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Trending: Resource optimization is driving the future of food

In the face of climate change, embracing new methods of agricultural production, consuming responsibly and adopting circular business models will be critical to forging a sustainable future and achieving both income and food security.

According to research conducted by nonprofit ReFED, sixty-three million tons of food worth $218 billion is wasted each year in the United States — one-third of which is wasted by restaurants and commercial food service businesses. To stop food waste in its tracks, the James Beard Foundation, with support from The Rockefeller Foundation, teamed up with Drexel University’s Center for Food & Hospitality to design and implement a curriculum around food waste reduction.

The James Beard Foundation appointed Jonathan Deutsch, PhD, a professor at Drexel’s Center for Food & Hospitality and founder of Drexel’s Food Lab, as the inaugural JBF Impact Program Fellow. Deutsch will oversee the development, pilot and national roll-out of a program aimed at reducing food waste.

“Recovering would-be food waste and transforming it into an item people would purchase and eat will create revenue, jobs and ultimately create a more sustainable food system,” Deutsch said. “I’m honored to have been selected as a James Beard Foundation Impact Program Fellow. Food product design and innovation that can help solve real-world food system problems is foundational to what we do at Drexel. It should be an issue that is top-of-mind for today’s chefs and those of tomorrow.”

The program will pilot a professional development curriculum with a focus on food waste reduction and will offer skills training, values exchange and the circular tools needed to inspire current and future generations of culinary students to minimize waste.

As part of the program, Drexel University will also collaborate with other schools, including New York University, The Academy of Culinary Arts, Boston University and Colorado State University on topics such as curriculum development, piloting lessons, assessment of student and instructor feedback and refining of the curriculum. Read more