



The path towards
food independence



New Food Enterprise



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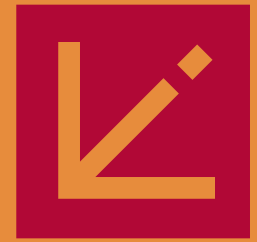
Why does Concordia need a change?



As students and community members, it is crucial for us to have access to affordable and nutritious food. Performing well in school, having the energy to engage ourselves on campus and staying healthy throughout the school year are all dependent on our access to high quality food at a fair price. Yet Concordia consistently fails to provide us with the nutritious, affordable and sustainable food that everyone on campus deserves and needs to function well on a daily basis.



Why does Concordia need a change?



Concordia's food services have garnered a reputation for being of extremely poor quality and high price. Students, particularly those living in residence with no option but to eat Concordia-provided meals, have complained of bugs, hair and nails in their food, lack of allergy and cultural accommodation, moldy bread and raw meat. At the mention of the food in residence cafeterias, it is not unusual for students to scrunch up their nose in disgust, remembering a personal experience of food poisoning. The remarkably poor quality of food even resulted in the creation of the Instagram @greynunscaf, in which residence students could submit photo evidence of the poor food quality.



@greynunscaf



Why is Concordia failing to provide students with good food?

Concordia's food service contract functions on a bidding model. This means that various food service corporations can bid on Concordia's food contract. Whichever corporation has the bid that is most appealing to Concordia wins the contract, and the potential profits that come with it. Unfortunately, the bidding process is not created equally, eliminating many groups from even participating in the process.

The Big Three

Profit Over People

There are three major food service providers that recurrently win the contracts of most North American universities and other institutions. These multinational corporations are: Aramark, Sodexo and Chartwells. Aramark was hired by Concordia in 2015, replacing Chartwells. This contract is slated for renewal in 2026. Concordia has never attempted any other model for food services.

Aramark's many flaws



Poor employer

As an employer, Aramark does not sufficiently focus on job retention, community-building or stimulating the local economy. This results in employees being undervalued, underpaid and having few reasons to want to help the organization grow. Further, employees have no form of democratic voice in Aramark's functioning, giving them no stakes to engage fully.

Subpar sustainability

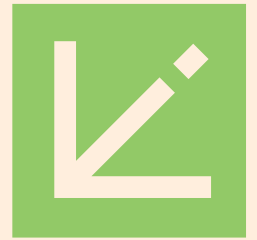
Aramark's "All You Care to Eat" food service model results in enormous food waste. While Aramark claims to meet sustainability standards, the corporation has failed to collaborate with local, community-led farming groups, or go above and beyond in sustainability.

Profiteering in Prisons

Aramark directly engages in the Prison Industrial Complex, in which incarcerated workers are paid pennies for long grueling shifts in prison kitchens, preparing meals under the supervision of paid Aramark employees. Aramark refuses to pay incarcerated workers despite being a conglomerate worth several billion dollars. At the same time, Aramark serves prison employees and inmates food of remarkably poor quality. Reports indicating that, at times, bologna has been served for every meal for over a week.



Our Vision



How can we:

- *achieve food independence?*
- *transition away from the Big Three?*
- *support local farms and our local economy?*

The New Food Enterprise



Concordia students have a long history of fighting for food sovereignty on campus. The establishment of le Frigo Vert, the Hive Café, the People's Potato, Reggie's, and many more campus staples originated from radically changing how we think about food on campus, pushing against the status quo and working against the administration's pushback and dismissal.

The fight to remove multinationals also has a significant history. Since the 2010s, the Link Newspaper, the Concordian and CUTV have published multiple articles and short videos exposing issues with all of the Big Three, residence students have spearheaded a number of Anti-Aramark campaigns and some professors have led courses or research on the topic.

Since 2013, the Concordia Food Coalition has worked towards replacing the Big Three with what they call the New Food Enterprise (NFE): a community-led food provider that focuses on nutritious food, affordable prices, fair labour and stimulating the local economy. The New Food Enterprise is the so far the best option we have at replacing Aramark. Here's what we know about the New Food Enterprise.



Our Vision

A food landscape that is



Meals under the New Food Enterprise will have competitive prices while providing students with nourishing, locally-sourced, diverse and sustainable options. Ingredient sourcing will focus on supporting local farms. Meals will be culturally appropriate, change with the seasons and optimize à la carte prep to cut down on food waste. An à la carte, declining balance meal plan will also help students save money by allowing substantial flexibility for what they pay for.

Community-led

The New Food Enterprise will be not-for-profit, governed by a Board of Directors representing campus food stakeholders and food service experts. There will be seats reserved for the Concordia food groups, social economy actors, workers, students, faculty and the community at large. Management of the NFE will be industry leaders.

Fueling students

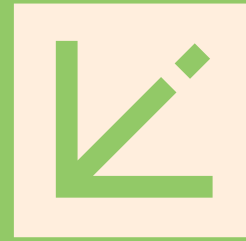
Hiring students

The NFE will create quality entry-level jobs that pay a living wage for students and community members. Good, year-round jobs that pay a living wage for marginalized individuals with family benefits plans will be a hallmark of this business along with fair working conditions for everyone along the supply chain. Their lived experiences will be respected, honored, and valued for what they contribute.



Our Vision

centers pillars of



Sustainability

- Going above and beyond Concordia sustainability metrics
- Sourcing from local farms
- Generating less waste
- Reducing the number of miles that food has to travel to get to campus

Fair labour

- Zero dependency on forced labour and child labour
- Creating quality entry-level jobs
- Focusing on job retention and offering quality benefits

Local Community

- Adding to the local circular economy
- Moving toward Sustainable Urban Development and away from Extraction-based & Colonial community relationships
- Democratic governance that uplifts the voices of students in residence, workers and food groups

The Canadian regional multiplier effect is around 1:3.5 meaning that if we spend \$1 million more locally than was spent last year, it will add an additional \$3.5 million to the local economy.

University of Winnipeg



The University of Winnipeg once also depended on a multi-billion dollar conglomerate food provider before innovating their own Social Enterprise that offers nutritious, fairly-priced and diverse food options. Concordia has the potential to do the same.

The Concordia Food Coalition is modelling the NFE after the key successes of the University of Winnipeg-based, Diversity Food Services, Inc. while leveraging Quebec social economy partners.

If Concordia's administration were to take the initiative to transform their poor food service into a community asset, we could all benefit from the same healthy, affordable and delicious food service as University of Winnipeg students do. Following Diversity Food Services' lead, the New Food Enterprise will offer living wages with family benefits plans to all workers. It will make fresh food, on campus from scratch that is culturally appropriate for the diverse population that makes up the Concordia community and makes sustainability a central pillar. It will work with residence advisers to ensure that international students are finding food that is "like home" for them. Hiring processes will prioritize marginalized members of our community and offer stable employment to those most in need. Efforts will be made to hire employees who represent international students and the study body at large. Our food provider will work to become an anchor purchaser for local small businesses, so that it can maximize the multiplier effect on the local economy and bolster community wealth.

To work, the NFE needs Concordia's support to come to fruition, but Concordia Administration is currently NOT willing to collaborate on the initiative.

In order to bid on Concordia's food service contract, the University has implemented certain eligibility criteria. These include having made 5 million dollars of profit from past food service contracts. By limiting the market, Concordia pushes out smaller potential bidders, leaving the Big Three as the only eligible options: Chartwells, Sodexo and Aramark. Since the Big Three can be certain one of them will be selected, they have no incentive to offer a competitive service.

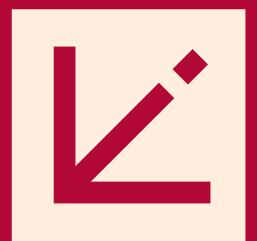
The NFE must be supported by a larger partner organization who meets these criteria until the new social enterprise will be able to support itself.

Bidding Criteria

Concordia administration have claimed that Aramark is adequately meeting the needs of students, given the lack of complaints they have heard from the student body in recent years. This is not the result of student satisfaction, but a lack of channels for students to voice their negative food experiences on campus.

Ignoring Student Voices

Obstacles



Student Associations



As those who rely the most on Aramark's food service, the voices of residence students must be at the forefront of our mobilization efforts. Residence students bear the brunt of Aramark's shortcomings: forced to pay thousands of dollars a year for poor quality food that doesn't accommodate allergies or diet restrictions. Accounts of their lived experiences will form the basis of our complaints to the administration and back the need for a change.

Student associations represent the student body at large and wield an influential voice. Their support will call attention to the food issue. Motions of support, or open letters will pressure the Concordia administration to listen to calls for change, and will encourage unengaged students to get involved.

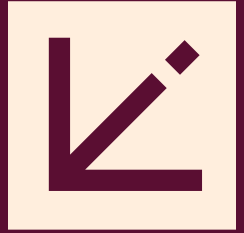
Residence Students

Momentum building

Concordia's food service contract is up for bid again in 2026. It's up to us to convince Concordia to collaborate on the New Food Enterprise, and take students' needs, justice & sustainability seriously.



Now is the time to fight
for the right to
Nutritious, Affordable
and Sustainable Food



Are you :

- *passionate about food security?*
- *an international or resident student?*
- *frustrated with Concordia's food quality?*

Want to get involved?

Join FedUp, a team of students
working together to change
Concordia's food provider!



**Scan or click
this QR code
to get in
touch with us!**

