

FOOD SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
1/28/2021
ZOOM

MINUTES

Attending:

Sarah Abraham
Sulaiman Anwar
Nancy Chrystal-Green
Eddie Daniels
Jessie Furman
Craig Hill
Dennis Hines
Tina Horvath
Yasmine Mohseni
Matthew Mueller
Anesha Patel
Joy Rodgers

Jessica-Jean Stonecipher
Alex Wilkerson
Matthew Williams
Tim Bucolo – Gator Dining Svcs.
Nicole Jackson – Gator Dining Svcs.
Bill Zemba – Gator Dining Svcs.
Hector Leon – Pepsi
Wilcley Lima
Danette Loyd
Bill McGinn
Jenn Moyer
Dwan Courtney

I. Call to Order

Jessie Furman called the meeting to order at 11:32am.

II. Welcome and Introductions

Jessie

Welcome and thank you once again for prioritizing this meeting with your already busy schedules. Dwan Courtney was introduced as the new Director for Small Business and Supplier Diversity and was asked to give a brief background.

III. Review/Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the December 2, 2020 meeting were approved as submitted by unanimous vote of the committee.

IV. Director of Food & Beverage Services Report

Matt

- Halal Shack will not be coming to campus due to a previous contractual agreement which prevents them from moving forward at this time. Will look for another alternative.
- Racquet Club is moving forward and hope to open the new concept in August.
- Keene Faculty Lounge reopened this semester. Made slight adjustments regarding service and operations in light of COVID-19 to ensure health/safety of those using the lounge. The intent of the lounge is for faculty to have a relaxing space for interacting for faculty only. Beverages are served in disposable cups and snacks served on compostable plates. Faculty are encouraged to consume in the space.

- Looking at adding a small/diverse business identifier to the approved catering list.
- “We Demand Food Justice” national campaign – student groups and non-student group, Food Justice League asking for a boycott of Aramark operations in the Reitz Union. Centered around the use of prison food labor. We are gathering information in response to the emails received. You may see the groups on campus handing out flyers or you may receive emails.

Alex asked if Aramark has given a statement? Matt –Aramark has not provided a formal statement at this time. Discussions at their corporate level are taking place.

Nancy asked if there has been any impact on sales in the Reitz Union food courts due to the call for boycott. Matt – No negative sales impact to date.

Eddie - We will share information on the topic as we receive it. There are many similar campaigns across the country; this is not just a University of Florida or Aramark issue. Matt – These protests target many providers. K-12, universities and prisons all have similar food needs.

- Hare Krishna presence – Been on campus over 20 years. They opened properly in the fall with COVID guidelines in place. Have opened again this spring and are following safety standards including COVID guidelines.

Dennis asked if allowing the Krishna’s to serve food is an exception to policy? Eddie – Krishna’s are on many campuses across the country. They are not allowed to sell meal plans --- funds collected are supposed to be donations. Existing activity is an exception because of their classification as a religious organization and food is considered an essential part of their religious activity.

Nancy asked if there is some legal language re: the relationship? Craig – The university is trying to figure out if there should be an agreement with Krishna’s directly or a general university policy about religious organizations. Has not been resolved by general counsel at this point and is an active discussion.

V. Food Service contract timeline & Invitation to Negotiate (ITN)

Eddie

Restarting the process next month. Envision Strategies will continue as consultant for the process. Our goal is to release the ITN June 1; short list of proposers – September; final selection of provider – December; 6 months for contract negotiations and transition (January – June 2022). New contract period to begin July 1, 2022. FSAC will be kept informed and asked to provide input as we move through the process.

VI. Food Service Master Plan

- Report Recommendations

Matt provided a brief overview of the purpose of the master plan including current state of the program (2019), study recommendations, and key and specific recommendations. Copy of the presentation is attached.

Craig – feels strongly that Brailsford and Dunlavey study didn't go far enough in addressing meal plan utilization and one of the lowest meal plan utilization percentages he has ever seen.

Sulaiman – was on a meal plan freshman year, however, experienced fatigue of having the same meals often. Program needs more diverse options

Yasmine – current freshman. Does not have a meal plan because she heard the food gets repetitive. Would like to “want to go, not have to.”

Sarah – would like for Gator Dining to find their “brand”.

Craig asked for student feedback regarding a mandatory meal plan for students in university housing. Majority of the students were against it claiming financial burden, difficult to find food they enjoy, limited menu items, etc.

Craig – when there is a financial need related to housing and dining, costs are linked to financial aid. Need to moderate our expectations in this ITN if we are not going to consider some of the bolder approaches especially those identified by the consultants as existing in our peer comparison group. We want the dining program to reflect what UF wants it to be. ITN is a huge opportunity to set the dining program for the next decade.

Eddie thanked Craig and the students for the feedback. As we go into the ITN process we need to make a decision on what kind of food program we want and what the implications are related to financing and other key decisions. Our food program needs to reflect our diverse campus.

Eddie challenges this committee to provide input and guidance through the ITN process. This group can impact what our food program will look like for the next ten years and beyond.

Jenn encourages the members of this committee to visit the dining halls. We want to know what you think. Take a fresh look at the current offerings and concepts.

Matt Williams reminded the students that the dining program is funded as an auxiliary (self-generated revenue --- primarily in this case generated from meal plan sales). No state funds go into the dining operations/facilities.

Jessie reminded everyone that Gator Dining has extended invitations for members of the committee to try one of the many locations across campus. If interested, reach out to Nicole with Gator Dining to get your name on the list. Gator Dining wants your feedback.

VII. Updates

- Canteen

Matt – vending offerings have been adjusted to include PPE (masks, sanitizer, etc.). Also keeping a percentage of healthy items in their offerings as well.

- Pepsi
Hector – launching zero calorie/zero sugar items by end of February (including Starbucks and energy drinks).
- Gator Dining
Tim – Employ approximately 1200 individuals. Shared their current mission statement; introduced the *seals* of Gator Dining and current marketing/programming initiatives. See attached presentation.

Nicole mentioned they had 22 “pop-up” events in January. The Farmer’s Market has been very popular. Today there is a chili cook-off happening at FFC and GC.

Dwan commented that the stickers are a great idea. Coming off a trend where students are a lot more vocal and a lot more socially conscious, it shows their voices are being heard.

Matt W. excited to see the local seal in here and knowing Gator Dining is doing a great job of increasing local components.

- Other
none

VIII. Old Business

none

IX. New Business

- Open meeting, public notice
Sulaiman discussed the possibility of open meeting forums and what that might look like. Could be structured by posting a public notice along with a zoom link for the meeting. Allow up to ten people to speak for 2 minutes each with an option of adding 1 additional minute. This could be done in a zoom webinar format.

Dwan felt it would be a good idea, however be sure to set expectations/parameters.

Dennis mentioned this would take organization including a method of first come, first serve.

Nancy – appreciate the desire for transparency, etc. Would like to revisit the purpose of this committee and role of committee members. Want to make sure moving down this path lines up with what our responsibilities are. Perhaps other ways of gathering opinions?

Dennis agrees with Nancy. There are methods to communicate but not necessarily in this format.

Matt W. also agrees. Likes the idea of transparency and making students a part of the solution, but needs to be managed appropriately.

- “Local Restaurant Row” – tabled due to limited time

X. Adjournment

Jessie adjourned the meeting at 1:01 p.m.

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Next meeting February 25, 2021, 11:30am – 1:00pm via Zoom.