

PSH comes out of the den

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Before the addition of the new cafeteria, Biscotti's Café, and the Towne Square—the new seating area and office wing—there was no room to socialize or relax and do work. Students used to plunge into the depths of the basement and eat in the Lion's Den, which was tucked away from the rest of campus. There is no doubt that the new cafeteria and town hall have dramatically changed the dynamics of Penn State Harrisburg.

Complaints about the food, prices, and layout of the new addition are hard to come by. The new cafeteria is approximately 18,000 square feet as compared to 5,000 square feet of the Lion's Den. It is obvious that the bright open space is just what Penn State Harrisburg needed.

"I love it! I always run into all my friends when otherwise I wouldn't even know they were on campus at this time," Sarah Thompson, criminal justice, said.

Nancy Leister of the Student Activities Office, received a brand new office, and she is enjoying it. "I get to see a lot more people walking by and I think a lot more people stop in to see us since we have been moved here," Leister said.

JoAnn Coleman, director of Housing and Food Services, and Greg Schiavoni, assistant director, visited trade shops, restaurants, coffee shops and other campuses, in order to get a feel for how other plans worked and to get ideas for the Harrisburg campus. "I think JoAnn and I visited every coffee shop between here and Pittsburgh," Schiavoni said.

Coleman and Schiavoni worked with architect Bob Cwoner, who is known for his expertise in renovations and for the designing of "Brunos" on the Penn State Behrend campus. Since the project was a renovation of the old library, there was only so much space to work with. The three years of planning took a team effort, which also involved the director and project manager at University Park.

What fulfilled their vision was a modern, clean space with an eclectic touch. "We wanted something that didn't scream institution," Schiavoni said. Holding focus groups with students helped them discern what types of foods the students would like and what kind of atmosphere the students need.

Even though tuition continues to increase, this new addition is not to blame. Housing and Food Services funded the \$2.2 million project from room and board fees and sales in their operations.

Overall, sales have increased by 40 percent this year, which Schiavoni said is a conservative figure. Only serving foods that are in season and being careful of waste enables Food Services to keep prices down.



photo by Jennifer Kauffman

Students eat and study in the hallway adjacent to the foodcourt, which is part of the Towne Square. The new area has around 300 seats.

Schiavoni draws from his experience managing restaurants, hotels, and traveling all over Europe, and said in comparison, the prices in the cafeteria are balanced and reasonable.

However, customers are not unanimously in agreement. The reasonability to students varies with the line item and some would rather go off campus to catch a bite to eat. Others seem content with what they are getting for the price. "This salad is just about the same thing you can get at Applebee's, it is only \$5 compared to \$8 or \$9," said J.J. Seasock, marketing.

The Food Services department is most proud of their brick-oven pizza pit, which allows them to experiment with their own varieties of pizza, such as the recent barbeque chicken pizza. However, there are those who are not excited by the frills of gourmet pizza. "I miss the Pizza Hut pizza they used to serve," Jeff Souders, communication, said.

Items cooked over the open fire of the new charcoal grill are the most popular among students, according to Schiavoni. The new deli area features gourmet bread and fresh quiche every day. Each cooking station will be undergoing improvements, one such addition that will be coming soon is a carving station.

Schiavoni assured that all food is at its freshest when served. Cafeteria workers cook in small batches to make sure no one is eating a chicken salad sandwich that

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