, Fresh City Farm Box, Afri-Can Food Basket

## 1pm – 2pm Sessions

### Session #1 – Why do we choose unhealthy options even when we have all of the information

**Location:** 280N York Lanes

**Initiator:** Jessica Reeve – jreeve@yorku.ca

**Who was involved:** Jessica Reeve, Alli Floroff, Shishir Handa, Enrique Miranda, Hao Yang, Netta Undershats, Andrew, Kita, Lada

#### **Summary of the Discussion/Main Facts:**

- people seek out the unhealthy food because that is what they expect
- disconnect between what people want to invest, paying for quality food
- racism – only providing certain options
- mass marketing – communication agenda, engage response
- food on campus has become value-added versus not – people wanting to eat healthy food should be willing to pay for it
- becomes about the fast food chain brand

- healthier options take longer – push for the slow food movement
- make it meaningful enough but fast enough – find a middle ground
- healthy options are in isolated areas
- Student Centre and York Lanes are high traffic areas
- hot and fresh food options are very appealing for people who may be tempted to bring their food
- we want food fast, between classes, instant gratification
- need to make healthy food more accessible and less expensive
- York website does have a healthy options page
- bring back culinary and food classes (family studies) in high schools
- lack of food literacy

### **Solutions and Recommendations Proposed /Action Plan**

- better signage at food services locations – more marketing for options – like the YFS recommendations to make vegan, vegetarian, healthy options are easily visible
- health office related to food that speak to health options, nutrition, food service options, equity issues, food desserts – food places could enrol in organization and register food options – be an app for it
- more microwaves
- community kitchens

### **Session #2 – Food Preparation Access on Campus**

**Location:** 280E York Lanes

**Initiator:** Darnel Harris

**Who Participated?** Lada, Kita, Cat

### **Summary of the Discussion/Main Facts:**

- Its hard to cook food on campus because the equipment is not available
- Very low tech cooking classes tried to be initiated (things that just needed microwaves, sinks etc)
  - In Vanier, Schulich: very hard to get access to this because of all the hoops to jump through
  - ENVS faculty was available (difficulties are here as well, in how ENVS is perceived by other faculties)
- There is definitely a resource problem, but also an attitude problem in how people view this issue
- Although there is interest in cooking, trying to find a space to do this is difficult
  - Reasons: the same people aren't making the decisions who are allowing access to these rooms as the ones who are interested in getting students more opportunities to eat better on campus
- The way hotels work is great: they have an open access concept
- How can we get the word out? Social media is only as good as the people you have as your friends. Only 20% of people can be informed this way.
- Graduation issue: people who have been here for 4 plus years leave and graduate, taking the connections that they have made with them. How do we solve this?

### **Solutions and Recommendations Proposed / Action Plan:**

- An idea: get volunteers to over look an open area kitchen (a supervisor, who has been trained) in exchange for a free class?
- Maybe have an open access area that students can sign out (like a study room)
- Working with Seneca or establish a co-op that students can run and work at for credits
- Have a glorified fresh food storage unit (hand in hand with a Farmers Market: everything they don't sell can be stored here)
  - Have wire containers of sorts with a lock and key within a fridge

- Provides an opportunity for food that would have gone bad to be saved
- A good way to combat the way information is passed on is to talk about it, maybe get faculty involved
- Be unique and extraordinary, this will caught more attention and involve more different groups of people
- Graduate students are one of the ways to go! These guys are the “life-ers”

### Session #3 – How can we provide more information on the health, environmental, social impacts of our food choices?

**Location:** 280A York Lanes

**Initiator:** Andrew Plunkett

**Who Participated?** Annette, Jennifer Evola, Hao Yang, Phantasma, Marylouise Bat-Hayim

#### Summary of the Discussion/Main Facts:

- Burger Chain in Sweden – show you the GHG emissions of their food options – and the chain is expanding
- In the US – the calories are included on menus
- Buzz words (organic, gluten free, vegan) are thought to be healthy but that isn’t always the case
- Having calories on the menu would be helpful
- Canada’s Health Canada food guide is very poor. Doesn’t offer different options. Timing of when you eat is important. Servings are confusing. Might be looking at revising the servings. Don’t take into account the environmental ramifications of food choices. And some health recommendations are counter-intuitive. I.e. osteoporosis is worsened by consuming milk as it is acidifying and leaches calcium from bones to neutralize it.
- Body style is associated with earning potential. But the body form isn’t necessarily healthy (though men have higher earning potential when they are overweight. Women it’s the opposite)
- Children’s food is full of sugar. Children who don’t have sugar before the age of 5 don’t like it.
- When you eat healthy food, you don’t want to eat industrialized food

#### Solutions and Recommendations Proposed / Action Plan:

- Food Master Plan – things to consider
  - Recommend ways for the vendors to better inform customers of the environmental factors, social and health factors
  - Vending machines – have information
  - Build more choices and informational requirements into contract renewals
  - Provide more options of serving sizes and self-serve/buffet style that allow you to pick your food
- Incentivize vendors to provide the information – might encourage some to provide the information and encourage others to do that too
- Really need a grocery store



## Final discussion and reflections:

- Alli: interesting to be able to share different thoughts and opinions, engage with people more broadly, more differences of opinion, not necessarily having people from the same faculty
- Andrew: we have an opportunity to raise the dialogue on campus, raise the consciousness around campus, it would be great to put some of the ideas into action – food master plan, timing is good now to elevate this discussion, talk about it, learn about, walk the talk
- Pavel: food is such an important part of our lives, part of our healthy environment, part of our rich diversity and cultural practices, there are a lot of really important touch points for people to engage with, inspiring that there are so many people willing to engage with these issues, have to stop talking about food as an economic issues, inspiring to see people so passionate
  - we are on the right track in addressing viable solutions on campus
- Ramsen: wanting to improve food access on campus and wanting to engage more
- Enrique: inspiring to hear professors talk about how they try to engage their students in food issues, inspired by collaboration by different modes of learning
- Jessica: inspired that the recommendations and solutions that were coming out in many of the discussions today are being addressed by the YFS recommendations and by the IRIS survey, need to keep this momentum going and keep pushing for the things we want to see on campus and in the surrounding community even though the struggle can be long
- Cat: excited about the idea of community kitchens and a farmer's market on campus
- James: great that people are working on these issues that he has experienced on campus
- Vanessa: excited to see how people will tackle the issues coming out of today
  - hearing different opinions and options for better food on campus
- Hao: able to hear a lot of different perspectives that she had never thought of – vendors to put calories on their menus, supermarkets – thought would be unrealistic before today
- What we can do:
  - start by creating a hashtag to promote businesses on campus to better support those businesses that are doing a good job
  - we hope that people have been inspired to take action after today
  - support good food businesses and initiatives on campus
  - [YorkU.ca/sustainability](http://YorkU.ca/sustainability)
    - click on food – if everyone could go there and let Andrew and Pavel know what can be added, that would help a lot to update it
  - expansion of Maloca garden

