

SFA Network-Wide / “Dine with Dignity” Conference Call April 7, 2009

Participating campuses (and organizations):

ARAMARK

Duquesne University
Georgetown (Georgetown Solidarity Committee)
John Carroll University
Samford University
St. Joseph’s University (Students for Workers’ Rights)
St. Thomas University (SFA)
University of Central Florida
UNC-Chapel Hill (Alianza, FLO)
UPenn

SODEXO

Armstrong Atlantic State University (HOLA)
Auraria Campus, Denver (SFA)
Carleton College (Real Food Challenge)
Fordham University (Labor Solidarity)
Juniata College
Lafayette College (Students for Social Justice)
New College of Florida (SFA)
Providence College (Student Environmental Action Coalition)
UC-Davis (Students for Sustainable Ag.)

COMPASS

Chartwells

Southern Illinois U., Carbondale (SFA)
U. of Miami (SFA, STAND)
U. of New Mexico

Bon Appétit

Portland State University

US FOODSERVICE

U. of Kansas

SELF-OPERATED/OTHER

High School, Kentucky
U. of Colorado, Boulder (SFA)
U. of Notre Dame (SFA, MEChA)
Denver Fair Food (SFA)
Staff, interns representing SFA, Just Harvest USA and Slow Food USA

I. Introduction:

We’ve just launched our “Dine with Dignity” campaign, which is the next phase for students & youth in the Campaign for Fair Food. We’re hopeful that this call will be helpful for folks across the country to learn about what we’re planning for the rest of the semester, as well as to share experiences about actions that have already been taking place across the country.

II. Greeting from the Coalition of Immokalee Workers:

Gerardo Reyes of the CIW spoke briefly about the current trajectory of the campaign, which includes putting pressure on major supermarket companies as well as food service providers Aramark, Compass and Sodexo. He also thanked us for participating and mentioned the increasingly-important role that students and youth have played—in direct alliance with the farmworkers of the CIW—in the success of the Campaign for Fair Food, which has only grown as the campaign has branched out to take on many different forms.

III. Campaign Debrief:

As we mentioned, the Dine with Dignity campaign was launched about two weeks ago, drawing inspiration from SFA’s “Boot the Bell” campaign, which successfully removed or prevented 25 Taco Bell contracts from operating on campuses during the CIW’s 4-year boycott of Taco Bell. **Our demand is that Aramark, Sodexo and Compass enter into agreements with the CIW to address the conditions of sweatshops in the fields created by these companies’ high volume/low cost purchasing practices.**

Since the campaign launch there has been quite a bit of activity across the country. Students have been organizing meetings with their campus dining directors, and SFA members have participated in delegations to

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all three corporate headquarters. To date, however, none of the corporations have been willing to commit to working with the CIW. Until that happens, we will continue to escalate our campaign.

IV. Go-around – What have folks already done on their campuses?:

-St Joseph’s University (Philadelphia) – met with Aramark director who was uneasy about working with them & didn’t want to give up information. Was more willing to pass it off to corporate headquarters.

-Georgetown – met with administrators on campus who were receptive and willing to work together to call on Aramark to do the right thing. Also trying to set up a meeting with Aramark rep. on campus, but he has been refusing. Might try other means to talk to Aramark rep.

-Portland State University – have been meeting with Aramark about sustainability. Were visited by their regional sustainability manager who was interested in working with them, but was fired the week later which put an end to their efforts.

-St. Thomas University (Miami) – had action last week to bring awareness to campus. Folks from CIW attended, was good for educating on campus. Trying to get a meeting with their campus dining director.

-University of New Mexico – fair trade group on campus noticed that Chartwells had a table set up, asked them informally about where they got their food from – talked about CIW. One guy said that he had worked in Florida, talked about how they didn’t get any food from Florida. Going to meet in the next 2 weeks about pressuring directors.

-Southern Illinois University - Carbonadale – met with campus dining services person & also Chartwells person. Both meetings went well but still not sure how they’re going to respond as the campaign moves on. Going to be following up with Chartwells representative. Asked him to send the letter to corporate HQ. Also met with the person who manages the University's contracts, who was receptive.

-University of Central Florida – has been trying to get a meeting with Aramark but they’ve refused so far. Going to keep trying.

-University of Miami – met with their university dining director who was very positive/receptive. Have followup meeting next week to answer questions about supply chain, etc. Also trying to get university to sign & send a letter to CIW & to Chartwells.

V. Next Steps & Ideas for the Future:

For the rest of this semester:

Continue meeting with campus dining directors – check out the SFA website for resources to help with setting up & carrying out the meeting. Also contact us in Immokalee (organize@sfalliance.org) for other resources that aren’t online.

Mail-in student letter to corporate headquarters – available for download on the SFA site, this is a word document that can be customized with information about your particular school and organization. Print out the letter, sign it (as an individual, organization, group of organizations, etc.) & mail it in.

May 1st Day of Action – organize an action or educational event around the campaign on campus, either on or around May 1st.

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Action ideas we came up with include:

- having a rally on campus
- sending a delegation to talk with dining services directors
- comment cards action (still being developed, but basically the premise would be to get your hands on a large quantity of cafeteria comment cards, have students sign them in support of the campaign & turn them in to dining services)
- show documentaries/mainstream movies somewhat related to topic (Contact organize@sfalliance.org for free DVD w/ CIW documentaries; Fast Food Nation, Fried Green Tomatoes, etc.), with space either before or afterwards to talk about the campaign
- set up a table or other way to collect lots of signatures to the student letter to corporate mentioned about
- educate! Get started with a brand new flyer to use on campus (sfalliance.org/FSCresources.html)
- organize quick classroom presentations or “class raps” to speak for 5-10 min. at the beginning or end of classes
- Action/delegation at Aramark headquarters in Philadelphia
- Get in touch with student government & get them to pass a resolution in support of the campaign
- student body president at New College of Florida (Sarasota) is signing on to student letter; this effectively represents all student organizations on campus
- students at University of New Mexico have already been doing work in solidarity with campus workers & have talked with them about working in solidarity with this campaign
- have folks sign postcards/comment cards/etc. When they put a letter in the box they glue a penny to the box, which is then given to on-campus directors to send to corporate HQ

Remember that this semester is just the launch, and that there will be many more chances for escalation next semester. Take advantage of the opportunity afforded by summer break to reflect & strategize around how to move forward when we come back to campus. Let’s hit the ground running!

There is also the opportunity for folks to attend SFA’s Encuentro – our annual gathering in Immokalee to strategize around the campaign & meet others organizing across the country. Stay tuned to the SFA website for more details in the coming months (<http://www.sfalliance.org/2008encphotos.html>)

VI. Questions?:

-High School student in Kentucky – learned about CIW via various campaigns in Louisville. Can he talk to public school officials? What should high schoolers do?

This is something that we’ve been thinking about in Immokalee. At the moment, we’re focusing on college students because that is where our base is the strongest, but as everyone knows these corporations also have contracts with K-12 districts, sometimes entire towns, hospitals, prisons, etc. If the interest is there then we are more than happy to talk about what the best course of action is. Shoot us an email! (organize@sfalliance.org)

Younger students & community members not on college campuses will also have the opportunity to be involved in CIW’s supermarket campaign, which will be getting off the ground in the next few weeks.

To conclude, thanks for everyone for being on the call. It’s great to hear from all of you & we’re super-excited about this campaign. We have a unique opportunity to really mold this into something great, and we hope all of you will be a part of it!

Don’t hesitate to get in touch with us in Immokalee with any questions or concerns you have, or just to talk. organize@sfalliance.org or 239-657-8311. Thanks!!