

New Cougar cafeteria being dished out

by Cassidy Scott

Coming this fall, the Clackamas Community College Cougar Café is expected to look a lot different. With the recent hiring of Trio Hospitality, a food services company from Oregon City, the college is looking to make some changes.

The company that currently holds a food services contract with CCC is Brosis Management, which since 2012 has been selling food on campus in the Cougar Café. However, according to an email from Bob Cochran, Dean of Student Services, Brosis will be leaving CCC this summer.

"Very simply ... existing vendor's contract expires June 30. We are required to advertise for a food vendor service and the existing company, Brosis, decided that they did not want to submit a proposal for food services for the college," Cochran wrote.

This left the college to put out a request for proposals to allow companies to place bids to sell their food at CCC. This process was met with some apprehension.

"With this type of a set up that we have, that we don't have dormitories or housing, it's really hard for companies to make a real profit, a good sized profit. Because they don't have meal plans and stuff," explained Lloyd Helm, Director of Campus Services, who coordinated the hiring of the new food services company. "And so we only received one bid back, from all the inquiries we did and everything, which was Trio Hospitality which was right here in Oregon City."

Despite there being only the bid from Trio, the hiring and process of beginning the transition has been a smooth one.

"They [Trio Hospitality] met with the food service committee, and brought in some samples of some food that they would be making here. And the food service committee felt that they would be a very good fit for us," Helm said.

"...I'm having the kitchen cleaned, and the serving area and the dining room is going to be repainted and the carpets fixed and cleaned and all that."

-Lloyd Helm

According to Trio's website and mission statement: "Trio Hospitality is the culmination of decades of experience in every facet of the hospitality and food service industries. We take pride in providing a personalized

approach to meeting the needs of our clients. We celebrate the great power and importance of food. We are passionate professionals who provide exceptional service."

The change in company and menu has been met with excitement from those involved with the hiring process.

"They want to do more farm fresh type stuff, no hormones in the meats and stuff like that," said Helm. "More vegetarian, more vegan food choices. And they're serving fresh food instead of something that's been recycled in a warmer a few times. So yeah, we're looking forward to having them here and we feel very confident that the students are going to like them. And it'll increase business and help students to stay on campus to have their lunch or whatever instead of going off campus."

However, the transition itself will indeed be met with a variety of changes, including the hiring of staff to help the three owners of Trio. Brosis Management currently staffs two full-time women along with a couple CCC students who help as well. As to whether Trio will decide to keep this system, is up to them.

"We didn't put a stipulation if they had to hire the two ladies that are in there presently," Helm stated. "It's up to them, and what they have indicated is, is that they have a right to apply for it too."

Although the contract will officially start July 6, Trio will have to wait a little longer to get started.

"They won't take position of the kitchen until August, because I'm having the kitchen repainted, everything cleaned, and the serving area is going to be repainted and the dining room is going to be repainted and the carpets, you know, fixed and cleaned, and all that," Helm explained. "So we're taking the month of July to be able to get folks in here to get equipment checked out and make sure everything's working like it's supposed to. We don't want any breakdowns or anything like that when they're trying to get started."

In the past, the success and popularity of the Cougar Café hasn't always been met with high ratings. However, with the hiring of Trio, the school is looking to revamp the café, bring healthier options to CCC and create a different atmosphere for students to stay on campus to eat.

Trio is excited as well, as they wrote on their Facebook page, "Great things are in store, can't wait to start sharing pictures of the revitalized Cougar Café with you soon."

Although the process to hire a new food services company on a community college campus can be difficult, the hiring of Trio has been positive.

"All in all we were very surprised, you might say, but very pleased," Helm said.



photo by Megan McCoy