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**From:** President Cornwell [<mailto:PRESIDENT@wooster.edu>]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 27, 2013 2:03 PM  
**To:** zwdFaculty zwdFaculty; zwdStaff zwdStaff; zwdStudents zwdStudents  
**Subject:** Dining Services Study Process

Dear Fellow Scots,

I write to provide a further update on the revamped structure, timing, and objectives of our dining services study.

As you know, at the beginning of the academic year I asked the Financial Advisory Committee to conduct a study of how we provide dining services at Wooster, with the goal of making the College's operation the best it can be. News of the study generated considerable anxiety, mostly because, in the original framing of the charge, I asked FAC to seek comparative data on the relative costs and benefits of our in-house dining service operation as compared to what contract management companies might offer, as the contract model is the predominant one for colleges like us. In order to allay that anxiety, I have asked FAC to recommend modifications to the process and they have developed a revised plan, which I support.

The first thing to note is that while FAC is overseeing the effort, the study itself is being conducted by those in Dining Services, a distinction that was not made clear at the outset.

FAC's revised study plan contains several parts. One very important element of the study is a site visit and external evaluation of our dining service operation by a consultant from the National Association of College and University Food Services. NACUFS will only carry out such a review if outsourcing is **not** being actively considered. To be clear, then, at this point the study will not seek proposals from contract management companies for comparison.

The site visit is one element of a five-phase, multi-year process aimed at making Dining Services at Wooster the best they can be, where "best" is to be understood as providing the most healthful, appealing, and cost effective dining services that are attentive to issues of food sourcing and dietary accommodations. You can find a more detailed [timeline here](#) but in brief, the process is this:

Phase 1 (Spring/Summer 2013): The Dining Services working groups will gather data about our current operations using NACUFS methodologies.

Phase 2 (Fall 2013): The working groups will facilitate sessions to gather input from Dining Services staff and the broader campus community, including students, faculty, and staff. Visits also will be made to other campuses to compare practices. At the conclusion of this phase, Dining Services will produce a written self-study report.

Phase 3 (Spring 2014): We will ask a team of consultants from NACUFS to visit campus and conduct an external evaluation of Dining Services. The consultants will provide a written report of observations and recommendations based on their visit and review of the self-study report.

Phase 4 (Spring 2014): FAC will review the self-study and NACUFS reports and make its recommendations for improving in-house operation to the president.

Phase 5 (Summer 2014 and beyond): Following review and endorsement of those recommendations by the president and cabinet, Dining Services will begin to implement them. This likely will be at least a two-year process, which will include periodic assessment of progress and evaluation of the impact of the changes.

I am pleased with this revamped process, which promises to serve very well our goal of making Wooster's dining service operation the best it can be in every way, including the quality, variety and sourcing of the food we eat, accommodation of a variety of dietary choices and needs, staff training and service, and cost effectiveness.

As we move forward through this process, we will work hard to keep the campus community engaged and to communicate effectively at every step.

Thank you,  
Grant