

Year-End Report: York Campus Food Service Ombud

"The office of the Ombud provides an open, impartial and easily accessible channel for communication between the UFBS and the York University community. Through this office, information is passed on, opinions are expressed and recommendations and suggestions are forwarded on to the appropriate committee, caterer or administrator to act upon."

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS

The performance of non-residence York food services has remained favourable throughout this term. Food services in Complexes I and II did suffer financial difficulties, however, which has resulted in changes to the meal plan for the next school year.

Information used in this report was acquired in conversation with the respective chairs of the various constituencies, and from conversations, on the telephone and in person, with members of the York community expressing some concern over the service being offered.

ILLNESS OUTBREAK — COMPLEXES I AND II, JANUARY 18, 19 AND 20.

Over the period from January 18 to 20, there were 90 reported cases of illness characterized by flu-like or food poisoning symptoms in Complex II (54 from Stong and 36 from Bethune). Six of these students were subsequently hospitalized.

The Complex II community was informed of the outbreak by means of posted notices in residences, colleges and food service areas on January 19. Notice was sent to Security, College Masters and resident students, from the Director of Student Affairs, detailing the appropriate actions to be taken should any further reports of illness occur.

The local health inspector on site on January 19 confirmed:

- Internal food handling and storage procedures in the Complex II kitchen, met provincial standards;
- All food handling equipment was set correctly for both hot and cold food;
- The illness was not a result of improper food handling or storage practices, or the result of any equipment failure on the premises.

Food samples and stool samples sent to the North York Health Department, Cybermedics Laboratory, and Standard Biological Laboratories for analysis, showed no evidence that the outbreak was food-related.

The incident has brought to light concern, largely on the part of the student body and the administration, on the action to be taken should a similar situation present itself in the future. Cited as a major concern was the lack of communication between all parties involved. A committee has been formed which will establish a comprehensive action plan should a similar outbreak occur in the future. This committee will consist of a wide cross-section of the university community, including administrative units which play key roles in residence life (college administration, health services, security, etc.)

CATERER PERFORMANCE COMPLEXES I AND II

1989-90 Meal Plans

Discussion between key officials of Marriott and a sub-committee of the UFBS in February, revealed that Marriott had not realized its sales expectations and had experienced some operational and logistical problems in the provision of the All-you-can-eat meal plan. Marriott representatives also expressed concerns that its current share of the market is insufficient to support the company's initial investment proposal for capital renovations.

Other financial considerations were also taken into consideration:

- The minimum meal plan (\$1300) is usually insufficient for the needs of students for the entire year;
- Food Services receives no funding from the government and must therefore be self-funded;
- Competition from Yorklanes and the new Student Centre may cause large losses, if nothing is done by way of changing the meal plan.

After considering the above, and all options available to them, the UFBS has recommended a new meal plan as follows:

- All first-year students will be required to purchase a 10-meal-a-week plan for \$1425 plus \$250 worth of scrip, at a cost to the student of \$1625 (a \$50 saving), while upper level students will have the option of choosing the first-year plan or purchasing \$1625 worth of scrip.
- All Glendon resident students will be required to purchase \$1625 contingent upon the provision of additional services at Glendon College, including a tuck-shop.

SERVICE AND FOOD

Rapid staff turnover experienced at the beginning of the school year does not appear to be a major concern this term. This stabilization may be partly attributed to the success of the caterer's student employment program, devised to increase security on campus, supply income opportunities to students, and fill gaps in the employee force, caused by rapid turnover. Marriott currently employs 43 students in its facilities, approximately 30% of its labour force.

The quality of service has shown great improvement in both Complexes. Such improvement is related to hours of service (particularly at the grill areas) being consistent with those posted. Night service has also improved with the grill areas being opened consistently this term.

Perceptions of food quality by residents in Complex II seem to have been affected after the January illness outbreak. Since then, however, the respective chairs have informed me that there have been few complaints about food quality in either Complex.

MARKY'S

Improvement in service experienced in the first term, has been sustained for a second term. There have been expressed concerns over the seemingly high prices at Marky's relative to other services on campus. The Chair of Complex I has made those expressing concerns aware of the fact that kosher catering is inherently more expensive than other non-kosher types of service. Students with these concerns were also informed that the prices on Campus are 10% below the prices charged at the Bathurst location of Marky's.

OSGOODE

My discussions with the Chair of Osgoode's Food Service Committee have revealed that new management has continued to provide high quality food and service. There have been no further disputes between employees and the caterer, as there were last year.

CENTRAL SQUARE AND ATKINSON

I received only two calls concerning Central Square. One individual, a vegetarian, expressed concern about selection — She suggested that at least one high protein item be supplied at the salad bar. I did speak with the caterer and ascertained that cottage cheese was usually a daily item in the salad bar. The second call concerned the division of the eating area into smoking and non-smoking areas. The person who called was a smoker, and I informed him that the division was consistent with York's smoke-free policy.

The Chair of Atkinson College's Food Service Committee has indicated that there are few concerns about service or food quality in that area. The Chair did however note that some employees sometimes smoke in non-smoking areas. I have since talked to the caterer about this problem and have received assurance that this will no longer take place.

CLOSING REMARKS

The years ahead will mark a new period of development for York University, development that will necessarily bring about changes to many policies on campus. Food service policy is no exception, but as this report explains, the most viable solutions are being devised to assure high quality service for both resident and commuter students, and to ensure the financial viability of caterers and the Food Services Department.

This report ends my term as Food Service Ombud, a position which had been made manageable by the dedication of all members of the Food Service Committees.

DEBORAH BUTTS
Food Service Ombud, York Campus, April 1989

UNIVERSITY FOOD SERVICES COMMITTEE (UFSC) ANNOUNCEMENT

At its October 1989 meeting, the University Food Services Committee (UFSC) recommended that the Food Service Ombud position for York and Glendon be suspended for the 1989-90 academic year. This recommendation was accepted by the University.

The absence of this position will be monitored and the committee will review and recommend on the Food Service Ombud position by April 1990.

Your 1989-90 UFSC members are:

Doug Souilliere Chair Atkinson Food Service Committee	c/o Atkinson College Room 256, Atkinson -2480 (Bus. 265-2018)
Kay Maharaj Chair, Central Square Food Service Committee	6 Assiniboine Road Apt. 1001, Downsview 739-1452, 741-1210 ext. 317
Russell Hersen Chair Complex 1 Food Service Committee	Room 614, Vanier Residence 739-8060
Marjorie Vogel Chair Complex 2 Food Service Committee	Room 724X, Stong Residence 739-9521
Claudine Pilon Chair Glendon Food Service Committee	Room E204, Hilliard Residence 487-6752
Bill Hourigan Chair Osgoode Food Service Committee	c/o Osgoode Legal & Literary Society Room 118, Osgoode Hall -5027

Prof. Vivienne Monty (Chair) Representative, YUFA	Gov't Documents Library, Room 113J, Admin. Studies -5139
Jean McNeil-Smith Representative, YUSA	Gov't Documents Library, Room 113, Admin. Studies -3041
Caroline Winship Representative, CYSF	Room 105, Central Square -5324
Prof. D. Newgren Representative Council of Masters	Room 266, Winters College -5142
Don Butcher Representative Masters Residence Committee	Room 312, Stong College -5010
Leon Wasser Business Manager Glendon College	Room 218, Glendon Hall -6714
Norman D. Crandles (Secretary) Director, Housing & Food Services	4 Assiniboine Road -5652
Angelina Catricala Manager Food Services Operations	4 Assiniboine Road -5517