

# Would you transfer schools for a taco salad?

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It's common knowledge that CCC has expensive food for college students and little selection in the Outlaw Cafe. During the next few weeks, Arts & Culture Editor Breanna Craine and News Editor Brittany Horne will be exploring the different community colleges in the area to check out if it is worth transferring schools in order to get better food on campus.

We parked in the crowded parking lot of Portland Community College's Sylvania campus. The spots are designed for city cars and can barely fit a Ford Escape. We paid \$5 for a day pass to park, although we were only there for about an hour. However, we did see quite a few smart cars.

Walking into the main building, which holds the cafeteria, the first thing we saw were rows of vending machines with different foods and drinks available to purchase. We looked past the vending machines and saw a juice bar called "Juice It Up," which is similar to Jamba Juice. They also offer Starbucks coffee and drink options.

Then we headed towards the main cafeteria where all the delicious magic happens. The first thing that caught our attention was what seemed to be 100 tables for the students and staff. This included a row of small tables at the top of a ramp, providing a splendid number of plug-ins where many students sat working with their laptops, food accompanying or not.

We walked into the area where they sell most of the food and were immediately overwhelmed. They had every type of food you could imagine. They had Chinese, Mexican, Italian, BBQ, a long salad bar and even a refrigerated deli just like you would see in stores. All had their own company names and workers.

The next thing we had to do is decide what we wanted. We each went for a different kind of salad.

**Breanna:** I think I want a taco salad or maybe even some Chinese food! But maybe I want a mini pizza, or a cheeseburger. There is so much to choose from. What do you think sounds good Brittany?

**Brittany:** I think I'm gonna get a salad. Did you see the salad buffet bar? *It's huge!* That sounds pretty good right now. Have you decided what you're going to get?

**Breanna:** There's just too much to choose from but I think I'll just get a taco salad. It looks like they are pretty big and have a lot of different toppings to put on top.

**Brittany:** Awesome. We're getting two different kinds of salads! I'll meet you over at the tables after we get our food.

We select our food at two vendors fairly close to each other,

but pay at one of the cashier stands that collects money for all of the restaurants. The only bad thing would be that neither of us saw a card swiper in the cafeteria, but most of the vending machines took credit cards so you could get lunch from one of them if you only had card.

**Brittany:** Wow, those little tables up there have so many wall plug-ins. That would be really cool for homework or checking Facebook during lunch.

**Breanna:** I wonder why we don't have that at our school? I am always trying to find places to plug in my laptop and iPad to work on my homework while I'm eating.

**Brittany:** Yeah, I'm glad we at least have the Print Lab to hang out in!

**Breanna:** I am so stuffed after only a few bites. Maybe I should have gotten something smaller like one of the pre-made sandwiches or a breakfast sandwich. How is your salad? Is that spinach and mixed peppers I see?

**Brittany:** Oh yeah, I got a variety of romaine lettuce, mixed greens, and spinach. There's also some cucumbers, broccoli, garbanzo beans, mixed bell peppers, croutons, Italian dressing, oil and vinegar. There was a lot more to choose from but I just picked what I wanted. They had some tomatoes too but they were the hugest cherry tomatoes I'd ever seen. I don't like them that much. The salad is pretty good though.

**Breanna:** My taco salad was pretty good. They had so many side choices. I had trouble deciding if I wanted beef or chicken. I decided to go with the beef and some Spanish rice and beans. The tomatoes looked really juicy but I decided not to get any. I was surprised how little lettuce they gave me. It had so much meat and beans that my mouth was so dry after the first few bites. I wish they could have given more lettuce and less of the fattening stuff.

**Brittany:** That's kind of funny because I feel like the only thing missing from my salad is some meat, like crispy chicken or something. Other than that, it's delicious!

**Breanna:** I wonder how much the students really spend on food here during the year. It isn't cheap but definitely a reasonable price for a good, well balanced lunch. My taco salad was only \$5.95 for how much food I got.

**Brittany:** Yeah, I mean the prices seem pretty comparable to Clackamas, but much better variety and quality. Do you see the group sitting next to us? It's a whole family: mom, grandma, four or five kids. It must be pretty good food if it's the family lunch place of choice.

**Breanna:** Well, it *is* good.

During the next few weeks we will be going to different schools around Oregon, comparing whether we think the food is better or not. PCC definitely has a good cafeteria and if you like all these types of foods, maybe you should go and try it out.



Above: Students study the menus as they choose from the large selection offered at each individual food stand. Below: Pre-made sandwiches are stacked high daily in the deli section of the cafeteria at the PCC Sylvania campus.



Photos by Brittany Horne The Clackamas Print

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