

Resolution of the Professional Staff Senate: Greening the Commons

Endorsed by the PSS Sustainable Living Committee, November 4, 2015

Approved by the PSS Executive Committee, November 5, 2015

WHEREAS, the production of polystyrene (a synthetic resin also known by the brand name Styrofoam) has been identified by the EPA as the fifth largest source of hazardous waste; and

WHEREAS, polystyrene is not recyclable, takes at least five hundred years to decompose, and is a main pollutant of urban areas, oceans, bays, and other US water sources; and

WHEREAS, styrene, the main chemical found in polystyrene, is a dangerous neurotoxin and potential carcinogen linked to Parkinson's disease and leukemia, which can leach into hot and acidic food and beverages; and

WHEREAS, polystyrene is banned in an increasing number of cities and institutions concerned with the health and safety of people and the environment; and

WHEREAS, the majority of vendors within UB Commons continue to provide their products to customers in polystyrene containers; and

WHEREAS, First Amherst Development, property manager of the UB Commons, does not provide recycling (other than cardboard) for vendors and customers; and

WHEREAS, the University at Buffalo takes pride in being a sustainability leader through zero-waste food service and the use of compostable and recyclable implements; and

WHEREAS, UB Commons is not governed by the policies of UB but nonetheless affects the perception of our campus by faculty, staff, students and visitors; and

WHEREAS, a coalition of concerned students, staff and faculty have repeatedly contacted the vendors and management of UB Commons with concerns about polystyrene and recycling to no avail.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that until the vendors and management of UB Commons eliminate the use of polystyrene and provide recycling to customers, the Professional Staff Senate will join with the Environmental Network and the Students for Sustainability Council in an information campaign highlighting the unsustainable practices in UB Commons; and be it further

RESOLVED, the PSS strongly encourages staff, faculty and students to voice their concerns to UB Commons vendors that their food be served in safe and compostable or recyclable containers; and be it further

RESOLVED, the PSS encourages staff, faculty and students to patronize and promote those vendors who have eliminated polystyrene and who provide recycling to their customers.