

**Minutes**  
**Board of Director's Meeting**  
April 26th, 2021  
Via WebEx Call

<b>Attendees:</b>	Steve Deutsch	Brian Obach
	Melinda Cirillo	Kevin Saunders
	Michele Halstead	Matthew Kreuz
	Stephanie Blaisdell	Jessica Jewell
	Corinna Caracci	Haley Hershenson
	Jeffrey Gant	Kevin Dicey
	Niza Cardona	

**Others Present:** Lisa Mitten, Logan Bross

**Recording Secretary:** Jacqueline Pascar

**Call to order:** 10:04am

**Unanimous approval of the agenda and February 8, 2021 minutes.**

**Meal Plans for 2021-22**

After meeting with **Steve, Melinda, Kevin Dicey,** and Tim Dilger, the meal plan committee approved of the plan for the upcoming academic year. **Steve** reviewed the presentation from the committee meeting before sharing the approved plan with the board.

**Spring 2021:** The anywhere, anytime meals were introduced at the beginning of the spring 2021 semester with no requirements to eat at Peregrine Dining Hall unless students chose to. The \$2,400 meal plan included 100 meal swipes and \$1,100 dining dollars for the semester. **Steve** showed examples of meal swipe exchanges that were available in retail areas followed by the hours of operations. **Steve** explained, "What made this [meal plan] possible was to condense the hours of Peregrine to just dinner time and all of the other areas we sort of condensed the hours of operations to peak hours, where folks were really using those particular things." Element 93 and the Truth Library Café were closed for the spring 2021 semester.

**Steve** presented a chart which showed the number of meals that were used with the locations listed, stating, "Although folks had the choice to go elsewhere, more than 50% of the meals were actually used in the dining hall and we found that really encouraging." Mid-semester feedback proved that students enjoyed the meal plan exchanges. "They thought that they were getting value for their money and they liked the freedom of using them," **Steve** explained. "We found that either people had budgeted or just simply have not spent what they had to spend. And so, we were also concerned that people would burn through their money quickly. Some did, but the vast majority had enough food to get through the end of the semester." The top 3 dining locations were Hissho Sushi, SubConnection and Pomodoro's.

**2021-22 Proposal:** **Steve** highlighted that all 3 meal plans included some requirement for students to eat at Peregrine which would resume serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner in the fall. **Steve** explained that, "we needed to guarantee that a certain amount of foot traffic would go through Peregrine, so we made it a requirement again. We tried to give maximum flexibility by not having a first-year meal plan,

allowing folks to choose whichever meal plan they wanted to be on, and having people sort of segregate themselves by their buying habits.” **Steve** presented the meal plans:

**Meal Plan A (Value) - \$2,400:** Unlimited meals per semester, \$300 dining dollars per semester, 5 meal swipe exchanges in retail per week

**Meal Plan B (Combo)\* - \$2,500:** 125 meals per semester, \$1,000 dining dollars per semester, 3 meal exchanges in retail per week. \*default plan

**Meal Plan C (Freedom) - \$2,500:** 75 meals per semester, \$1,500 dining dollars per semester, 3 meal exchanges in retail per week

**Steve** shared the hours of dining operations for the fall, stating that Element 93 would reopen, Peregrine would resume serving from the morning through the evening, but the Truth Café would remain closed. **Steve** explained: “If we have more people than we are expecting to have, then we will consider opening that up, but for right now it's the only operation that we're certain that we're not going to open, or at least we're going to start the semester that way.”

**Steve** concluded that the anywhere, anytime meals would be replaced for 3 or 5 meal exchanges per week depending on the plan, a first-year meal plan would not be mandatory and “we are going to emphasize the value of eating at Peregrine by having that plan be \$100 less than the other 2 plans.” **Steve** asked if there were any thoughts or comments.

**Lisa** asked if meal plans B and C costed \$2,500. **Steve** confirmed that both plans would be \$100 more than the current cost of \$2,400.

**Stephanie** asked about the thinking behind eliminating the mandatory requirement for a first-year meal plan. **Steve** responded that “resistance” had increased over the years as first year students don't enjoy being on the “freshman” meal plan. **Steve** further explained, “what we've seen is, and I'm a little bit sorry to say this is, for those who don't want community, those who don't want to eat in the dining hall, they're just taking it to-go anyway. So, our sense was, we can't sort of force that on folks and the idea was just to sort of open it up and allow people to choose based on how they bought as opposed to whether they were a 1st year, a 2nd year or a 3rd year person.”

**Stephanie** understood and responded, “I do think that this is something we need to look carefully about for longer term planning, because students often want things that are not necessarily the best things for them.” **Stephanie** compared the first-year dining requirement to Residence Life explaining, “We put freshmen in corridor style housing because the research says that that's the best way for them to build community.” **Stephanie** reiterated that “we want to draw people into those community environments because we know it's the way that they attach to the institution. And that was part of my concern with the rise of the to-go containers even before the pandemic. If we give students an easy out, they will do that.”

**Steve** acknowledged **Stephanie's** points and further elaborated on how dining has experienced “a lot of people that have genuine anxiety about eating in a cafeteria”. **Steve** noted that dining programs and events in Peregrine have been successful and concluded that “if people are drawn in rather than forced to be there, it seems to go a lot better in terms of customer satisfaction.” **Stephanie** agreed and noted that, “I personally would rather see us attack that and make it a less stressful way to come in to form

community.” **Stephanie** clarified that students with legitimate anxiety issues could go through an established accommodation process. **Kevin D.** noted that some of the reasons behind limiting the meal exchanges per week in the approved plan were to keep Peregrine thriving as best as possible and to encourage community with the interactions and special events. **Kevin** acknowledged **Stephanie’s** points, stating that the meal plan would be reevaluated again next year. **Steve** pointed out that the upcoming year would not be normal and stated: “We can't say that the plan that we're crafting for next year is going to be the plan moving forward. We'll just have to get feedback and see how it goes.”

**Brian** concurred with **Stephanie**, hoping for the discussion to be reconsidered in the future. **Brian** explained that “CAS in this weird space where we're a service provider and want customer satisfaction, but we're also at this educational mission, and we're an educational institution. I think that part of what CAS does is educational, and I like the idea of having events that attract people to make them want to do that, but I think there's also an educational role here to socialize people... So, I think if we sort of combine elements of coercion, like you have to get this meal plan with education and socialization, this is good. We're a community here and you want to interact and there's all sorts of benefits to be derived.”

**Steve** reminded the Board that, “every plan has some commitment to Peregrine ... So, there is some level of commitment.”

**Niza** pointed out that since students will default to the combo plan, “the chances of them moving over to an all you can eat plan are even less.” **Niza** suggested for the freshman to default to the value plan with unlimited meal swipes and upperclassmen to default to the combo plan. **Steve** agreed with the suggestion, noting that “I think it solves some of this issue that we're talking about right now and that a lot of first-years will start with that plan and maybe they'll stick with it, and certainly a higher percentage will do that if we default it to them.” Students would have to pay \$100 if they chose to switch from the value plan to either the combo or freedom plans.

**Melinda** asked if freshman or everybody under 30 credits should be defaulted to the value plan and unable to change meal plans. **Niza** asked if that would go contrary to the findings. **Steve** confirmed that the findings were not conclusive and that it would be a different semester. **Steve** asked for student input and reiterated that “I think it's a completely legitimate option to do it as we used to do it, which is first-years are on that. I also think it's legitimate to let them slide off it because we've priced them out accordingly and we've weighed the traffic options of each plan so that if the population swings to any one of the plans, will be okay.”

**Logan** noted that students, and particularly freshman, with medical issues may be limited with food options on campus. **Steve** confirmed that students with medical issues work with a dietitian to make an accommodation. **Steve** asked board members to weigh in on whether the plan should be mandatory for freshmen or just defaulted, allowing students to switch if desired.

**Niza** pointed out that “If we open it up this semester and allow them to be able to switch their first semester here, it's going to be very difficult to go backwards, because word of mouth is powerful and I'm sure other institutions have them defaulting to that plan and making sure they get it.” **Steve** responded, “I kind of favored the idea of making the value plan default for first-year students and making the combo plan the default for upperclassmen, and then allowing folks to switch within a certain period, maybe 2 weeks into the semester, they can switch if they want to, and those who want to be off of the value plan and get onto the more flexible plans will have to pay \$100 more to do so.” **Steve**

further explained that some students may not want to go through the trouble of changing plans and others may end up liking the defaulted meal plan.

In response to the previous discussion on social skills, **Matt** noted “I think it would be beneficial if we're emphasizing that point to maybe have workshops for first-years on that.” **Matt** indicated the fiscal responsibility that comes with each meal plan and concluded, “I don't think there's a wrong choice. I think it's a matter of, how do we want to emphasize what skills students get?... Having those resources available to them will help them have a successful year.”

**Kevin** commented, “I just want to make sure that as a group, and I support any decision we make, just remember that at this point in time I have to plan the dining hall at 50%, which means the dining hall will only have 160 to 180 seats available.” With an expectation of 800 freshmen in the fall, seating in Peregrine will be limited. **Melinda** responded, “In order to justify giving everybody have a little bit more flexibility and accomplish the covid restrictions, we came up with the default plan as we did.” Regarding the seating restrictions, **Steve** asked **Kevin** if it looked like the capacity would change from 50% by the fall. **Kevin** was optimistic that the percentage would change but uncertain that it would reach 100%. **Steve** asked the board if vaccinations would be required by the fall semester. **Stephanie** responded “No, because it's approved under emergency FDA it can't be required, but once it gets a standard FDA approval then it can.”

With all things considered, **Niza** stated that there was no choice but to default to the more expensive, combo plan. **Steve** agreed and explained, “We could take the risk and default upperclassmen to the combo plan and first-years to the other plan, knowing that a lot of first-years are going to make the switch, but there is a little risk there, because **Kevin** is not 100% sure about his occupancy and we don't know how many [students] will make the switch.” **Kevin** noted that offering the meal plan flexibility to all students could also be used as a marketing strategy that may be a “swaying factor” for prospective students.

**Steve** suggested for the board to approve of the plans presented, “with a note to both **Stephanie's** and **Brian's** points about maybe reintroducing the first-year requirement.” More data on meal plan usage and occupancy would be known by the spring. **Steve** reiterated that “We don't have to make that decision right now. We can make that in the fall.” **Steve** asked if the proposal made sense. The board agreed. **Steve** asked if any members were against or had a different proposal. **Stephanie** agreed and asked if the communication could have a “positive spin” to help “manage expectations and [make] Sodexo look responsive.” **Steve** confirmed that it could.

**Niza** questioned whether 2 weeks would be too much time for students to spend dining dollars on campus before switching to the less expensive, value plan. **Steve** didn't think it would be an issue. **Melinda** agreed, explaining that “Even if they go back to the value plan, it's \$300 in DCB. I don't normally see them using more than \$300 and when they do, we kind of adjust the liability accordingly. So, it's all about calculations.”

**Steve** announced that if everyone agreed, the meeting would continue to the budget presentation. The board agreed to move forward. **Steve** thanked the board and welcomed **Melinda** to present the budget.

## 2021-2022 Budget

**Melinda** addressed the difficulties with creating the budget, explaining that, “when I was doing a lot of the comparison data between 19 and 20 and budget 2021, we have some issues with comparison right now, because of the impact of the water issue and the pandemic.” **Melinda** noted that she was able to use historical data for some operations where the enrollment matched the expectations of 2,820 for the upcoming fall and 2,650 for the spring.

In terms of commissions, which are normally paid by vendors based on guaranteed contract amounts, **Melinda** stated that “Several of our vendors have come back to us and asked us for this year to go to a retail sales model. So just pay us commission based on actual sales, and we agreed to it.”

Salaries were budgeted for a 2% increase and fringe benefits were budgeted for a 3% increase based on the corporation’s unemployment rate and health insurance. Space/rent and utilities were also budgeted for a 2% increase. **Melinda** reiterated that these notes would show up throughout the rest of the budget.

**Central Services:**

Under the revenue column for 21-22, **Melinda** highlighted that the interest/dividend income was based on 4% of the performing portfolio equating to about \$250,000. **Melinda** stated that the gain or loss on investment, or how the portfolio is expected to perform, was a “shot in the dark” since it is unknown.

**Melinda** clarified that the other/miscellaneous line included revenue earned from the campus as reimbursement for cleaning at Peregrine by our employee, along with bookkeeping services provided for the Children’s Center and Student Association.

For salaries and wages, **Melinda** reiterated that the 2% increase was included, “but there's still a decrease because we've decided that we had a person retire in our office that we would not backfill that position until the work flow picks up and we need it.

. So, with what we see in volume, we've basically just reshuffled our work and our responsibilities and we're not going to fill it.”

**Melinda** highlighted public relations on the left-hand page, explaining “that's just basically the money that we donate over to the college for the foundation for the financial aid office for an internship program and for food insecurity program.” **Melinda** asked if there were any questions. The board responded no.

**Food Service Operations:**

The board contract line was based on the meal plans that were previously presented and residency numbers. Residence for the fall was expected to be 2,820 and 2,650 in the spring. **Melinda** noted that changes in these numbers would result in a change on the board contract line.

Commissions would not be guaranteed. Instead, Sodexo commissions would be based on actual retail sales. **Melinda** also pointed out the enhancement fund of about \$300,000, “which is what Sodexo gives us to maintain their equipment they use on campus.”

The numbers for sanitation and composting were low in 19-20 since students left campus in March.

**Melinda** noted that the numbers were restored for the upcoming year “with the expectation that our campus will be fully operational.”

The contract service line showed the expenses paid to Sodexo to provide meal plans. On the depreciation line, **Melinda** pointed out that the number decreased due to the replacement of the old Shop 24 machine and clarified that “depreciation is basically our depreciating the equipment we purchase for our venues on campus.” Other/miscellaneous included small programs that would run on campus which the corporation gets reimbursement for. The net excess revenue was calculated to be about \$282,000.

#### **Bookstore Operations:**

Regarding general merchandise and digital sales, **Melinda** noted that, “Those are basically just for information purposes only... below the line in contract services, those numbers will be taken out so net effect on our P&L for those items are 0.”

**Melinda** continued to highlight the significant decrease in commissions. She explained that “for this contract, it's basically based on prior year sales, but they asked us to go on the retail sales model.” Commissions were estimated to be \$110,000. Other revenue was “a small upfront fee that they give us for the life of the contract”. This is amortized over the life for 5 years resulting in \$25,000 per year.

#### **Vending Operations:**

**Melinda** announced that the Snack Shack had been performing as well as expected. She said, “by looking at our data and looking at sales with our number of students on campus right now, it's really doing well.” The actual sales for Open 24 in 19-20 were \$35,458, 20-21 sales were budgeted for \$50,000, and the 21-22 sales budget increased to be \$90,000.

Vending commissions/other increased due to an expectation of 15% commissions from Open 24, resulting in an increase in commissions. Like the bookstore, **Melinda** noted that “cold beverage, candy and snack are placeholders for revenue, because they also come out in expense on the contract service line. So, the net effect on our P&L is really 0. We put their revenue in, but we take it out in expense. So just information purposes.”

#### **Laundry Operations:**

Revenue for laundry operations is “based on the number of students on campus times an agreed contract rate that the corporation gets reimbursed from the college.” **Melinda** noted that the contract rate historically pays for all expenses below the line, but “because our residency numbers are going down, in 21-22 we don't foresee that revenue covering the expenses. So, there's going to be a net loss.” If the number of residents vary from the expected 2,820 in the fall and 2,650 in the spring, the budget for laundry operations will change.

**Stephanie** asked what the breakeven number of residents would be to cover the expenses. **Melinda** said that she would have to do some calculations before sharing the breakeven number.

#### **OAS:**

**Melinda** highlighted the big differences in the conference revenue line since conferences were not expected to take place through 20-21. With the report covering through May 31, 2022, conference revenue had diminished to \$10,000.

The difference on the salaries and wages line under expenses, resulted from the office losing an employee. **Melinda** noted that the position would not be backfilled due to the lack of conference

activity. Repair and maintenance included atrium fees, which were less in comparison to the previous blackboard fees. The bottom line was expected to be a net loss of almost \$100,000.

#### **Consolidated Bottom-Lines:**

The total expected net income was budgeted for \$264,238 with the proposed meal plans and expected residency.

#### **Campus & Community Support:**

Half of the programming funds would be allocated in 21-22, resulting in a total of \$156,500.

The remaining \$100,000 net income would then fund some of the campus and community donations.

**Melinda** emphasized that the funding would cause the net income to be zero. **Steve** clarified that the \$313,000 of programming funds were not given out this year, and explained “Instead of making people apply again, we're just going to give the same folks half of the money for next year if this budget is approved as presented, that's our current plan.” **Melinda** asked if there were any questions.

With the switch to mostly aluminum cans, **Lisa** thought “there would be a reduction in revenue somehow regarding the vending contract.” **Lisa** asked for clarification since it did not appear in the budget. **Melinda** responded, “Coke has guaranteed our commissions for this year. So, that's one positive, but the other thing in the revenue lines that you're seeing is really the pickup of sales of Open 24. It's kind of obscuring the data. There is a slight reduction, but again, we're hoping that Open 24 will backfill the reduction.” **Steve** asked if there were any additional thoughts or comments.

**Melinda** further noted that the cold beverage line also increased since 19-20 since students left campus in March. “So, we're also budgeting more because we should have the last quarter of the year in this as well.”

If there were no more comments, **Steve** asked for a motion to approve the 2021-2022 budget. **Michele motioned to approve the budget as presented for next year. Stephanie seconded. Steve** asked if there were any objections. The answer was no. With the budget approved, **Steve** confirmed that the programming fund recipients would be notified that there would be no application process for next year and they would be receiving half of the allocation amount from last year. **Steve** thanked **Melinda** for her hard work on the budget. **Melinda** thanked the budget committee for their feedback.

**Matt** asked if he could present his Bronze Pin Award. **Steve** said yes. **Matt** introduced the Bronze Pin Award as the “the highest honor of the National Association of College University and Residence Halls, our national affiliate, one can receive on a college campus. The pins can only be given out by an NRHH or RHSA president.” **Matt** continued into his speech and asked **Melinda** to accept his first Bronze Pin of the spring 2021 semester. **Melinda** thanked **Matt** and accepted the award.

**Steve** thanked the board for attending the meeting and stated that the meeting in May would be a shorter, wrap-up meeting.

**Meeting Adjourned 11:02am**