

The Lower Dining Hall: Friend or Foe?

Aman Rizwan

The Lower Dining Hall, more commonly known as simply the LD, used to be a staple of the iDiv community. The greasy and unhealthy food was craved by all. The food was held in high authority, no matter how horrible, but over the March break and the summer, things started to change. Parents, guardians and some students had a problem with the level of unhealthiness featured by the school in the LD. Students will hate to admit it, but it should have been a cause for concern. A slice of fast-food cheese pizza nowadays contains 200 or more grams of calories, and at least 30% of the whole slice is just simply fat. To put it in simple terms, it is not good for you. And the prices don't help either. The school was overpricing the drinks and food, pizza costing \$2.99 instead of a \$1.99 from Pizza Pizza. And another example is Odwalla. Odwalla was an infamous drink at the LD. It was famous for its great taste, but infamous for the whopping 6 dollars you had to pay for it. This was seen throughout the menu, as items were overpriced and you had to pay much more than you would if you bought the item from a local retailer. But that was the past. What has the Lower Dining Hall morphed to now?

Students moaned in agony as they walked in after the summer, to be greeted with empty coolers where their favourite snacks used to be. They grimaced at the taste of the whole wheat pizza that was now served. These reactions were expected, but were they warranted? One of the many popular items that was taken away as a part of the eating healthy plan was sport drinks. Gatorades, Powerades, and Vitamin Waters were enjoyed by students from all grades (especially the iDiv) despite the amount of exercise that was done. Just had a 45 minute gym class? Better fuel up with a Gatorade. Just played basketball with some friends in the Lett Gym? A Powerade is exactly what you need to compensate for the sweat and hardwork you put in. Just walked up a set of stairs? Better run down and get yourself a Vitamin Water so you can walk up that set of stairs again without collapsing of dehydration. This was the mentality of the students last year. They kept wasting their money on unhealthy and unneeded snacks day after day. The new changes promoted salads and healthier pizzas, rather than the unhealthy pizza that was once served along with a giant Powerade. The large variety of chips was taken out, so that only some of the more healthier ones remained. Snacks were also promoted by the SAS, such as Clif bars and other healthier options that still taste great. But what is the distaste for? Why are there countless attempts to persuade the school to go back to the way it was? Why are students against eating healthy? Last year, students filled themselves up with disgusting, unhealthy, but tasty meals from the LD. When the menu was changed to help students eat healthier, students were not welcoming to the change, as they would rather have a fat-filled pizza slice than a healthy caesar salad. Some wild thinkers in the iDiv believe the school is trying to take

away their precious snacks and more of their money, while the school is actually trying to benefit our health with what we are eating. Students, especially the younger ones, resent change, even if it is for the better.

Many students are dissatisfied with the quality of the meals at the LD. So what are their choices? They have four, or three and a half really.

- Continuing to eat at the LDH. Yes, many students are angry at the menu, but for those who don't have a problem with this inexistent problem, they are welcome to eat there.
- This next one is a half-solution, really. The Student Centre. The Student Centre provides a menu similar to the LD. But, they have less variety. One of the reasons students eat there is that a lot of their friends bringing lunch from home eat there, and there are some products there that are not anywhere else in the school, such as the paninis.
- This next one is probably the safest option, bringing lunch from home. While for the lazier people out there, it is a hassle to pack their own lunch when they can just buy it, it is much better for choosing exactly what you will be eating. It is also much much more cheaper than buying lunch.
- This last one is probably the best option, the Upper Dining Hall (or the UD). The UD is the more glorified cousin of the LD, where students eat an all-you-can-eat buffet, for less than 10 dollars! It is the same price in the LD for a slice of pizza, a bag of chips; while in the UD, you have a never ending supply of the day's entrée, soup, juices, coffee, cookies, sandwiches, salads and most importantly, saltine crackers. A much more healthy and a much more cheaper option for students compared to the LD.