

# Student Solutions for Shaw Dining Hall

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## Executive Summary

Our mission is to make Shaw Dining Hall an accessible and enjoyable experience for all students. Our vision provides students with affordable meals and an additional hour of operation at Shaw.

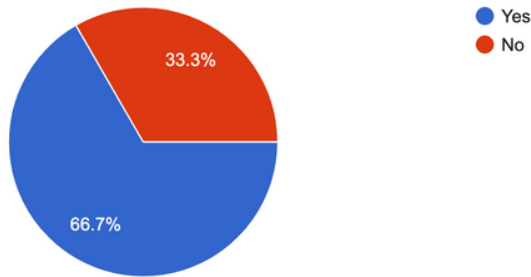
It is our goal to make Shaw Dining Hall more available to students who are in class during the 7 p.m. closing of Shaw. We recommend closing Shaw at 8:30 or 9 p.m. so that students have time to use their meal plan for dinner. Through our research, we found that 75% of students who responded would prefer to pick up dinner from Shaw between 7 and 8 p.m.

Making food affordable for students on a meal plan, or a budget, is another key issue we aim to address. Having to-go containers as opposed to throwing food out will not only eliminate the amount of food waste, but also eliminate additional trash bags and cleaning supplies used. In effect, we hope to lower the prices of food at Shaw. By eliminating 1-2 of the existing stations and lowering the prices of meals on the remaining options, students would be able to afford more food options.

# List of figures:

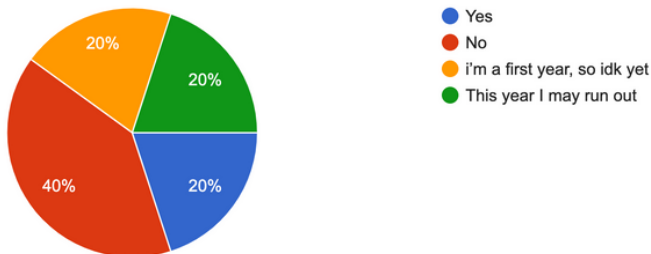
## Figure 1. A

Do you have a meal plan?  
6 responses



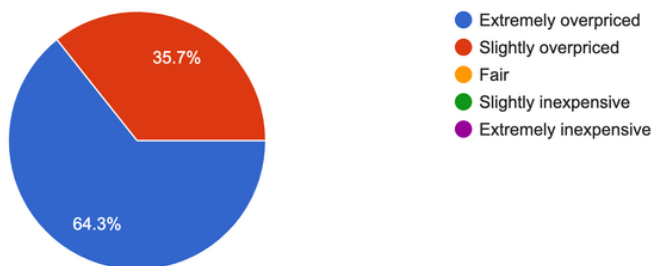
## Figure 1. B

If you have a meal plan, do you ever run out of funds before the end of the semester?  
5 responses



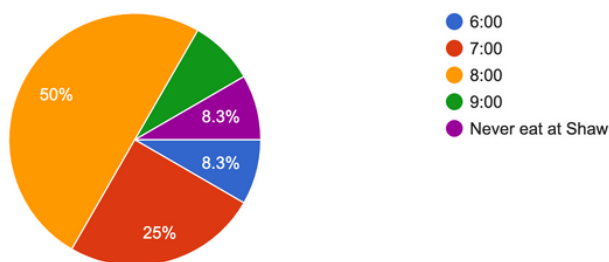
## Figure 1. C

How do you feel about the pricing of Shaw food?  
14 responses



## Figure 1. D

When would you would like to go into Shaw for dinner if it stayed open until 9:00 pm?  
12 responses

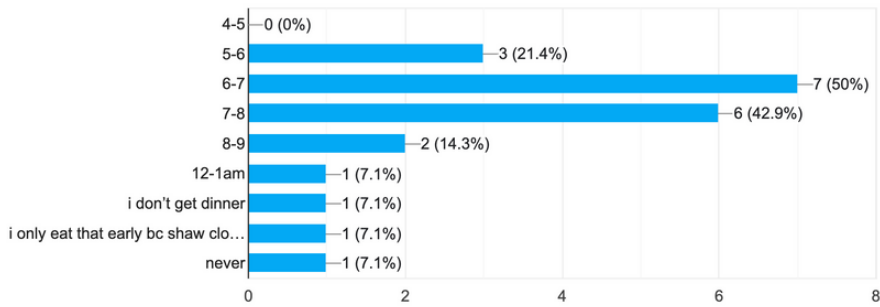


# List of figures:

## Figure 1. E

What time do you usually eat dinner Monday through Sunday

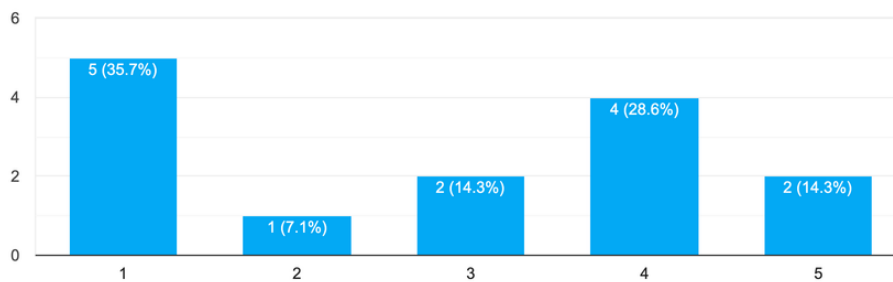
14 responses



## Figure 1. F

How likely are you to purchase your dinner from Shaw Dining Hall?

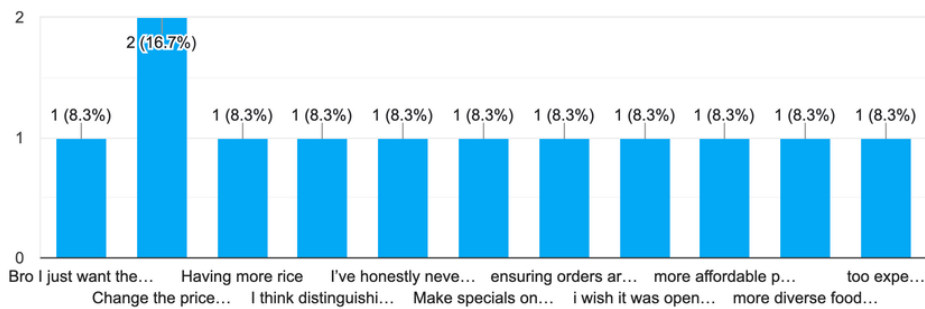
14 responses



## Figure 1. G

What is the most important change you think would make Shaw a better dining experience for students?

12 responses



# List of figures:

Figure 2. A



Figure 2. B

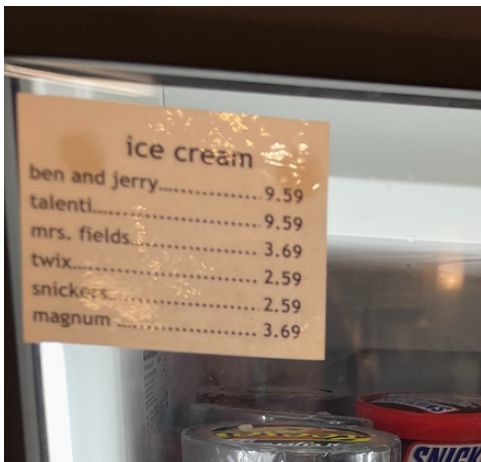


Figure 2. C



Figure 2. D



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## Introduction

**Our mission:** Find solutions to provide meals for students past 7pm and overall more affordable dining options.

As Westminster College becomes Westminster University, this is the optimal time to review and make changes to Shaw Dining Hall and create an even better dining experience than we have had before. As we welcome the new University title we hope to also introduce new dining solutions to you. This will ensure that the new wave of students experiencing Westminster University will have dining options that are just as amazing as the rest of what campus has to offer.

It is our goal to help make Shaw more accessible to students through finding solutions that make food available more often and more affordable for students on a meal plan or a budget. We recognize that Westminster College has a yearly renewal contract with Bon Appetit and we want to help maintain that relationship. However, the price markup of food has become significantly higher in the last year and students are struggling with this.

Through this report we will explore options to not only benefit the students, but the college and Bon Appetit as well.

## Problems

It is a common worry from the student body that Shaw Dining Hall is not as accessible as it could be. Through our research, we identified it is not accessible because of barriers like hours of operations, cost, and food options.

Students find it difficult to get dinner from Shaw before it closes at 7 p.m. Mostly because they are in class during that time or just getting out of class. After surveying students, we found that 75% of respondents would prefer to eat dinner at Shaw from 7 to 8 p.m.

The price markup for food items in Shaw has increased throughout the years and has been a growing problem for on and off campus students. Of the survey respondents, 40% of students with meal plans don't have the funds to last them the entire semester. On top of that, another 20% of students in their first semester aren't certain their meal plan will last them to the end of the school year.



## Methods of Research

For our methods, we conducted a survey for students sitting outside Richer Commons, as well as one-on-one interviews. The Interviews were geared towards understanding how to make Shaw more accessible and affordable for students. The results from our survey is the List of Figures.

We did price research with the closest grocery stores in the area and compared the prices for pantry and snack items such as pasta sauce, crackers, and ice cream. We found the exact same brand and flavor items in Walmart and Target as the one being sold in Shaw. We then divided the Shaw price by the Walmart price to find out the mark up percentage for each item.

## Research Results

Shaw is one of two places students can purchase food on campus. For students living on campus, Shaw can be very expensive and 40% students run out of money for their meal plan by the end of the semester. We want Bon Appetit to re-consider the pricing for their food and meals so students do not run out of swipes on their card as well as take into consideration students and faculty purchasing food from Shaw during the school week.

From our research we found most food has about a 200% increase in price. From our interviews we found that students know Shaw is charging them a considerable amount more than what they can purchase at Walmart. Students fear Shaw knows students buy those snack and pantry items in a pinch and raise these prices to try and make the most profit possible. Below are a few examples of the price differences from the Walmart on Parley's Way and Shaw.

The prices from Shaw can be found in the [List of Figures](#).

Newman's Own pasta sauce at Shaw costs \$5.59.	At <u>Walmart</u> it costs \$2.52	222% of the Walmart price
Ben & Jerry's Ice cream at Shaw costs \$9.59	At <u>Walmart</u> it costs \$4.48	214% of the Walmart price
Annie's crackers at Shaw costs \$7.29	At <u>Walmart</u> it costs \$4.28	170% of the Walmart price
A 2.3 oz can of Pringles at Shaw costs \$2.19	At <u>Walmart</u> it costs \$9.99 for the 12 pack. .83 cents a can.	379% of the Walmart price

## Research Conclusions

For our research we conducted market price investigation, interviews with staff at Bon Appetit, Glenn Smith, students, and conducted some online comparisons to another similar sized college. We collected all of our data from these avenues. A few overlapping issues we discovered are as follows

- There seems to be a decent amount of food waste estimated at 25%. (This number is from talking to Bon Appetit staff)
- While members of staff enjoy working at Bon Appetit, they generally feel understaffed.
- Employees are willing to shift hours and work later to about 8 p.m.
- The survey found that most students eat dinner at 7 or 8 p.m.
- 66% of the students that responded have a meal plan and of those respondents 25% run out of food.
- 66% of respondents feel that the food at Bon Appetit is overpriced.
- One student interview concluded that over the last year there was a 100% markup on food in Shaw and Bon appetit.
- 28.6% eat of respondents eat at Shaw 3-4 times per week.

- [Westminster College](#) in Fulton Missouri average meal plan is around \$2,700 each semester and that includes "dine dollars" which means they can spend x amount of dollars at Starbucks as well as grab-and-go places around campus. These "dine dollars" also roll over to the next year. In contrast, the average meal plan for [our school](#) is \$3,000 each year. There is no roll over for the next semester for students who do not use the allotted amount of funds.

## Solutions

The solutions we suggest exploring to allow students to receive dinner later and make the pricing of Shaw more affordable are as follows:

- Shaw should use to-go containers to store the food that will be thrown out for the night. Placing food in containers as opposed to throwing it out will not only eliminate the amount of food thrown away at the end of the night but also eliminate the amount of trash bags and cleaning supplies used to clean up this waste. This will also address the issue of students not being able to receive dinner past 7 p.m. and will not require staff to stay later.
- Shaw and Bon Appetit should look into which stations of the cafeteria are used least often. While it is great to have variety, many students have a hard time affording any of the choices currently. If Shaw can eliminate 1-2 of the existing stations and lower the prices of meals on the remaining options students would be able to afford more food options, mitigating the obstacle of running out of funds before the end of the semester. It is important to note that if this option is chosen, students with dietary restrictions need to have at least one option for lunch that meets their dietary needs.

- Another recommendation we offer Bon Appetit is to possibly hire more staff or extend the shifts of workers to allow Shaw to be open until 8:30pm. The majority of our survey respondents said they eat dinner between 7pm-9pm. Closing at 8:30 p.m. will allow students who get out of class at 7:50 p.m. to rush over and have dinner.
- Lastly, we recommend evaluating if there are any items that can either be terminated or found at a lower cost to reduce markups over 200% in Shaw. Not only does this cause some resentment from students at these prices, but lowering them would probably increase the number of students purchasing items all together.

## Recommendations

In conclusion, Shaw and Bon Appetit provide a lot of amazing meal choices with fresh sustainable ingredients that students enjoy eating. However, the student concern for lowered prices and extended hours have begun to outweigh the love for freshly made meals and ingredients. We conducted this report to thoughtfully find solutions on how to lower prices and extend Shaw hours while also keeping in mind the best outcomes for the staff of Bon Appetit and the college in general. We thank you for your time and consideration in looking over this report and we hope you find our recommendations worth exploring.

### **We recommend**

- Changing the closing time at Shaw from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- Reducing the prices of snack items, meals and drinks at Shaw to be less than 50% markup of the local grocery stores prices to allow pricing to be affordable.
- Putting end-of-day meals and food items in disposable to-go containers for free or reduced price for students and staff with late schedules.

## References

**Hunter Halbower** [-hah0814@westminstercollege.edu](mailto:-hah0814@westminstercollege.edu)

Interview

**Student Survey** conducted through Westminster College regarding Shaw preferences

**Bon Appetit Staff** Kendrix B, James Barlon, Nick Sheer, Dino Wolframm

**Glenn smith**, Dean of Students  
[gsmith@westminstercollege.edu](mailto:gsmith@westminstercollege.edu)

Interview

**Westminster College in Fulton Missouri**

<https://www.westminster.edu/campus/dining/meal-plans.cfm>

**Westminster College**

<https://westminstercollege.edu/admissions/index.html>