

Chartwells: Food survey asks big questions about quality, price, health and satisfaction

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According to Bookstore Director David Holcomb, the survey was produced to give "campus input on how the food service is doing" and to allow respondents to contribute ideas for change.

One of the main questions in the survey asked why students don't eat on campus. An overwhelming number of responses claimed that prices are to blame, as well as food quality and choice.

"We should offer better prices," said one respondent. "The food that we offer now is not worth the high price. A student ... could get a better-quality choice for about the same price off campus. Either lower the price

or better the quality of food."

Other complaints mentioned were the health aspects of the food served, service and the times at which food is actually available.

"It seems the cafeteria is now more like a convenience store filled with snacks, chips, soda and unhealthy food," said another respondent. "I bring my lunch to work now to save time and money (and calories)."

With the survey completed, the Food Committee will now analyze the results in hopes that it can better serve the campus community.

Chartwells, which has been a part of the contract since August 2005, updated its contract in 2006. The contract states that in order for a party to the agreement, there must be a 60-day written notice to the termination date.

It is unclear what the survey results mean. Students and faculty alike await a decision.

"I'm not sure what the school wants to do at the moment," said sophomore Kristin Overson. "I know that a lot of people are not happy with Chartwells. Maybe this is it for them."

Survey Comments

"Although the workers at Chartwells are great, management is really bad and food quality is low for the price. Saturday Market food kiosks could fill up during the week and offer more variety, better food and reasonable prices."

"Thank you for doing the survey. CCC is a hostage to our current vendor and contract."

"It seems that Chartwells is calling the shots for our food choices (in the cafeteria and at campus functions), rather than the other way around. I really hope that their contract is thoroughly reviewed and that we can offer an alternative. Chartwells is very limited in what they offer, their prices have increased and their quality has decreased, all without a thought to students/staff on budgets. Departments are having to become very creative in order to get around having to use them for our department and division functions."

"The current service and food quality is very good. The staff of Chartwells is very kind and helpful. I know that college staff complain about Chartwells, but I believe there has been improvements provided from those complaints. I think the food pricing is very competitive, and I think we have the best situation we can have. They are a business, and a business has to profit to stay alive. Please don't screw it up by going outside again for another contracted service provider. When we have done that in the past, we have ended up with worse."

Questions about Chartwells' operations are nationwide

Other Chartwells operations have been hit hard with complaints about health, food safety and employee treatment

Lydia E. Bashaw

News Editor

The National Education Association (NEA), an organization that fights for students' rights, has had several complaints made about Chartwells in the past eight years.

Chartwells is a national food-service provider for schools, colleges and universities throughout North America. It goes by several different names, including Chartwells Educational Foodservices Incorporation, Chartwells Education Dining Services and other subsidiaries of the food service conglomerate Compass Group.

According to an article published in the October 2002 issue of *The Ann Arbor News*, a student at the Cheney Academy of Math and Science, in Ypsilanti, Mich., found mold in her bread.

The story stated that County inspection of the operation found Chartwells to be in violation of several codes. The inspector found food left at improper temperatures and food packages lacking expiration dates.

Students at the school instituted a full boycott of the food services.

As stated in an article published in *The Record*, the Wayne Cafeteria Association (WCA) of Bergen County, N.J., requested in July 2002 that the school board reevaluate its contract with Chartwells' North Carolina company. The WCA complained of issues regarding "employee treatment."

According to the article, "employees complained that their paychecks often fell short or were lost by the company, and their employer would take months to correct the mistake."

After careful consideration, the board ended its contract with the company and hired a new food-service provider.

The NEA is dedicated to many educational issues at the elementary and secondary level, but it ranks food health at the top.

"Without food safety and health," the NEA Web site states, "the other issues regarding our schools do not matter. It starts with our body health, and then we can worry about the other issues."

"I'd like to see more food labeling, especially sodium content, fat breakdown and calories. Lots of inefficiency - people waiting in line for coffee have to compete with people in line for food. Some workers have great customer service; others have a 'not my job' attitude. Take a look at PSU's organic, local, student-run café - it's the best food on their campus and helps students learn about the business."

"I do not believe that Chartwells Management supports college staff schedules or our evening and weekend students. 1) Closed during long breaks even though college staff will work (examples: breaks after summer and fall terms). 2) Change operating hours without input from staff. 3) Closed to staff during short breaks to support special college events."



Kayla Berg

Students wait in line at Chartwells to buy lunch snacks. One of the main complaints from survey respondents was the length of lines in the cafeteria.

Price Comparison: Chartwells vs. Home

Item	Chartwells	Home
Candy Bar	\$1.40	
20 oz. Coca-Cola	\$1.20	
Lay's Chips	\$1.15	
Yogurt	\$0.99	
Cup of soup	\$2.99	

"Please change the food service. There must be affordable options that are healthy, that model college should model: smart living. We need satisfying, fresh, real food in a place where we can sit down together and visit over lunch or break. Until this quality food experience can be provided, let's cut the cafeteria service altogether."

- Compiled by Lydia Bashaw and Matt Gu