

ARAMARK seeks dining growth in future

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Senior Reporter

At the beginning of the school year, ARAMARK, Elon University's food service provider, restructured the meal-plan system in an attempt to provide more variety and options to Elon students.

With more than a semester of the new meal plan system underway, ARAMARK plans to continue improving its dining options to appease students in the years to come.

Jeff Gazda, resident district manager of ARAMARK, said constant evaluation and improvements are always necessary as student preferences and ideals change.

"Everything we accomplish is from direct feedback of students," Gazda said. "Whether it's through online surveys, focus groups or interaction with SGA."

ARAMARK is about to begin a planning phase where it looks into future changes that will need to be made to keep updated with the current Elon Commitment, strategic plan. This spring, ARAMARK will begin working with the university, architects and contractors for the future. The first place where new dining facilities could be added is North area, Gazda said.

ARAMARK has been the university's food service

provider since 1960. Gazda came to Elon in 1992, when there were only two smaller dining halls, McEwen and Harden, and a vending machine in Long.

"You were assigned to a dining hall based on where you lived on campus," Gazda said. "ARAMARK has mirrored the university in its constant growth."

Under the new structure of the meal plan, meal dollars have been added to each plan — the 19, 15, 10 or five meal swipes per week. In addition, more meal combos have been added, while the \$2.50 meal plan cash equivalency has been eliminated.

The new meal plan model has garnered mixed reactions. While some students have enjoyed and benefitted from the restructured meal plan, others see the new meal plan as more restrictive.

"I think on-campus dining provides quality food, and a lot of the options and variety of establishments are nice," freshman Darien Flowers said. "I just wish that there were more options for late-night food choices on campus."

Students living on campus are required by the university to have at least the five meal-plan package. Upperclassmen living off-campus are not required to have a meal plan.

"By not having a meal



ARAMARK continues to provide for students by updating the meal plan system on a regular basis, including last semester. ARAMARK is about to begin planning to create future changes to stay current with The Elon Commitment. MOLLY CAREY | Staff Photographer

plan, I've become much more likely to eat meals at home or off-campus," junior Krysten Malcolm said. "But if I am grabbing a snack on campus, it is nice to use Phoenix Cash for quick purchases."

ARAMARK and Elon share an exclusive contract, which is

renegotiated each year. As the only on-campus dining option, ARAMARK works closely with the university to meet the needs of the students, staff and faculty, Gazda said.

"Having a heavily residential campus, and with the emphasis on living-

learning communities, our services fit in very well with the environment of the university," Gazda said. "The only constant is change, and change will continue to occur. We are poised to work hand in hand with the university for the upcoming growth phase."

Pi Kappa Phi fraternity settles furniture debate, cleans lawn

Samantha King
News Editor

For more than a month, a pool table, parts of two couches and a broken table rested on Pi Kappa Phi fraternity's lawn.

When the Phi Mu sorority moved from a house to a suite in Maynard Hall this year, it was left with no room to house its potential new members for recruitment. Since the fraternities leave for Fake Break when girls' recruitment is scheduled, Phi Mu members were allowed to use a fraternity house.

They chose to use Pi Kappa Phi's.

The furniture was not suitable for recruitment, so Phi Mu moved it to the deck, senior Pi Kappa Phi brother Devin Darrell said. Then it rained, and the furniture became moldy.

After spring semester began, the men moved the couch onto the lawn so they could have room for their own recruitment, not expecting the upcoming snow storm that made the furniture even more useless.

"The incident was not discussed in chapter or even board meetings," said junior Evan Davis, former alumni relations chair. "We assumed it was being taken care of."

Normally, organizations are given a contract and told to negotiate terms and conditions according to the director of Greek Life, Shana Plasters. This year, Pi Kappa Phi chose not to create a contract, but president Daniel Shulman said this is something the fraternity will definitely do in the future.

Plasters said the men asked Greek Life where they could take the furniture, if there was an option for the university to move it and the associated cost.

"The men were asked repeatedly (to move the furniture)," Plasters said. "But they had the same excuses each time: not enough money, no brothers to help and no vehicle."

Plasters said the Greek Life office does not have a written policy of when deadlines for requests should be met, but that it is expected.

Although Plasters said the men were waiting because they did not have enough money to pay for the furniture removal, she mentioned there was a \$25 fee per

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- Shana Plasters
DIRECTOR OF GREEK LIFE

day for anything left outside the facility. Whether Pi Kappa Phi was charged or paid the accumulating fee is undetermined.

"If there had been a couch outside of Smith, it would have been gone immediately," said junior John Roman, new member educator and head of research and development. "We thought Physical Plant was going to take care of it. They're just like dorm rooms."

Robert Bucholz said his department cannot remove anything from campus without a call and a payment.

"Typically, if something was left outside the residence halls, the RA would call us and the owner of the property would be fined," Bucholz said. "We would take a look at how much manpower is needed, then charge \$15-20 per hour to move the item."

Physical Plant did not remove the furniture, but the brothers did.

Plasters said the deadline for removal was before noon on March 10, but could not specify how far in advance the deadline was made. Davis, Darrell and Roman said they moved the furniture early that morning with Davis' truck, the only one in the fraternity. Shulman said the furniture was not taken until 1 p.m. Whether the men were fined could not be specified by Plasters.

Funding to replace the furniture was divided between Phi Mu and Pi Kappa Phi for the damages.

"It's not Phi Mu's fault at all," Shulman said. "We should have gotten rid of it sooner rather than later."

Phi Mu president Katharine West declined to comment.

Grade inflation translates to 'academic challenge' at Elon

Gabriela Szewcow
Design Chief

Grade inflation is a growing concern at universities across the nation. At Elon University, it's an issue that Associate Provost Nancy Midgette prefers to refer to as "level of academic challenge."

"Grade inflation is a tricky term," Midgette said. "It's difficult to understand what it really means."

She said the academic challenge of a university needs to rise as fast as the caliber of students rise.

On the collegiate level, GPAs are on the rise all over the nation. Midgette has worked at Elon for 10 years and has noticed an increase in GPAs during that time.

"Over the past 10 years, students' GPAs have increased," Midgette said. "But it has been a gradual increase. There have been no giant leaps." Midgette says there are multiples causes for this increase.

"This could be because our students are more talented academically," she said. "Also, Elon has a low student-to-faculty ratio. We also stress experiential learning, which helps students to achieve a higher performance."

Midgette said students at Elon can receive help from a professor easily and often because of the low student-to-faculty ratio. Professors also have students hand in multiple drafts of work in order to ensure a stronger performance on assignments.

Professor of education Glenda Crawford has different thoughts on the cause of grade inflation at Elon and across the nation.

"One reason for grade inflation in universities across the country and at Elon may be the trend toward more alternative assessments such as papers, presentations, collaborative projects and performances. These assessments are generally measured against criteria on rubrics and risk being less objective."

The question is whether or not this rise in GPA is a bad thing.

"I don't think that increasing the level of contact with students is a bad thing," Midgette said. She said she believes it is the job of educators to help students succeed against the standards that are set for them.

Midgette has a mantra she keeps with her in the classroom: "I believe that students will live up to or down to my expectations."

Crawford thinks there can be something done to help the issue of grade inflation at Elon.

"As professors, we need to think about and communicate to students what constitutes an A, she said. Exemplary work or performance exceeds expectations," she said.

She also believes there are tangible ways to make a real change.

"I think we need to use multiple and varied assessments, both traditional and alternative, to provide a broader view of student success," Crawford said.

So, is there a grade inflation problem here at Elon? Midgette doesn't think the question is easily answered.

"It's too easy to say 'yes' or 'no,'" she said. "Neither is the right answer. The right answer is a question. And that question is: Are we providing our students with an adequate academic challenge?"

Midgette said the answer to this question is constantly changing, because Elon has to continue to adapt to the caliber of students that attend the university.

"I would like for all of Elon's faculty to always ask ourselves if we are providing the appropriate level of academic challenge for our students as we plan our curriculum," Midgette said. "We have to work to adequately challenge our students and prepare them for what's next."