2013-2014 Assessment Report

Asst. VP Auxiliary Services

Campus Dining

Expected Outcome 1: Patrons experience shorter lines at Student Center restaurants
By assessing the popularity of our dining options and tracking the most frequented dining locations, we can place the more popular dining concepts within the most frequented building. Replacing less popular restaurants within the Student Center levels the popularity of the restaurants throughout the building and results in shorter lines.

Assessment Method 1: Sales Figures via Daily Dashboards

Assessment Method Description
Dollars spent in Campus Dining locations are recorded on a spreadsheet called the Daily Dashboard. Daily Dashboards are run every day, they contain information from all campus dining locations, and they compare sales with the previous year. Daily Dashboards enable comparisons not only between all the different dining locations on campus, but also provide monthly and yearly sales data, which allows us to keep track of students’ changing tastes.

Since all students participate in the required dining plan, the Daily Dashboard’s compilation of sales data gives accurate feedback, because students spend their dining funds on food they actually eat.

Findings
The Student Center is located in the Central Campus area and houses seven different dining options. During the Fall 2012 semester, it accounted for 47% of dining expenditures (Chart 1). In Fall of 2013, the Student Center captured 44% of students’ dining dollars, a decrease of $175,000 in Student Center sales, while overall dining plan expenditures increased $213,000 (Chart 2).

JoAnn’s, one of seven dining options in the Student Center, accounted for only 4% of the Student Center’s sales. Sales were strong during the breakfast hour, however lunch and dinner sales significantly underperformed. Since JoAnn’s was located in the primary dining location on campus, lack of performance creates longer lines at the other Student
Center restaurants.

- Chart 1
- Chart 2

How did you use findings for improvement?

Additional Comments
Assessment Method 2: Dining Surveys

Assessment Method Description
Every semester Auburn’s foodservice contractor surveys students regarding their overall satisfaction with dining options on campus. These surveys reflect students’ opinions about campus dining in general, as well as specific dining venues. Rating Performance scores are based on the following scale of 1-5: Excellent = 4.5-5.0, Very Good = 3.5-4.4, Good = 3.0-3.4, Fair = 2.0-2.9, and Poor = 1.0-1.9. Also included in this survey is the question “Why did you decide to dine in this location today?”

Findings
With a total of 3387 responses, 55% of respondents said that location was the determining factor in where they ate. (Chart 3)

Out of those 3387 total survey responses, only 86 rated JoAnn’s. Although still considered very good, JoAnn’s overall food and beverage ratings of 3.84 were the lowest recorded at a dining option in the Student Center*. While breakfast is strong, this location does not perform as well during the lunch and dinner meals, which are our primary dining hours. *The Student Center comprises 44% of campus dining sales; and location is a primary factor in why students dine at a specific venue.

Go Greek at Lupton was a new dining option in a less traveled area of campus, yet it maintained significant dining sales. Of the 3387 survey responses, 214 students rated Go Greek, and its overall food and beverage ratings came in at 4.49, just 1/100th short of an excellent rating. Lupton is a small out-of-the-way location with no indoor seating, yet students enthusiastically support this dining option.

- Chart 3

How did you use findings for improvement?
To maximize use of the JoAnn’s location, the area was refreshed between the Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 semesters. The Go Greek concept was brought into this area of the Student Center. While this space is now branded “Go Greek” the popular JoAnn’s-style breakfast menu has been retained and expanded with Go Greek’s own breakfast options including a
breakfast quesadilla. This change not only keeps a popular breakfast menu in rotation, it also maximizes availability to students during lunch and dinner hours.

Additional Comments

Expected Outcome 2: Sustainable dining is modeled on campus.
Today’s students are not only concerned with what they are eating, but also where it comes from and how it’s grown. Hand-in-hand with this awareness is the desire to be able to offer more dining options to students who suffer from food allergies and intolerances, and those who maintain specific diets due to religious restrictions. With recent government legal decisions assigning disability status to dietary intolerances under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Tiger Dining’s goal is to start taking steps toward a campus dining program that will better accommodate all students with a variety of fresh, nutritious options.

Assessment Method 1: Dining Plan Exemption Applications

Assessment Method Description
Since implementing a required participation dining program, Auburn University asks students requiring accommodation to self identify by submitting a form and providing proper documentation of their specific circumstances. These exemptions are reviewed, approved or disapproved and recorded in a database prior to their being processed in the accounting system.

Findings
During the Fall 2012 semester, 10 dining plan exemptions were processed for students with documented medical or religious restrictions.

During the Fall 2013 semester, 46 students received dining plan exemptions for documented and verified medical or religious limitations. In one year, the number of students requesting these exemptions increased by more than 400%. (Chart 4)

- 📊Chart 4

How did you use findings for improvement?

Additional Comments

Assessment Method 2: Student Advocacy Groups and Feedback
Assessment Method Description
Auburn University’s Campus Dining office welcomes interaction with students and student groups. During the Fall 2013 semester, students from the Real Food Challenge met with Campus Dining advocating for more local, sustainable, humanely produced foods on campus.

During this same time period, at least 12 students with dietary restrictions and their family members met with Campus Dining regarding the availability of foods made without gluten and other major allergens on campus.

Findings
Students are voicing a desire for more fresh, local, sustainable foods on campus.

Campus dining venues offer few options to accommodate students with medically documented or religious dietary restrictions.

How did you use findings for improvement?
Noting the need to improve accommodation for students with special dietary restrictions, and after speaking with representatives from the Real Food Challenge and other sustainability-minded individuals on campus, Campus Dining arranged to meet with our dining contractor’s Senior Executive Chef to explore ways to collaborate on a dining option that would better serve both these student populations. Taking these concerns to heart, Tiger Dining created a venue that features foods grown as responsibly, as sustainably, and as close to campus as possible. Since student input was key, students also named the location “Plains to Plate”. During the break between the Fall 2013 and Spring 2014 semesters, the South-facing Lupton dining area was refurbished, and when the Spring 2014 semester commenced, Plains to Plate was born. Plains to Plate has proven to be immensely popular with the student body, with sales far surpassing initial projections.

Additional Comments