**Project Title:** Local Foods Audit in Student Dining

**Project Description:** Students will explore what share of dining facility or C-Store food is local. From their research, they will provide recommendations on increasing collaboration with local food producers and explain its impact in terms of the three E’s of sustainability.

**Background Information:** The Office of Sustainability and the Environment, in partnership with Housing and Dining, audit food waste to identify foods that students frequently throw away and implement strategies to reduce overall waste. Now, a Food Waste Intern in the Office works to support Housing and Dining in its efforts to improve on the issue.

While food waste is one of the most significant environmental impacts of the residence halls, the sourcing of food itself has impacts. One solution to improve sustainability of food systems and food sourcing has been to “eat local,” which supports the local economy, reduces the overall transportation (CO2) inputs, and results in more nutrient-rich and healthier food. The campus C-Stores, market places, and other dining facilities may already have some examples of locally sourced food such as Oasis snack packs and “local eggs.” A project focusing on local foods in the dining halls could:

1. Collect data. Start with a location: <https://dining.uiowa.edu/locations>. Identify the products at each place and categorize them as local/not local. It will likely be necessary to contact staff at UI dining to find out this information. Define your scope of what is considered local.
2. Estimate transportation inputs from the collected data and their associated greenhouse gases output. Show your work.
3. Approximate gains to local economy by transitioning to local sources. You may use outside reports to inform your calculations.
4. Identify solutions for reducing transportation impacts and ensuring that local agriculture and food resources are used. Write a well-researched report on what other institutions have done to ensure local procurement of food. Suggest local partnerships.
5. Discuss how local food policy in campus dining relates to Iowa City Climate Action Plan.

As with all projects, this can be scaled or altered depending on the student background or scope of the project. Prepare your report or presentation with the goal of it being used as an official resource for housing and dining units.

**Desired Outcomes:** A written report or visual presentation focusing on one or more of the A-E focus areas for an audit of local foods. Thorough documentation of data collection throughout the process.

**Collaborators/Stakeholders:**

Office of Sustainability and the Environment

UI Housing and Dining

**Resources:**

University of Iowa Dining https://dining.uiowa.edu/

**Evaluation:**

* Was data collected whenever possible? Is a reasonable scope defined for the project? If applicable, does the group provide practical suggestions for buying local foods or improving local partnerships?

**Course Relevance:** Sustainability Certificate courses