
Resolution to Permanently Instill the Oat Milk Opt-In At All Campus Cafe Locations

Author(s):

Osasogie Iyoha (He/Him/His), Vistas Senator

Margaret Jelsma (She/Her/Hers), Sustainability Coordinator

Sponsoring Senator(s):

Anisa Beckett (She/Her/Hers), Athletics Coordinator

Angelica Gaupman (She/Her/Hers), Health and Wellness Coordinator

Jolie Beegle (She/Her/Hers), Academics Chair

Marzena Leyden (She/Her/Hers), At Large Senator

Julia Capodanno (She/Her/Hers), Commuter Senator

Takilah Haymond (She/Her/Hers), Manchester Senator

Lukas Diazgranados (He/Him/His), IDEA Committee Chair

Date: 2 May 2024

WHEREAS, the Associated Student Government has discussed with the Changemaker Hub on permanently instilling the Oat Milk Opt-In to all campus cafes after the successful pilots and student interest in sustainability initiatives. The upcharge of plant-based milk alternatives in the amount of 75 cents for beverages at the University of San Diego cafes presents a financial barrier to students who need or prefer dairy-free beverages. The Oat Milk Opt-In provides an accessible and inclusive choice for all students, encompassing needs for dietary restrictions and providing a healthier, more sustainable campus environment.

WHEREAS, the Changemaker Hub spearheaded the Oat Milk Opt-In at Aromas in the 2023 Spring Semester, and following the pilot's success, another pilot was initiated for the 2024 Spring Semester. Surveys were used to collect data on student opinions and insight on the pilot. From the pilot in Spring 2023, the following responses are from the student body in response to whether the milk alternative up-charge influences purchasing decisions: Yes-"It makes me order drinks less frequently or in smaller sizes", Yes-"I sometimes order coffee without milk (an americano) to avoid having to pay extra for alternative milk. I can't drink regular milk because I'm severely lactose intolerant." No-"because I don't like dairy milk in general and am an avid plant-based supporter. Personally, it's a bit sad that ordering alternative milk costs more when there are so many people who are lactose intolerant or even allergic to dairy."



WHEREAS, the transition to oat milk is in the best interests of the health of the student body, as it is the healthiest milk alternative. Studies have shown that oat milk is superior to cow's milk in most metrics. This initiative is inclusive of all students who require plant-based alternatives for dietary restrictions, allergies, and [lactose intolerance, which especially impacts our students of color](#), a demographic we are always trying to better serve. The survey results from last year's pilot show this impact: 53% of respondents claiming a dietary restriction, 42% claiming lactose intolerance, 59% of Hispanic/Latino respondents claiming dietary restrictions, and 95% of Hispanic respondents ordering alternative milk "always, often, sometimes".

WHEREAS, oat milk is the most sustainable plant-based milk alternative which actively engages students in a sustainable lifestyle through daily practices. Living sustainably is growing in popularity among college students amid the effects of climate anxiety and a desire to minimize one's impact on the planet. The Oat Milk Opt-In allows for accessible sustainable choices that make students feel good about their beverage choices and also ensures students are included in the conversation of change. Additionally, having oat milk as the default across campus cafes allows students to have the opportunity to get involved in the mission at USD to confront the challenges of climate change, social justice, animal welfare, and public health.

WHEREAS, institutions such as Pitzer, Pomona, and University College London recently began an oat-milk default initiative, and Universities such as Cornell have dropped up-charges on plant-based milk alternatives. More Universities are modeling environmentally conscious practices is a growing trend that we should participate in. This transition also serves as an opportunity to set an example for other institutions in prioritizing inclusivity, as well as affordable, healthy, and environmentally-friendly beverage options.

WHEREAS, competing chains such as Blue Bottle Coffee and Pachamama Coffee have similarly made a switch to this default, Starbucks includes oat milk-exclusive beverages in their menu, following suit would allow us to compete with these chains in students' purchasing decisions, as well as allowing students to feel as though they get more value out of their meal plans.

WHEREAS, dairy milk is less expensive to supply in comparison to plant-based alternatives yet plant-based milks have [skyrocketed in popularity](#) which provides customer attraction and sales benefits for businesses. Oat milk in particular has made large strides in nationwide demand for its allergen inclusivity, sustainability, and quality. Businesses that have made the switch to free oat milk, such as [Blue Bottle Coffee](#), have shared that customer satisfaction with this change has been paramount for success. Implementing this change will go beyond financial reorganization,





it will provide campus cafes the opportunity to grow customer engagement and foster an inclusive experience for all students.

WHEREAS, responses to the 2023 Oat Milk Opt-In survey demonstrate support for a switch to Oat Milk Opt-In. Students shared that they are more likely to order more at Aromas with this change and/or always have to ask for an alternative from dairy milk when ordering: 70% of survey respondents ordering one or more lattes per week at Aromas, 84% of respondents would select oat milk as their alternative milk if it had no extra cost, and 61% of respondents always choose an alternative milk when ordering.

WHEREAS, gradual inflation of coffee prices coupled with the \$0.75 upcharge for non-dairy milk alternatives have impacted students choosing to dine on campus. In the survey results of the Spring 2024 semester, 39% of students (159/406) indicated that they strongly disapprove of the upcharge policy on all non-dairy milk alternatives. Additionally, when asked about their opinions on having a free opt-in for oat milk and an upcharge for dairy and other milk alternatives (such as almond, pea, coconut) 50% of respondents (201/406) answered they strongly approve. These responses are a testament to the student opinions on having more inclusive choices while dining on campus, as well as minimizing our ecological footprint on a university-wide scale.

BE IT RESOLVED, the Associated Student Government supports that all on-campus cafes will make the switch to Oat milk as a default in their milk-based menu items, at no extra cost to the students. All other prices for non-dairy milk alternatives should be kept to prevent price inflation. The Legislative Branch of the Associated Government hereby asserts that the Oat Milk Opt-In will be permanently instilled by the start of the Fall 2024 semester, following the expiration of the Spring 2024 pilot.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, University Administrators work to implement the most cost-effective solutions for this transition to minimize price inflation, whether this includes seeking vendors, or looking to localize. If cost-effective solutions are challenging, Auxillary Services should be prepared to accept whatever losses are incurred in the interest of students' needs. Buying food that fits one's dietary needs is not a privilege, and increasing the prices of coffee on campus to supplement the Oat Milk Opt-In will go against the University of San Diego's [Core Values](#) of creating a culture of respect and inclusivity for all students. We ask the University to address student needs for this change and maintain financial accessibility for those choosing to dine at campus cafes.





BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be delivered to the following individuals for comment and action: Dr. James T. Harris III, *President, University of San Diego*; Dr. Gail Baker, *Senior Vice President and Provost*; Ms. Charlotte Johnson, *Vice President for Student Affairs*; Dr. Regina Dixon-Reeves, *Vice Provost, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*; Dr. Byron Howlett, *Assistant Vice President for Student Life*; Dr. Nicole Whitner, *Assistant Vice President and Dean of Students*; Dr. Soha Jafarzade, *Associate Director for Community Engagement & Inclusion*; Mr. Andrew Allen, *Vice President, Institutional Effectiveness and Strategic Initiatives*; Mr. Juan Carlos Rivas Espinosa, *Director Social Change and Student Engagement, Changemaker Hub*; Mr. Charles Ramos, *Dining Services Director, Auxiliary Administration*; Mr. Andre Mallie, *Assistant Vice President, Auxiliary Services*; Ms. Loryn Johnson, *Marketing Director, Auxiliary Services*; Ms. Janet Kelly, *Business Director of Student Affairs and Auxiliary Services*; Ms. Maria Lopez, *Administrative Manager, Auxiliary Administration*; Ms. Brittney Castro, *Receiving and Purchasing Manager, Auxiliary Business Services*; Mr. Jason Fortner, *Dining Senior Supervisor, Dining Services*; Elsa Galindo, *Dining Senior Supervisor, La Paloma*.





Osasogie Iyoha

May 6, 2024

Co-Author, Osasogie Iyoha, ASG Vistas Senator

Date

Margaret Jelsma

May 6, 2024

Co-Author, Margaret Jelsma, ASG Sustainability Coordinator

Date

Gunner Kolon

May 6, 2024

Gunner Kolon, ASG Speaker of the Senate

Date

Andres Fernandez Perez

May 6, 2024

Andres Fernandez Perez, ASG President

Date

