

# News

Wednesday, September 25, 2013 • page 6

service, and an ice machine and sink were marked down for heavy mold build-up. Some food was not date-marked, and a bag of lettuce was stored for nine days. The state requires many ready-to-eat and potentially hazardous foods to be consumed, sold or discarded within four days of preparation or storage to limit the growth of pathogens and toxins.

Self-service foods, including butter, granola, salad toppings, cheese and cookies, were not protected with sneeze guards. A few stored dishes were found dirty, and clean utensils were stored with a greasy surge protector strip. The facilities received other demerits for failing to properly sanitize wiping cloths.

Across the state of North Carolina, health and sanitation inspections have become an increasingly painstaking process. Last year, the environmental branch of the Alamance County Health Department released an updated document of food service sanitation rules to which dining establishments must adhere.

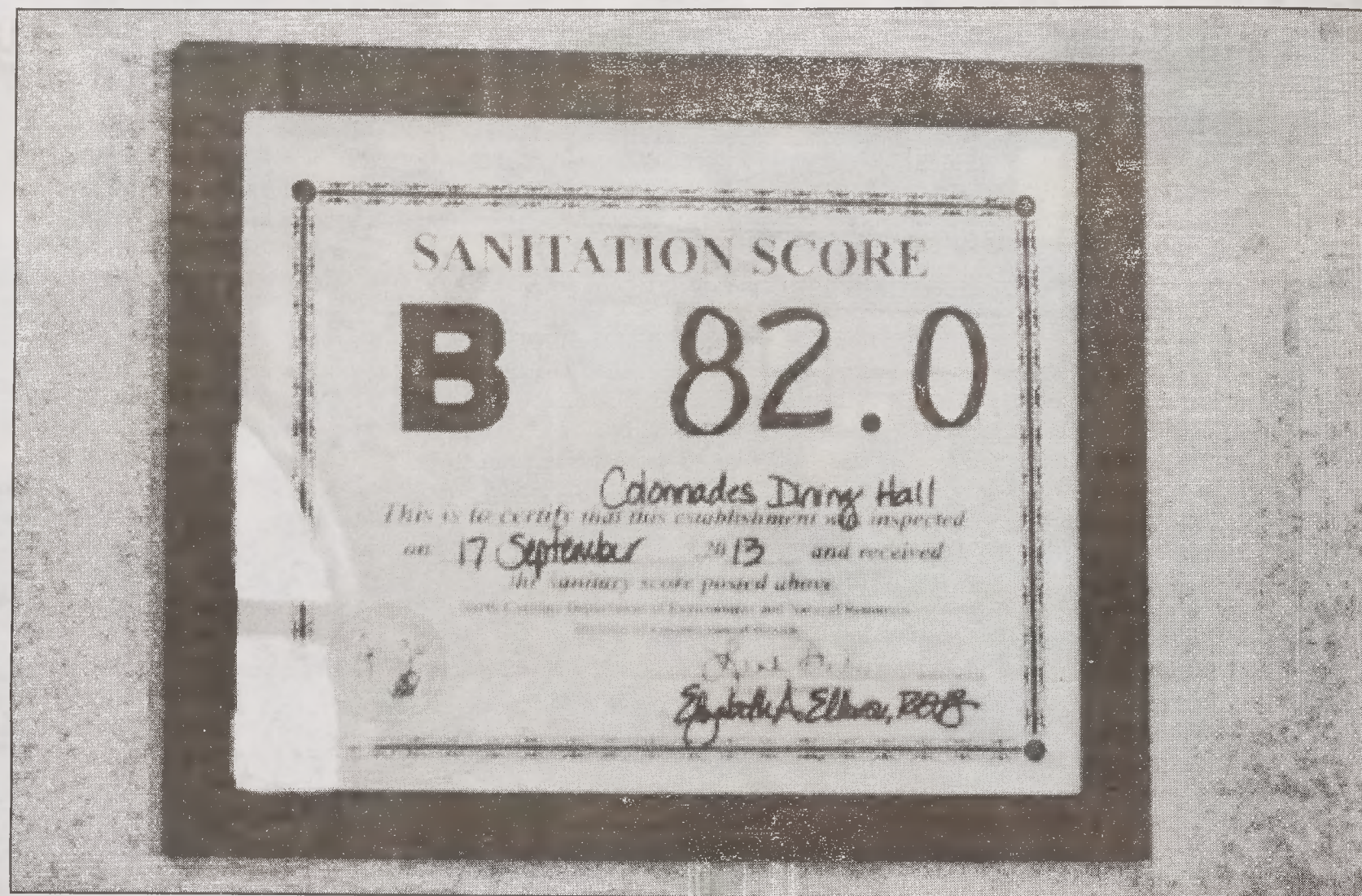
The list identifies the top five risk factors found in any kitchen, including improper holding temperatures and poor employee hygiene, along with ways to combat those risks behind the scenes. Food handlers are now required to wash their hands more frequently throughout the day, and mandatory holding temperatures have been adjusted.

Nelson said Elon takes a number of precautions to ensure each facility is meeting the state requirements for inspection.

"We have an institutional priority of maintaining at least a 97 percent on all of our inspections," Nelson said. "The criteria developed by the state continuously becomes more stringent, and the Elon facilities continue to receive the same high scores."

But it wasn't always that way. In April 2002, The Pendulum reported several facilities that had not scored nearly as high as they do now. At the time, the highest on-campus sanitation grade was a 94.5 at McEwen Dining Hall. The lowest was at Acorn Coffee Shop: 88 percent.

But according to Nelson, ARAMARK has assisted Elon's employees in becoming more conscious of sanitation throughout the years. This includes fulfillment of a



Colonnades Dining Hall and the adjacent 1889 Grill Room received a sanitation score of 82 after the most recent health inspection, 14 points lower than its last score. TIM DEWITT | Staff Photographer

training program called ServSafe which, if completed by a manager or employee, was formerly able to boost any dining establishment's sanitation grade by two points. Now, SafeServ certification is a requirement for all food service employees in the state.

"As an organization, we do have a third party inspect our facilities as a part of our safety platform," Nelson said. "All of our managers are ServSafe certified, and we have continuing training and developmental opportunities for our front-line associates."

Poor sanitation practices on college campuses can lead to food-related illnesses caused by bacteria and other practices, as well as problems for people who have food allergies. Despite the recent Colonnades Dining Hall demerits, on-campus eating establishments consistently score high sanitation ratings, often ranging between 97 and 101.

In March, Colonnades Dining Hall

received a rating of 96 and Lakeside Dining Hall received a rating of 99. McEwen Dining Hall was given a score of 98 in May.

Freshman Victoria Murphy said she believed Colonnades employees would improve their sanitation. Even though her friends encouraged her to eat at other dining locations, she said she continued to eat there, partly out of convenience.

"I've been eating here for a month, and I've been fine," she said. "I trust that they will do what they have to do."

Freshman Caroline Grell also said that she still ate at the dining hall after the score was issued.

"I feel like now that it's public knowledge, they'll do something about it," Grell said.

Sophomore Sarah Vaughan said the rating at Colonnades might influence other on-campus eateries to improve their sanitation practices.

"It sends a message for other dining

halls to watch out," she said.

Vaughan said she did not pay attention to Elon Dining's sanitation practices before the Colonnades rating. When the score was released, she said she understood that the facility was deducted points for health violations.

"I was really surprised that a low rating would be given at a college," Vaughan said. "I don't want to be eating something that's not prepared very well."

Despite these negative attitudes toward the news about the Colonnades inspection, ARAMARK is optimistic about its prevention program, according to Nelson.

"We are committed to the health and safety of Elon students and we are confident that we will continue to maintain a quality dining program," Nelson said. "ARAMARK will continue to follow all of the local health regulations and retrain all employees on their ServSafe certification." §