

QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
The City University of New York

COMMITTEE ON VENDOR SERVICES

TO: Dr. Emily Tai, Chairperson, Academic Senate Steering Committee

FROM: Johannes Burgers, Cheryl Tokke, and Paul Sideris, Co-Chairs and Secretary, Vendor Services Committee

SUBJECT: Annual Report of the Committee on Vendor Services, September 2016-- May 2017

DATE: May 17, 2017

Committee Members:

Prof. Johannes Burgers, Co-Chair
Prof. Cheryl Tokke, Co-Chair
Prof. Paul Sideris, Secretary
Prof. Li Xu Li, Member
Prof. Miguel Quiroz, Member
Prof. Kathleen Pechinka, Member

Prof. Eva Goldhammer, COC Liaison
David Wasserman, Finance and Administration, President's Liaison

Number of Committee Meetings: The Committee on Vendor Services met two times during the 2015-2016 academic year.

During 2016-2017, David Wasserman served as the President's Designee to the Committee on Vendor Services.

Creating a Plan for Vendor Services Assessment

The bulk of our efforts this year were to continue project to create a student experience survey for the food and drink options available on campus. This project quite quickly ran into scope-creep. It would take a committee far larger, and far richer in resources to develop, deploy, and analyze a statistically significant survey. Such an undertaking is well beyond the possible workload of the committee. Indeed, the past several years have seen this committee searching for a manageable and specific function. Hence, the idea we settled on was a yearly focus group that reports out about its findings. Prof. Tokke working on previous experience with such studies developed and deployed a pilot, detailed below.

Vendor Services Focus Group

The focus group study titled “Hearing the Students Voice on Vending Machines,” conducted with business marketing students of BU401 at QCC, encompassed three levels of data collection. 54 machines distributed in various locations throughout campus were the focus of the study.

1. Student site observation and documentation.

Students were divided into research groups and assigned a specific location on campus to observe the contents of the vending machines, their mechanical and aesthetic effectiveness, and the usage by students at the site. This included seeing the quality of the machines, their usability, the products, and simplicity for ordering. They reported out a qualitative narrative and point form response describing their observations including the demographics of users, time people use the machines, appropriateness of the products compared to the demographic, replenishment and restocking timing and efficiency, and pricing comparatives to outside sources (bodegas, delis, street vendors) nearby.

2. Student focus groups.

Student focus groups were formed out of the classes and asked to respond to various questions posed.

Key results:

- Organized well and bright. It seems the products are replenished efficiently and consistently.
- There is strong variance as to how much students use the vending machines with the majority of one focus group using it once a week or more, to another group with 8 out of 10 respondents not ever using the machines.
- Expensive option about 75 cents more than in the delis nearby. This caused many to not buy at the vending machines but elsewhere.
- Problems with the debit card system. There must be better integration across all the machines and with student cards as well.
- The most popular items were the snacks; M&Ms, Honeybuns, and chips being most popular. Water was also a popular item. The name soda was Ginger-Ale.
- The vending machine users generally did not eat food on campus using the cafes.

Needs:

More healthy options are desired to motivate non-purchasers. It is questionable whether those who claim to want healthy options would change their behavior from buying the unhealthier snack food.

Reduce prices for more sales and to align with outside sources.

The pouring contract with Pepsico does not allow for Coke products as several students wanted.

Recommendations for 2017-2018

The following are the members of the Committee on Vendor Services for 2017-2018:

Prof. Cheryl Tokke, Interim Chair
Prof. Miguel Quiroz, Member
Prof. Gheorghe Proteasa, Member
Prof. Lixu Li, Member
Prof. Melissa Dennihy, Member
Prof. Janet Rice Franzese, Member
Liaisons

Eva Goldhammer, Social Sciences, COC Liaison
Gheorghe Proteasa, Steering Committee Designee
David Wasserman, Finance and Administration, President's Liaison

We were not able to hold elections by the end of the term. This will be done in September 2017. For the time being Cheryl Tokke will function as interim Chair.

Recommendations to Prof. Tokke for year 2017-2018 would be—

- Establish a permanent focus group and feedback cycle
- Create a consistent report on focus group experience.
- Spread awareness about healthy snack options.

Respectfully Submitted,

Prof. Johannes Burgers, Co-Chair

Prof. Cheryl Tokke, Co-Chair

Prof. Paul Sideris, Secretary