

## **UWO named Operator Innovations Award finalist**

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<http://www.uwosh.edu/today/26073/uwo-named-operator-innovations-award-finalist/>

An independent panel of food service operators from across the industry named the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh one of the finalists for the National Restaurant Association 2013 Operator Innovations Awards. UW Oshkosh is among three finalists in the sustainability category.

UW Oshkosh was recognized for the implementation of a kitchen and dining recycling program--[Feed The Beast](#)--that combines the use of the University's food pulper and its innovative dry fermentation anaerobic biodigester, which digests food waste to produce methane gas that is used to generate electricity for up to 10 percent of campus.

"This is one more indication of how active our campus is with sustainability, and that our programs are worthy of international recognition. It makes me proud to be a Titan," said Marty Strand, assistant director for dining operations at UW Oshkosh.

The UW Oshkosh anaerobic dry fermentation biodigester is the first of its kind in the western hemisphere. The biodigester was unveiled at UW Oshkosh in the spring of 2011 and began producing energy later that fall. It's located at 755 Dempsey Trail, adjacent to the Campus Service Center. The project was a collaborative effort with the UW Oshkosh Foundation.

The food pulper at Blackhawk Commons has been sending waste to the biodigester since the spring of 2012, according to UW Oshkosh officials. The food pulper removes water from organic waste from kitchen and dining services.

"This innovation has helped us to decrease the amount of solid waste we are sending to the landfill, and cost of materials and transport. It has made for a better working environment for our staff and promotes the use of green energy on campus," UW Oshkosh officials wrote in the nomination for the recognition.

In 2006, the campus was one of four selected by the governor to work toward energy independence. A comprehensive Sustainability Plan was adopted in 2008 with goals for energy efficiency and alternative energy. In 2009, following carbon-footprint studies conducted by Johnson Controls and university staff, the University established one of the nation's most aggressive Climate Action Plans to achieve carbon neutrality by 2025.

The Operator Innovation Awards recognize organizations in five categories: Food Safety, Health and Nutrition, Menu Development, Sustainability and Technology. Finalists, including representatives from UW Oshkosh, are invited to Chicago for the 2013 National Restaurant Association Restaurant, Hotel-Motel Show in May. The winners in each category, as well as an Innovator of the Year selected from all finalists, will be announced live in Chicago during the Destination: Celebration gala on Saturday, May 18.

Read more:

- [NRA announces Operator Innovations finalists](#)
- [Sustainability at UW Oshkosh](#)