



Resident Student Dining Committee
Minutes of Meeting

Date: Wednesday, November 10, 2021, 1:00pm
Location: Zoom Meeting
Attendees:
UTM Andrea D., Angela D
Students Giang B., Melanie C., Aly S., Divine A.

NAPKIN TALK @ ARAMARK RESIDENTIAL DINING LOCATIONS

Aramark developed the “Napkin Talk” communication tool and first launched it in Canada at Carleton University; we later implemented it at all of our residential dining locations. This program encourages students to provide their feedback by writing their comments on a napkin and posting it on the Napkin Talk board. We have had great success with this program; it is one of the most successful methods of collecting feedback.

The fact that it is posted on the board for others to read, provides feedback to everyone, including students, and staff members. What we realized was that this open dialogue encouraged others to provide feedback and to also build awareness for our team members who took a moment to read through the comments.

Within 24 hours of the comments being posted, our manager responds to the comment by placing a post it note with the response onto the original napkin. We track all of the information on our dashboard and use this fact-based data to support necessary changes within our program.

1. New Business

A. Hospitality Services Budget

- Andrea D. reviewed the requirements for an ancillary budget for Hospitality
 - Self-funded, not subsidized by operating budget
 - Must maintain a fund reserve to cover construction, capital investments, operating reserves and shortfalls
 - Covers food services (meal plan), vending, conferences, special events, catering, movie shoots
- Andrea D. highlighted the key elements of the budget
 - direct investment in addressing data and network security concerns that have been preventing recent integrations from being implemented
 - Projecting a \$1.2M operating shortfall due to provincial and campus health restrictions reducing the number of people on campus and eliminating conference and catering business
 - No layoffs
 - Continued investment in sustainability program
 - Shortfalls will not be put on the backs of students

B. Basic vs. Flex

- Andrea D. reviewed the definition of Basic and Flex accounts and what qualifies as a Basic purchase
 - meals can be purchased using Basic dollars

- meals are food and beverage typically consumed at breakfast, lunch, and dinner
- adding a drink, snack, or dessert to a meal qualifies those items as Basic-eligible
- adding a second drink, snack, or dessert to a meal does not qualify those items as Basic-eligible
- for places like Tim Hortons and Starbucks, items considered a dessert (e.g. donut, brownie, cookie, cake pop) are not considered meal items and, therefore, do not qualify as Basic-eligible when purchased with a drink
- The minimum amount of Basic available on a meal plan has to meet the CRA formula $\text{Average Meal Price} \times 10 \text{ Meals per Week} \times \text{Number of Weeks}$
- Flex items are items that are not Basic-eligible as well as items purchased from vending machines, from UTMSU operations, from off-campus partners, or from food trucks

C. 2022-2023 Meal Plan Rates

- Andrea D. presented the proposed meal plan rates for 2022-2023
 - Forecasts for next year are that food prices will increase by 3%
 - Andrea D. confirmed that, with the uncertainty around food prices fueled by current supply chain issues, H&RS will work with Aramark to keep non-branded food price increases within the 3% range for next year
 - The projected 3% food price increase equates to an increase of 3% in meal prices, which means that Basic amounts need to increase accordingly to abide by the CRA meal plan formula
 - Average meal prices for 2022-23 are projected to be about \$8.00
 - Because demand for items has increased due to the fact that more items at places like Tim Hortons and Starbucks are no longer Basic-eligible, Flex amounts will increase for next year as well
 - Andrea D. showed that, for those who selected \$100 in Flex for 2021-22, projected Flex spending is about 200% of their starting balance even before Tim Hortons opened
 - As a result of this demand, Flex amounts for next year will increase from \$100/\$250 to \$250/\$500
 - Andrea D. reiterated that UTM has historically had lower than average food prices when compared to other Canadian Universities
 - Andrea D. showed that UTM has the lowest minimum required meal plan for first- and upper-year students as compared to other Ontario Universities with declining balance meal plans
 - Because of the proposed meal plan increases being based on projected food price increases as required by the CRA and based on an increase in demand for Flex dollars attached to the meal plan, Andrea D. confirmed that, despite the ancillary's forecasted operating shortfall of approximately \$3M over the past 2 years, the recovery of this shortfall will not be placed on the backs of students
 - The Resident Student Dining Committee endorsed the meal plan rate increases for next year

D. Mystery Shop Program

- Andrea D. reviewed the Resident Student Mystery Shop Program that was in place prior to the pandemic
 - Meal plan students participate by filling out brief survey of their food purchase using their meal plan on campus
 - Items to include in the survey include cleanliness, stock levels, signage/menu boards, customer service (server/cashier), food quality, and dietary restriction information (labels, procedures)
 - Those who participate will receive funds on their meal plan to cover the cost of their meal
 - Training will be provided to review what to look for and how the program works
 - Andrea will provide a more detailed overview of the program, including sample audits, in the next meeting

E. Communication

- Andrea D. asked the Committee how they received information from H&RS
 - The Committee confirmed that they do get departmental information from direct email and the Residence newsletter
 - The Committee suggested posters at entrances of locations and at POS stations, and felt that a suggestion box for raising general food service concerns would be a good idea
 - Andrea D. introduced the Aramark's Napkin Talk program – a program where students can anonymously leave feedback on a napkin and attach it to a bulletin board where the feedback gets reconciled daily by Aramark
 - **UPDATE: Aramark has not launched this program as a safety precaution due to the pandemic. However, students wanting to provide similar feedback can do so as part of the Aramark's Voice of the Consumer program, which can be accessed at <http://yourdiningvoice.com>. Aramark will launch a communication program around this initiative to build awareness**
 - Andrea D. reminded the Committee that students with any specific concerns about their order should immediately contact Aramark on-site to replace their order or to get a refund
 - Andrea D. also reminded the Committee that any communication materials posted by H&RS will always have a call back to its website where more detailed and updated information is posted
 - ***ACTION: H&RS will post communication with examples to better explain Basic & Flex at the cash stations***

NEXT MEETING: Before December Exams