

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-1541

TITLE: Resolution Advocating for Financially Accessible On-Campus Markets

AUTHOR(S): Senator Alexander Wierichs

SPONSOR(S): Senator Arshan Falasiri, Senator Benjamin Stone, Senator Logan Siemienas, Senator Lucas Rodriguez, Senator Griffin Atchinson

WHEREAS, on June 1, 2022, Chartwells Higher Education became the main caterer and vendor of food for the University of Florida campus [1], and oversees both on-campus dining halls and convenience markets; and

WHEREAS, on-campus markets are important and necessary resources for students living on campus; and

WHEREAS, on-campus markets are a convenient source of food for students, allowing them to quickly purchase food between classes and outside of normal dining hall hours; and

WHEREAS, current item prices within on-campus markets are consistently higher than off-campus commercial alternatives; and

WHEREAS, prices within markets continue to rise, such as an increase to the price of many products in July of 2024, according to a personal interview with the Business Services Director of Administration and Finance; and

WHEREAS, the stated mission by Chartwells division president Nelson DeFigueiredo was to “align with UF’s culture creating a program that celebrates the campus’s rich history and supports our partners on campus” [1]; and

WHEREAS, current meal plans provide students with declining balance/flex bucks, along with \$7.25/day in retail equivalency which can be used in pod markets [2]; and

WHEREAS, despite these provisions to allow economic flexibility for students, the prices of said meal plans are contractually set to rise by 4.5% this year, and by 2.35% every subsequent year for the next 10 years; and

WHEREAS, the price increases for meal plans may create a higher barrier-to-entry to the bonuses they provide; and

WHEREAS, price increases within both meal plans and on-campus markets place increased stress on students financially; and

WHEREAS, the University's oversight over on-campus market prices could allow these markets to provide more affordable options for students; and

WHEREAS, retail equivalency offered within meal plans is meant to be the value of an entire meal; and

WHEREAS, there currently exists no established deal in an on-campus market where students may exchange \$7.25 for a sandwich/main, drink, and side; and

WHEREAS, the guaranteed provision of one such deal or bundle within markets could alleviate some financial stress and offset high prices for students both with and without meal plans; and

WHEREAS, there currently exists a Food Service Advisory Committee whose role is to advocate for student and administrative wants and needs as they apply to dining on campus; then,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate expresses concern for the high prices and price-raising practices within on-campus markets, and the potential impact of these prices on lower-income students.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate stresses the importance of providing affordable and nutritionally complete eating options within on-campus markets in the interest of student health and wellbeing.

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate requests for Chartwells to provide a 'retail equivalency deal' in which a sandwich, drink, and side may be purchased for \$7.25 in on-campus markets, with available substitutions supplied for dietary restrictions.

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate urges administration, Chartwells, and the Food Service Advisory Committee to improve and maintain communication between each other and the student body.

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to Business Services Director of Administration and Finance Robin Stewart, Florida Fresh Dining Director of Retail Services Anthony Stack, Senior Vice President Dave Kratzer, Food Service Advisory Committee, Associate Vice President of Student Life Nancy Chrystal-Green.

[1]<https://news.ufl.edu/2022/05/uf-selects-chartwells-higher-education-/>

[2]<https://businessservices.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Pick-Your-Own-Plan-31523-1.pdf>



8/27/24

Monish Vijayaraghavan
Senate President

Date