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March 16, 2022

Colin Moore
Director of Food Services
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z4

Subject: Letter of Transmittal

Dear Colin Moore,

Attached below is a report titled “Implementation of Subsidized Hot Beverage Vendors on Campus”. This report contains recommendations for improving the customer experience of students on campus when purchasing a hot beverage on campus while considering many factors that are important to both students and UBC as a whole. As the director of Food Services, you oversee many new initiatives that take place, and I thank you for your commitment to quality services at UBC.

The goal of this report is to introduce the possibility of a new initiative that provides students with subsidized costs for purchasing beverages on campus. Many students have reported that current price points are much higher than they would reasonably like it to be which can contribute to financial stress. The implementation of subsidized food services on campus resulted in lower food insecurity self-reports by students in the past year, and I am certain that a similar application towards cafes on campus can produce positive outcomes for the wellbeing of students.

I sincerely appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to hearing your thoughts on this topic. If you have any questions or feedback concerning this report, please do not hesitate to contact me at varneega@student.ubc.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Varneega', is enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Varneega Theva

Implementation of Subsidized Hot Beverage Vendors on Campus

For the review of UBC's Food Services Director, Colin Moore

Wednesday March 16, 2022

BY: VARNEEGA THEVA | ENGL 301 STUDENT

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ABSTRACT

The affordability of food and beverages on campus is of utmost importance to students of UBC. Although food insecurity has decreased through the implementation of subsidized food vendors on campus, the same is yet to exist for cafes on campus. Students prioritize affordability and convenience as the biggest factors when purchasing these items on campus. Students previously their concern for reasonably priced caffeinated drinks on campus, as they tend to be an important part of their busy days.

In order to reduce food security in regards to accessible yet affordable beverages on campus, Food Services at UBC can take the following recommendations into consideration:

- Introducing subsidized cafes on campus
- Increasing the hours of operations of these locations (particularly in the evenings)
- Implementing self-serve kiosks for hot beverages
- Considering the locations of where can be situated

I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND ON FOOD INSECURITY

Campus food insecurity can be defined as “inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints” and impacts a large majority of university students, including many at UBC. Self-reporting data show 37% of students at UBC Vancouver report low to very low food security (Figure 1) ("Campus Food Insecurity"). This is concerning for university students because of the negative impacts on learning, academics, and overall mental health. Food insecure students typically show lower grades, higher concerns for mental health well-being and a higher tendency to reduce course load, thereby requiring additional time to complete their degree.



Figure 1: 2020 UBC Statistics collected from UBC Food Services

A shocking statistic is that 54% of food insecure students worry about how to pay their tuition and living expenses ("Campus Food Insecurity"). This can be significantly attributed to the fact that while tuition has increased by 238% in the last 2 decades, wages and financial assistance have not (Quadros). In a city ranked as the second least affordable city in all of Canada to reside in, there have been dramatic increases in the cost of living. When coupled with inadequate financial assistance, it is clear where food insecurity stems from.

UBC Food Services provides some of its profits back to the university for many programs and services that benefit the community. One recent initiative that has taken off is their "Foood" program. This project operates as a not-for-profit service, with food and labour costs subsidized by UBC. Healthy vegan and non-vegan meal options are offered to UBC students for the low price of \$3 during peak lunch hours Monday through Friday at two locations on campus.

Since the introduction of this initiative, self-reports have shown reduced food insecurity numbers by up to six percent. While UBC recognizes this as not an ideal long-term solution, food security is complicated and relates to overall financial security caused by a complex web of factors.

B. OVERVIEW OF PROBLEM AND PURPOSE

A similar issue that UBC students on campus face is the lack of affordable, quality hot beverages on campus. Caffeine is inevitably an important part of a daily routine for students, with nearly half of 18 to 24 year olds in the U.S being habitual coffee drinkers (Perez). The average cup of coffee on campus at UBC costs \$3.66 on campus, which produces an average profit margin of \$2.49 per cup. A proposal for a similar initiative would be to create subsidized cafes on campus for the vast majority of students who rely on caffeine to keep them awake during the busiest

weeks of the semester. The purpose is to provide the director of Food Services at UBC with supplemental information that can be used to evaluate whether this initiative can be successfully implemented.

C. METHODS OF INQUIRY

To investigate the usefulness of this initiative, current student demand of hot drinks on campus is measured through the use of an online survey targeted to consumers. As part of this primary data collection, an interview with Colin Moore is used to attain insider statistics and information based on additional polls and feedback received from students. Secondary sources include researching coffee consumption of students at another university and its impact.

D. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The coverage of this study is limited by the sample size of 68 students who completed the online survey. All participants are anonymous UBC students to reduce unrelated external factors.

Additionally, a formal in-person interview with the Food Services Director at UBC, Colin Moore, was unable to occur due to scheduling conflicts. A brief zoom interview was used as a supplement.

E. SCOPE OF INVESTIGATION

The following four areas of inquiry are used to lead the investigation into the implementation of subsidized cafes on campus.

1. To what extent do financial restrictions limit students' decision to buy beverages on campus
2. Most important factors considered by hot beverage consumers at UBC
3. The feasibility in the implementation of self-serve kiosks
4. UBC space and fund availability

II. DATA SECTION

A. ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RESULTS

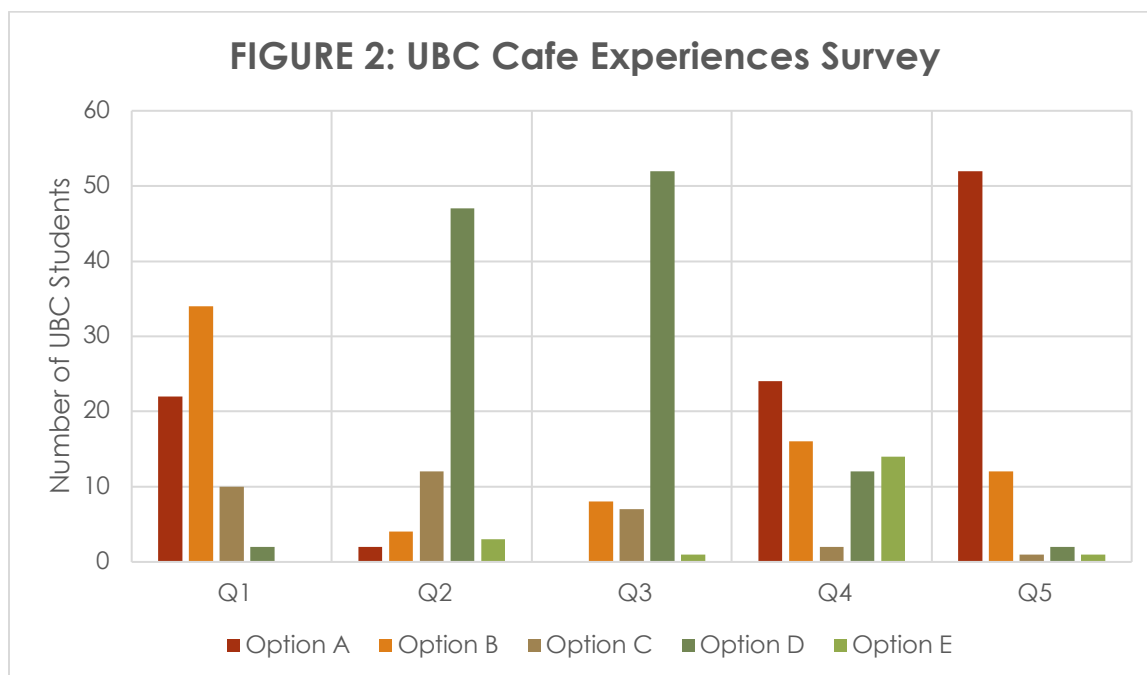


Figure 2: An anonymous survey of 68 UBC students, consisting of 5 questions (refer to appendix for template)

The survey utilized was developed to investigate the importance of providing affordable, quality hot brewed beverages on campus and whether the current students' needs are being met. The first question analyzes the frequency of consumption, with exactly 50% of students purchasing drinks 3 to 4 times a week. According to results from the second and third question, 69% of these beverages are caffeinated, and 78% of these students rate the affordability as not quite reasonable. The majority of these sales come from the vendor, Tim Horton's, with Starbucks next in line and other vendors on campus slightly behind. A shocking 76% of students voted affordability as the number one factor in deciding where to purchase these drinks, and 18% of students preferring convenience.

B. SUSTAINABLE COFFEE CONSUMPTION STUDY – DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

A study on ethical and sustainable coffee consumption at Dalhousie University that investigates consumer choices produced very similar results, with the relationship between environmentally conscious perspectives and ethical coffee consumption behaviour to be weak. Although three quarter of participants indicate they care about the environmental implications of coffee they consume on campus, on average, students claimed to prioritize cost, proximity, flavour, and available food options over sustainability when deciding where

to buy coffee. These students report that they feel constrained by prices, and on average, prefer to buy the least expensive coffee on campus, which correlates to our findings.

These results depict a disconnect between students' sustainability values and the coffee vendor they end up choosing from. This can partially be explained by the influence of factors at play in the life of being a student, such as time, money, convenience, class locations on campus, and social influence. These results indicate current concerns of adequate pricing is not being met by UBC, and there is room for improvement.

C. INTERVIEW WITH UBC FOOD SERVICES DIRECTOR

The interview with Colin Moore, the director of Food Services at UBC, highlights the importance of creating change for students while adhering to UBC's food and vision values as depicted below.

“We nourish and support the students, faculty, staff, and visitors of UBC by providing a diverse selection of fresh, delicious, and memorable food experiences in a socially and ecologically conscious manner. We do this by creating marketplaces and environments where wholesome, healthful food is a priority because our guests, our food, and our wellbeing matter.” (Moore)



Figure 3: UBC Vancouver's Food Vision and Values

UBC is proud to be a designated Fair-Trade campus while purchasing high-quality, nutritious, sustainable foods and prioritizing fresh, minimally processed ingredients. Currently, ingredients found in cafes on campus are sourced locally from within the province. Although this produces higher costs for UBC, the lower carbon footprint in addition to support local farmers is an important reason why UBC continues to source locally.

III. CONCLUSION

A. SUMMARY AND OVERALL INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

Accessibility of quality and affordable beverages on campus is a problem for UBC students that contributes to food insecurity. As a high population of students rely heavily on caffeinated drinks during their tightly packed schedules, a majority of these students show concerns overpaying upwards of four dollars per cup of coffee. Although it is important to recognize that we continue to source local ingredients and participate in fair-trade, the following factors were also important to students:

1. Affordability-

Affordability of beverages promotes equality among all students and plays a role in decreasing insecurities.

2. Convenience-

With many students jolting from class to class, convenience of being able to quickly purchase a beverage without waiting in long lines is of secondary importance. Self serve kiosks can help resolve this issue.

3. Hours of operation-

Many of the cafes on campus apart from franchise locations such as Starbucks and Tim Hortons close by 4 or 5pm regularly. Most libraries however remain open until 9pm, which leaves students without an option of purchasing a beverage during those hours.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS AND APPLICATION OF PROPOSED SOLUTION

Financial burdens can be a heavy weight for students to bear during their period of studies. Although UBC has implemented subsidized food vendors on campus to help mitigate some of this stress, a future step would be to implement subsidized hot beverages in cafes on campus. To further reduce costs incurred by these establishments, an additional proposal would be to implement self-serve kiosks that would decrease costs by reducing the need of hourly workers. This sort of establishment is currently in use at many universities across Ontario such Western and McMaster University and have proved useful for students according to previously conducted polls. Currently there are many open spaces on campus where the possibility of introducing them is feasible such as the UBC Life Building and Neville's Café. Some important factors to consider would be the location and price point per cup as these were the biggest concerns according to the results in the data section. By taking into consideration of the suggestions and needs of students, a progressive step can be taken towards solving food insecurity and financial burdens that students face.

IV. **APPENDIX**

A. SURVEY ETHICAL INTRODUCTION

I am an undergraduate student at UBC engaged in a technical writing project. The purpose of this survey is to obtain primary data for an analysis and investigation that aims to provide recommendations for improving your experience with purchasing beverages on the UBC Vancouver campus. The final formal report will be addressed to UBC's

Director of Food Services, Colin Moore. Together with the research conducted at other universities, the data I gather from this survey will serve the ultimate purpose of providing recommendations for increasing affordability, convenience and quality of drinks provided on campus. The survey contains 5 multiple-choice questions, and it should take less than a few minutes of your time. Your responses are voluntary and anonymous. Thank you, I appreciate your generous participation in this survey.

B. SURVEY QUESTIONS

1. How often do you buy a hot beverage on campus?

- a. 1-2 times a week
- b. 3-4 times a week
- c. 4-5 times a week
- d. never

2. How often are these drinks caffeinated?

- a. Never
- b. Sometimes
- c. About half the time
- d. Most of the time
- e. Always

3. On a scale of 1 to 5, how reasonably priced do you believe the drinks to be assuming 1 is VERY REASONABLY PRICED and 5 being NOT REASONABLY PRICED AT ALL?

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3
- d. 4
- e. 5

4. Which vendors do you visit most on campus when purchasing these drinks?

- a. Tim Horton's
- b. Starbucks
- c. JJ Bean
- d. Blue Chip Cafe
- e. Other

5. What is the most important factor when deciding to purchase these drinks?

- a. Affordability
- b. Convenience
- c. Locally sourced/ ethical
- d. Franchise (Tim Horton's, Starbucks, etc.)
- e. Hours of Operation

C. SURVEY LINK

https://ubc.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/SV_0NGlvUsbVVQwHeS?Q_CHL=preview&Q_SurveyVersionID=current

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