

TO: New York University (NYU) Student Government Assembly

SUBJECT: Letter of Support Concerning Sustainable Events Practices

Dear Student Government Assembly,

Given the current climate crises we face today, it is safe to say that sustainability should be a key concern at New York University. In many ways, NYU has proven their commitment to becoming a greener, more sustainable campus. Pertaining to food and catering, New York University as a whole has even demonstrated the need to provide more sustainable food options and taken various measures in order to reduce our environmental footprint through meals. Notably, New York University is a signatory of the Cool Food Pledge, committing to reduce food-related greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent by 2030<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, NYU administration adheres to the Green Events Standard that includes food and catering standards for events<sup>2</sup>. Although these actions heartening they do not apply to student organizations such as the Student Government Assembly. Currently, SGA has no support to help honor the university's sustainability commitments when it comes to food. Therefore, NYU Student Government should use Greener by Default's initiative and services<sup>3</sup> to fulfill the food and catering requirements of the Green Events Standard.

Greener by Default provides free menu and language consultation that simultaneously makes plant-based food the default and gives diners the choice to opt into meat and dairy.<sup>4</sup> This could more than double consumption of plant-based meals, reducing catering's carbon footprint by 40% and water footprint by 24%.<sup>5</sup> Adhering to a default plant-based policy could also attract more students to NYU given the increased demand for plant-based foods amongst millennials<sup>6</sup>, GenZ<sup>7</sup>, and BIPOC<sup>8</sup>. Overall, 14% of college students are already fully plant-based<sup>9</sup>. All the while, it increases inclusivity for people with allergies and cultural or religious restrictions. Additionally, plant-based meals can improve our health by providing low-fat, high fiber foods. As an added benefit, Greener by Default can also cut food costs.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Food](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Green Events Standard](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Greener by Default](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Greener by Default](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Nudging healthy and sustainable food choices: three randomized controlled field experiments using a vegetarian lunch-default as a normative signal | Journal of Public Health | Oxford Academic](#)

<sup>6</sup> [• Americans interested in alternative diets, by generation 2018 | Statista](#)

<sup>7</sup> [How Generation Z Is Creating The Opportunity Of A Lifetime. Pay Attention As This Is Not A Fad But A Deep Long-Lasting Trend.](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Why black Americans are more likely to be vegan - BBC News](#)

<sup>9</sup> [1 in 10 College Students Follow a Vegetarian or Vegan Diet](#)

<sup>10</sup> [These Restaurants Removed Animal Products From Their Menus And Went Vegan - Here Are The Results](#)



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There is a growing amount of awareness and action relating to food and sustainability at NYU and around the globe. NYU's own Office of Sustainability and Office of the Provost have adopted Greener by Default to uphold their climate commitments.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, departments at peer institutions, such as Harvard, Stanford, Northwestern, and Oxford, have demonstrated their commitment to sustainable eating by using Greener by Default, and the NYU Student Government Assembly should do the same. The NYU Environmental Studies and Animal Studies departments have recognized this need for awareness and action, offering a variety of classes and lectures on the topic. These include classes such as Food, Animals, and the Environment (ANST-UA 440/ENVST-UA 440) and lectures such as *Alternative Proteins, the Neglected Climate Solution* by Bruce Friedrich, founder and CEO of the Global Food Institute. NYU Student Government has the unique opportunity to lead the charge and provide support for sustainable and inclusive menus by adopting the Greener by Default standard.

Sincerely,

**Jacqueline Moy**, Alternate Senator at-Large representing Students for Sustainability, Student Sustainability Committee Chair

*In collaboration with the SGA Student Sustainability Committee*

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<sup>11</sup> [Events](#)