

## ***Ithaca College Dining Services and Sodexo Frequently Asked Questions***

- **What is the relationship between Ithaca College and Sodexo?**
  - Like many other institutions, Ithaca College hires a third-party contractor to operate all dining services on campus. The college has a management fee contract with Sodexo Campus Services and pays Sodexo one set amount each year to provide all dining service operations on campus. These services include all resident dining halls, all retail food services, and campus catering.
- **Does Sodexo make money when I buy food from a retail location on campus?**
  - No. Any income from people purchasing anything from Dining Services becomes income for Ithaca College and is accounted for in the college's budget. As mentioned above, the College pays Sodexo a management fee, but, Sodexo Campus Services does not receive any additional compensation from the college or individuals from any sale or service.
- **Does Sodexo make money when I order catering through Campus Center and Event Services or when I order Simply-to-Go?**
  - No. As noted above, the College only pays a management fee to Sodexo. The money to order food, pay workers, and provide service is all paid for by Ithaca College. Likewise, all budget transfers from departments for traditional catering or Simply-to-Go retail services come back to Ithaca College and are accounted for
- **Does Sodexo make more money when more students are on the campus meal plan?**
  - No. All expenses and income related to resident dining are part of the Ithaca College budget.
- **Who sets the prices for the meal plans, catering and retail on campus?**
  - Ithaca College sets the annual board plan rate for resident dining increase through the annual zero based budgeting process. Each year, Dining Services staff and management (Sodexo) propose the retail costs on campus (including Simply-to-Go), and these costs are reviewed by Ithaca College. All retail dining locations on campus are budgeted through the zero based budget process and are expected to produce a positive return to Ithaca College. Similarly, traditional catering charges are set by Dining Services (Sodexo) and Campus Center and Event Services. The traditional catering budget also is set through the annual zero based budget process, and the operation is expected to produce a positive return to Ithaca College.
- **Why are on-campus retail and/or catering costs as high as they are?**
  - On campus retail and catering operations incorporate a number of values that are important to the Ithaca College community. For example, since 2011 Ithaca College has been paying all full-time Dining Services staff the Tompkins County living wage or above, unlike some grocery stores, catering services, or restaurants in the area. Ithaca College also contracts with Challenge Workforce Solutions, a local

company dedicated to supporting individuals with disabilities, to provide all campus dining hall dish rooms and most dining hall cleaning services. The cost of using Challenge workers is higher than using student employees or non-Challenge Dining Services employees. In addition, Ithaca College Catering Services provides a higher level of service for campus events, including not just the provision of food, but also set up before the event, staffing during the event, and clean-up after the event. Utilization of Ithaca College Catering Services not only helps maintain consistency of quality, but helps the college avoid placing an unfair burden on Facilities staff who would otherwise need to clean up after a campus event.

- **Isn't it better for my budget to purchase food at a local vendor instead of through Dining Services?**

- Ithaca College Dining Services is the largest single employer of Ithaca College students on campus, with up to 700 students working in some capacity for Dining Services at any time. Dining Services student work is primarily "shift work" and is dependent on campus need. The Ithaca College students who work in retail locations, for campus catering, and in the resident dining locations (where much of the catering food is prepared) count on campus orders and business in order to receive the hours they need for their employment and work study jobs. When campus budgeted funds are spent off campus, none of those funds are recovered by Ithaca College in any way. In contrast, when campus funds are spent on campus, at least some of those funds go towards the Ithaca College students employed by Dining Services, as well as the full-time Dining Services staff, and staff from Challenge Workforce Solutions.

- **Does Dining Services (through Sodexo) support other local businesses besides Challenge Industries?**

- Approximately 20% of purchases for Ithaca College Dining Services are for items supplied through local food providers and businesses. Many of these local purchases are to take advantage of fruits and vegetables that are in season.
- Sodexo at Ithaca College sponsors and supports numerous local charity efforts, including the Food Bank of the Southern Tier and Food for Thought's hunger relief efforts.

- **Does Dining Services and Sodexo support campus sustainability efforts?**

- Sustainability has been a major focus of Dining Services for the last 5-10 years. Full-time Dining Services staff, along with sustainability interns from Dining Services, have created numerous programs on campus, including:
  - Trayless dining to reduce water usage in the campus dish rooms.
  - Meatless Mondays to reduce Ithaca College's carbon footprint.
  - The "Weigh the Waste" program to encourage portion control and reduce "left-over" food.
  - Introducing the Coke Freestyle machines, the catering "water monsters" and bottle fill stations to reduce bottled beverage use.
  - A robust composting program utilizing the Leanpath tracking system.
  - Numerous energy conservation programs to reduce energy consumption by replacing outdated and inefficient equipment.

- **How are Dining Services employees hired?**

- Dining Services managers and hourly staff are employed by Sodexo. Sodexo handles the recruitment, hiring, training, scheduling, and supervision for all the dining staff. Sodexo also provides benefits for managers and hourly staff. The cost of wages and benefits are billed to Ithaca College by Sodexo.
  - Student workers are employed by and paid by Ithaca College. Student workers are hired and supervised by Sodexo managers. Students are recruited and interviewed during summer orientation. Ongoing recruitment and interviewing takes place to fill all positions. Dining services employs students to work in all of our resident dining, retail dining, catering, and offices. Dining Services also employs student marketing, nutrition, and sustainability interns.
- **Why doesn't Ithaca College manage its own dining services operation?**
    - Many colleges and universities utilize third-party contractors for a variety of reasons. Most importantly, managing a large-scale food service operation requires significant staffing and support resources including purchasing, human resources, supply-chain management, food safety, and training. When a campus has a self-operated dining services operation, all of these resources and services must be provided and managed by the campus staff and infrastructure.
    - National food service contractors (like Sodexo) are able to leverage their company-wide purchasing power in order to acquire the lowest possible contracted prices for food and other goods from suppliers. Due to the nature of the Ithaca College contract with Sodexo these cost savings directly benefit Ithaca College.