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3/6/2012

Quick Hit

ARAMARK: Are Meal Plans a Scam?

 Every day, hundreds of students go to places like the Husky Lounge, Scranton Commons, and Monty’s to eat on campus at Bloomsburg University. Some have full meal plans, some just use flex, and others pay with cash or a credit card. Most people believe that having a meal plan is worth it, but are students really getting their money’s worth?

 “I have 14 meals a week,” explains sophomore, Alex Dusak, “plus $150 flex, costing $1,237 a semester. From the outside, a meal plan looks like a good idea, but a meal swipe costs $4.55, and most items at places like the Husky are more than a meal swipe, especially if you include a drink.”

 Many students are questioning meal plans and the cost of food at on-campus dining facilities. I contacted Dave Giron, the Resident District Manager, to ask him a few questions, but he responded by sending me a link regarding the most basic meal plan information. So instead, I talked to a student who no longer has a meal plan.

 “I had 19 meals a week when I was a freshman,” said sophomore, Tia Franzone, “but I found I was using more flex because not many food items fall under the price of a meal swipe.”

Flex dollars come with each meal plan, but when flex runs out, students have to pay their own money to add more.

 “My flex ran out quickly,” stated Franzone, “by March 2011, I had to ask my mom to write a check for $60 to add more flex. Since I can only get a small amount of food for a meal swipe, I decided not to have a meal plan at all this year.”

 Many other students are doing the same thing as Franzone.

 “It cost more to pay for a meal plan and to add on more flex than just buying all of my food at Giant,” said Franzone.

 So the question is, are students getting ripped off?

 “I don’t think I’m getting my money’s worth,” said Dusak, “I pay so much money for a meal plan, but a meal swipe is only $4.55. How much food can you get for that?”

 Although on-campus dining facilities are convenient and provide decent food, many students are turning away because it is too expensive.

 “I paid a set amount for a meal plan,” stated Franzone, “but I ended up putting more money into it in the end. I felt as if I had been scammed.”