

Jeffrey Malone

Feature Story Friday – September 18, 2009

Changes in Loyola Dining Services

A loquacious man once said, many times, “What kind of change do we want? Not all change is good.” Loyola’s Dining Services will find out this year if they have entered the realm of negative change or if the significant changes they have introduced will in fact be embraced by the student body. The most notable difference in dining is the new format of Primo’s, which is now an “All Inclusive” restaurant in which guests pay a set fee of \$7.99 for lunch and \$11.99 for dinner, allowing them to choose from numerous dining options in a sort of all-you-can eat style. Some (perpetually hungry) students have expressed approval over the opportunity to have a wide range of eating opportunities at a set price. Also, students who prefer set meal plans to an a la carte dining style are happy to see the introduction of the Primo’s Power Plan, which offers the lunch and dinner options at a discounted rate. However, some students feel that the “All Inclusive” style does not work for them, as they feel that they generally would not buy enough items for their meals to reach the set price. Also, there are some students who would like to buy only the main part of their meal at Primo’s and perhaps grab a drink and sides from their dorm, but doing so at the “All Inclusive” Primo’s is not very cost-effective. Overall, reactions have ranged from “Primo’s is now giving Boulder a run for its money” to “Boulder might actually be better than Primo’s now.”

Primo’s is not the only dining location being revamped this year, as Boulder Garden Café has also been redesigned for 2009. Students had to wait patiently for

the new Boulder, as it was not ready to open until September 10. The dining services website offers flashy descriptions of the new sections, including the “fun and casual” WoW Café & Wingery, the “national brand” Moe’s Southwest Grill, the “saucy and buongusto” Il Piatto, the “premium” Boar’s Head Deli, and the “tossed fresh” Cyclone Salads. However, the overall sentiment about Boulder was not anticipation over all the new eating options but anticipation for the place to simply be open. Reception of the new Boulder stations has been mixed, but the general sentiment is that it still offers a solid variety of hot lunch and dinner items.

A change that students can unanimously get behind is that of the overall increased operating hours of the dining halls. Although the new Primo’s is only open until 9 PM, this is not too different from the old Primo’s, in which only the pre-made items were available in the late hours. Besides, the ancillary shops outside Primo’s are open even later, with the Boar’s Head Deli open until midnight and the “grab-and-go” Smart Market C-Store available until 2 AM. The revamped Boulder is now open until 11 PM Monday through Thursday, and until 9 PM Friday through Sunday, thus addressing a perpetual complaint of east side residents, who until this year would have had to make the trek over to the west side if they had a craving after 8 PM.

Regardless of how successful the new Primo’s and Boulder prove to be, they cannot bring back the departed Salsa Rico, the student-favorite dining location that has inexplicably been lost amidst the shuffle of the dining changes. The Stacks and Wraps stations, formerly in the Boulder Atrium, are also a sad loss for many students. While likely nothing can replace Salsa Rico’s, the loss of Stacks and Wraps

should not be so severe, as there are still many sandwich options throughout campus. And their replacements in terms of location – Sangam Indian Cuisine and Ikigai Sushi of the Global Market – have proven to be popular, with a steady stream of students choosing this world fare throughout the day.

While Loyola may have become a little change-crazy, there should still be enough choices for everyone to find at least one decent meal a day. Of course, actually cooking one's own meals is always an option in a Loyola dorm.