
Dear Dining Services,

This semester I took a class that encouraged us to get involved in our own community. For a research project, we had the opportunity to do just that by finding a way to make some type of impact on a community with which we identify. I decided to do some investigating with my peers and gather some of their responses to dining services this semester. I did this because dining on our campus has experienced a great amount of change and looked different this year than it ever has before. This has caused a great deal of conversation among students and faculty. I wanted to harness some of that conversation by asking constructive questions that would get students thinking more critically about their opinions on dining services.

Attached is the data I collected as well as some of my own comments and analysis. I hope that this information will be helpful in some way to you and your staff. I am including the comments that stood out as constructive and beneficial, but if you would ultimately like access to all of the responses, I would be glad to share that link with you. Thank you for your time and for being willing to listen to the voices of the students of our community.

Sincerely,

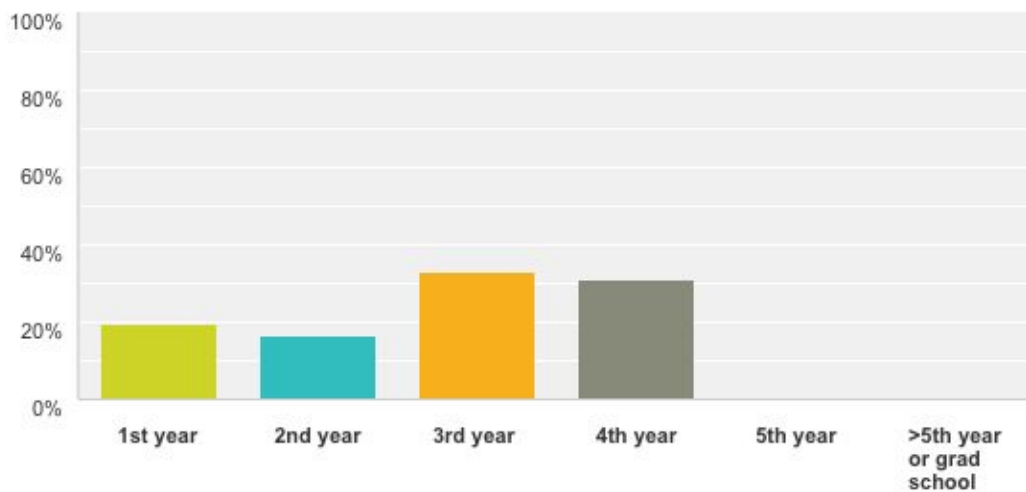
Sequoi Phipps

I conducted this survey via the Survey Monkey website. I introduced the survey by stating my intentions of sending the data to you, the dining services staff, and by stating that my goal was to collect student opinions on dining this semester. I stated that I was not affiliated with dining services or employed by dining services but that I was simply another student with the hopes of helping the students' voice be heard.

There were 61 responses to the survey from first through fourth year undergraduate students with a variety of meal plans.

What year in school are you?

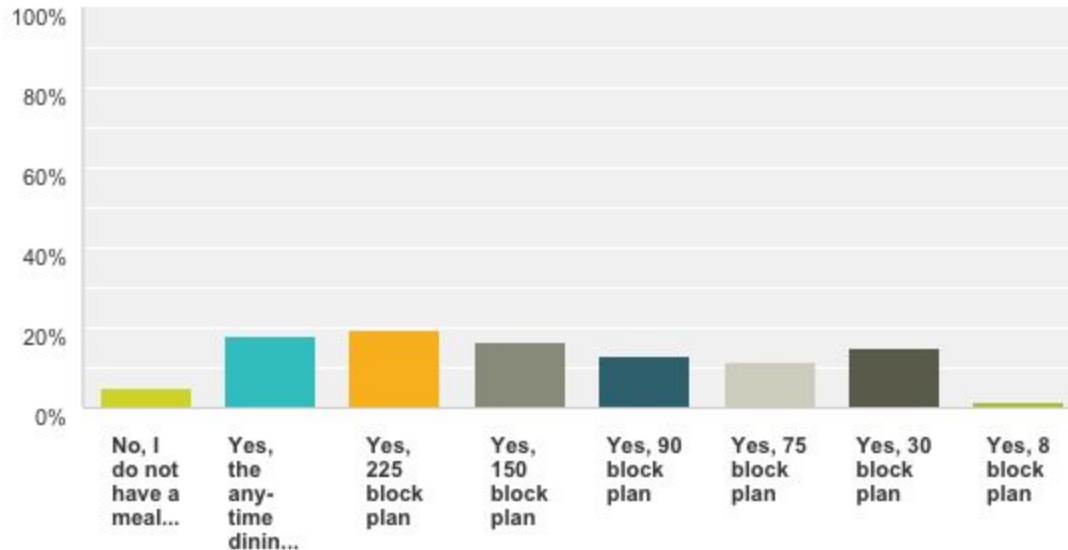
Answered: 61 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses
1st year	19.67%
2nd year	16.39%
3rd year	32.79%
4th year	31.15%

Do you have a meal plan? If so, which one?

Answered: 61 Skipped: 0



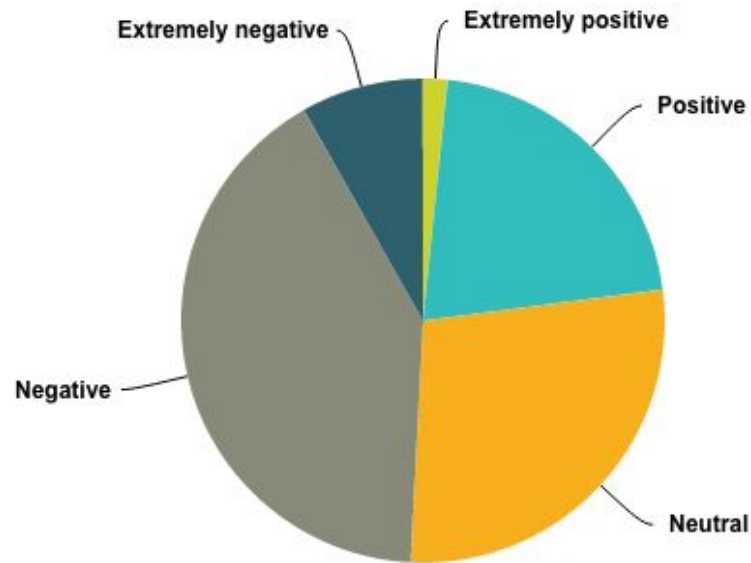
No, I do not have a meal plan	4.92%	3
Yes, the any-time dining plan (freshman requirement)	18.03%	11
Yes, 225 block plan	19.67%	12
Yes, 150 block plan	16.39%	10
Yes, 90 block plan	13.11%	8
Yes, 75 block plan	11.48%	7
Yes, 30 block plan	14.75%	9
Yes, 8 block plan	1.64%	1

Answer Choices	Responses
Extremely satisfied	0.00% 0
Satisfied	8.70% 2
Neutral	47.83% 11
Unsatisfied	26.09% 6
Extremely unsatisfied	17.39% 4
Total	23

Students were then asked about their general response to dining services this semester. Most of the responses fell in the center of the spectrum, on positive, neutral, and negative.

What is your initial reaction when discussing dining services this semester?

Answered: 61 Skipped: 0

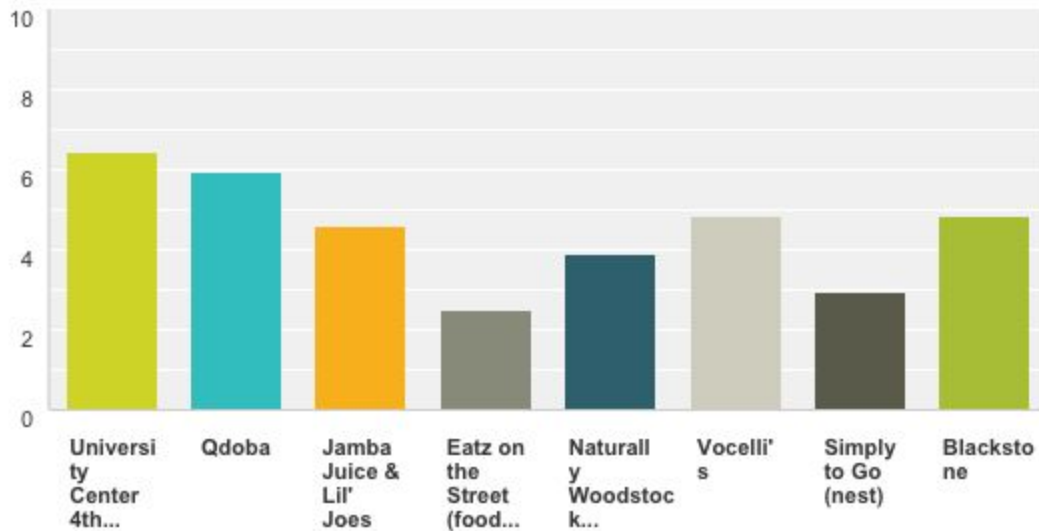


Answer Choices	Responses
Extremely positive	1.64% 1
Positive	21.31% 13
Neutral	27.87% 17
Negative	40.98% 25
Extremely negative	8.20% 5
Total	61

The survey also inquired about dining facility frequency and where the students ate the most and the least. They rated each dining option from 1 to 8, 1 being where they visited the most frequently and 8 where they visited least frequently.

Rank the dining options based on where you most frequently eat using your meal plan. 1 = most frequently, 8 = least frequently or never.

Answered: 61 Skipped: 0

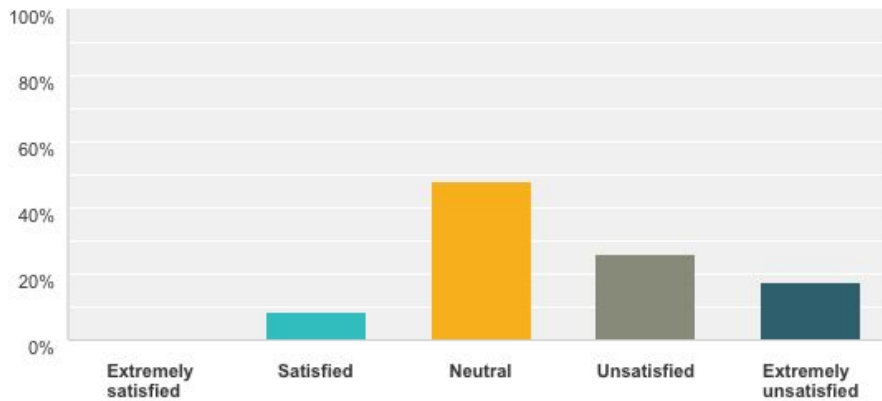


For students who have had a meal plan before this semester, I asked what changes impacted students. Overwhelmingly, these responses were in regards to the Nest and the Underground. Specifically, students were impacted by the reduced use of the Nest. Students stated multiple times that they wanted an accessible, full menu Joe Stacks that would make sandwiches. They also stated numerous times that the hours at the Underground have been a great disappointment. Upperclassmen state that the vacancy of the Nest now is not only a disappointment but the community formed in a place of dining has been lost with the loss of the nest.

Because the freshmen meal plan is different than it has been in the past, I asked the freshmen respondents to give their feedback on how satisfied they are with the meal plan.*

For freshmen with the anytime dining plan, how satisfied are you with your meal plan?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 38



Answer Choices	Responses
Extremely satisfied	0.00% 0
Satisfied	8.70% 2
Neutral	47.83% 11
Unsatisfied	26.09% 6
Extremely unsatisfied	17.39% 4
Total	23

* Since the survey was circulated, I spoke to a group of freshmen in person that informed me about the change to their meal plan for next semester. They were *all* very excited about the addition of 30 meal swipes to their plan and really appreciate the effort that has been put into altering their dining options slightly.

The next three questions were free response questions. The first question asked, “*What are some aspects of dining services that you feel are working well and that the dining services staff is doing well?*” Overwhelmingly, students responded that dining services staff and customer service has improved immensely. The answers included:

“Customer Service has done a 180”

“I’ve appreciated having Qdoba and Jamba Juice, both are brands I recognize and enjoy. They both offer something unique to UMW that wasn’t here before.”

“I think dining services is doing really well overall adjusting to the changes in all of the different services, I know it was not an easy adjustment for the staff.”

“I love the university center. The salad bar has way more options and the food seems to taste better.”

“Everyone's friendly and there's a lot more variety in the UC than there was in seaco. Longer hours in the main UC rooms are helpful for us who have practice that can go late in the evening.”

Following this, the survey inquired, “*What are some aspects of dining services that you feel need improvement or change?*” I attempted to select responses to share with you that contained constructive feedback.

“...having the billiards in the UC doesn't make sense. Put them in the underground and have snacks available late at night or put them in the nest.”

“Wish that they knew and posted the ingredients of all foods - there've been a few times when I've picked up foods (especially pastries or sandwiches) that had things I didn't like (ex: raw onions) or shouldn't eat for health reasons (ex: coffee) in them.”

“The hours of all places--being a freshman and not having anywhere to eat after 8 is very frustrating, especially when I run out of flex and can no longer order vocelli's or get qdoba.”

“One: they need better hours for weekend dining. Two: They need more vegetarian options. They don't just need a salad bar or a vegan bar, but they need vegetarian pasta options available most days, they need meatless options available to students at any time.”

“Spread available dining across campus so the UC is not as crowded and implement easier to go items again.”

“The Anytime Meal Plan does not suit my needs, especially considering how expensive it is. I see the benefit of helping freshmen to figure out their eating habits, but by this point I and everyone I know knows their eating habits.”

“I once got charged \$19 for a sandwich, soup and drink at the underground because I ran out of meal swipes and had to use flex. Had I known it would've cost that much I wouldn't have ordered it because no meal on this campus is worth that. You're wasting space by not putting anything else near Vocellis. The simply to go area should have regular hours.”

Thank you for taking the time to read these responses and to listen to the students' voice. I hope that hearing responses from a student point of view can assist you all as you continue to work to improve student life through a very crucial aspect of the university experience.