

SAC Meeting Minutes 1/27/15

In Attendance: Connor Browne, Amber Hackney, Shan-Hua Wu, Michael Lilliston (guest)

- SAC checked in with Michael Lilliston on the status of the Grove since their last meeting
- Addition of non-GMO food
 - This is not being actively worked on right now because they are focusing on other pressing issues
 - However, they do offer food from Molly's, a vendor that offers higher-end, organic items
 - Some of these items may be non-GMO
 - Going forward, they do want to phase out these items and start making it themselves
- There are quite a few other things that are on their plate right now that they are working on
 - Robust catering deal
 - Quotes, planning, executing
 - Addressing labelling issues
 - They have a new label printer that prints labels that you make in an Excel spreadsheet, which can be difficult to work with at times
 - Thermal prints, so no toner is needed
 - The labels do look very nice once they're made
 - These would automatically put the expiration date on the label
 - Another alternative is Avery labels, which have templates
 - Much easier to make, but you do need to put labels in printer and have a computer, etc.
 - Wouldn't print the expiration date, but they could keep using the price guns for this option
 - Both of these options would let you import barcodes, which would be helpful for better tracking of items and would help the cashiers
 - Barcodes are something they're looking at doing in the future
 - He has researched this idea
 - Would also be good for soup so people with allergies would know what's in it
 - Not as complete as nutrition breakdown, but according to Federal code, we don't need to do this unless we make specific claims (such as low-fat, etc)
 - They would eventually like to get a full nutritional breakdown for their products, possibly by having a booklet with the information
 - Also looking at having specific stickers/color-coding/having symbols or something along those lines for gluten-free and vegetarian items
 - Greater variety of product
 - Working with the kitchen lead in terms of quality levels and consistency
 - Trying to set up a system for standardizing recipes
 - Labeling is related to this
 - This would also help with costing the product appropriately
 - Heat Meals are gaining momentum
 - They are trying to focus and move forward with this
 - Their main customer base for this would be evening students
 - There is demand for this

- Both vegetarian and meat options
 - Juggling the creation of these programs/improvement of the Grove while also performing the basic functions—feeding students, faculty, and staff
- WorkSource
 - This would not be a good idea for the Grove
 - Around 95% of their labor is minimum wage
 - While they do have some non-student workers for stability, most of their workers are students, which they are very happy with
 - Employing WorkSource people would be very difficult because they would have to be paid more and this doesn't work well with their budget
- Pricing/costs of the items in the Grove
 - Michael said he didn't feel that the items in the Grove were overpriced because they cost everything using a formula
 - They are trying to walk the fine line between quality and price
 - In order to continue operations, they have to get an appropriate margin—they need money to go on, but they don't want to overcharge
 - As for the non-GMO and organic foods—this would drive up the price of those items due to increased costs for materials used to make the food
 - Michael estimated around 25-50% increase in costs
 - Many people are used to foods that are priced low to get people in the door, such as Costco, where people then end up buying other large-scale items
 - So these corporations have alternate revenue sources, which the Grove does not have
 - Some said that the Grove is targeting students, to which Michael said that the Grove is all about providing service to those who are unable to leave campus
 - Before, due to a variety of reasons (including lack of care and lack of good management), the cafeteria had accrued around \$360k in debt
 - The Grove must be fiscally responsible—they should not be all about profit over everything, but they do need to stay on the surplus rather than the deficit side
- Variance in portion size
 - Pizza and burgers are cut the same size
 - Some items, such as chicken wings and jojos, may look differently sized but are weighed on a scale
 - They also have equipment to help measure out portions, including scoops, 3-partition plates, and so on
 - He considers consistency in portion size important for pricing and costs reasons as well
- Staff
 - Like McDonalds, the workers are largely students who don't have high-level culinary knowledge
 - From time to time, people do make complaints to staff—in particular International students—because while the students can converse well in English, sometimes people do not understand their accent or may use different vocabulary
 - Some applicants may have cooking experience, but this is not an instant “in” for the job
 - There is very high demand for the job—lots of student labor
 - May not have the kind of cooking experience they're looking for
- On the subject of what's being offered in the Grove
 - This is a project that is progressing well

- Some have commented that they don't believe that the Grove should offer so much junk food and snacks, but Michael pointed out that there is a very large demand for this
 - Their Frito-Lays vendor has to come by two times per week to make sure they have enough
 - They also have fresh fruit bowls that they have quite a bit of demand for and get restocked multiple times a day
- They have expanded their vegetarian and vegan items
 - Mango/papaya salads are gluten-free and vegan
 - They have at least one vegetarian soup per day
 - Going forward, may end up making their own gluten free items
 - There is a liability issue, which might be helped with warning labels
 - They could be as proactive as possible, such as working in a clean area with very clean equipment
 - This can be challenging due to the size of the kitchen
- Some have said that the water is too expensive
 - They sell a lot of water, so the price is not a large obstacle
 - They are all less than \$2, which Michael feels is fair
 - There are water fountains available as well
- Feel that digital signage would greatly help them—they could advertise what is being offered better
- Also looking at changing the shelf situation—having items that can be warmed up together, cold deli sandwiches elsewhere, and so on
 - Might have specific stickers saying what can and can't be heated up (or with egg salad sandwiches and sandwiches with lettuce, what can and what shouldn't be heated up)
- Espresso lounge
 - The open hours are working well for them—the lounge is largely an area for Grove overflow for those who don't want to wait in long lines
 - Open from 9-1, Monday through Thursday—these are the busy hours
 - They don't feel that it would be useful to have them open longer—not enough traffic
 - A little above the breakeven point
 - They will put the hours of operation up on a sandwich board to keep up regularly
 - Will talk with Chris about getting the information about the espresso lounge up on the website, which is now mostly up-to-date