Themes from Community Members regarding Beloit College Food Services

Input collected from hundreds of students, faculty and staff during October 2011 and distilled into themes by the Food Service Task Force members

Food that we eat
- Food variety is critical in meeting the needs of a diverse student body, and it is critical that we meet the needs of a growing contingent of students who prefer vegetarian and vegan options or have dietary restrictions.
- We place a priority on healthy, fresh, and cook to order options, at all dining locations, and are particularly looking for enhanced healthy options in DKs. At DKs and Java Joint in particular, we seek to eliminate a pricing structure that financially incentivizes eating less healthy foods.
- We expect the food we eat to look appealing and be presented in visually attractive ways, believing that presentation enhances both taste and the overall experience of dining.
- We place a priority on eating local and socially responsible food, whenever it is reasonable, and we expect to grow the proportion of foods that fall into these categories over the next 5 years. Our students expect to be part of the planning for this priority. We expect to be educated about the sources of food we eat and to consistently be told where our food comes from, especially when it is local, so that we regularly have the option of making choices that align with personal values.
- We want consistent access to information about the food that we eat, including but not limited to: nutritional information and robust ingredient information. We seek some non-intrusive guidance about how to maximize our well-being through the food that is served.
- We expect our practices related to energy use, food sourcing, and waste removal to reflect our commitment to social responsibility.
- We seek to enhance the way we use our food to celebrate ethnic, cultural, and religious traditions and practices.

Access to food
- Students desire a meal plan that is much more flexible than our current meal plan. In particular students want more options to use combinations of meals and dollars.

Given the community input, this is a rough structure that students would find appealing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Price A (20 meal equivalents)</th>
<th>Price B (10 meal equivalents)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All meal swipes</td>
<td>All meal swipes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half meal swipes, half declining balance</td>
<td>Half meal swipes, half declining balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All declining balance</td>
<td>All declining balance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- We need a robust late night option that includes healthy options and coffee. While it does not have to be a full-fledged meal, it must be accessible with meal plan dollars and should be delivered on the north end of campus.
- We are interested in an arrangement with some number of local food establishments that would allow students to use food dollars to eat there, particularly on Sunday nights.
- We need to improve the access to desirable, healthy, to go meal options for students who are on the meal plan and are away from campus on College sponsored activities.

Using food as a vehicle for learning
- Student work study should be leveraged in more desirable ways to facilitate learning, including internships within food service in areas such as marketing, purchasing, producing and managing.
- Create student run, entrepreneurial options (examples: student run campus garden or a student run
coffee shop).
- Grow student consciousness about educated, mindful eating that will benefit and sustain them for life (think, liberal arts in practice).
- Advance a model for integrating students into food service decision making that both educates and contributes to fostering a responsive, involved driven decision-making food service culture.
- We should grow the way our food system is used as a learning laboratory, from the way we source food to the way it’s cooked and consumed.
- We expect our food service, the manager in particular, to be integrated into the fabric of the campus and provide leadership on ways we can use food for curricular and co-curricular learning.

The spaces in which we eat
- Our eating spaces need to be more attractive and inviting, and more generally appealing to all our senses. Some thematic ideas include: change in flooring, more coziness, circular tables, decorative food displays, more visual connections to the food we eat, attention to art/walls, enhanced lighting.
- DKs desperately needs expansion.
- We desire an outdoor dining option.
- There is some interest is adapting the top floor of CHaus for the late night food/coffee option.

Our catering needs
- Catering costs need to be at least equal to community pricing; there needs to be an incentive to use campus catering.
- Increased innovation in food options.
- We seek to maintain flexibility in terms of ordering and adapting menus to meet needs, timing of our ordering, last minute changes.
- We have to vastly improve the attention to detail, professionalize the entire operation, and overall vastly improve the customer service.

Current staff
We will respect and honor the contributions of our current employees as we consider whether to hire a food management company, paying particular attention to continued employment of our current staff, fair compensation for staff, continuing tuition support for those currently employed, and exploring possibilities for tuition support for new workers.

Areas for learning related to self-operating or hiring a food management company:
- What are their plans and visions for improving our spaces? And how will we pay for the capital improvements?
- In what ways will they build and maintain relationships with students?
- In what ways can they incorporate work study students into their business model?
- How flexible, responsive will a company be?
- How will their model adapt to be Beloit-ish?