

Campus set to lose healthy commons

By Julie Mastrine
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER



Collegian file photo

Simmons Dining Hall, which closes at the end of this year, is known for its all-healthy option. Though Pollock Commons is about to undergo changes, the dining hall will not exclusively offer healthy foods.

Pollock Commons is about to go under the knife. When the Simmons dining hall closes at the end of this school year, officials have said students should not expect the addition of another dining commons devoted to healthy eating.

Though the renovation of Pollock will absorb some, but not all of Simmons' choices, officials said the final vision for the renovation is becoming more clear.

"With Simmons closing, the timing is right to renovate Pollock," said Lisa Wandel, director of residence dining.

Simmons will be converted into residence halls, and Pollock's renovation will mostly occur during the summer of 2011, reopening in time for fall 2011. Summer session students will have access to Redifer Commons.

Pollock, which hasn't been renovated since 1991, is "definitely due for a facelift," Wandel said. Instead of two dining rooms, Pollock will have multiple stations on the main floor. Each station will have different food choices, including an Asian grille, chef's table, BBQ, deli bar, soup bar, grain bar, hot vegetable bar, salad bar, fruit bar and pizza and pasta bar, Wandel said.

Current private dining spaces in Pollock will be converted to a bakery and breakfast concept for daily use by students, Wandel said. Here students will be able to find waffles, coffee and cereal, as well as various desserts, such as muffins and cupcakes.

Although it may not be implemented right away, Wandel said there are plans to eventually keep this section of Pollock open late at night. The area will have soft seating and a fireplace, she said.

The Nittany Lion Training Table will remain where it currently is, and a private dining room will be added to the south side of the building. Student organizations and other committees will be able to reserve this room to hold meetings, Wandel said.

The renovation will also add entrances so that students will no longer have to wait in only two lines to enter the commons, she said.

Wandel said no food on campus is unhealthy if students make sure they eat a well balanced diet.

But many students said Pollock should have been renovated to become the new health-conscious commons.

"They should still have an entire area where it's all healthy food, so it's not as tempting," Jaime Wesley (sophomore-psychology) said.

Victoria Maggio, who lives in Simmons Hall, said she and her friends eat in Simmons every day and will be sad to see the commons close. "I think people will still make bad choices, even if healthy options are available everywhere," Maggio (sophomore-graphic design) said.

But while students may not like having to make the choice between healthy and unhealthy foods, it is a decision they'll have to face in their everyday lives, Wandel said.

"It'll be up to the student to make the right choice. We'll incorporate recipes from Simmons in the other dining commons, but we'll also serve burgers and fries," she said.

"But that's real life — when you walk down College Avenue, you have to walk past places that serve burgers and fries to get to the place that will serve you a salad."

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With state funds cut, Schlow seeks donors

The library is looking to the community for help in the coming year.

By Colleen Boyle
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

About \$52,500 of state and district aid has been cut from the Schlow Centre Region Library's funding, library officials said.

The cuts are crippling the library's resources, and in trying economic times, library director Catherine Alloway said she fears the changes are permanent.

In response to these drastic cutbacks, Alloway has looked to the community for support.

Downtown State College Improvement District Director Jody Alessandrino said he hopes those who are considering supporting the library should contribute as much as possible to the effort.

"Schlow has been consistently able to operate and be realistic with their resources," he said. "We all know what an integral part of the community it is."

But the future continues to look bleak. Despite generous contributions from community members, operating costs for the library are on the rise, making the budget cuts even more disturbing.

The contributions only make up for this year's cuts, not for future losses, Alloway said, and the library cannot expect people to consistently donate.

Now Schlow is looking for

other ways to increase funding. Ideas include opening the library parking lot in the evening to downtown restaurant goers and shoppers.

Additionally, those who attend universities other than Penn State and use the library could be charged a fee to cover the cost of library staff members who serve as exam proctors, Alloway said.

But until the fundraising replenishes library funding, Schlow officials have had to cut back on purchasing new materials including books and electronic databases.

In addition, two employees have been laid off due to the budget cuts.

Many of these visitors are Penn State students who take advantage of the quiet study space because it is more convenient than the Pattee and Paterno Libraries on campus. Nicolette Gengel (senior-biology) said she enjoys studying in the Schlow facility for just that reason.

"It's a nice, quiet place to study," Gengel said.

And library users may see changes as Schlow officials struggle to overcome financial obstacles.

"Consequently I feel right now the library is at the lowest possible staffing for the hours we have," Alloway said.

"We just don't have enough bodies to help people in finding things."

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Cyclists traverse country, build houses, touch many lives

By Megan Rogers
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Six Penn State students opted out of a traditional summer of lounging around and instead spent their time bicycling up to 116 miles a day.

For them it was all in an effort to lend a hand in increasing affordable housing across the country.

The Bike and Build program is a national organization that combines sport and service.

Participants not only ride across the country, they stop at various places to help out at affordable housing project sites.

The trip was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, said Brian Nahas, one of four Penn State students on a route from South Carolina to Santa Cruz.

Dave McDonald, who biked from North Carolina to California in 70 days, said it was an "awesome" experience.

The bikers provided extra manpower to groups that were building houses, by doing odd jobs like framing, roofing, painting and landscaping, he said.

Though the students were on separate routes, they got the chance to collaborate on one specific project.

In Colorado Springs, Colo., McDonald helped lay the foundation for a house. One week later, the bikers on the California route came through and finished the project.

Nahas (senior-architectural engineering) said it was incredible to know they had all worked together to help someone out.

The best part about the experience was that it provided a chance to not only help out a great cause, but to also explore big cities and small towns across the country, he said. Other highlights included watching sunsets and sunrises.

Biker Lance Nissley said it was

great to see the physical terrain of the country in a whole new way.

Nissley (senior-predmedicine) said he enjoyed talking to the people the team built houses for and seeing the impact they were having on those lives.

Bikers rode through deserts, redwood forests, the Grand Canyon and the Rocky Mountains.

"It's basically an adventure across the country with a purpose behind it," Nahas said.

Other highlights of the trip included hiking six hours up Pike's Peak — a 14,090 ft. mountain, Nahas said.

Spending up to six hours a day

on a bicycle riding an average of 75 miles per day was the best way to spend a summer, McDonald (senior-aerospace engineering) said.

McDonald said he had been involved with affordable housing projects before and said though he had never been a serious road biker before, the challenge and adventure was too good to pass up.

"When I heard Bike and Build combined biking with service, I thought it would be an awesome experience — something I couldn't miss," he said.

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