



Food Service Advisory Committee

Minutes of Meeting

Date: Thursday, November 28, 2019
Room: MN 5128
Attendees: V. Jezierski, S. Senese, L. Bailey, A. De Vito, S. Coccagna, B. Slomka, L. Barber,
A. Abdullah, H. Waheed, K. Ng, A. Abdeldayem, M. Havelka
Regrets: S. Fazilat, A. Carter
Absent: S. Talwar

1. **BUSINESS ARISING**

UTMSU Feedback

- Before the UTMSU proceeded with presenting their concerns, A. De Vito referenced a Medium Article “Chartwells Catering: Say No to Monopoly” that had some misleading information
 - A. De Vito pointed out that the food service contract with Chartwells allows for other external caterers
 - UTM put out 2 separate RFSQs for external caterers – one on September 22, 2015 and one on November 10, 2016 – and received only 1 bid (Aura) response between the two
 - V. Jezierski added that the UTMSU was involved in the process for the 2 RFSQs
 - V. Jezierski also confirmed that the Blind Duck did not submit a bid
 - A. De Vito also reminded the Committee that all recognized student groups receive 30% off on catering orders (non-branded items only)
 - A. Abdullah asked if the 30% discount has only been in place this past year
 - V. Jezierski and S. Coccagna confirmed that the discount has been in place for at least 5 years and was negotiated into the current food service contract with Chartwells
- The Committee asked if the Committee had any connections to Chartwells
 - V. Jezierski responded that the Committee has no affiliation with Chartwells and, as a third party organization, they are contracted by UTM through the public procurement process to provide food services at UTM
 - V. Jezierski reminded the Committee that UTM gathered feedback from the Community through a variety of methods when the RFP for the food service contract was prepared
- The UTMSU presented their issues with Chartwells and were concerned that these issues would continue if the contract with Chartwells was extended by one year

- On behalf of the 124 clubs and 17 academic society groups, the UTMSU felt that catering prices offered by Chartwells were too high and the budgets of the student groups could not support serving food to their constituents in order to bring culture to the campus
 - Even with 30% discount, the student groups cannot afford to have at least one function with catering
 - As a result, the UTMSU has to get sponsorships for student clubs
 - The UTMSU feels that there is a lack of cultural food and halal options on the catering menu
 - Only 2 halal options identified on Catertrax
 - **ACTION – V. Jezierski will work immediately with Chartwells to better identify the halal options for catering**
 - The UTMSU feels that the only way to meet the demand for catered cultural food is to have external food come onto campus
 - The UTMSU feels that access to cultural food will allow student groups to improve quality of campus life at UTM
 - The UTMSU does not believe that Chartwells or any other provider can accommodate the variety of cultures on campus
 - The UTMSU has seen that student groups at other universities are allowed to bring in external catered food, but UTM student groups cannot
 - The UTMSU stated that the lack of available meeting space in the Student Centre forces student groups to book space in other places on campus, where they run into the issue of only being able to order from Chartwells
- The UTMSU conducted 50+ interviews with Chartwells staff and supervisors and concluded that, for the past 3-4 years, the working environment and the treatment of the Chartwells employees by management has become an issue
 - The UTMSU will present their findings in the new year – over 90% of employees interviewed provided answers that were not favourable to Chartwells
 - The UTMSU will be working with Chartwells' labour union as well as consultants and external professionals to find a solution the current issues and to ensure workers of third-party companies get treated fairly
- V. Jezierski provided a response
 - Chartwells is on their fourth General Manager in the past 5 years – management has changed frequently to accommodate the concerns brought forward by Hospitality & Retail Services and the Community
 - UTM has to follow public procurement rules when procuring new catering partners
 - UTM cannot let just anyone caterer come on campus – part of the procurement process is ensuring that the prospective caterers meet public health approvals
 - UTM has no involvement in Chartwells relations with its employees
 - if Chartwells' employees have issues, they need to address them with their union and with their management
 - it is Chartwells' employees right to talk to their union to ensure that they are being treated fairly
 - Any concerns that come to Hospitality & Retail Services are addressed and followed up on

- From CCUFSA, it was determined that UTM is the only university that has as many halal options on campus
 - Many universities charged extra for halal options – UTM does not
 - Possible lack of halal labelling and signage was a concern brought forward by the Resident Student Dining Committee
 - **ACTION – Hospitality & Retail Services will follow up with Chartwells to ensure that halal items are prominently labelled and to educate the Community**
 - S. Senese asked if the UTMSU could compile cultural menus or items that they would like so that Chartwells can have a chance to make them available
 - V. Jezierski stated that she will bring the request for more cultural menu items for catering forward to Chartwells to try and get new options on campus
 - B. Slomka asked if the Committee would be involved in determining the strategic food service priorities as part of the RFP process for a new food service contract
 - V. Jezierski respond that the consultants UTM hired before the last RFP was developed performed open houses, focus groups, and town halls to collect feedback from the Community in allowing UTM to develop its strategic food service priorities for the food service contract
 - V. Jezierski opined that perhaps an updated self-op feasibility study could be completed as part of the next RFP process
 - V. Jezierski also stated that the mission of food services at UTM is to be the best campus food service provider with or without a contractor – UTM will not settle and will keep pushing Chartwells
 - B. Slomka asked if any other food service providers are able to get the types of food that the Community would like to have from other sources if they can't produce it in-house
 - V. Jezierski replied that food service providers, including Chartwells, can form partnerships to accomplish this, but UTM would need to provide them the space to accommodate and, currently, this space is not available
 - A. Abdullah asked what other options UTM had if Chartwells can't provide the catering solutions students want
 - V. Jezierski responded that UTM could request for a deeper discount for students in the next RFP
 - V. Jezierski reiterated that she will ask Chartwells to better identify halal options on their catering menu
 - V. Jezierski also reminded the Committee that food authenticity is difficulty to provide across all cultures
 - With public-tendered RFSQs for external caterers, V. Jezierski stated that the requirements for these suppliers would be to have a process that includes delivery to campus, setup, and clean-up
 - **ACTION – Hospitality & Retail Services will speak with Procurement to discuss how to change the public tender process for external caterers to take into account the issues that were brought forward in the Meeting**
 - M. Havelka asked the UTMSU what they found out regarding how other universities were able to provide external food on their campuses
 - A. Abdullah will provide this information to the Committee at the next meeting

Fair Trade Campus Update

- A. De Vito received notification during the Meeting that UTM was just awarded Fair Trade Campus – Silver Designation by Fair Trade Canada
 - A formal announcement and celebration event are to come

Hospitality & Retail Services Budget

- A. De Vito reviewed the 2019-20 Forecast and 2020-21 Budget for Hospitality Services
 - A. De Vito emphasized the fact that, as an ancillary, Hospitality Services does not take subsidies from the central operating budget
 - UTM has also decided that all ancillaries would also *not* contribute any surpluses back to the central operating budget but, instead, will re-invest in its services through capital purchases and renovations and will use any surpluses to build up reserves in order to fund these activities
 - A. De Vito outlined impacts on the 2019-2020 Forecast
 - Delay in food court opening
 - Delay in hiring for vacant and new positions
 - Several large, one-time movie shoots
 - A. De Vito showed that the revenue from the one-time movie shoots would result in the ancillary earning a significant surplus, which would be used to help pay off the \$3M+ in capital investment the ancillary made this year (food court, Starbucks renovation, Starbucks new-build)
 - A. De Vito outlined impacts on the 2020-21 Budget
 - CPI + Cost-of-Living increases – projected 3.3% food price increases
 - Average Cheque – projected to be \$7.50
 - Less Movie Shoots
 - Department Expansion
 - First full year of depreciation for \$3M+ capital expenditures
 - No new builds planned for next year
 - Slight enrolment increases
 - A. De Vito showed that the decrease in revenue from the movie shoots would be offset by an increase in food revenue from the food court and new Starbucks
 - With food service revenue incurring higher cost of sales than movie shoots, and with the increase in labour (new hires) and depreciation expenses, the operating result would move close to breakeven
 - A. De Vito also reviewed the impact that the increase in average cheque would have on meal plan rates
 - The minimum meal plan (Small B) basic amount would increase to \$2,250 to satisfy CRA's minimum requirement for a tax-exempt meal plan
 - The increases to the other Group B meal plans would follow suit
 - The Group B meal plan increases will be offset by only nominal (less than 1%) increases in the Group A plans
 - A. De Vito informed the Committee that about 90% of meal plan students select a Group A
 - A. De Vito also announced that Residence was looking to have less and less upper-year students in Residence, which meant that the number of Group A meal plan students could move toward 100% in the short term

- As a result, the impact of the higher meal plan increases for next year would be felt by the upper-year students who select a Group B plan, which represented less than 10% of the Residence population
- A. De Vito showed that UTM food prices, on average, tend to be low compared to other Canadian universities, and that UTM meal plan rates among the lowest in the province as compared to other universities requiring declining balance meal plans for Residence students
- H. Waheed asked why can't Basic funds be transferred to Flex
 - A. De Vito and A. De Lorenzis stated that the transfer of Basic funds to Flex is not allowed because it jeopardizes the tax-exempt statuses of all Basic purchases, and all previously-made Basic transactions would now be taxable and the students would have to pay back the taxes outstanding
 - Doing so would be administratively burdensome and would put the entire tax-exempt meal plan program at risk of being audited
- The Committee did not have any comments regarding the budget or the proposed meal plan rate increases

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, February 6, 2020