Residence Food Service Sub-Committee

Minutes of Meeting

Date: Wednesday, March 17th, 5:00pm – Colman Commons

Attendees: UTM Bill McFadden, Andrea De Vito, Dale Mullings
Chartwells Linda Balfour, Vicky Jezierski
Students Iris Yu, Run Ze Yu, Emily Cadger, Marc Bressler, Keshav Uppal

1. Town Hall Review
   - Bill reviewed the student feedback and questions from the February 11th Town Hall Meeting:
     i. Branded food service outlet pricing on campus were perceived as high, and off-campus branded promotions/specials were not available on campus
        • Bill stated that branded food service outlets on campus have prices set the same as the outlets located off campus. The price is established by the brand partner.
        • Bill explained that on-campus branded food service outlets are considered non-traditional sites (NTS) and, as such, are not included in all the promotions and specials that a full street store would offer.
     ii. Chartwells Pricing Review
        • Bill conveyed the results of a pricing survey completed by the Canadian College and University Food Service Association (CCUFSAs)
        • The UTM was ranked 14th highest (in terms of average prices) out of the 22 schools who participated in the survey (6th highest out of 12 full service comprehensive Universities)
        • The UTM ranked much lower than average in many of the prepared food/entrée (center of the plate) categories
        • Bill reminded the students that average prices of ‘center of the plate’ items were lowered at Colman Commons for the 2009-2010 school year
        • Bill noted that the UTM’s ranking in the soup and salad category was higher than average
        • Bill again asked the students to e-mail him with any item prices they wanted benchmarked against prices from other schools
        • Bill reviewed the procedures that Chartwells and the UTM use to determine prices – prices are to be set for the following school year in May/June after several meetings and discussions around industry pricing and related economic factors
   ➢ ACTION – Bill agreed to emphasize a review of the salad and soup pricing for the following school year
iii. Food Services Expansion
   - Bill reiterated the need to include a mixture of branded and non-branded food service outlets in the expansion of food services on campus – what this mixture will specifically include will be determined in large part by the upcoming survey.

iv. The “D” in the Globe & Mail
   - Bill believes that the Globe & Mail’s ranking is mostly attributed to a shortage of quality food service space on campus and, once the number of outlets increases, the ‘D’ ranking will improve.

v. Hours of Operation
   - Bill explained that the UTM currently provides approximately 100 more service hours (a combination of number of outlets and operating hours) than schools of a similar size. The University of Windsor was sited as a specific example as it is very similar in size to UTM.
   - Vicky stated that staffing levels at each outlet change throughout the day based on hourly volume.

vi. Local/Sustainable Food Choices
   - Vicky described Chartwells local purchasing initiatives – although they try to purchase these items whenever available, these items tend to have limited availability due to seasonality and, consequently, are relatively high in price.
   - Vicky reviewed the results of a student survey Chartwells performed in October/November 2009 about the Local Food Plus (LFP) program:
     a. A large number of students did not know what LFP was.
     b. A larger number of Students did not (and would not once they learned of LFP) consider LFP a determinant in their purchasing decisions.
     c. Students would not pay more for LFP products.
   - Vicky mentioned that Chartwells only uses sustainable seafood and can make free-range eggs available despite their relatively high cost, but she has not received any demand for these eggs.
     a. Free range eggs would be sold at a premium to regular eggs if they were to be desired on campus.
   - If product costs of LFP and/or organic items are close to the non-LFP or non-organic item costs, Chartwells will always purchase the LFP and/or organic items.
   - Bill mentioned that organic and LFP considerations will be included in the survey to determine what concepts will be located in the renovated Meeting Place.
   - Vicky described Starbucks’ composting program recently launched at the UTM and, if this program is successful, will consider launching a Tim Hortons composting program as well.

vii. Environmentally-Friendly Packaging
   - Biodegradable packaging for takeout containers costs $0.25 each and customers have expressed that they do not want to pay the additional cost for these containers.
   - Linda reviewed the status of the dish return program in residence:
     a. Linda noticed a 2-week period in January where return rates increased, but return rates have since returned to normal.
     b. Colman Commons is currently out of China and had to order once again.
   - Bill wants to resume the dish return program at Roy Ivor and Erindale in the fall and hopes that a full year of the program will lead to improved dish return behaviour.

2. Survey for Meeting Place Food Concepts
   - Bill reviewed the proposed survey questions for the UTM Community to help determine what food concepts will be included in the renovated Meeting Place.
• Bill clarified that there will be 2 subsets of survey respondents – Resident Students and Non-Resident UTM Community Members
• Marc recommended that the survey be implemented to Residence Students before the end of this school year
• Run Ze recommended a survey launch as soon as possible

3. Meeting with Sheridan Students
• Andrea reviewed the points discussed at the March 2nd meeting with Sheridan/UTM students:
  i. Breakfast and Late Night Meals
  • Andrea and Vicky have had numerous discussions on how to make more food available prior to 8:25am for UTM students to take to Sheridan on Tuesdays and Thursdays
  • The UTM and Chartwells want to ensure that any food that students purchase from Colman Commons to bring to Sheridan can be stored in a food safe manner and can also be safely reheated once at Sheridan – i.e. how to appropriately package the food items so that food temperatures are maintained below the danger zone for bacteria prior to reheating
  • Vicky and Andrea came to the conclusion that the best way to make allow students to take hot entrées away would be to provide students the ability to purchase lunch bags and ice packs
  • The students did not feel that Sheridan students would want to carry any extra items to Sheridan because they already have a lot of art supplies and other equipment to take with them
  • Vicky asked the students to provide any specific items that they would like made available to them in the morning to take to Sheridan
  • Vicky has pre-made mixed fruit bowls in the past, but found that the students preferred to make up their own fruit mixture
  • Vicky encouraged the students to submit a list of items in the evening that Chartwells will prepare and make available to the students the following morning to take to Sheridan
  • Bill reviewed the discussion regarding a Sheridan-specific meal plan
    a. A Sheridan-specific meal plan at the UTM could only feasibly include the same Basic Dollar amounts as the existing plans but with greater Flex Dollar amounts
    b. Any reduction in Basic Dollar amounts runs the risk of moving the plan outside the realm of being the government’s definition of a meal plan, thus removing any meal plan tax savings
  ➢ ACTION – Bill agreed to contact the UTM’s Region of Peel Health Inspector to discuss food options for students to take from Colman Commons to Sheridan that can be done so in a safe manner
  ➢ ACTION – Bill, Andrea, and Chartwells agreed to investigate the feasibility of offering lunch containers and ice packs for sale at Colman Commons for the fall
  ➢ ACTION – Vicky agreed to meet with a group of Sheridan students at the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year to discuss Sheridan-specific food service ideas

4. New Business
• Communication from Meal Plan Office to students
  i. The students agreed that communication from the Meal Plan Office via Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, etc would not be deemed as professional and, consequently, would not have the intended impact
  ➢ ACTION – Bill agreed that the Meal Plan Office would try a scheduled weekly e-mail with a short, pointed message to the students starting in the 2010-2011 school year
• Customer Service Issue with Colman Commons Cashier
  i. The students raised a customer service issue regarding a specific cashier at Colman Commons
  ii. The cashier did not ring in a Value Combo properly and has been rude to students in the past
ACTION – Vicky and Linda agreed to address this cashier as soon as possible

• Paper Plates
  
  i. As a follow up to the previous discussion on the low return rates of dishes to Colman Commons, Bill asked if the students would like to see paper plates – plates that are biodegradable and recyclable – at Colman Commons instead
    
    • Marc felt that the students would not give up the use of China for eat-in purchases
    • The students recommended the use of paper plates for takeout only
    • Bill felt that Housing would have a concern with the increased amount of garbage as a result of the use of paper plates in residence

ACTION – Bill agreed to conduct more research and have further discussion regarding the costs and benefits of continuing the china program while selectively using paper plates. The focus of this initiative is to be as respectful to the environment as possible while meeting the needs of the community and minimizing meal plan rate increases.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 31st, 5:00pm – Room SB 3138