

New Meal Plan Options

The University of Richmond, an independent private institution of higher education founded in 1830, is located in Richmond, Virginia. The institution is a Master's College and University I according to the Carnegie Classification. Over 92% of its 2,900 undergraduates live on-campus and attend one of three undergraduate schools: Richmond School of Arts & Sciences, Robins School of Business, and Jepson School of Leadership Studies. Additionally, Richmond School of Law has 460 full time students and the Richmond School of Continuing Studies and graduate schools have approximately 1,000 part-time students. Total FTE for the University of Richmond is about 3,800 students. William E. Cooper, Ph.D. is President and Herbert C. Peterson is the Vice President for Business & Finance. Jennifer M. Sauer is the Associate Vice President & Controller.

Historically University of Richmond has had the traditional 19, 14, and 10 meal plans since the fall of 1978. In 1984 a 5-meal plan was added to attract students who lived in the apartments and off campus and were under no obligation to purchase a meal plan. The University serves three meals a day Monday through Friday and two meals a day on Saturday and Sunday. The Dining Center serves the bulk of the meals in a traditional cafeteria style with unlimited amounts of food. However, students can enter the Dining Center facility only once during each meal period. There is a fast food type restaurant that serves food and beverages as well. Students can eat in the fast food restaurant and pay for the food via an exchange rate. In short, during a meal period students can eat in either the main dining facility or the fast food restaurant but not both. Additionally they are not allowed to eat twice at either facility.

Prior to the opening of the 2000 school term, Food Services decided to create two new dining plans and to rename the older meal plans. The ideas for these changes came from the Food Services staff and from student feedback. The meal plan names were changed as follows:

<u>Old Name</u>	<u>New Name</u>
-	Spider Plus Unlimited
19 Meal Plan	Spider Plus Plan
14 Meal Plan	Spider 14
10 Meal Plan	Spider 10
-	Spider 100
5 Meal Plan	Spider 5

The University's athletic mascot is a Spider. Thus the word Spider was used in all of the new meal plan names. There were no changes to the 5, 10, 14, and 19 meal plans except for their names. The two new plans, Spider Plus Unlimited and Spider 100, were new plans that had some of the flexibilities and features that the students wanted according to their suggestion box feedback. The Spider Plus Unlimited plan is the premier plan that provides the students with the following benefits not available in the Spider Plus Plan: (1) Unlimited access to the dining center (Student can enter the dining center multiple times during one meal period.), (2) Five guest meals per semester (The Spider Plus Plan only provides one guest meal per semester.), and (3) Five dollar bonus punch per week for use in Food Service store, pub, and snack shop locations. Initially, the Spider Plus Unlimited plan cost \$135 per semester more than the Spider Plus Plan.

The Spider 100 plan provides one hundred meal punches per semester, which is approximately 25 more meals than the Spider 5 plan. The student under the Spider 100 plan gets two guest meal punches per semester versus only one guest meal punch with the Spider 5 plan. Like the Spider Plus Unlimited plan the Spider 100 allows unlimited access to the main dining center during any meal period and five dollar per week bonus punch at other Food Service locations. Finally, the Spider 100 allows up to three meal punches at the fast food restaurant during one meal period; this feature is available so that students can purchase more food at one time. Initially the cost of the Spider 100 was \$95 per semester more than the Spider 5 plan.

After initiating these changes, these two new plans generated new gross revenues of \$49,000 the first year. During the first semester of the second year new gross revenues amounted to \$65,000 with much of the increase coming from greater number of students participating in the food service meal plan offerings. The participation rate for the fall of 2001 was 92.52% versus 88.73% the previous fall. The participation rate is calculated by dividing the number of meal plans purchased by the total number of undergraduate students, excluding the evening school students. The Spider 100 plan was the catalyst that caused the growth in participation. To conclude, the creation of two new plans and the renaming of the plans have increased gross revenues and attracted a larger number of students (especially those who are not required to purchase a meal plan) to participate in the meal plan offerings.