

Minutes
Board of Director's Meeting
February 8th, 2021
Via WebEx Call

Attendees:	Steve Deutsch	Kevin Saunders
	Melinda Cirillo	Fred Destefano
	Michele Halstead	Matthew Kreuz
	Stephanie Blaisdell	Jessica Jewell
	Corinna Caracci	Haley Hershenson
	Jeffrey Gant	Kevin Dicey
	Niza Cardona	

Others Present: Lisa Mitten

Recording Secretary: Jacqueline Pascar

Call to order: 9:04am

Unanimous approval of agenda and December 7, 2020 minutes.

Introductions

Steve welcomed **Jeff Gant** as the college's new Vice President of Enrollment and President's Designee on the board.

ED Report

The biggest impact on the corporation's financial health had been the lack of students on campus. The current count was estimated to be 1,350 total residents. **Steve** explained, "We were thinking pessimistically that it was going to be around 1,500 so that extra falloff is really going to hurt. Not just for us, but for all of the other financial aspects of campus." The financial loss was expected to exceed the anticipated \$500,000 per semester.

However, **Steve** announced that both of the PPP loans the corporation had received were forgiven, and the portfolio's performance "mitigated a lot of our loss". The total loss for the fall semester was \$200,000. After noting the stock market's uncertainty, **Steve** commented, "I do think overall we're going to lose less money this entire year than we thought we would". **Melinda** agreed.

In terms of the campus meal plan, **Steve** stated "We think we've made a lot of improvements and have gotten a lot of positive feedback. Again, having fewer people on campus means that we're going to cut back service a little bit so that we lose less." The corporation was working with dining services to reduce hours and staffing in order better adjust the program for the current enrollment. **Steve** noted that **Kevin D.** would further discuss campus dining and asked if there were any questions regarding the ED report.

Kevin S. asked for an update on the Student Union's new sushi name. **Kevin D.** responded that Tokyo Sushi chose to downsize during the pandemic. After pursuing other opportunities, dining services welcomed Hissho Sushi at the start of the spring semester as the new campus sushi vendor. **Kevin D.** commented that "The quality, the presentation, the variety far exceeds what we were offering before." **Steve** asked if there were any additional questions. The answer was no. **Steve** gave an update on the Executive Director Evaluation System. **Michele** and **Steve** had begun work by writing up the evaluation

system and listing the involved parties. **Steve** noted that the system would be presented at the board meeting in April and go into effect with the first evaluation hopefully completed and presented at the May meeting.

Campus Dining Update

Anywhere, Anytime Meals:

Steve welcomed **Kevin** to report on campus dining. After noting that the campus had dealt with the water issues a year ago proceeded by the pandemic outbreak, **Kevin** shared his ongoing collaboration with **Lisa Mitten** and the sustainability ambassadors at the time to develop plans for eliminating plastics on campus. **Kevin** said, “We were trying to get that [the programs] to be a student project through their academia, but when the pandemic hit, we dove right into it and said, 'wait a second, this is the greatest time ever for us to push forward with all of these programs'.” As the sustainability initiatives progressed, the enrollment numbers decreased. In order to assess the current meal plan, **Matthew Kreuz** and **Tevin Green**, sustainability ambassador, volunteered to facilitate focus groups with campus residents. **Kevin** explained how the student-led focus groups “...kept the economics out of it and tried to keep the emotions in check.” **Kevin** thanked **Matt** and **Tevin** for their hard work in collecting student feedback.

Kevin introduced the current Anywhere, Anytime Meal Plan as a program that gave students a “freedom of choice”. **Kevin** stated “I’m hearing great comments about it [the meal plan]. Economically it's working right now, but we need to make some tweaks for the fall.” The Anywhere, Anytime Meal Plan included \$1,100 dining dollars and 100 Anywhere, Anytime Meals for the semester. The meals could be used at Peregrine Dining Hall or exchanged for breakfast, lunch and dinner at retail locations on campus.

Peregrine:

Kevin stated that “We're focused on one meal and making it the best meal possible.” With Peregrine operating on a later schedule in the spring semester, dining services had been serving daily themed dinners including international cuisines, homestyle dishes, city spotlights, sustainable seafood nights, pub meals and steakhouse entrees. In regard to the sustainably certified seafood, **Kevin** commented “I know **Lisa** has a history with Red’s Best so we’re very excited to have it back on campus.” **Kevin** emphasized that Peregrine had now become a “dining destination”, and stated “I know that myself, **Steve**, **Melinda** and the chefs on campus are so excited that this may be the future, making it [Peregrine] a destination restaurant. That is what the students that we have today, and I think what the future students are going to want.”

Coin System:

Originally planning for the WasteWatch REUSE program to rollout in Element 93 as a “pilot model”, **Kevin** explained that the program was introduced at Peregrine instead to eliminate waste and better work with the dining program after the pandemic hit. The program successfully rolled out at the start of the fall semester, but concerns developed as students left containers in their rooms longer than expected.

Kevin noted that receptacle systems for returning the containers were considered, but “it was economically not feasible right now to do that and timing wise, it just couldn't happen quick enough.” Instead, a coin system was introduced so students were able to return their containers without being required to eat at Peregrine during the same visit. **Kevin** showed board members the coin that was distributed with a keychain attachment. **Kevin** explained that “When they [students] return their container they get a coin. So, the next time they come to the dining hall, all they do is turn in their coin

and they get a clean container.” **Kevin** shared that the coin system had been working well for the time being and stated “I think ideally, we'd like to find a way to put receptacles on campus at some point... That is definitely a summer project for us to figure that out.”

With the program originally modelled in January for 1500 students, recent discussion led to streamlining the program where possible to work better with the lower amount of meal plans. **Kevin** noted that one change was for the SUB to stop serving at 8:00pm, while Peregrine continued to serve late night food until 10:00pm. **Kevin** said, “we're hoping that if the only venue that's open [for] late night is Peregrine, the students that don't typically come to Peregrine will start coming.” **Kevin** also mentioned that operational hours at Sweets & Treats and a few other locations would shift by a half hour based on food traffic analysis reports. **Kevin** thanked **Lisa**, **Matt** and **Corinna** for helping out with various parts of the dining program and welcomed any questions.

Steve noted that they had discussed evaluating the current meal plan system to make decisions for the fall semester and asked **Kevin** and **Melinda** if the meal plan would have to be fully planned out by the time the budget is finished. **Melinda** answered yes. **Kevin** commented that “Depending on what programs we have open and how much labor we're going to use, that's all built into meal rate that turns around to what the offering is going to be for the students.” **Steve** asked, “given that we're already working on the budget, do we reconvene an evaluation process, maybe using **Matt's** services if he's got the bandwidth for it again to evaluate where we're at very soon so that we can make a suggestion to the board about what the meal plan is going to look like for the fall semester?” **Melinda** and **Kevin** both agreed.

Steve pointed out that for the past 20 years, New Paltz had offered one of the least expensive carte blanche plans, all you care to eat program, in the SUNY system. **Steve** said “It's something that we've been very proud to do. We're able to do it because of the efficiencies of making everybody go through one place that was a very efficient place to run.” Though the Anywhere, Anytime Plan is more popular with the student body, the program is more expensive to operate causing New Paltz to be “in the middle or moving now towards the upper echelon of what it costs to provide food for a student who's in a residence hall.” **Steve** emphasized that he would like to be able to also offer a low-cost option again.

Kevin agreed and reiterated how gathering more data from campus residents could shape dining services offered for the upcoming year. **Kevin** said “Element resurfacing and maybe resurfacing in a different way can handle a lot of our volume issues. If Element becomes a 7-days a week breakfast and lunch location for example, that will handle a large volume of 600-700 more students on campus that we didn't think we could handle in the SUB.”

Niza asked if freshmen would still be required an all you can eat meal plan option and questioned whether or not students would gravitate towards a cheaper meal plan if offered. **Steve** noted that first-year meal plan restrictions were currently waived since all students were on the Anywhere, Anytime Meal Plan. **Steve** stated that he would like to continue without restricting first-year students, explaining that “I think where we're going to want to be able to at least position ourselves is, our main program, the one that most people are going to choose is going to be a more expensive program, because I think by in large students would much rather have freedom than fiscal responsibility.” **Steve** explained that a low-cost option with less food choice and variety would be available for those interested and emphasized “I think that's what we need to work on is to not return to the carte blanche program as it was where we were forcing people to do it but having it as a choice for people who want to do it.”

Steve reiterated that the coin system was integrated to combat the issue of students not returning the containers back to the dining hall in a timely manner. **Steve** stated “The coin system allows them to just drop the reusable containers off at any time and get the coin. But still at that point, students have to be somewhat forward thinking.” **Steve** asked what percentage of students have been using the coin system on a daily basis. **Kevin** responded that about 10-15% of the usual diners at Peregrine have been regularly using the coin system. **Matt** shared that, to his knowledge, students liked the coin system as an option, but most continued to return the containers and takeout more food within the same visit. **Matt** commented, “I think eventually having a disposable container option would be beneficial if we have the fiscal capability. But as it stands, I think it's a good alternative to just having it sit in the room and become overly stinky as **Kevin** illustrated.”

Steve explained that the coins worked with Ozzi machines that can be placed anywhere on campus. The machine would take used dining containers and give out the same coin that is currently in use at Peregrine. **Steve** commented “So imagine if we had that machine in every residence hall. Instead of students having to go anywhere other than down to the lobby, I think that would encourage compliance a lot better than having them have to walk back to the residence hall.” A major factor to consider was that each Ozzi machine costed \$30,000 to \$40,000. **Steve** proposed including the Ozzi machines in next year's budget with one machine in each quad on campus, noting that “I know **Lisa** said she was looking at some grant money for this, but obviously at \$30,000 to \$40,000 a machine it's an expensive proposition.”

Melinda asked if in-person dining would resume in the fall and if so, would the machines be useful if meals were taken out from the dining hall in lower quantities? **Kevin** stated that it was unknown whether or not in-person dining would resume in the fall and suggested that the WasteWatch REUSE program could also be integrated into retail dining. **Melinda** responded, “I think **Kevin's** idea is a wonderful idea to really start changing out the retail locations to the reusable containers so we can cut back on waste there.”

Matt noted that a machine was not needed in Peregrine quad since Peregrine Hall would accept containers and further suggested that an Ozzi machine in the SUB could supplement for Parker Quad as well as Shango, College and Bouton Halls. **Matt** highlighted that students would likely return their used containers in retail areas and commented “I don't think we should be investing a lot in 4 or 5 machines just knowing there will be reduced numbers. If we could have a system that's more effective to only have one or two, because everything else could just handle itself and then we'll be saving money and we don't need to worry about grants or allocating enough resources to something that will then have to be changed in the future.” **Steve** agreed and asked if there were any additional questions for **Kevin**. No questions were asked.

Steve announced that **Melinda** would need to meet with the budget committee soon. **Jaca** would be reaching out to **Michele**, **Niza** and **Matt** to schedule the committee meeting. **Steve** also noted that an evaluation process of the current meal plan system would have to be completed for the budget and asked for volunteers. **Matt**, **Kevin S.** and **Jessica** volunteered to join the evaluation committee. **Steve** noted that **Jaca** would also reach out to those regarding the evaluation meeting. **Steve** asked if there were any additional questions or comments.

Michele gave a shoutout to Tim Dilger for his great work with the IT Department and Student Affairs to refine card access on campus with the testing requirements. **Michele** said, “We've really come up with some spectacular ideas as to how to control the access that students have to the academic building if they haven't tested.” **Michele** noted that, formerly on two systems, all buildings with card access were

now controlled within one system. She said “**Stephanie** and I were leading a charge to do this for security reasons, and for other reasons, but it really has come in to be a great help during this time of pandemic and keeping the public out of our buildings but still allowing faculty/staff and students. Tim has been fantastic in that whole effort, so I just wanted to give him a good shoutout.” **Steve** thanked **Michele**.

Corinna commented “Thank you so much for **Kevin** and his crew with isolation and quarantine students, delivering the meals, being flexible and just so accommodating and always willing to do whatever it takes to help our students get through that rough time of being in that situation... And **Steve**, thanks for the donation of the water. Thank you everyone for all of your help. We're really grateful for everything that you can all do for us.”

Steve thanked everyone for the great meeting and reminded the board that the next meeting would be held in April.

Meeting Adjourned 9:44am