

The challenges of healthy eating on campus

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Deciding what to eat can sometimes be difficult, but some UNC Asheville students feel campus dining services are not making the process any easier.

When living on campus, students are required to have a meal plan. Some might spend even more money on groceries along with the meal plan.

Over the past week, students and parents have expressed their opinions regarding dining services. On UNCA's Class of 2020 Facebook group, a student asked others to go to the UNCA Dining Services Facebook or Instagram page to leave honest ratings and comments.

Parents also voiced their concerns on their Facebook page about the food situation and discussed taking it to the chancellor.

This wave of engagement led to many concerned comments and one star ratings, which earned UNCA Dining Services' Facebook page to earn an overall 1.9 star rating out of the 55 reviews left.

Since then administrators have made an effort to reach out to parents and students about the concerns they may have.

UNCA's Active Students for a Healthy Environment has been making efforts to change options on campus since 2013. ASHE aims to have Chancellor Mary K. Grant sign off on The Real Food Challenge before she resigns at the end of the semester.

"Real food" is fulfilled in at least one of the four categories: local and community-based, ecologically sound, fair or humane, according to Real Food calculator.

The calculator, run by student researchers, goes over the purchases dining services make over a certain amount of time. One by one they decide what constitutes as real food.

According to the Real Food Challenge, only two out of North Carolina's 40 colleges have signed the Real Food Campus Commitment.



PHOTO BY BRYCE ALBERGHINI

Dining services on campus are beginning to offer more options for alternative diets.

Members of ASHE delivered three crates of donated local apples from Mountain Foods Products, to Grant on Oct. 24 along with a copy of the commitment document for her to sign.

Jenna Ventrella, a sophomore health and wellness student, and ASHE's co-president, said the apples had sticky notes on them which said "We want real food," "20 percent by 2020," and "Asheville loves real food."

"We wrote her a nice handwritten letter with a personal note from some people she has close relationships with at Mountain Foods and said 'Students want this, this aligns with our core value mission statement. We are in the perfect position to pass through and sign off on the Real Food Challenge right now,'" Ventrella said.

Later that day, they received an email from Grant, thanking them for the apples and inviting them to

a sustainability conference on Nov. 17 to talk about sustainable eating on campus.

In the past, ASHE made a video and interviewed students about their opinions about dining services. Ventrella said many students thought the percentage of real food on campus was higher than it actually was as of 2014, that they have gotten sick from the food or they

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