

A Vast Menu of Options: Navigating Dietary Accommodations

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Background Information

- Prior to 2009 little attention paid to dietary accommodations
- Lesley University settlement (2009)
- Food Allergy Research and Education Pilot College Food Allergy Guidance (2014)
- Many more resources available now

Challenges with Dietary Accommodations

- Contracted vendors versus university dining
- Complexities in dealing with different allergies/needs
- Disability offices being asked for other dietary accommodations (i.e. religious, dietary choice)
- Meal plan requirements (one year, four years, somewhere in between)

Dining Accommodation Request Process

Generally, this is the same process as other accommodation requests:

- Enter request in AIM (or other DMS), with supporting documentation
- Access Specialist will review the request
- If reasonable, Access Specialist will refer the student to meet with Dining (or in our case, our University Dietitian). Within that referral, the student's limitations are shared.
- Once the student meets with Dining, the accommodation is shared on the student's eligibility form, e.g. OrderIT program

Establishing a relationship with your dining team

Meeting regularly with the University Dietitian

- What requests are coming into the Student Access office?
- What requests are coming through to Dining?
- Can we improve communication?

Meeting with Dining leadership at least once per year

Dining Accommodation Review (Self-Operated)

- Due to University requirements of a meal plan, self operation allows for a lot of flexibility and personalization
 - Chefs, General Managers, and Senior leadership often connect with students in need
- Determine needs of the student
 - Physical or sensory accommodation, individual product needs, dietary guidance

Dining Accommodation Review (Self-Operated)

- Dietary Needs
 - Reviewing current operations and determining if what we currently have in place is suitable
 - Access to the OrderIT system
 - Allows for students to order meals that are individually made for them and delivered across campus
 - OrderIT is completely customizable, so new products can be added to further accommodate for individual needs or even preferences

Dining Accommodations (Vendors)

- Develop a collaborative process for reviewing requests for dining waivers or other accommodations.
- Understand the parameters of your dining contract (or make friends with someone who does).
- Identify a point of contact within dining administration.
- Be proactive with information for students.
 - Share information about dietitian contacts, ingredient labels, etc. so students get used to seeing necessary information. If possible, require information sharing in a similar format across all vendors or dining locations.
 - Schedule a meet and greet with dining managers and students so they can see how food is prepared or be assured of safety.

Questions and Answers?

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