

GSC/WEST Quality of Life Survey Report

Dining Services

Abstract

Graduate students are typically willing to spend \$4-\$6 on their on-campus lunches. 25% of respondents did not eat lunch at a Caltech dining facility; of those who did, the average number of times they ate at such a facility ranged from once a week to four times a week. Although graduate students generally give Dining Services high marks on food choice, food quality, and service, they are dissatisfied with the prices at Caltech dining facilities.

Results

To review the survey questions and methodology, please read the Report on Survey Methodology available at <http://www.its.caltech.edu/~survey/results.html>.

Our survey asked three questions about Dining Services:

1. I buy lunch at a Caltech dining facility ___ times a week (Avery Broad, Chandler, Convenience Store, Red Door).
2. I am willing to spend \$____ (\$x.xx) a day for lunch at a Caltech dining facility.
3. I am satisfied with Caltech Dining Services based on:
 - a. Food Choice
 - b. Food Quality
 - c. Price
 - d. Service

Forty-nine respondents (7% of respondents) would not pay anything for a meal from dining services (they entered "\$0" in response to question 2 above), and two answers above \$10 were discarded (\$12 and \$25). Four people did not answer the question. Of the remainder, the average amount that a graduate student was willing to spend on lunch was \$5. This was also the most common (modal) response. The standard deviation was \$0.89.

One hundred and seventy-nine respondents (26% of respondents) said they did not buy lunch at a Caltech dining facility; however, one hundred and thirty of those said that they would be willing to spend a non-zero amount for lunch at a Caltech dining facility. The most frequent response was once a week, but on average students ate lunch at a Caltech dining facility 2.75 times a week. The standard deviation of this response was 1.29.

In response to question three, respondents gave Dining Services high marks, in general. 67% of respondents were satisfied with the service, 62% with the quality, and 60% with the choices available to them. (See Figure 1.) However, only 24% of respondents were satisfied with the prices at Caltech dining facilities.

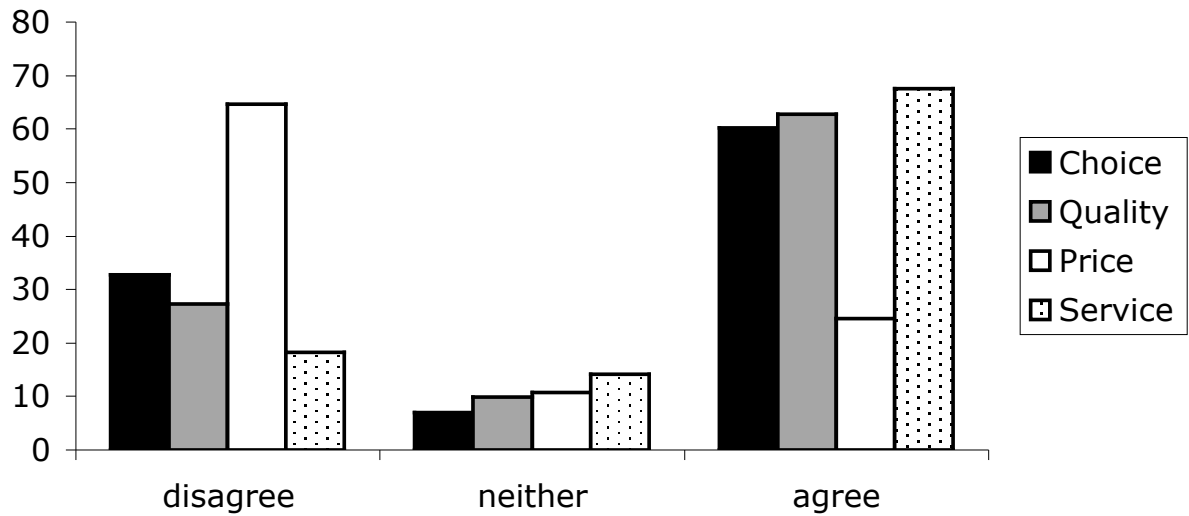


Figure 1. Responses to the question, "I am satisfied with Caltech Dining Services based on: (a) choice, (b) quality, (c) price, (d) service."

It is worth noting that 32% of the graduate student respondents were dissatisfied with the food choice, and 27% with the food quality.

Recommendations

We recommend that Dining Services attempt to offer lower-cost meals to attract more graduate students to its facilities on-campus. While graduate students seem to enjoy eating on campus in general, the prices of food at Caltech dining facilities seem to be too high for most graduate students. This might explain why so many graduate students do not eat on campus, despite the convenience of the Caltech Dining Services facilities.