

Introducing Local Vendors to Wildcat Shop to Promote University Sustainability

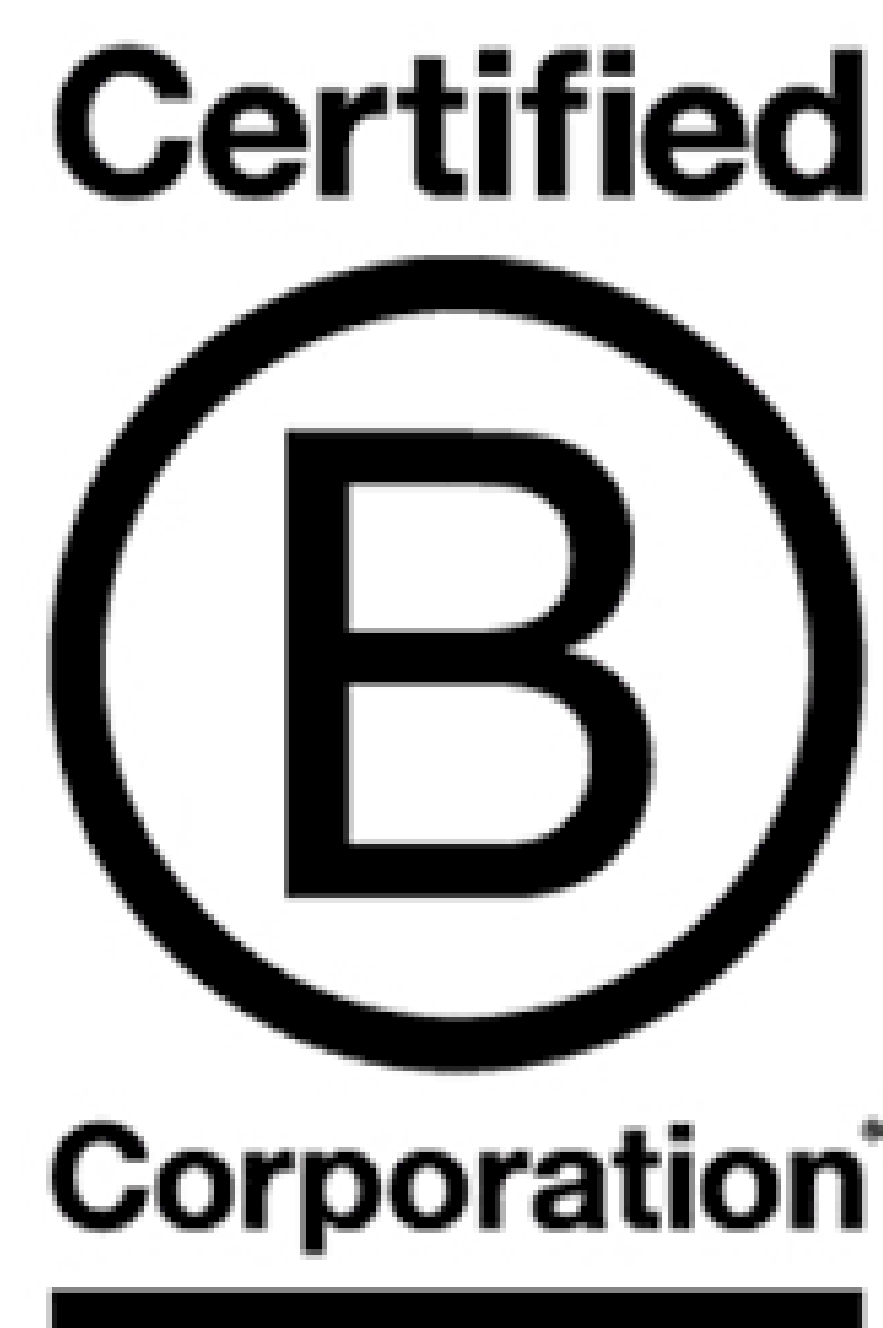
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Introduction

Awareness of ethical and sustainable purchasing continues to rise, and many consumers opt for sustainable or local goods to shrink their ecological footprint. This shift reflects a broader cultural movement towards environmental responsibility and community-centered practices. In fact, 74% of all consumers prefer to browse or buy locally. Currently, the local, Fair Trade, and sustainable offerings at the Wildcat Shop are limited to one small line of sustainable apparel and one stall of local products from the CWU Wildcat Farm. This project improves student access to locally sourced items, supports the Sustainable Investments focus area of the CWU Climate Action Plan, and builds meaningful relationships within the Ellensburg community.

Benefit Corporations

Benefit Lab lets corporations connect with a global community & co-lead a growing movement. It turns isolated efforts into shared progress, across industries and around the world. B Lab creates standards, policies, tools, and programs that shift behavior, culture, and structural underpinnings of capitalism. Standards ask every associated corporation to meet high expectations in critical areas like climate, equity, and governance. B Labs strives to ensure compliance and that the company is committed to responsible business practices that benefit people and the planet, not just shareholders.



Fair Trade

The Fairtrade Foundation is a non-profit organization that partners with small-scale farmers and workers worldwide to create a more equitable global trade system. Ellensburg is home to two Fair Trade certified companies – D&M Coffee and Evolve Clothing and Jewelry, demonstrating how these principles can impact a community, bringing together farmers, workers, consumers, and governments to promote a system that emphasizes fair labor rights, long-term environmental and economic sustainability, and ethical business partnerships.



Figure 1. Benefit Corporations logo (top), Fair Trade logo (bottom)

Methods

To increase the availability of sustainable and locally sourced products in the Wildcat Shop, I completed the following steps over three months:

Step 1: Met with Angela Johnson, Director of the Wildcat Shop, to propose partnering with local vendors to feature their products in the bookstore.

Step 2: Researched universities across the country that successfully incorporate local and sustainable goods into their campus bookstores, analyzing both in-store and online retail strategies.

Step 3: Contacted multiple Ellensburg-based businesses to identify products and partnerships that would align with the Wildcat Shop's brand and customer interests.

Step 4: Met with the owners of Colockum Coffee Craft to discuss potential collaboration opportunities and evaluate products suitable for the bookstore.

Step 5: Presented findings and partnership opportunities to Angela Johnson, including the potential development of a dedicated sustainability section within the Wildcat Shop.



Figure 2. The CWU Wildcat Shop



Figure 3. CWU's sustainable clothing line



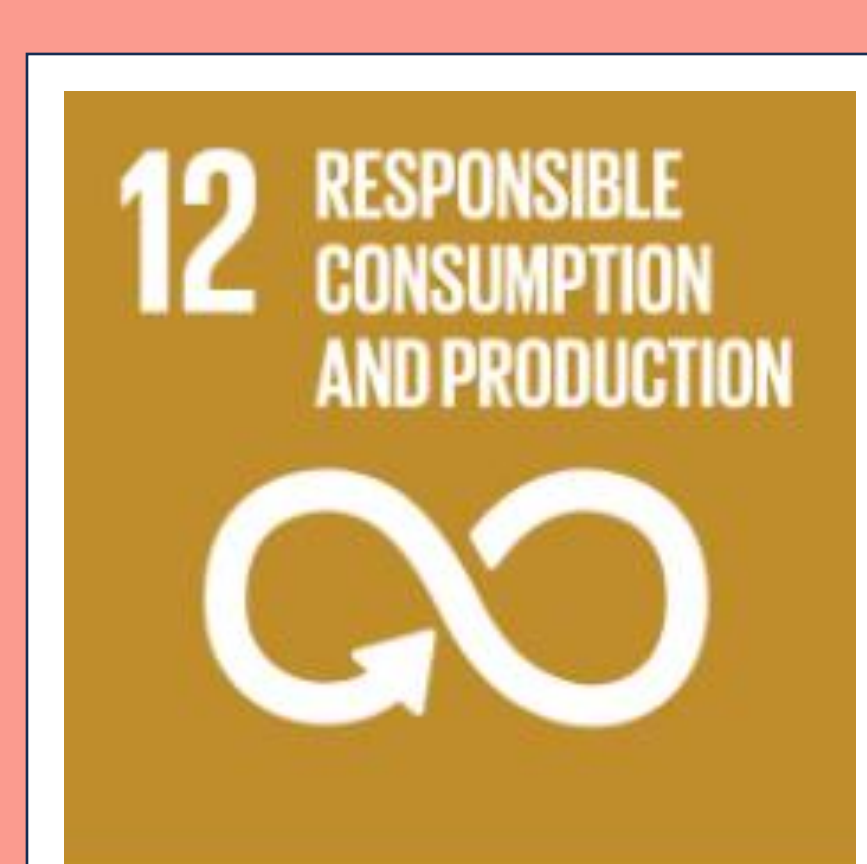
Figure 4. Colockum Coffee Craft logo

Recommendations

While I have conceptualized and gathered research for this project, it still needs to be implemented. In order to fully implement local, fair trade, or benefit corporation products in the Wildcat Shop, I recommend:

- Building partnerships with local businesses in Ellensburg to expand beyond what is already in place.
- Collaborate with Colockum Coffee and integrate their products into the bookstore. Autumn Graff's survey concluded that approximately 60% of student respondents want coffee in the Wildcat Shop.
- Introduce a wider range of Fair Trade and/or Benefit Lab certified products, such as apparel, coffee, and school supplies.
- Create a clearly labeled "Sustainable" section in-store and online to increase visibility and accessibility for consumers.

This Project Supports UN Sustainable Development Goals:



Acknowledgements

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References

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