Colby-Sawyer students are encouraged to take charge of their education and use their knowledge to initiate change. Garrett Dunnells ’15 did just that. The environmental science major worked for more than a year to ensure that 20 percent of the food items offered in Colby-Sawyer’s dining hall come from local sources.

In April, 25.7 percent of Colby-Sawyer’s food purchases came from sources within 150 miles of the college. Chicken, pork, beef, soymilk, butter, bread, milk, yogurt and cage-free eggs are just a few of the local products now on the menu.

“I took Environmental Issues, and that class really opened my eyes to how people can make a change and what you can do on a more personalized level rather than through political or mass changes,” said Dunnells.

Dunnells believed he could reduce the environmental impact of Colby-Sawyer’s meals and talked with Director of Sustainability Jen White ’90 about next steps. That led to a petition, which after just two days had more than 700 signatures—about half the student body—and was presented to the administration.

“That petition was the start of an intense effort to figure out how to integrate local foods into our menus,” said Mike Heffernan, general manager of Sodexo Dining Services.

Dunnells, Heffernan and the Sodexo team looked for local options and worked to figure out how the college could afford to buy locally.

Black River Produce, a Vt.–based vendor and a primary supplier for Sodexo at Colby-Sawyer, had a lot of what they were looking for. The vendor sourced local products, including some meat products processed at its own plant. As a result, much of the pork, beef and chicken offered in the dining hall are from local farms.

By buying local, Colby-Sawyer depends less on trucks bringing out-of-season goods across the country, which reduces fuel consumption. It also minimizes the college’s negative environmental impact while maximizing the food’s freshness, taste and nutritional value. This approach, in turn, strengthens the local economy, preserves open space and lowers the college’s carbon “foodprint.”

Executive Chef Henry Doyle played a crucial role in partnering with the local vendors, as well as adjusting menus to accommodate these options. “We’ve been working closely with Jen White, and I have the same passion she has for it,” said Doyle. “If we work with local people, it helps the total economy and keeps people employed. I’m all about keeping it in your own neighborhood.”

More changes will come as Sodexo strives to improve the sustainability of the college’s food.

“It took a while to get this far, and now we’re reaping the benefits,” said Heffernan. “We’re still looking for what else we can do, though.”

by Elaine Edgecomb ’14 and Jacqueline Susmann ’14; photo by Michael Seamans

Going Local: A Student-led Initiative

Colby-Sawyer Magazine

Local Partners, Local Food

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Colby-Sawyer Launches Food Recovery Initiative

Colby-Sawyer and its dining services provider, Sodexo, partnered to create the first certified chapter of Sodexo’s national Food Recovery Network in the state of New Hampshire. The Feed the Freezer program recovers surplus food from Colby-Sawyer’s dining hall to donate to three local food pantries. More than 800 individual meals have been donated since January.

Sodexo employee Sandra Brownell, the driving force behind Feed the Freezer, saw the opportunity for Colby-Sawyer to do more for its community. “We think that everyone is doing okay because we are doing okay,” said Brownell. “But you cannot see hunger in your neighbor.” Read more at www.colby-sawyer.edu/news/Feed-the-Freezer.html.

Sign Me Up: Brewing Science

Colby-Sawyer and The Flying Goose Brew Pub & Grille in New London have collaborated to offer the two-credit elective course Brewing Science this fall that teaches the craft and science of brewing beer. The course reached its capacity of 15 students in 59 seconds during registration.

The course is taught by Assistant Professor of Natural Sciences Darrell Kuykendall. The Flying Goose hosts the course’s lab component in its solar-powered brewing facility where students can put their new scientific understanding to work while creating their own brews. The class is a prelude to a proposed hyperlocal brewpub in Lethbridge Lodge where student-made beers would be served alongside local brews and foods. The new venture would provide opportunities for students in multiple disciplines, from graphic design, writing and art majors, who could create signage and packaging, to business students and those in the sciences. Read more at www.colby-sawyer.edu/news/Craft-of-Brewing.html.

Setting the Table Green

“Setting the Table Green,” a graphic design exhibition showcasing Colby-Sawyer’s ongoing commitment to sustainability and the community, was unveiled in the dining hall on Earth Day.

Eight graphic design students teamed with four creative writing and media studies majors to create the posters to illustrate Colby-Sawyer College’s forward thinking and sustainability initiatives.

Themes include the college’s student-initiated commitment to local food and use of compostable and recyclable goods, using fry oil as bio fuel, the Feed the Freezer food recovery program, and Sodexo’s responsible use of chemicals to run a clean and healthy dining operation. Read more at www.colby-sawyer.edu/news/setting-the-table-green.html.

A Certified Fair Trade College

Colby-Sawyer was recognized as a Fair Trade College by Fair Trade Campaigns, a nonprofit partnership advocating Fair Trade for farmers, workers and artisans across the globe. Colby-Sawyer is the first private college in New Hampshire, and the second college in the state, to earn the certification.

Business administration major Amigo Khadka ’14 was inspired by Associate Professor of Business Administration Christopher Kubik’s spring 2012 Fair Trade course and recognized that Fair Trade was missing from Colby-Sawyer’s sustainability campaign. He decided to take action on behalf of the college.

“While sustainability practices are the epitome of Colby-Sawyer, there is more to it than going green and decreasing our carbon footprint,” said Khadka. “Fair Trade takes sustainability to the next level by adding a social justice component.” Read more at www.colby-sawyer.edu/news/Fair-Trade.html.