

**Abstract Title:** Healthy and Sustainable Eating on Campus: An Examination of a Novel Policy Alternative  
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**Objectives:** The purpose of this study is to critically examine the role of interests and ideas in the development of a student-led food policy initiative launched at Ryerson University in 2016. *Thrifty Fifty* (TF) aims to support healthy and sustainable decision-making concerning food catering for campus events by promoting a desired minimum of plant-based food. Nutrition advocates (NA) are seeking a commitment from the Ryerson community to provide at least 50% plant-based food at catered events and functions involving food. The goal is to promote inclusivity, cost savings, environmental protection and health.

**Method:** Informal discussions with students and faculty identified concerns with food waste and inclusivity and confirmed an urgent need to stimulate discourse about sustainability. Further exploration included consultations with Ryerson's Sustainability Office and its food service provider. Influential student groups and student champions were identified and informally interviewed as a key step in recruiting supporters. A focus on shared values between NAs and student groups was critical for successful recruitment of supporters.

**Results:** Content analysis revealed that students want to support healthy, inclusive and sustainable food choices but need implementation guidance from NAs. In 6 months, 7 student groups representing more than 35,000 endorsed TF.

**Conclusion:** TF shows that a few individuals can inspire and mobilize large student bodies to create a movement with powerful legacy for human and planetary health.

**Significance:** A better understanding of the interaction between interests and ideas can inform the process used by NAs to address food-related issues. The adoption of a plant-based minimum policy is consistent with recent shifts in dietary guidance, Meatless Mondays and organizational actions within Canadian dietetics to examine sustainable eating. Results from this study can provide critical insight into the practical training of nutrition students through participatory action research and can inform the work of other interest groups.