

opinion

The unfairness of student meal plans

ZACH READ
Managing Editor

As far as meal options go around Ashland University, dining services offers very limited alternative options for meal plans. Specifically, student teachers and students with internships should be able to choose what meal plan fits best for them. They are gone for at least two meals every day, which would work wonderfully with the 80-meal plan. However, the policy is that if you are living in a residence hall, you are not able to have anything except at least the 240-meal plan. The 80 or no meal plan option is only available to those living in the senior apartments or off-campus. When told about this situation, dining services recommended a few other options for using the meal swipes, but offered no reasoning in why student teachers could not switch to a lower meal

swipe plan. The secondary options for lunches to use meal swipes at are the Eagle's Nest or the Ashland Marketplace. Many of these students have food allergies, such as gluten. There are very few options to get a nutritious meal at the Eagle's Nest that also align with these allergies. The Ashland Marketplace also has outrageous prices so you end up with barely any food out of a lot of swipes. Dining services traps you into the system so that you have to buy food from their sources, all of which are highly overpriced. To purchase a loaf of bread from the Marketplace would cost you \$2.43 while a loaf at a regular grocery store would typically cost you around \$1.19. Furthermore, they charge \$4.25 for a gallon of milk which you could typically get for \$2 cheaper at any other grocery store. When looking at the financial side of things, it does not make any sense for anyone to buy from the Ashland Marketplace, so why would dining services expect "broke college students" to use this as a resource. Keeping to the financial side of things, student teachers and students with internships already have to pay for their own gas, which some have to travel 30 minutes or more one way. For student teachers who still live on campus, they have to do this every day of the week. Most of the students in these positions have to leave at least an hour before the Nest even

opens, making it impossible to get a nutritious breakfast and leaving no option for lunch. It would be way more financially smart for the students if they were able to buy groceries from a regular store rather than having to pay for a meal plan. They can go to the grocery once every one to two weeks and be set. It is very inconvenient to have to get food from the Nest several times a week for breakfasts and lunches when they are already gone from campus over 10 hours every day. How can this system make any sense to those who control the meal plan system? You are doing your own students a disservice by not being flexible based on their situation and then charging outrageous prices for your alternative options. Finally, when the numbers are added up and broken down concerning the 240 meal plan, the results are outrageous and students get ripped off. If you take the 240 meal plan, which costs \$2,365, it comes out to \$9.85 for a meal swipe. The price that each swipe is worth at the Eagles Nest is \$6.75, over three-dollars less than what it should be. Also, if you have extra swipes at the end of each semester dining services allows you to turn them in for vouchers at the AU bookstore, very thoughtful. However, they give you 100 bookstore dollars for 30 swipes. This comes out to \$3.33 per swipe, one-third of what an original meal plan costs at \$9.85. Receiving those vouchers is in no way helping you as a student, but rather dining services is ripping you off financially and making easy money off of each student. Obviously the university and dining services needs to make money so that they can provide all of the food options for the students each year.

However, when offering incentives they tend to rip you off financially. Ultimately, I understand that most students may be content with the 240 plan, but I wish there was at least an option for seniors in these situations of student teaching or internships that never find themselves on campus.



All students who live on-campus must have a meal plan.

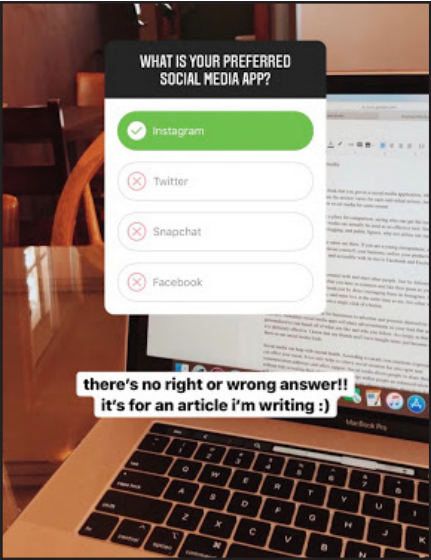


The Eagles nest offers to go options for AU students

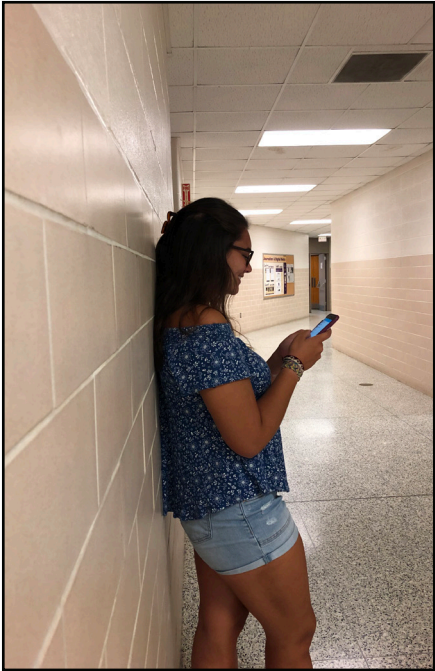
The positive effects of social media

CASS TOLLIVER
AU-Live Sports Editor

How many times a day do you think you get on a social media app, whether it be on your phone, laptop, etc.? I'm sure the answer varies for each individual person, but that doesn't change the fact that we all get on social media for some reason. To some people, social media is a place for comparison, seeing who can get the most attention and fake news. However, social media can actually be used as an effective tool. Since we live in the generation of social media, vlogging, and public figures, why not utilize our resources?



What is your preferred social media platform?



Social media is highly present in our lives today.

Social media is a way to get your name out there. If you are a young entrepreneur, using a social media page is a great way to publicise yourself, your business or your products. Instagram makes doing this extremely easy and accessible with its ties to Facebook and their business pages. Another key tool is the "swipe up" feature on Instagram stories, linking whatever web page you wish. This feature is only available to those accounts that have over ten thousand followers, but it is still beneficial. Secondly, social media is a unique way to connect with and meet other people. Just by

friending someone you can see what you have in common and like their posts. I personally have made multiple friends just by direct messaging them on Instagram. Some of them live hundreds of miles away, and some live in the same state as me, but either way they are good friendships that stemmed from the click of a button. Social media is an effective way for businesses to advertise and promote themselves to a targeted audience. Nowadays social media apps will place advertisements on your feed that are personalized to you based off of what you like and who you follow. As creepy as that may sound, it is definitely effective. I know that my friends and I have bought items just because of seeing them on our social media feeds. On the other hand, social media can help with mental health. According to Curatti.com, emotions expressed online can affect your mood. It not only helps to relieve social isolation but also open new communication pathways and offers support. Social media allows people to share their thoughts without truly revealing their identity, and it helps to develop an enhanced talent of self-expression without any fear. People on Twitter are always tweeting about their friends, ex's, emotions, and more without a single care of who reads it. Why? Because they are behind a phone screen. Teenagers typically use social media apps such as Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat. In a recent poll on my personal Instagram story, I asked the question, "What is your preferred social media app?" The answer choices

included Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, and Facebook. The results showed that 2,394 people prefer Instagram, 570 people prefer Twitter, 231 people prefer Snapchat, and 32 people prefer Facebook. While this may be biased since it was posted on Instagram, the results are still effective. This shows that you can reach the most college aged people (since the majority of my following who voted on this poll are ages 18-25) effectively by using the Instagram app. Personally, my favorite social media app is Instagram. I like how easy it is to post photos, upload stories and like/comment on other people's photos. I also like that it is mainly pictures, so that we can tell a story with those instead of words. I think that Instagram makes it easy to reach a larger audience. If you use your social media outlets for a positive reason, it could have a larger impact than you think. Whether that be starting a blog, a YouTube channel, or simply tweeting something positive, you can be a positive social media user.

Instagram	2394
Twitter	231
Snapchat	570
Facebook	32

The results of the Instagram poll.

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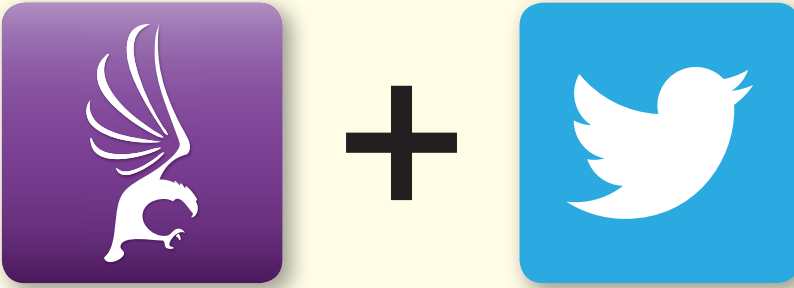
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401 College Avenue
Ashland, Ohio 44805
137 Center for the Arts

(419) 289-5310
collegian@ashland.edu
www.ashlandcollegian.com
@AUCollegian

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