

the PRESIDENT'S PAGE



Jeff Doucet
VP Finance

vpfinance@msu.mcmaster.ca
ext. 24109

Improving Food and Catering Options on Campus

Each year, Maclean's magazine releases their much anticipated Canadian University rankings. Future students use these rankings as a basis for choosing where they will spend their next four years. The rankings collect student feedback about a number of issues, ranging from teaching quality and class size to ancillary operations such as food quality. The quality and cost of food is often discussed. With undergrads placing such important emphasis on food quality when ranking postsecondary institutions, the MSU recognizes how important food is to the undergraduate experience.

This is why the MSU invests in services such as TwelvEighty and Union Market, which provide low-cost alternatives to our University counterparts. In TwelvEighty, a student can sit down for a meal and enjoy a sandwich and a side for as low as \$5.99 and we pride ourselves on selling the best and least expensive coffee on campus at Union Market.

While we offer retail options for students on campus, the MSU is working to expand catering options as well. For the thousands of students who are members of MSU Clubs and/or Faculty Societies who participate in Welcome Week planning or other activities, campus catering costs impact their ability to plan affordable events throughout the year.

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In my role as Vice-President (Finance), I have been collecting feedback from students to get a better understanding of the state of catering on campus. Students are appreciative of the 15% discount that Paradise Catering offers to MSU-affiliated clubs and Faculty Societies. As well, when less than forty students attend an event, groups can host a “pot-luck” in which attendees can prepare and serve their own food. This concept is popular with students and cultural groups, who often hold events to celebrate our diverse student body.

That being said, students have indicated that there is significant room for improvement. The current catering system seems to create unreasonable burdens for students, often charging well above competitive rates in the industry. Also, in busy times such as Welcome Week, there are not enough resources in the catering department to meet the needs of Faculty Societies. This is not a failure by the University - it would be hard for any single catering company to feed thousands of students at different events throughout a day as busy as Faculty Day.

The MSU has the resources and capabilities to provide students with more catering options, and we will be working with University Administration to expand catering options to students. Though I recognize that the University-based catering operation generates needed revenue for the insitution, I believe that the current system doesn't benefit all campus groups and I want to find a solution that does. Allowing the MSU to cater to students in the Student Centre (which was built through money generated by students) seems like a fair and reasonable outcome to ensure that students get proper value when hosting events.

twelveEighty BAR & GRILL

\$4.99 Penne Pasta
w/ Garlic Bread

\$5.99 Cajun Chicken Wrap
w/ choice of side



\$1.30 Medium Coffee

\$2.95 Fresh Sandwich

La Piazza

\$5.05 Slice of Pizza Pizza
w/ dipping sauce

\$5.30 Piller's Wrap
(w/ no side)

\$7.15 Pasta w/ Meat at
Tomasito's

*Paradise Catering
Cost Examples:*

Coffee House	
Coffee for 50:	\$70
'Small Cookies' for 50:	\$32.50
----- Total: \$102.50	
Dinner for a Club Meeting	
4 Pizzas: (2 slices per person)	\$63.80
20 Cans of Pop:	\$37
----- Total: \$100.80	

Based on pricing available at <http://hospitality.mcmaster.ca/catering/>



Spencer Graham
VP (Education)

David Campbell
President

Anna D'Angela
VP (Administration)

Jeff Doucet
VP (Finance)



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