

To: Shannon Bellum, University Senate President

From: Jonathan Koppell, President

Date: February 13, 2025

Re: Response to Single-use Plastics Policy Proposal

President Bellum:

I have reviewed the Senate's proposal for a policy on the University's use of single-use plastics. Since that proposal was submitted in 2021, there have been substantial changes to our practices that we believe negate the need for a formal policy on single-use plastics. A large majority of the recommendations are already incorporated into campus operations.

Since 2021, the University has entirely eliminated the use of plastic bags from our dining operations and replaced single-use plastic straws with compostable, environmentally friendly straws. Additionally, the University stopped using styrofoam food containers many years ago and any food taken to go is provided in either reusable containers or paper-based products. In the residential dining halls, we use silverware and china for food service. In most of our retail locations, where we do not have the capacity for dishwashing operations, we are using recycled plastic utensils. Furthermore, nearly 100% of the bottled water and other beverages sold on campus at dining venues and in vending machines, comes through our contracted Coca Cola supplier, Liberty Coke. Liberty uses 100% recycled clear plastic for their core 20-ounce bottles, including water bottles. Some of the bottles use caps that are also made of recycled content. Liberty has a robust sustainability program which includes a number of initiatives to reduce carbon footprint, enhance energy efficiency and recycle plastic, aluminum, and glass back into the supply chain.

With respect to prioritizing vendors, as a public university, Montclair is bound by the procurement laws, regulations, and procedures established by the State of New Jersey. However, the University is committed to sustainability and will act within the confines of the law to partner with those vendors who share a commitment to environmental stewardship.

At this time, the University is unable to commit to the phaseout of plastics. Given the substantial progress made since this recommendation was made in 2021 and the University's continued commitment to sustainability, we do not feel the establishment of a website is necessary as most of the information sought is available by way of the dining services' website. The University has created the Director of Sustainability position, who continues to work towards making Montclair State University even more environmentally conscious and forward-thinking.

Thank you for your thoughts.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Koppell
President