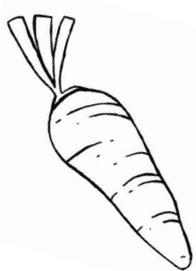


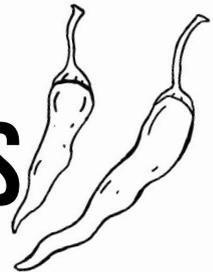
A People's History of Food Systems at



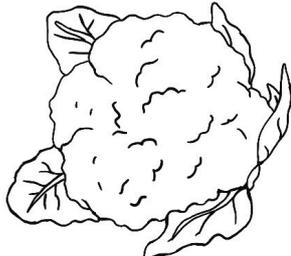
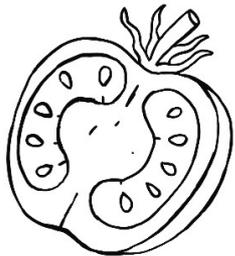
Written and Illustrated by Emma Paisley



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Author's Note: Why I Made This Zine

This zine is part of my doctoral research exploring how people learn about food systems.

My work focuses on place-based experiential learning in sustainable agriculture education. In other words, how hands-on experiences with land, farming, and community food initiatives shape what people understand about food systems.

Universities like Trent provide a unique setting for this type of learning. Gardens, farms, kitchens, and community partnerships all become sites where education happens beyond the classroom.

By tracing the history of food spaces and initiatives on campus, this zine explores how learning about food has always been tied to place, community, and practice.

Food education is not only about information.

It is about experience.

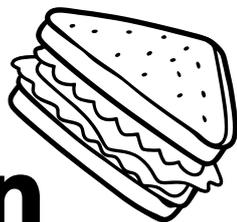
A Small Disclaimer (and a Love Letter)

While this zine raises many critiques of Trent University, the issues discussed here are not unique to Trent. They exist across public universities throughout higher education, wherever institutions try to balance learning, community, budgets, and bureaucracy. If I didn't care deeply about this place, I wouldn't still be here working on my third degree.

Trent has a long history of student activism, community organizing, and people asking difficult questions about how things should be done. That spirit is exactly what makes this university special.

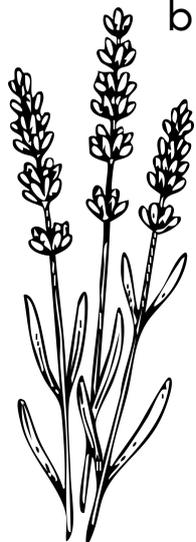
So yes, this zine is critical. But it is critical in the way people are critical of places they love, because they believe those places can be better.

(Also, if anyone on a future hiring committee is reading this: I promise I'm very nice.)



Introduction

This zine traces the people's history of food systems at Trent University, a story woven through student organizing, community resistance, and institutional change. Campus food systems are more than cafeterias and dining halls; they are contested spaces where power, justice, and everyday survival meet. By documenting these struggles, this project links Trent's foodscape to broader debates in food studies: food sovereignty, food justice, and the politics of the neoliberal university. This history reminds us that food is never neutral. It is always about power, belonging, and possibility.





Food, Land, and Responsibility

Before gardens, cafeterias, and meal plans, there was land.

The campus of Trent University sits on the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg. For thousands of years, food systems here were shaped by relationships between people, land, water, and seasonal knowledge.

Indigenous food systems are not simply about growing crops. They are systems of governance, culture, and care.

Harvesting wild rice, fishing, gathering medicines, and tending land are all ways of maintaining relationships with the ecosystem.

Today, some initiatives on campus are beginning to reconnect food learning with these traditions. Land-based education, partnerships with Elders and Knowledge Holders, and Indigenous food sovereignty work are helping students rethink what a “food system” can be.

These conversations remind us that sustainable food systems are not new innovations. They are practices that Indigenous communities have sustained for generations. Learning about food at Trent, therefore, means learning about responsibility: to land, to history, and to the people who have cared for this place long before the university existed.



A Not-So-Official Timeline of Food at Trent

1996 → Roof Top Garden sprouted.

Someone thought: “Hey, let’s grow food on top of a science building.” And it worked. Bees, pollinators, and over 1,000 lbs of veggies later, it’s still thriving.

2002 → Stone Soup Project cooked up.

OPIRG Food Issues Group asked: what happens when you throw community, activism, and a pot of soup together? (Spoiler: you get the Seasoned Spoon’s origin story.)

2003 → Seasoned Spoon Café opened its doors.

Student-run, non-profit, and serving more than just food. Suddenly, Aramark’s monopoly wasn’t the only game in town.

2005 → The Field Garden expanded the growing game.

More land, more veggies, more excuses to skip class and dig in the dirt.

2010 → Community garden plots sprouted.

Because nothing says “resistance” like growing your own kale with your neighbours.

2012 → Root cellar built.

Translation: fresh carrots all winter. Also, a quiet act of rebellion against industrial food systems that assume seasonality is dead.

2015 → Market Garden launched.

Student-run, student-funded, student-powered. Free produce markets pop up on campus in the fall.

2016 → Seasoned Spoon joins the meal plan.

The co-op café gets folded into the official dining system. Students can swipe their cards for hummus wraps instead of Pizza Pizza. Progress?

Co-optation? Maybe both.

2017 → Study finds 48% of first-years are food insecure.

Translation: Almost half of the students don’t have enough to eat.

2026 and beyond...

The story is still cooking. Students keep organizing, gardens keep growing, and the fight for food justice on campus is far from over.

The Seasoned Spoon Café

The Seasoned Spoon Café was **founded in 2003** as a student-led, non-profit cooperative. It became a hub for local food, anti-oppressive food justice practices, and experiential education. From its cozy space in Champlain College, The Spoon nourished not just bellies but movements.



The Spoon challenged the **food service monopoly** that Aramark had at Trent, offering more diverse food choices made with fresh, local, and organic ingredients, as well as **food for thought** about institutional food policies.

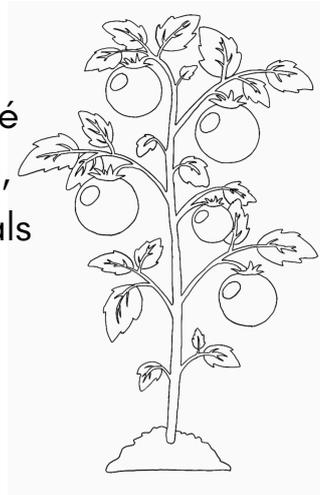


Today, The Seasoned Spoon Café is a **non-profit, vegetarian, cooperative café** located in Champlain College at Trent University. The café serves food sourced locally and, whenever possible, organically, at affordable prices. Their food sourcing principles prioritize the cultivation of meaningful relationships with local producers to support a sustainable regional agricultural system. The Spoon cooperative has **over 500 members**, consisting of Trent students, staff, and local community members.



As well as serving delicious seasonal food, a central part of their mandate as a not-for-profit community-based organization is to offer educational opportunities to the campus and broader Peterborough community. This is realized primarily through paid and volunteer work positions, reskilling workshops, panel discussions, community meals, and student research projects coordinated in partnership with the **Trent Community Research Centre**. In partnership with the **Trent Vegetable Gardens**, they aspire to demonstrate a sustainable field-to-table campus food system.

In 2016, The Seasoned Spoon Café joined Trent University's meal plan, allowing students to purchase meals through their dining plans

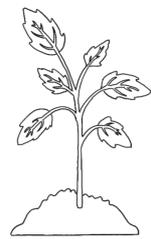


2025↑



In 2012, the Spoon's root cellar was built, allowing fresh/local produce throughout the fall and winter

The Seasoned Spoon partners with the Trent Vegetable Garden, to provide the bulk of the fresh produce



February 25th, 2003, The Seasoned Spoon's grand opening

Stone Soup Project on campus run by OPIRG Food Issues Group 2002. The initiative grew and elected a Board of Directors to better represent them



2002

START HERE

Archival Voices

Students Were Saying This Decades Ago

Reading through archival material feels a bit like overhearing conversations from another era. Different hairstyles, different politics, same underlying question:

Who gets to eat on campus, and on whose terms?

Across decades of documents, students repeatedly raised concerns about food pricing, access, and the role of the university in shaping everyday life.

The language changes, but the themes remain familiar.

1972

During the week, students may eat lunch at any college; resident students are expected to take other meals at their own college. Resident students must show their accounts card to the meal steward at all meals.

As for the relative quality of food at different colleges, there are as many opinions as there are Trent students. Try them and see.

1978

If you are 'on campus' you are somehow going to have to survive the food dished out by Beaver Foods in the dining halls. As with business in general, profit is directly related to costs of operation (food costs). The cheaper the products they can buy, the more money they can make. Nothing is wrong with profit except that this profit is at the expense of your health. You must therefore concentrate on the salads and fruits and leave off the french fries, meat patties and desserts. This also goes for the snack bar in Champlain College. Buy the yoghurt, milk, muffins and natural cookies, forget the fried food.

Future nations will not use weapons to defeat foes, but will sell franchise hamburgers and Coca Cola to their populace and let them shop in Loblaws etc. They will then eat themselves to death. It is mainly because of the meat in Dominion and because hamburger chains do it all for themselves that we urge you to eat and shop wisely.

Bon Appetit

1975

The Food Scam

Since the widespread interest in food nutrition during the late '60s, we have come to accept the fact that we are, in part, what we eat. The keynote at University 'Survival' is a 'packrat' philosophy towards good food at sensible prices. Sensible prices involve commitment . . . legwork, communication with others, and the ability to scam at a moment's notice.

SURVIVAL IN THE KITCHEN

1978

So you want to survive first year at university. Well, the chances are that your diet for the last 18 years, as with many Canadians, has been pretty appalling. University attempts to feed your brain but it certainly does not guarantee to feed you good food. Many students forget that looking after their bodies (not just their heads) is part of the survival course.

1974

Endless Land of Burgers and Grills

Nutrition

An important aspect of anyone's university career and one that is often neglected. Common is the tale of the students who are regularly seen in the cafeterias only eating desserts, claiming the meal is too atrocious to stomach. Irresponsible eating isn't likely to be dissuaded by anything you read herein, such eating being a matter of habit and laziness. More to the point, the meals may taste like forked over goo, but they've kept countless thousands of students before you alive, and will probably so keep thousands more to come.

1982

Grocery shopping is a lot more complex and less fun than buying drugs or alcohol so a lot of students spend their limited funds accordingly and eat poorly but drink, or smoke, well. I don't necessarily think this is wrong; but wouldn't it be nice if we could drink, smoke and eat well? There's not much chance of extra OSAP funds falling out of the sky so it seems the best solution would be to discover the secret to simple inexpensive grocery shopping.

1983

Residence life; love it or leave it

LIVING IN RESIDENCE is a unique experience. It has a special atmosphere to it — all those people crammed into those tiny rooms are bound to create some dynamic situations. So stay awake if you can, leave yourself open to new ideas. It may turn out to be one of the best things that ever happened to you.

To begin with, Beaver Foods is not just like Mom used to make. Friday nights are often spent exploring cheap downtown restaurants. Breakfast is usually too hard to face on Saturday and Sunday mornings and if you do go, you'll notice a sharp decline in attendance.

Tuesday lunch is always liver and onions so you might want to miss this meal. Then, at the end of the year Beaver runs over their budget and you get lots of 'mystery meat'. Play 'Name That Dish'.

Not to be entirely unfair, Thursday night is generally worth attending. This is College dinner and theme night, often ethnic or speciality food that has some flavour. Despite the complaints, you can't help but notice the extra pounds creep up after awhile.

The 1,000 students who pay \$821 each to eat at the college dining halls are probably the largest single group at Trent who share a common interest: food.

1981

IF YOU'RE LIVING in residence, you go through the same routine three times a day. You line up for your meals just like you were in prison or something. Sometimes when you bite into your meal you become convinced you are in prison. In fact, you may suspect that even the dregs of society must eat better than this. No government could inflict on even the most vicious criminals such cruel and unusual punishment — only a university could be so hard. At times like this you may be tempted to confront the cook at your college with the line that Beaver Cleaver's brother immortalized — "Aw, c'mon Beav!!!"

Beaver Foods: Residence food can be a real impediment to enjoying residence life. When its really bad, students have even found more enjoyment out of throwing Beaver's Foods than out of eating them. Remember though, even on an all you can eat meal plan, you end up paying for everything you waste. Either you pay through year end indigestion as Beaver Foods' budget runs out and they start serving surprise casseroles, or you pay through higher meal plan prices the next year (or both). And if anything is a crime, its paying more for residence food than is absolutely necessary. (For more on Beaver Foods, see the article "Aw, C'mon Beav!!").

1986

Trent residences are by far and large the best in the land. Other universities from coast to coast tend to sport grey little cubicles crammed with two or more bewildered, overcrowded students. Trent has maid service, an all-you-can-eat meal plan and mostly single rooms. Trent is like a big country club and it's fun to dwell and be spoiled here.

1990

Marriot Neglects Vegetarians in Residence?

Since Marriot foods have taken over the responsibility of catering meals within each of the Trent residences, numerous complaints have arisen concerning the quantity and quality of the vegetarian alternatives provided by Marriot, if any at all. Many of these complaints have been voiced during meetings of the Trent Animal Rights Association. As a member of TARA, I decided to take on the task of investigating the problem.

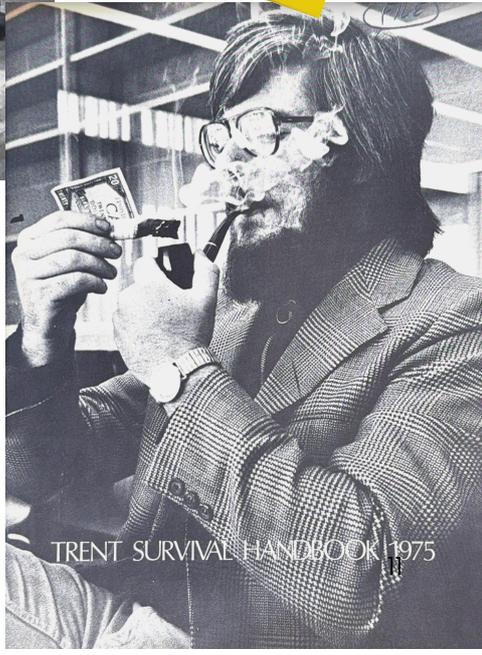
1989



Peterborough used to be a great town for lunch counters and lunch counter food. Alas, as we become just another suburb of Toronto the food scene here is increasingly dominated by restaurants that serve their meals in baskets. Nostalgia is a bad thing so I'm determined not to be sad about this and instead venture boldly into the world of fetucini, crab meat melts and chicken wings. What follows is a look at the major downtown eateries and what you can expect to find when you get bored by eating in the dinine hall (approx. 3-4 days after your first meal). I've also tried to indicate places where Trent professors are known to eat. Now I realize at this time of year this is in no way interesting; but when January comes around and you still haven't finished those December essays, you'll be avoiding these people like the plague and you'll appreciate the knowledge. Trust me, I know.

*The following are an assortment of images I think are worth sharing. Discovered during my archives perusal.

PASSIN' THE TIME



TRENT SURVIVAL HANDBOOK 1975

Before the Spoon

Early Food Activism on Campus

History didn't start in 2003

Today, the Seasoned Spoon often gets credit for transforming campus food culture at Trent. And in many ways, it did.

But the story doesn't begin there.

Long before the Spoon opened its doors in 2003, students were already questioning the systems that shaped how food moved through campus. Archival documents from the 1970s and 1980s reveal a campus where food prices, cafeteria services, and institutional priorities were frequent topics of debate.

Food might seem like a small issue in the grand scheme of university politics. But for students living away from home for the first time, food was and still is survival.

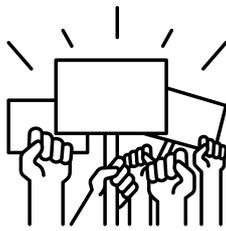
Who sets the prices? Who profits from campus dining? And what happens when students can't afford to eat?

These were not abstract questions.

Sometimes the concerns were practical:
Why is cafeteria food so expensive?

Sometimes they were political:
Should a university treat food as a service to students, or as a revenue stream?

And sometimes they were deeply personal:
How do students make ends meet when the cost of being here keeps rising?



These early conversations did not always produce immediate change. But they laid the groundwork for something important: the idea that food on campus could be organized differently.

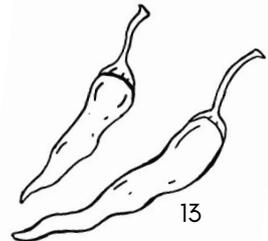
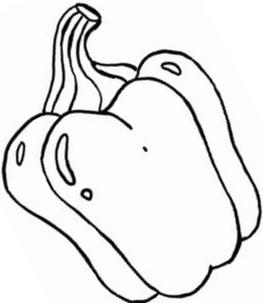
Decades later, that idea would take shape in projects like the Stone Soup initiative, the Seasoned Spoon café, and the many gardens that now dot the campus landscape.

In other words, the Spoon didn't appear out of nowhere.

It grew out of a long tradition of students asking difficult questions about who feeds the university, and why.

**Campus food activism
didn't begin with the Spoon.**

**But the Spoon is part of a
much longer recipe for
change.**



Stone Soup: A Recipe for Revolution

Serving: Future Generations

Prep Time: Ongoing

Cooking Time: As long as it takes

Ingredients

- 2 cups local food justice
- 1 handful of student empowerment
- 4 tbsp anti-oppression frameworks
- 1 quart of organic produce from the Trent Market Garden
- 3 cloves critical pedagogy
- ½ cup solidarity, not charity
- Generous dash of consent-based organizing
- A pinch of fermenting radical hope
- Optional: institutional disruption to taste



Instructions

1. Preheat your imagination: Begin by unlearning the myth of neutrality in campus food systems. Set your intention to centre equity, access, and land-based knowledge.
2. In a large bowl, mash dominant paradigms: Break down ideas of efficiency over community, profit over people, and institutional convenience over ecological care. Compost what you can.
3. Sauté student voices in a cooperative pan until sizzling with purpose. Season with shared decision-making and food literacy.
4. Stir in locally grown resistance — harvested with care from the Trent Market Garden, washed in critical thought, and chopped with collective purpose.
5. Slowly pour in community accountability, stirring often to avoid clumps of performative allyship.
6. Add anti-oppression spices generously, adjusting to meet the evolving needs of the community. This may include dismantling food hierarchies, disrupting settler colonial systems, and redistributing power.
7. Bake in a sustainable oven fueled by care, creativity, and continued questioning. Set the timer for "as long as it takes."
8. Serve hot, share widely, and return your dishes to the revolution.

Chef's Notes

- Best enjoyed in community.
- Pairs well with open forums, student-led workshops, kitchen takeovers, and volunteer potlucks.
- This dish is ever-evolving. Taste often, listen deeply, and revise recipes as new voices emerge.

According to the Bank of Canada Inflation Calculator, this would be around **\$3,240** in 2026

RESIDENCE LIFE

There's no life like it. Yeehaw,
where's the beer?
-Trent Student Handbook 1986

The 1,000 students who pay **\$821** each probably the largest single group at Trent who share a common interest:
-Trent Student Handbook 1980

The High Cost of Belonging: Mandatory Meal Plans, Optional Dignity

Ever notice how being a first-year at Trent comes with a price tag? Literally. From day one, you start to feel less like a student and more like a "basic income unit". As an incoming student, you are expected to fork over thousands of dollars for a mandatory meal plan just to survive on campus. Meal plan? Mandatory. Dignity? Optional.

Meanwhile, the campus cafeteria is supposed to be a community space, but it often feels more like a cash register. Nothing builds community like an \$18 burger and fries meal.

Here's the thing: your ability to belong shouldn't depend on how much money you have. Let's talk about what it really costs to live, learn, and eat as a first-year student – and why they deserve better.

Eating and Drinking

Dining Halls

The dining halls of the four colleges are organized separately so meal times and traditions vary. Champlain and Eaton have formal served dinners four nights a week, for example, while Robinson does not. Traill is the only college that is not catered by Beaver Foods.

For non-residents, meal tickets cost \$1 and \$1.30 respectively for lunch and dinner. There is a five per cent reduction if these are bought in bulk at the Comptroller's Office.

-Trent Student Handbook 1971



A guide to food-buying
in Peterborough

On staying alive

-Trent Student Handbook 1980

Raise your hand if you've ever been personally victimized by the fine print...



	TRADITIONAL ROOM	SUITE STYLE
Dining Plan Value	\$4,800	\$3,200
Food Service Overhead	\$1,250	\$950
Total	\$6,050	\$4,150

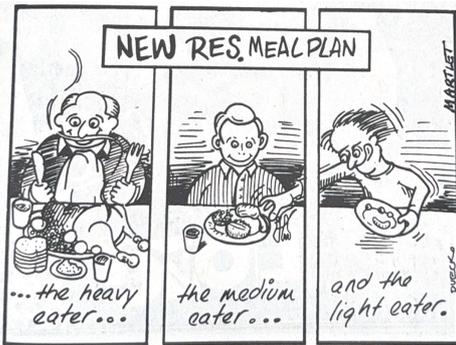
*based on the 2025-2026 school year

A basic dining plan will likely work for me if:

- I usually eat 2 times a day
- I plan to leave campus most weekends
- I tend to eat small meals
- I am relatively inactive
- I do not eat many snacks
- I do not drink much coffee or tea

(Trent Food Services, 2025)

According to Trent Food Services



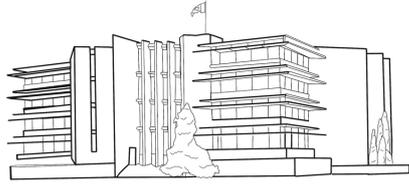
-Trent Student Handbook 1986

All declining balance dining plans can be used at all Trent University Food Services locations and off campus at approximately 6 restaurants, a cab company, specific Subway locations and SkipTheDishes

"When you're here, you're family... as long as you only eat 2 meals a day, leave on the weekends and don't drink coffee or tea"

FOOD INSECURITY MEANS NOT HAVING ENOUGH MONEY TO BUY FOOD

STUDENT PURCHASES REQUIRED MEAL PLAN IN SEPTEMBER, BRIGHT-EYED AND BUSHY-TAILED, READY TO EMBARK ON THEIR NEW ACADEMIC JOURNEY

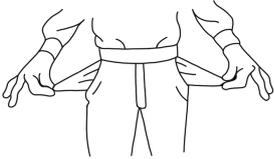


STUDENT EATS THREE MEALS A DAY, INCLUDING DRINKING COFFEE/TEA DAILY, MAYBE HAS AN OCCASIONAL SNACK OR AN INCREASED APPETITE DUE TO STRESS OR LIFESTYLE CHANGES

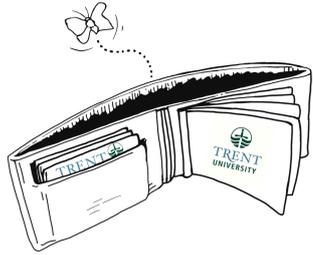
STUDENT EXPLORES THE CAMPUS AND THE CITY THAT THEY HAVE MOVED TO, THEY USE THEIR MEAL PLAN AT LOCAL RESTAURANTS AND FOR A CAB RIDE HOME LATE AT NIGHT



STUDENT RUNS OUT OF THEIR MEAL PLAN IN MARCH. THERE IS AT LEAST THREE WEEKS OF CLASSES LEFT AND EXAMS UNTIL THE LAST WEEK OF APRIL



STUDENT CAN'T AFFORD TO ADD MONEY TO THEIR MEAL PLAN, AND THEY DIDN'T REALIZE IT WOULDN'T LAST ALL YEAR. THEIR PARENTS CANNOT SUPPORT THEM, AND THEY DON'T HAVE A PART-TIME JOB; THIS IS ONLY THEIR FIRST YEAR...



STUDENT CAN RELY ON THE TCSA FOOD BANK,... BUT THEY CAN ONLY VISIT EVERY TWO WEEKS, AND THEY DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO A KITCHEN OR THE MEANS TO COOK FOOD IN THEIR DORM ROOM.



ONE MIGHT WONDER... ARE FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS BEING SET UP FOR FOOD INSECURITY?

48% of full-time Trent University students in their first year living away from home were found to be food insecure

(Dasné & Furgal, 2017)



What happens when students run out of money? Coming from a former first-year student who ran out of their meal plan early, I chose to eat using the freshly minted credit card in my hands (an overly optimistic 18-year-old). This left me with credit card debt that I carried for years.... and I had a part-time job that transferred with me from high school. I could have gone to the TCSA, which at the time offered grocery vouchers (they now run a food bank, One-Stop Chop), but I didn't even know that was an option*

*This example is meant to illustrate the struggles of living on campus at the mercy of a basic meal plan. I would not recommend this as a feasible solution. Please do not go into credit card debt to buy food from Chartwells



Arthur
**RALLY FOR FOOD
WORKERS AT TRENT**

The People Who Feed the Campus

Behind every tray of food, there are workers.

Campus dining halls, cafés, and kitchens rely on cooks, servers, dishwashers, delivery drivers, managers, and student employees. Their labour keeps the campus fed and running every day. Coffee appears in the morning, soup is hot at lunch, and dishes are cleaned long after students have left the dining hall.

Many of these workers are employed through contracts with food service companies such as Chartwells, while others work in independent or cooperative food spaces.

Food workers are often invisible in discussions about campus food systems, yet their experiences shape how food is prepared, served, and valued. Their knowledge about kitchens, supply chains, and student eating habits is a critical part of understanding how food systems actually function.

A people's history of food at Trent must therefore include not only students and administrators, but also the workers whose daily labour feeds the campus community.

**Food systems are not just policies and meal plans.
They are people.**

Every early-morning prep shift, every tray cleared, every pot washed at the end of a long day is part of the hidden infrastructure that keeps a university fed.

Arthur
**STATE OF DECAY:
LABOUR ISSUES,
CORPORATIZATION,
AND FOOD SECURITY
INSIDE TRENT'S FOOD
MONOPOLY**

*Universities run on research, tuition,
and coffee. But someone still has to
make the coffee.*

The following processed products are all high cost and low nutrition items:

- heavily processed products
- soft drinks
- imported fruits and vegetables (found in winter in supermarkets)—many have been picked unripe and ripened unnaturally for transportation
- sugar
- preservatives and additives (look at content labels)
- out-of-season fruit and vegetables
- powdered drinks
- most cookies and candies
- french fries
- commercial ice cream

-Trent Student Handbook 1978



How Students Actually Eat

Official meal plans tell one story. Student life tells another.

Students develop their own creative ways of navigating food on campus:

- sharing groceries with housemates
- cooking giant batches of pasta before midterms
- swapping meal swipes with friends
- volunteering at campus gardens
- stretching leftovers for three days

These strategies are not just about saving money; they are about building community.

In shared kitchens and crowded apartments, food becomes a social practice. Recipes are exchanged, cultures mix, and meals become moments of care during stressful semesters.

Sometimes, the most important food systems on campus are the informal ones.

SURVIVAL IN THE KITCHEN

Now it's time to put your kitchen together. The equipment available is endless, but you don't need a lot to cook basic food. If you take a look in second-hand stores and at auctions, you shouldn't have much trouble supplying your kitchen. In addition to cups, glasses, plates, bowls and cutlery, some of the things you'll find necessary are:

- a good frying pan, preferably cast iron
- several pots and pans, with lids, or various sizes, including one big enough for stews, chili etc.
- mixing bowls
- measuring cups and spoons
- a lifter or flipper for eggs etc.
- a good sharp knife
- egg beater or whisk
- kettle
- teapot and/or coffee pot

Once you've got the basics, add utensils as you find them necessary. Casserole dishes, a roasting pan or Dutch oven, baking pans, a grater, a wooden spoon and a chopping board are just a few other useful things for your kitchen.

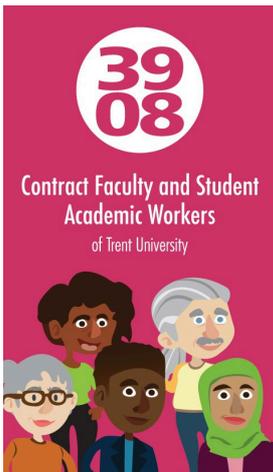


Assemblages of Power: The University Is Not Neutral

Campus food isn't just about what is on your plate or in your mug; it's about a complex web of power. This web of power ultimately decides what food is served, who profits, and who gets left hungry.

Every choice, from what is served to how much it costs, and who has access to it, reflects power, not neutrality. Some voices dominate, others are ignored. Some pockets of resistance emerge, but they exist in tension with the larger system.

Campus food is political. Every meal represents a negotiation. Every garden is a tiny revolt. Understanding these power structures is the first step toward reclaiming the right to feed ourselves, together.



KEY STAKEHOLDERS

VICE PRESIDENT (FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION)

DIRECTOR OF FOOD SERVICES

OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

HOUSING SERVICES

CHARTWELLS

FACILITIES MANAGEMENT

FOOD SERVICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TRENT SCHOOL OF THE ENVIRONMENT

SAFS PROGRAM

SAFS FACULTY

TRENT RESEARCH FARM

TCSA

SAFS SOCIETY

TRENT VEGETABLE GARDENS

CULTURAL CLUBS (FPHL, ISA)

KWIC

OPIRG

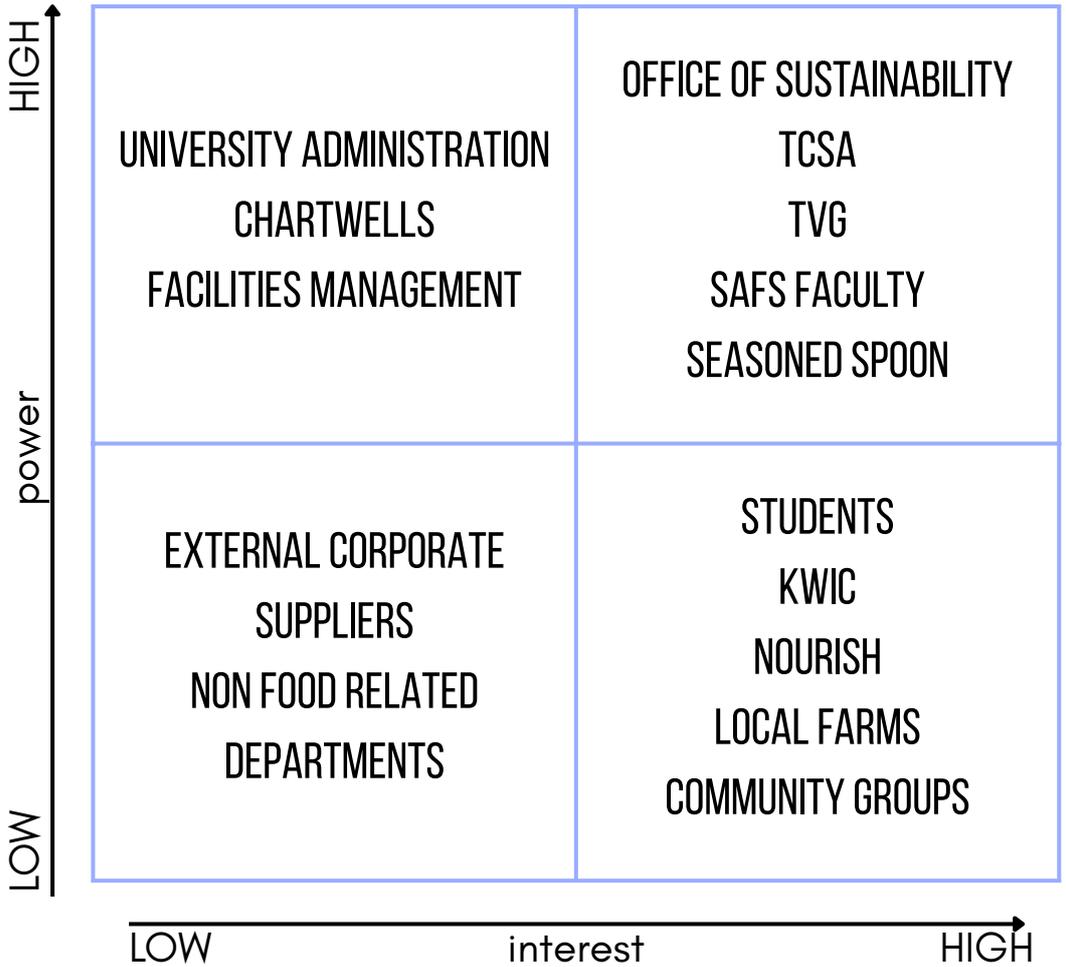
FPHL - ELDERS AND KNOWLEDGE HOLDERS

STUDENTS

OTHER FACULTY/STAFF

Power vs. Interest

who holds the power and who cares about it...



Trent has several players involved in its on-campus food system. This power grid is a visualization of the different stakeholders and the influence they have on shaping Trent’s food system.

The Many Gardens



The Roof Top Garden

First established in 1996 as a living laboratory on top of Trent's Environmental Science Building. It still functions as a research space and agricultural ecosystem. It is home to an established pollinator garden and a highly productive perennial garden and produces over 1,000 lbs of food each year despite its modest dimensions of 100 by 30 feet of growing space.

The Field Garden

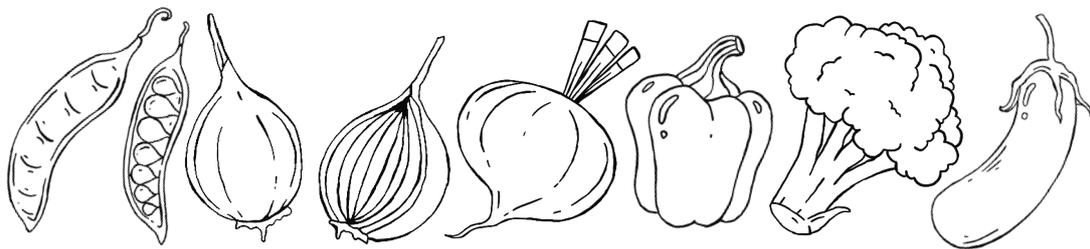
Established in 2005, it enabled the TVG to expand both in its size and scope. $\frac{2}{3}$ of an acre of growing space, and it is organized similarly to a small-scale farm. In 2010, the Trent Vegetable Gardens partnered with the Peterborough Community Garden Network and established a 20-plot community garden. The garden emphasizes community skill-building, research and experiential learning.



The Market Garden

The Trent Market Garden is a student-run experimental farm funded and run through the SAFS Society, established in 2015. Brings students a free produce market in the Trent Student Centre throughout the months of September and October





Food Production as Resistance

Grow. Resist. Repeat.

Growing food is, in a sense, an act of rebellion. Every seed we plant defies rising fees, mandatory meal plans, and a system that treats hunger as a cost of belonging. These gardens, wherever they may be, are not just green spaces; they are frontline resistance.

We dig, we sow, we water, and in doing so, we reclaim space, reclaim power, reclaim dignity. Every leaf that bursts through the soil is a refusal: we will not be hungry. We will not be silent. We will not accept a campus where access to food is a privilege.

Food is knowledge. Food is care. Food is rebellion. And as we harvest together, we are building more than meals; we are growing community, growing justice, growing a campus that feeds all of us, not just the system.



Trent Farm Research Centre

The Campus That Just Got Dirtier

est.2024

This isn't just a farm, it's a living classroom, a hub of experiments, and a space where students, staff, and community come together to grow knowledge, food, and possibility. Every plot, every shed, every hand in the soil shows how learning can be hands-on, collaborative, and powerful.



The farm brings together many voices: students exploring sustainable practices, faculty guiding research, and community partners sharing expertise. Projects range from soil health and carbon sequestration to Indigenous food knowledge, showing how food is tied to culture, community, and the planet.



Here, every seed planted is a chance to learn, to resist the idea that campus food is only about profit, and to explore how we can shape a more just and sustainable future. The farm is a reminder: food on campus is political, but it can also be a space for action, care, and creativity.



What Comes Next?

Campus food systems are always evolving.

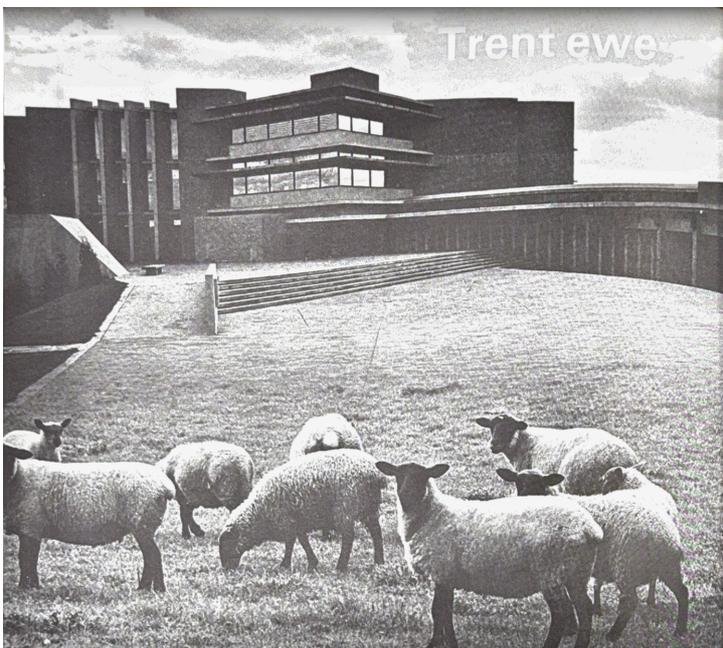
Students continue to organize around food access. Gardens keep expanding. Research projects explore new ideas about sustainability, justice, and local agriculture.

At the same time, universities face real constraints: budgets, contracts, infrastructure, and growing student populations.

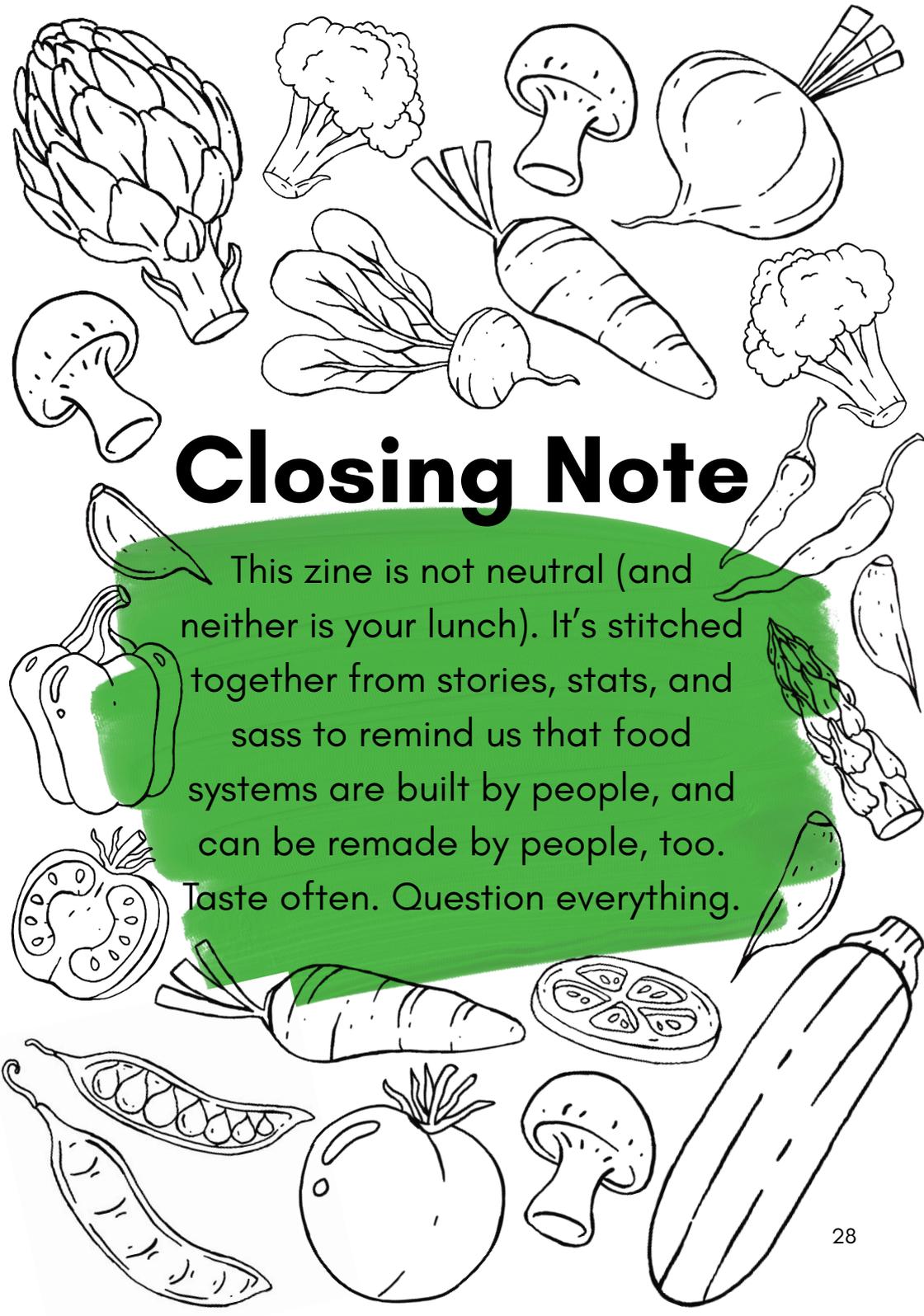
The future of food at Trent will likely be shaped by collaboration between many groups, including students, food workers, faculty, community partners, and administrators.

The question is not whether the food system will change.

The question is how?



*I'm not saying bringing sheep back to the Bata podium would fix everything, I'm just asking if we think it might be worth a shot?



Closing Note

This zine is not neutral (and neither is your lunch). It's stitched together from stories, stats, and sass to remind us that food systems are built by people, and can be remade by people, too. Taste often. Question everything.

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