Duke Dining Bans Disposable Plastics from Dining Program

Duke University: Industry leader, Duke Dining, takes an innovative approach to sustainability and as of July 1st, 2018 implemented a full ban on all disposable plastics.

The campus-wide disposable plastic ban for all on-campus Duke Dining locations is part of The Deliberate Dining Project, a new sustainable initiative, created to share Duke Dining’s commitment to sustainability. Marcus Carson, Assistant Director of Duke Dining for Sustainability and Quality Control said, “This change in policy is a big deal, and while not easy to implement, we are passionate about the impact the disposable plastics ban will have on the environment and are proud to be a national industry leader in this important effort.”

Duke Dining locations will specifically no longer carry single-use plastic carryout bags as well as disposable plastic food service ware. A “single-use plastic carryout bag” is defined as:

- Any bag made from plastic that is provided by a retail establishment at the point of sale with a purpose of transporting purchased products and not intended for reuse.

"Disposable plastic food service ware" is defined as:

- non-recyclable containers, plates, serving trays, hot and cold beverage cups, and utensils that are made of plastic or plastic-coated paper and not intended for reuse.

Alternatives for the prohibited disposable plastic ware are 100% compostable or recyclable items. “Pollution from disposable plastics is a huge global issue, and we want to be contributing to solutions, not creating the problem. It’s the right thing to do,” said Carson.

Duke Dining works purposefully to fully understand all the issues that make up a sustainable dining program and over the past several years has eliminated the use of other products and implemented the following:

- 100% ban on all bleached paper products
- 100% ban on all Styrofoam products
- Trayless Dining

“Duke Dining is committed to operating in a manner that improves the health of the Duke community, reduces negative environmental impacts, and strengthens the local food system. “Sustainability” isn’t optional for Duke Dining; it’s who we are and how we define ourselves. The disposable plastics ban is another step in the right direction,” said Coffey.

You can learn more about Duke Dining’s sustainability standards and initiatives by visiting: https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/dining/sustainable-dining