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Should concealed weapons be allowed on college campuses? Read more about the proposed legislation and one staff member's take on it.

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THE PENDULUM

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Naw Thein, an ARAMARK employee, hands out a slice of pizza at Topio's, one of the many dining options on Elon's campus. But starting this fall, combos in Octagon will not come with the standard meal plan.

TRACY RAETZ | Staff Photographer

'Meal swipe' gets new meaning

ARAMARK changes affect students' eating options on campus

Sam Parker
Senior Reporter

ARAMARK, Elon University's food service provider, is changing the way students eat with the introduction of two newly available dining packages, All Access and Block Meal plans.

The All Access option gives students unlimited access to all three dining halls on campus, while the Block meal plan provides a specific number of visits to dining halls per year.

According to Jeff Gazda, resident district

manager of ARAMARK, throughout the spring and fall 2010 semesters, Elon's Dining Services conducted a market-match process that involved in-depth customer research to gather feedback from 1,292 campus customers, which is approximately 44 percent of on-campus residents and 17 percent of the total student population.

"Our research told us that students were looking for better prices, value and increased flexibility from their meal plan," Gazda said. "So, our goal was to develop a customized meal plan solution that delivers those things."

Gazda said both the economic recession and The Elon Commitment's goal to enhance students' well-being also served as influences in creating the new meal plans.

"We want to align ourselves completely with the direction that Elon is going in," he said. "And one thing we realized we needed to do that was retool meal plans for the next step of the phase."

According to Gazda, the All Access meal plan

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Redefining learning: Elon seeks ideas to enhance education on campus, remain accredited by SACS

Caitlin O'Donnell
News Editor

A committee of Elon University faculty and staff has been charged with developing an innovative way of learning in preparation for a 2013 visit from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the school's accrediting body.

With input from other staff members as well as students, the idea proposal, also known as a quality enhancement plan or QEP will be finalized this fall and then implemented in preparation for the SACS visit.

"The QEP is something that the university will do that will enhance the learning for students," said David Copeland, professor of communications and a member of the committee developing the QEP. "It's

something that SACS expects us to spend significant amounts of money on. It is probably new to what we're doing and if not, will take something we're already doing and expand it beyond anything we've thought of before."

Since Elon last went through the reaccreditation process in 2003, SACS added the new requirement of the QEP along with other standards that must be met. Specific guidelines from SACS dictate how the QEP must be developed.

"It assures that your programs are up to certain standards, that all the elements within your school or university meet criteria," Copeland said. "By meeting criteria and SACS standards, it shows the government we meet qualifications and can get

student loans and grants."

Currently, the four-person committee is in the brainstorming phase and collecting ideas from students, faculty and staff, said Pam Kiser, professor of human service studies and co-chair of the committee.

"Right now, we're trying to get everyone's attention amidst everything else that is going on," she said. "This is on a very definite timeline imposed by our accrediting body, so we need ideas and we need ideas now."

Ideas can be submitted through e-mail to qep@elon.edu, or dropped into boxes soon to be placed around campus, Copeland said.

"They don't have to be well-formed," Kiser said. "That's the point of brainstorming, you don't critique."

This phase of the process will continue until the first week of April. At that time, the committee will take the ideas and pull out common themes that will then be put on a website for everyone on campus to view. During the summer, ideas will be narrowed down and brief papers prepared describing the best argument for why each should be selected as the QEP for Elon.

"We will ask people who are really knowledgeable or excited about them to write short paper descriptions," Copeland said.

By late November of this year, the focus of the QEP will be finalized. After being narrowed down to two or three ideas, senior staff will make the final

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QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN TIMELINE

MARCH 2011:
Brainstorming phase

APRIL 2011:
Evaluation of ideas

SUMMER 2011:
Pitching of final three ideas

NOVEMBER 2011:
Final idea chosen

SPRING 2013:
SACS team arrives for evaluation