



University Food Committee  
Minutes  
November 12, 2021  
1:00-2:00 pm  
Kirkhof Center 2270

Attendees: Bri Conway, Sam Asoklis, Paul Kramer, Felix Ngassa, Suzeanne Benet, Jay Chapa, Lauren Carlisi, Kylie Ohrt, Ty Krueger, Kristen Evans, Libby MacQuillan (attended via zoom), Kyle Gineman, Aaron Haight  
Absent: Allison Griffin, Kimberly Quinn, Doug Wentworth, Leah Short  
Guest(s): Craig Wieschhorster (for Doug Wentworth), Kyle Holcomb (for Leah Short)  
Recorder: Susan Sigler

## Introductions

- Committee members in attendance introduced themselves:
  - Aaron Haight (co-chair), Acting Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students
  - Kyle Gineman (co-chair), Vice President for Diversity Affairs, Student Senate
  - Bri Conway, Student Senate
  - Sam Asoklis, Hospitality & Tourism Management student
  - Paul Kramer, Aramark Manager
  - Felix Ngassa, Professor and Chair, University Academic Senate
  - Suzeanne Benet, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs (Provost's Office),
  - Craig Wieschhorster, Associate Vice President for Business & Finance
  - Jay Chapa, Campus Activities Board
  - Lauren Carlisi, Applied Food & Nutrition student
  - Kylie Ohrt, Residence Hall Association
  - Ty Krueger, Graduate Student Association
  - Kristen Evans, Housing & Residence Life
  - Kyle Holcomb, Center for Women and Gender Equity

## Approval of Minutes

- Minutes approved with no changes.

## Campus Dining Overview

- Craig Wieschhorster presented an overview of the Campus Dining process
  - There are two ways to run a campus dining program:
    - Self-operated by University

- **Have a contractual relationship with a third-party vendor (Grand Valley's model)**
- The majority of universities are contracted
  - Contracting provides economies of scale
  - Self-operated model is more expensive
    - Data shows ⅓ to ⅔ higher cost to students
  - Contracting keeps cost down for students
- GVSU financial responsibilities
  - Auxiliary costs (facilities, equipment, utility costs, space, etc.) are solely funded through dining revenues
  - Auxiliary costs are not supplemented by the University
  - The goal is not to make money but must cover costs
- New contracts go through a Request for Proposal (RFP) competitive bidding and evaluation process
- Contracts span a period of time but are negotiated each year (to review food costs, new menus, trends in Food Service industry, etc.)
  - GVSU's contract with Aramark is for 10 years, from 2018-2028
  - Contracts are negotiated as mutual agreement/partnership with Aramark
  - At maximum capacity operations are at \$22-23 million, have been \$15-16 million the last few years (less food costs, labor costs, overhead)
  - This year rising food costs and higher labor costs were factors in negotiations
  - Aramark has been in partnership with GV for over 30 years
- GVSU Sustainability rates are largely driven by dining
- Approximately 30% of foods are locally sourced
- Third-party vendor contracting can take advantage of bulk purchasing
  - Savings can then be passed on to students
- The existing contractual relationship doesn't exist on autopilot
  - Daily management meetings are held and discuss student feedback
  - Quarterly meetings occur with Aramark regional management
- We constantly evaluate to provide the best value for students
- GVSU housing/dining are the lowest in the state of Michigan
  - GVSU offers an affordable, quality education and experience
- The effect of campus dining to GVSU value is important
  - When students talk about value/quality we need to take them seriously
    - GVSU quality and experience ratings beat national averages
- Social media complaints are taken seriously
  - We take negative feedback and act on it
  - Rumors are investigated
- All are encouraged to address dissatisfaction with dining immediately (at point of interaction), so dining can correct the situation
- There will be human errors, it is GVSU's job to correct situations caused by errors

- Infrastructure: What is owned by GVSU vs. Aramark
  - Equipment is GVSU-owned
  - When a new contract begins, an inventory is taken
  - When the vendor leaves, inventory levels restored to original
- RFP process
  - Business and Finance team solicits and reviews proposals (the committee of University representatives includes faculty, staff, and students)
  - Vendors present publicly and to the committee
  - How do we find representatives for the committee?
    - Suggestions for members are solicited from Dean of Students, Provost, Housing, Student Senate, other University offices, etc.
- Campus Dining feedback (Paul Kramer)
  - Feedback is collected daily at each location, through the use of cards with QR codes
  - Feedback (“Wow” or “Rescue”) goes directly to the manager of the food service facility, and is responded to within 24 hours
    - If the food service director doesn’t respond within 24 hours, the feedback goes to Paul Kramer
    - If there isn’t a response within 48 hours feedback goes to Aramark’s regional director
  - Talk with Campus Dining occurs on Tuesday afternoons
    - Campus Dining has been directly contacting students to attend
    - Attendance has been poor
    - If interested in attending, reach out to Campus Dining’s marketing department to be added to the invitation list
  - In October, external consultant conducted a review of campus dining
    - Results will be available mid-December
    - 1400 responses were received
    - Comparison to Aramark and to higher ed
  - Approximately 38% of GVSU’s menus are Vegan or Vegetarian
    - Campus Dining needs to do a better job of communicating where they can be found
  - GVSU has a Registered Dietician
    - The dietician is free of charge and available to work with students who have dietary allergies, restrictions, etc.
  - Campus Dining is looking at a True Balance (allergy free) station to go into Kleiner in Fall 2022
    - There is special training and equipment involved in the set up
  - Food sourcing
    - Local farms are being used, and are sourced through Gordon Foods
    - More information can be found on the Campus Dining website at <https://www.gvsu.edu/campusdine/sustainability-68.htm>
    - For example: GVSU uses 12,000 pounds of lettuce per year

- If local farmers provide wholesale to GVSU, they lose retail opportunities, so many times they can't provide the volume GVSU needs for a cost that's sustainable for the farmers
- Staffing
  - Due to the current economic climate, it's difficult to retain staff
  - An HR manager is joining the team at end of the month
  - Campus Dining is down 450 student positions, will need to supplement with full-time employees
  - Staffing shortages are not unique to GVSU or Aramark
  - Aramark has negotiated with a fulltime union for competitive wages
  - Students are being offered signing and retention bonuses
    - There is the opportunity for up to \$1,700 in total bonuses
    - This effort did not yield an increase in student employees
  - Aramark doesn't force students to work during class time
    - Senior student managers prepare staffing schedules and work with the needs of student schedules
- Food Insecurity
  - LakerMeal Share – donation drive is currently open (ran out of meals and now replenishing)
  - Partner with Replenish
    - A lot of times if a Catering event has low turnout, they partner to provide meals
  - Non-perishable food drives are held to stock Replenish
  - \$25,000 food insecurity fund with Financial Aid
- Question: can people donate to LakerMeal Share without having a meal plan?
  - Donations can be made through the Student First Fund which is administered through the Dean of Students Office
    - Crisis funds are used for many needs (insecurity, IT, etc.)
- Parking Services has done a drive to pay parking tickets with canned goods donations
- Meal plans related to housing style
  - Meal plan is required if no kitchen is available in housing type – North housing automatically has the 14 plus meal plan
  - \$2,900 for mandatory meal plan
  - Just under 5000 students are voluntarily purchasing meal plans
  - Question: Were meal plans adjusted due to decreased availability?
    - No – Plans are based on meals per week
    - Campus Dining is working with students who are underutilizing meal plans
  - Students can decrease or upgrade meal plans

- Plans have to be considered for the future, when we are back to fully staffed and fully in person
- Campus Dining is considering at adjustable meal plans
- Each year GVSU evaluates how to provide best services at best value

## Exploring Student Input

- More than half the membership of the University Food Committee are students
- Student Senate provides opportunities for public comment and discussion
  - Senate will continue to share with UFC
  - Senate meeting had a campus dining conversation
    - Will discuss more in depth at the next general assembly
- Dining Forums are held every 3 weeks
  - Free food is provided
  - Contact Paul Kramer to be added to the invite list
- Vice Provost Student Advisory Board (VSAB)
  - Aaron Haight will raise the campus dining/food topic again with the advisory board and will provide feedback to UFC (December meeting)
- RHA Campus Concerns
  - Meets every Tuesday night at 8pm
  - At the end of the meeting, there is open discussion of campus concerns
  - Will send findings to Aaron Haight
- Other avenues for student feedback
  - Craig Wieschhorster will compile survey data and share with UFC
- Campus Activities Board
  - CAB works with Catering on events, and usually gets feedback pretty quickly
  - CAB is considering incorporating a survey
- Reach out to Replenish students
  - Partner with Replenish to create a survey of their students
- Do we want to add a button to the UFC website to provide feedback?
  - Would this be a separate collection of data, or would we provide links to avenues that already exist?
    - It's possible students may be being more comfortable sending feedback directly to this committee rather than directly to Aramark
    - May be helpful for gathering of themes and info
    - Needs to be continuity so things get reported only once (not on UFC website, Aramark, Replenish) which would skew data
      - The question needs to be asked: Did you also report this directly to Campus Dining?
- Libby MacQuillan's class is doing a project with campus dining as topic
  - The Committee can attend their final presentations if interested
- Students for Food Sovereignty is vocally against Aramark
  - SFS has been invited to meet with Aaron Haight, however to date they have declined

- Are other concerns being raised?
  - Factual information is part of the goal of UFC
  - Doug Wentworth and Craig Wieschhorster met with SFS last spring
- Issues raised by SFS regarding Aramark
  - Aramark is: unethical, part of the prison pipeline, fired from State of Michigan prisons, lack of local purchasing, non-sustainable, work with ICE, terrible place to work, food on campus is not good, not enough options
- Questions to explore regarding third-party contracts:
  - Who is involved with how the selection is done
  - What is considered in how we select a contractor
  - Perhaps our recommendation could be surrounding having representation on the annual review committee and on the 10-year RFP process
- We can put forward clear-cut recommendations

### **Finalizing UFC Focus Areas**

- Three Identified Objectives:
  - Accessibility/Options
  - Food Insecurity
  - Staffing Crisis
- Next meeting we will divide into three groups
  - Committee members will pick their area of interest
- A fourth area of interest is third-party contracts – Committee decided to add this to focus areas
  - Examining the selection process
  - Exploring concerns with/ethics of third-party vendors
  - Ethical issues with Aramark are of concern nationwide

### **Next Meeting**

- December 3, 2021, 1:00-2:00 pm, KC 2270