

# Best Practices in Auxiliary Services: Dining

Authored by the NACAS Professional Development Committee

# Best Practice Recommendations - Dining

## Accounts Receivable

- Obtain recent
- Aging Report, Is there adequate follow-up on past due items?
- Are all invoices billed promptly
- Does the operation retain adequate supporting documentation for A/R billings?
- Payment checks are received promptly deposited and recorded
- Use of proper GL's and checked to ensure matched with budget

## Alcohol

- Are all servers of alcohol trained properly. Are policies in place to address underage presence at catered events with alcohol?

## Allergy

- Be aware of potential ADA considerations related to food service operations on campus (see Lesley University vs Justice Dept., December 2012)
- Provide gluten-free and allergen-free food options in dining halls
- Display notices concerning food allergies and identify foods containing specific allergens
- Provide a dedicated space to store and prepare gluten-free and allergen-free foods
- Partner with other campus departments to address concerns, such as Disability Access Services, Food Services, and Student Health Services.
- Make resources and information available online to student and staff about dining options and food allergy/intolerance risk.

## Assessment

- Secret Shopper Program
- Compare current year/month to same month in previous year to identify any anomalies and have a true picture of where you're at.
- Benchmark your services against industry standard, i.e., NACUFS

## Audit

- Use a consultant to conduct surprise audits of each operation. The first audit was pre-announced, subsequent audits are not, unless extenuating circumstances exist.

## Bank Deposits

- Bank Deposit Policy in place

## Cash

- Is there a petty cash system in place for paid outs?

## Cash Register

- Are drawer overage/shortages excessive?

## Catering

- Catering guide in place that can be handed to customers. Includes pictures and descriptions of all the services that the dining center can provide
- Able to order all catering on line, able to see all prices and options
- If the item is sold to a non-taxable group there is tax exempt on the invoice and the tax exempt letter kept on file

## Catering menus

- Is there a student group menu, that has incorporated student input in its items and pricing?

## Comparative Pricing Analysis

- Vendor submits a report each summer comparing prices of our on-campus dining restaurants to the nearest 2 off-campus locations. This way we are able to justify price increases. We ask them to keep prices at or below "street" pricing. This information also helps when students complain that prices are high.

## Credit Cards

- Are all credit card payments for catering ran through the corporate office and does a signed catering order accompany the payment
- Are credit card transactions batched and transmitted daily?
- Is there a written credit card information protection plan in place for electronic and paper transactions
- Are credit card sales in excess of \$50 signed by the customer
- All employees with access to card info complete PCI training
- All employees with access to card info complete Red Flags training
- Are credit card transactions EMV or PCI compliant?

## Customer Satisfaction

- Annual customer satisfaction survey conducted
- Feedback routinely solicited from diners
- Active Dining Committee in place

## Data Evaluation

- Dining Center needs to conduct market research such as comparing prices, offerings, menu, hours, and service levels for near by competitors.

## Dining Contract Requirements

# Best Practice Recommendations - Dining

- Are we invoicing the client in accordance with the contract terms?
- University is allowed to purchase products and supplies outside of their normal providers
- University can ban people from the site
- Full clean up at end of contract – hold last payment and use it to clean up as needed
- University has hiring input on all managers and supervisors
- No allocated charges. For example – no 2% for marketing. Contractor will only proceed with these after approval from the University
- No fee for purchasing if funding is provided up front by the University
- No non-competes for any of the staff
- Monthly documentation provided to support all charges
- If using an outside group for dining services, be clear on the responsibility to replace broken items in the agreement.
- If using an outside group for dining services, make sure ownership of specific equipment and repair of college owned equipment used by dining services is spelled out in the agreement.
- Include custodial responsibilities for any shared space - be specific
- Emergency, such as floods, hurricanes, blizzards - what costs/operations is dining expected to cover (all residence dining halls are priority, with retail only if possible, feeding the EOC, what if power goes out) and how does university handle reimbursement, especially if FEMA might be involved?

## Diversity

- Dining should acknowledge that it serves a multicultural community and provide products and services that recognize this ethnic and cultural diversity.
- Dining should promote educational experiences that are characterized by open and continuous communication that deepens understanding of one's own identity, culture, and heritage, and that of others. DSP must educate and promote respect about commonalities and differences in their historical and cultural contexts.
- Dining should plan promotions that recognize religious or ethnic events, considering student body diversity, institutional support, and community diversity.

## Emergency Preparations

- Dining should participate in campus emergency planning efforts to ensure that appropriate contingency plans are in place to feed students.

## Financial

- All orders adhere to the budget or explanations of variance

are documented

- Budget reconciliation is done monthly
- Pricing Database/Price Increases are maintained. Ensure all shelf tags or stickers are updated in the point of sale.
- Inventory is conducted Monthly
- Weekly/Monthly Operation Reports used to monitor the P and L
- Track revenue vs. expenses for special events when non-traditional or off-hours staffing is required. This allows to refer back when looking at future events.
- Inventory conducted weekly and month end to ensure proper levels and inventory turns being maintained

## Financial Aid Funds

- Students can use Financial Aid Funds to purchase meal plans. Students receive a pop-up when registering for class and/or accepting their Financial Aid award. Give them the opportunity to use any remaining FA funds after tuition toward the purchase of a meal plan and/or books.

## Food Insecurity

- Active partner in addressing food insecurity on campuses.

## Freezers

- Freezers have temperature alarms

## Health Inspections

- Pass all health department inspections
- The staff is certified on "health and sanitation requirements"

## Inventory

- Are physical inventories taken monthly at all locations?
- Are security measures in place to ensure no food leaves premises?

## Invoices

- Are invoices reviewed by management for accurate pricing and quantity ordered

## Marketing

- Use student interns as part of a pier to pier marketing program, notifying students of meal plan options, soliciting feedback.
- Identify and implement marketing plan for department

## Meal Plan - Declining Balance

- Are we invoicing the client in accordance with the contract terms?

## Meal Plans

- A commuter meal program is available and is being market-

# Best Practice Recommendations - Dining

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- A meal plan database is maintained with data from Banner, StarRez, Res Life
- Partner with Student Accounts to allow students to transfer any additional balances to meal cards
- Are there written procedures on how dining/university handles the first few days of the semester, i.e. students whose ID card/meal swipe does not yet work?
- Is the policy for one meal swipe per meal period/# guest swipes clearly communicated and written/shared with customers?
- Is the refund policy for meal plans clearly defined?
- Is the appeals process clearly defined?
- Audit process in place with Housing – ensure all students who are required to be on a plan are
- Is there a process in place to request exemption from dining requirement (religious reasons, financial, etc.)
- Meal plans can be changed within first two weeks of the semester to help students get the right plan.

## Menu

- Concepts, Weekly Specials and a Monthly Menu Cycle are all in place and are being used
- Menus have flexibility to provide students with items that can be eaten at a later time
- There is an internet site that lists the upcoming menus
- Online menus have links to nutritional information, healthy eating habits and employment
- Nutritional information is easily available to students.
- To-Go program implemented

## Metrics

- Determine what the average cost per meal is for the dining center. Use this number to benchmark against competition
- The declining balance plan can provide the advertised number of meals using the average meal cost
- What is the number of voluntary meal plans? What is the target?
- What is the profit / loss of the dining center?
- What is the annual turnover % of staff. Target - Not greater than 20% annual turnover.
- What % of catering customers do not pay within 60 days (Target no greater than 20%)
- Labor percentage should be around 23% and consistent month to month
- Are retail percentages around 50% and consistent from month to month
- If the meal plan is declining balance - What is the % of meal plan money not used? (Target: <5%)
- If the meal plan is meals per week - What is the % of missed meals (Target: 60% usage)

## Nutrition

- Nutrition education provided by the department should address the assessed needs of customers and staff and contribute to the overall health of the campus community.

## Operations

- Preventive maintenance program in place and used for all equipment
- Overall kitchen and dining area cleanliness including serveware
- Quality Assurance with follow up action plan and timeline
- Customer satisfaction: Mystery shopper program in place?

## Recipe Management

- Recipes followed to follow FDA labeling standards

## Safety

- Self inspection program is in place (checklist, review safety concerns ,quarterly).

## Safety Program

- Workers Compensation Claims Process in Place
- HAACP (Health Analysis and Critical Control Point) System in Place
- OSHA Posting and required State Posters in Place
- Annual Risk audit occurs and documented
- MSDS book available

## Strategic Planning

- What is 5-10 year plan for dining on campus. Does it align with the campus master plan?

## Training

- Ensure the Dining Center has at least one ANSI Certified Master Trainers for Allergens on staff
- Training documented and on file
- At least one person on staff is certified on food allergen
- Provide Bi-annual All Staff training: Customer Service, Food Safety, Sustainability, Quality, New Programs, Policies and Procedures, other topical info
- Staff trained on allergy training, cross contact and cross contamination
- There is a basic how to guide on how to use the equipment, common problems, safety concerns and improper use concerns of all equipment
- All training documented and on file
- Food Safety Training conducted
- All staff must be certified on basic sanitation procedures through a 3rd party vendor approved by the state
- New employee on-boarding program in place and used
- Employee Recognition Program in Place

# Best Practice Recommendations - Dining

## Uniforms

- Employees all wearing name tags
- Uniforms consistent with the work being done (per position) and the environment you are trying to create

## Website

- Website should list hours of operation, dates of extended hours of operation, menus for dining locations, hours of operation, nutritional information.

## Written Policies

- Food Safety policy in place and used
- Policy on how internal customers pay for catering
- Payment policy in place for catering for external groups, student groups and faculty / staff
- Cash Deposits policy in place
- Cashier policy and procedures in place and being used.
- Temperature monitoring policy in place and used
- Proper cooking temperature policy in place and used
- Clocking in and out policy in place
- Site specific policies
- Uniform policy in place and followed
- Every station has written procedures in place and used
- Electronics / radio policy
- Fraternalization policy
- Food-born Illness Policy and Procedures
- Is there a petty cash policy in place?
- Annual dining rates increase process/approval clearly defined?
- Follow humane treatment guidelines for raising, slaughtering and purchasing broiler chickens