

Minutes
Board of Director's Meeting
December 17th, 2024
Teams Meeting

Attendees:	Steve Deutsch	Fred DeStefano
	Melinda Cirillo	Edward Curley
	Michele Halstead	Athena Anthos
	Mark McFadden	Derek Rodriguez
	Corinna Caracci	Michael Cavalieri
	Stella Turk	Tom Byrne
	Niza Cardona	Max Olshansky
	Kevin Saunders	Margaux Moses
	Rachel Rigolino	

Recording Secretary: Kellyann Hauschildt

Call to Order: 2:01

Steve called the meeting to order then asked if anyone has questions about the minutes or agenda as presented. There were none. Steve started with a review of the first semester with the ReusePass program. **Steve** introduced Margaux Moses and Max Olshansky from ReusePass Topanga to the group. **Steve** started by asking Michael Cavalieri to re-brief the group on what the reusable container program looked like prior to this semester. **Michael C** stated that he has made an initiative in sustainability when it came to takeout food in all the units. Last year, or probably the last two years, there was the Ozzi program which was an analog system. Every student was given a coin when they enrolled on campus. They were given out for free. It was a swap. Once the food was ordered the student decided whether to use paper or green container, and there was no charge for the paper or container at that time, then when they picked up their food they handed in the coin and the food was given to them. Once the container was returned either to a kiosk or a worker a coin would be returned. The concept was there but it was not functional or did not bring any return. The analytical data was about a 30% to 40% return rate at that time on the containers. By contrast, today with Topanga we are at a 96% return rate. Which means the students are actively returning the containers and are involved. They are part of the sustainability effort. Topanga really put it together and made it happen. There have been issues but making the transition to bring Topanga to campus has been amazing. A simple percentage of paper to plastic, about 10% of the orders are going out in paper whereas last year 10% of the orders were going out in plastic. The staff has done a great job managing it. **Steve** asked if there were any questions for Mike about the background. There were none so Steve handed it off to Margaux Moses from Topanga.

Margaux M began by going over how the program works. It is a reuseable program powered by tech. There are both containers that are labeled with QR codes and humans that receive their own unique QR code. It works like a library system checking in and checking out containers. There is a scan out moment where the operator manually scans out the container to a student using the scan app device. Then there is a scan back into inventory moment, in the case for SUNY New Paltz it is scanned back in using an RFID in the back of house in the dish rooms. The program specifically launched with Grubhub. There is a seamless integration with Grubhub. When students go to order their food on the app, they are prompted to either sign up for ReusePass or sign in. Once they sign up or sign in, they are automatically kicked back to the Grubhub app to place their order.

The container type is an item level modifier, on the Grubhub app they can choose to reuse or in SUNY New Paltz case, they can choose a single use option and then pay the \$5.00 up charge. Once the order is placed, there are operators receiving the order ticket which automatically prints the student's QR code on it. The operator fulfills the order as usual and they scan both the user QR and the container QR creating the rental and then the student does not have to be there to present their QR code, it is in a reuseable container, and there is no line being held up and the food is ready to go. **Margaux M** asked if there were any questions and moves on. **Margaux M** showed a slide regarding RFID readers. She stated there are a lot of returns with programs using the RFID readers. Decreased labor is one of the biggest returns. If there is no RFID reader, then the scan device in front of house is in back-of-house operations as well where operators must manually scan each container. RFID is the way to go for decreased labor, more accurate readings, and better user experience. The Topanga dashboard is how all the data is provided to the managers. There are metrics showing everything that happens in the program such as daily activity, rentals that are scanned in and out, shelf life, return rate, and can adjust the forgiveness settings, and see which day the program is most active. **Margaux M** continued with that at SUNY New Paltz, ReusePass was launched at seven locations with a shared goal of minimizing waste, maintaining high return rates and ensuring a positive student/operator sentiment towards the reusable container program on campus. The next slide **Margaux M** spoke about was settings and the container types. For Topanga this was more retail locations than they saw in the beginning. Usually, people are more hesitant to test in retail and so they test it in one or two dining halls before expanding. However, SUNY New Paltz started out with retail and the volume was exceptional. There is a \$5.00 fee for late charge and a \$5.00 surcharge for single use container if the ReusePass program is not used. Next **Margaux M** spoke about launch learnings. The dishwashers and the return receptacles were the main challenges when launching. **Michael C** stated that the biggest issue was how well the system works. The dishwashing capacity was not sufficient. We had to move containers from one location to another. Peregrine dining hall has a much larger dish machine, so we transported the containers from the Student Union to the Peregrine dining hall to keep up with the capacity. Return receptacles; at the beginning of the semester there were containers piled everywhere. The receptacles have since been increased around campus. They have been moved to a different location at the SUB which is working great. The team has done an exceptional job organizing the system and it now works. There are still things that have to be worked out but overall, the system is working well, and student complaints have gone down drastically. **Margaux M** stated that regarding the student complaints there was live SMS support 24/7 available to answer student questions or concerns. Marketing materials were also provided. Together we have had a big impact. This is the fastest that a school has reached 100,000 container rentals. Numbers on savings include \$47,300 saved on single use packaging costs, \$20,000 generated in single use upcharge collected, over 10,550 lbs. of waste diverted, over 73,000 gallons of water saved, and 74,060 lbs. of emissions. Some of the metrics regarding the ReusePass are a 97% return rate, over 4000 students enrolled, over 118,000 rentals since launch, most people taking food in a to-go container 2 to 3 times per week, and on average a container is going on 12 loops. **Michael C** reiterated that the paper/plastic use has flip flopped since last year. What was 10% plastic usage last year is now 10% paper usage this year. In addition, the data entry that we used to do every month by hand is now on the dashboard. **Steve** asked about \$7000 in late fees and where that money is going. What percentage that looks like and how that compares to other schools and how many late fees were waived. **Margaux M** responded that she could look into those numbers but that \$5.00 late fee is average across campuses. In terms of forgiving rentals, it is something to go back and see and pull when the program was launched. There were problems with dishwashing and scanning. The customer service department did have a high volume of inquiries and instant forgiveness was turned on for a short period of time. With that setting, it automatically forgives rentals that are not scanned in. **Michael C** stated that instant forgiveness is turned on now with the break coming. **Steve** stated that at \$5.00 per container and \$7000 in late fee charges yields about 1400 containers total out of 100,000 usages so it is approximately 1% for late fees. Where does that \$7000 get invested.

Michael C responded that it goes into revenue where it can be reinvested into the program or any other initiatives in sustainability. **Steve** goes on to congratulate both Topanga and Mike. Mike made the decision to do all the locations at once and the program did better because he went all in. **Michael C** responded when it was decided it was either all or nothing. It is not 100%. There are some locations that it is difficult to use it in but 90% of the locations are using it. **Margaux M** added that the operators were open to it and very engaged when she was there for the site visit, they asked great questions and were able to go through the workflow and it felt really easy. Operator adoption is a huge part of success just like user adoption and it was clear that the operators understood the technology and were excited to participate in the environmental impact. **Edward C** stated that in past meetings, longer time frame to give students to return was discussed and making the time frame longer and wanted to know if there was an update on that. **Michael C** responded there is no update at this time. It has not been discussed in detail and then Mike asked Max how other schools operate. **Max O** stated that he believes that all their schools have a three day return window but with a 10-day grace period after the three-day window. Part of why that is important is that if there is 100% return rate and diners held on to the containers for 10 days, 20 days, 30 days, that means there is less uses per container over the course of a school year. The actual cost savings will be less, and the environmental impact will be less as well. Part of why Topanga gently pushes schools to have the three-day window it leads to more impact both environmentally and economically. There is a 10-day window before a charge is actually taking place. The recommendation is to communicate it with the student population differently and bring them in a little deeper as to when there is a charge happening specifically. He cautions changing the return window because it will be impactful. For example, more containers will have to be purchased especially when there is a 97% return rate and there is plenty of inventory on campus to keep the program feeding itself. That is the opinion of Topanga but that said they are flexible and can support whatever decision is made. **Steve** asked Ed if he thinks the grace period covers it or is still a concern. **Edward C** responded, for him personally, thinks it is beneficial and that the grace period covers it. **Kevin S** asked anecdotally how the students feel the program is working for them. **Derek R** responded that he is living off campus and has a commuter meal plan and the start was rocky, and communication was an issue. Part of what keeps getting repeated is the 24-hour customer service, it was just AI and not a real person who could understand the specifics of the situation. He gave an example of what happened. **Max O** responded that he is sorry that Derek had that experience and will investigate the situation. **Margaux M** stated that the AI was on the Grubhub side because Topanga only has live agents answering calls. **Edward C** stated that both he and Athena A live on campus and have had a great experience but there could have been more communication in the beginning of the semester as to what ReusePass was and how to use it. But he appreciated the easy use of dropping off containers. The live agent was extremely useful but more marketing towards the student population was necessary so they know they could text the number. Once everyone learned it has been a great success. **Kevin S** asked how many people have returned a container only to report that it was stolen because there is no security around the collection. **Max O** responded that he understands the concern, but the data speaks for itself not just at SUNY New Paltz but at all seventy plus campuses that an aggregate of millions of transactions that are done theft is not an issue that has been encountered to date. **Derek R** asked about the \$7000 and if there will be a report as to where that goes at some point because it was said it would be reinvested into the program and put back into the system but is there going to be a breakdown of where it goes or what it is being utilized for because it is student funds. **Steve** responded that it would go back to the students but as to whether it will go through Sodexo offsetting some of the program or CAS offsetting the program we will inform the students when it is decided. **Niza C** gave the perspective of an employee using ReusePass for the first time. The staff were knowledgeable to show how to download and use the program so whatever training was done before going live they knew how to do it. **Steve** thanks Margaux M and Max O for being in the meeting and for a great first semester.

Steve continued the meeting with slides regarding the Peregrine renovations. He stated that marketing material must get out to the student population and incoming students making sure that all the information we have is out there and

there are meetings to make that happen. As far as developed renderings campus wide, there are only renderings of Peregrine. In the next month, there will be renderings of all the areas that will absorb all the traffic from Peregrine. We are working hard to make sure that 2000 meals a day that Peregrine serves can be absorbed by the rest of the operation. **Steve** proceeded to take the group through the renderings of the Peregrine dining hall renovations. On the first floor, there will be a diner concept and everything that is offered at Sweets & Treats. On the other side on the lobby level will be a smart vending area where salads, baked goods, and coffees are available. **Melinda C** added that the new computer lab will be accessed through an exterior door so they can access it at any time. The second floor will have one entrance point. The first concept will be breakfast and on the other side will be Kulture Trip. **Michael C** explained that Kulture Trip is a revolving concept that goes around the world. The menus are designed in two-week cycles and every two weeks it will be another cuisine from around the world. The main dining area will be u shaped. **Michael C** stated there will be a salad bar, pizza/pasta station with a hearth that will be the centerpiece, Emas, a Spanish inspired concept, then Architect which is a sandwich building station. **Steve** stated there will be a gluten free dining section that is not in the rendering yet, but it will be away from everything to make sure the station stays pure from allergens. **Michael C** commented that it is a simple serving and free of the top nine allergens and is a self-contained cooking space. It is completely on its own. The outside renderings have a walk path on the second floor. **Stella T** asked with Kulture Trip, do the students get to help with the selection of the concepts that will be rotating every two weeks. The second question is how many years the dining hall will be offline. **Michael C** responded that student involvement is a great idea but not thought of before. It may not happen at first to make sure it runs properly so it will have to be planned accordingly. The second question, the dining hall will be down for three years. **Stella T** asked then in terms of marketing all that will be new, it will not happen for another two years. **Michael C** responded that he is meeting with Shelly Wright and Andrew Brusco this week to determine how the marketing and communication gets out without interference. We want to make sure everyone gets the same message but when it gets marketed out it is not known yet. **Steve** stated that he will be at the same meeting and that how the student population will get fed for the next three years will be discussed. **Stella T** responded that it is her concern too, much more than what the building will offer three years from now. The students now will not make a difference to them, but the future students will care very much about that. The focus is on how to make what is being done sound exciting so students will want to come to SUNY New Paltz and experience what is going to be offered. **Steve** stated there are a lot of plans in the works but there are no renderings. We are also still pushing to get other spaces, for instance, trailers that can be used as kitchens to back up other operations. That might not be done initially but will be a backup concept if things get too busy too crowded too overwhelmed. All of that will be in a presentable form hopefully within the next month. **Stella T** responded that it is great, but we have got to stop tours going through Peregrine dining hall because that is not something the students are going to experience. We need to be able to tell them what they will be experiencing so they do not feel like they have been cheated from something. **Michael C** stated that it is a valid point and make sure to market correctly moving forward. **Steve** asked if Ed had a question. **Edward C** responded he had a question on the accessible entrance and is there plans for an elevator. **Steve** replied that there is an elevator. **Michele H** asked if there was a way the students in the computer lab could get to the bathrooms, other areas from the computer lab or is it a self-contained room. **Melinda C** answered that it is a self-contained room and that they will have to card in to the dining hall. That was done purposely because after hours there is no one to maintain the inside of the building. So, for the computer lab to be open 24 hours, the best recommendation was to have it accessible from the outside. **Michele H** stated her second question is what the anticipated hours of the internal lobby will be. Are you anticipating having that lobby open longer hours than the diner concept. **Melinda C** replied it is a wait and see because there are security issues. **Derek R** asked about the construction and how three years of construction is going to impact the residence halls that have multiple students.

Michele H responded, as any project that is going on there are work hours for the contractors for the noise level. It will be no different than when Awosting Hall or Mohonk Hall or all those areas in that quad were renovated. Hopefully the major noise will be in the day. It is not the first time that a major renovation has been completed, and it will be a continuous challenge to deal with. The first part of the meeting concluded.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:58