



Resident Student Dining Committee

Minutes of Meeting

Date: Monday, March 9, 2020, 9:00am
Location: DH2085
Attendees: UTM Andrea D., Sanjhana D.
 Students Hamza W., Layla M.

1. Business Arising

A. Grocery Delivery Initiative - WANDA

- The students asked for an update on WANDA's implementation in Residence
 - Andrea D. reminded the Committee that the initiative would be taken on by Residence for implementation since there was no option to allow all meal plan holders to have access to this service
 - Andrea D. agreed to reach out to Residence for an update
 - *UPDATE: Andrea D. has received no response – Residence operations are focused on addressing concerns of those students who will be staying on campus*

B. Plant-Based Food Initiative

- Andrea D. reminded the Committee that, although the plant-based food initiatives will be ramping up, UTM's intention is not to be 100% plant-based but to provide the UTM Community with resources to make their own decisions

- Andrea D. indicated that a Copper Branch will opening in the TFC space in the Fall and that UTM has an arrangement with Chartwells that Copper Branch will continue past the expiration of the food service contract with Chartwells even if Chartwells is not the successful bidder
- Andrea D. stated that Copper Branch is a 100% vegan concept that offers breakfast options that differ to those already being offered in the Davis Building and also includes Power Bowls, which are really popular with vegans and non-vegans
 - The Students were excited about Copper Branch's menu offerings
 - The Students asked if Copper Branch would push average cheque up or down
 - Andrea D. was not able to show Copper Branch's prices on their website, but stated that the impact on average cheque would depend on which menu items were popular
- The Students asked if more plant-based options be offered as part of Chartwells' menu, like in Colman Commons
 - Andrea D. replied that the non-branded locations would have more plant-based options, and those options would be better highlighted on the menus
 - Andrea D. also indicated that Forward Food would assist in providing marketing, educational, and supply chain support in UTM's efforts to get more plant-based options on campus
 - The Students asked if Forward Food only focused on getting more products, like Beyond Meat, onto campus
 - Andrea D. responded that, although Forward Food does help get more plant-based meat substitutes, like Beyond Meat, through the supply chain, they also provide many more valuable resources, like sustainability support, such as supplying carbon emissions statistics based on increases in plant-based food offerings

- *UPDATE: UTM has offered to host the 2020 Plant-Based Food Summit in the Fall*

2. New Business

A. Food Service Contract

- Andrea D. announced that Hospitality & Retail Services has commenced the process of procuring the services of a food service consultant to assist with the development of the RFP for a new Food Service Contract
- As part of the RFP process, a sub-committee of the Food Service Advisory Committee will spin-off to accommodate a more frequent meeting schedule throughout the RFP process, and A. De Vito asked if someone from the Resident Student Dining Committee would be available over the summer to provide resident student representation on this sub-committee
 - Layla M. volunteered but would commit via email once she has confirmed her summer availability
 - *UPDATE: Given the operational changes on campus, the confirmation of the sub-committee would likely be postponed until after the end of April*

B. Sustainability Initiatives

- Andrea D. reminded the Committee that March 9-13 was Sustainability Week
 - Hamza W. commented that he would be participating in the Sustainability Case event, where students were asked to present possible sustainability projects for their campus, scheduled to occur on March 21
 - Andrea D. committed to allowing Hamza W. to present his findings at the next Committee meeting
 - *UPDATE: The Sustainability Case event was cancelled, as was the follow-up Committee meeting*

- Andrea D. announced that an eco-container program based on a token system would be launching to support the Food Court in time for the start of school in the Fall
 - The students asked how the eco-containers would be washed
 - Andrea D. replied that they would be washed through commercial dishwashers, but the space for properly drying the containers is currently being sought after by Hospitality & Retail Services, who are confident that they will have this issue resolved in time for the Fall launch
 - Andrea D. also mentioned the possibility of having an eco-container program to replace or support the China program in Colman Commons
 - The students weren't aware that takeout on China could be removed from Colman Commons and returned to dish-return stations in Erindale and Roy Ivor
 - Andrea D. reviewed the program and confirmed that China does missing each year, and having an eco-container using a deposit system may work better
- Andrea D. also announced that Hospitality & Retail Services will be going out to tender for a modular farm system that would support the existing vertical farm and provide almost 2-acres worth of produce each year for food services, but, given lead times, a solution would likely not be implemented until the spring of 2021

C. Communication Around Allergies & Dietary Restrictions

- Andrea D. reviewed current procedures around requesting allergy and dietary information from students through the residence application process
 - The students suggested that Hospitality & Retail Services run a tabling session/questionnaire at the beginning of the school year to capture data and opinions on the process in order to maximize feedback
 - Andrea D. also suggested that Hospitality & Retail Services contact Student Housing & Residence Life as well as Student Affairs to resume its

inclusion in training sessions for staff involved in campus tour, student life, and orientation activities in order to broaden the reach of the message around the need for increased disclosure of allergies and dietary restrictions by students

D. Meal Plan – Open Discussion

- Andrea D. opened the floor to an open discussion on the meal plan
 - The students asked why they had to have Basic and Flex Dollars
 - Andrea D. explained that Basic Dollars provided students with the ability to save the tax on qualified purchases as long as the calculation of the funds met a specific calculation, leaving Flex Dollars for purchases that don't qualify for as tax-exempt
 - The students brought up the concern that meal plan students feel they have too much Basic and not enough Flex and asked if Basic could be transferred to Flex.
 - Andrea D. responded that Basic could not be transferred to Flex because of the tax-exempt status of the Basic funds
 - ***ACTION: Andrea D. committed to reviewing the meal plan composition (Basic vs. Flex) for 2021-22 since the 2020-21 meal plans were already set***
 - The students asked if the Blind Duck could accept Basic funds
 - Andrea D. stated that, because the Blind Duck was operated by the UTMSU, an external organization to UTM, purchases at the Blind Duck could not qualify as tax-exempt
 - Andrea D. brought up the current trend that students were looking for both convenience vs. customization in their food operations, and asked the students if this was a factor in why students increasingly using food delivery apps

- Andrea D. added that the Food Court has increased the ability to customize food, but acknowledged that, with the line-ups, the convenience factor may be lacking
- The students stated that they much preferred the food in the Food Court over Colman Commons, but the Food Court has limited hours and offerings in the evenings and on weekends
- The students also felt that portions at Colman Commons were too small
- The students felt that delivery apps provided more access to "authentic" ethnic foods, like Indian, Pakistani, and Chinese, that were not available or were not deemed as "authentic" on campus
- The students will bring the topic back to other resident students for feedback, but confirmed that the fact that food apps make food available 24/7 with convenient delivery right to residence is a huge factor in why students are using these apps
- The students also suggested that most students prefer quick, handheld foods when studying, and such foods aren't as available from campus

NEXT MEETING: Fall 2020