Objective: Analyze the food and supply inputs to the food stream associated with the City College cafeteria and dining room, devise a plan for connecting the food waste streams with food recovery programs, and design a composting facility for the South Campus.

Background: Of the 1.5 million New Yorkers who currently live in poverty, more than one million rely on emergency food. Although the City College cafeteria and faculty/student dining room serve approximately 16,000 students and faculty each day, the college does not participate in food recovery programs. This clearly presents an opportunity to connect the College cafeteria and dining room waste streams to existing food rescue, food recycling, and composting operations. Organizations for handling food rescue and donation already exist—e.g., City Harvest, and a variety of other community food banks. A campus composting operation could easily be set up on the South Campus. The challenge is to connect the existing organizations in a manner that allows efficient management of the waste stream, and to find ways to make it economically advantageous for the cafeteria food vendor to participate. Once the campus waste stream management system is set up, it could serve as a focal point for participation by restaurants in the neighborhood.

Suggested Approaches: Comprehensively analyze the food and supply inputs to the cafeteria and dining room, measuring the volume of various components of the waste stream. Begin formulating a collection mechanism for compostable food. Based on the foregoing, perform a cost analysis for the packaging and rescue of usable food, as well as for the collection of projected quantities of compostable food. Also prepare a cost analysis of reducing solid, non-organic wastes associated with cafeteria and dining room operations, e.g., disposable trays and packaging materials. Develop a comprehensive plan (design, materials, labor, timeline, etc.) for constructing an appropriate-size composting facility on the South Campus of the college. Push for the implementation of the plan.