THE PAST

In 1890, the State Normal School was constructed and future teachers arrived to learn their craft. These students arrived with their appetites in tow and Dining Services came to be. An announcement for the State Normal School informed students that club boarding was available at costs ranging from $2.75 to $3.23 per week. In 1922, a new household arts and sciences building was added to the campus of Colorado State Teacher’s College. In the basement, there was a well arranged cafeteria that was maintained to provide meals for students.

East campus sprung up with two new Residence Halls: Cross Hall in 1947 and Troxel in 1960. Each facility boasted a dining room with a central kitchen. Meals were brought to the halls and served family style. Unfortunately, family style dining meant that students were restricted by meal times, assigned seating, and dress codes. Our future teachers were happy to have a source for sustenance, but it was Dining Services’ destiny to grow beyond its initial, utilitarian monotony. In 1985, due to decreasing enrollment, the University chose to divest themselves of the east campus residences.

Tobey-Kendel Hall was constructed in 1936. Two dining rooms were located on the second floor with the kitchen and dishwashing done on the main floor. Dinners were served family style; everyone sat down for meals with cooks serving each table. Lunch was cafeteria style. On Sundays, only breakfast and a noon meal were served. Everyone went out for supper on Sunday. An addition to the original hall was built in 1957.

The 1930’s also saw the creation of Bru Inn. This restaurant/soda fountain provided a vision of the possibilities for Dining Services. Coffee, soft drinks, cigarettes, and conversation abounded in an atmosphere that was more conducive to socializing than the dining rooms. Bru Inn provided an atmosphere where students could converse with people other than the set they were assigned to during dinner, and that was the key to its instant popularity. It was at this time that Dining Services realized their job on campus had two functions: the obvious, primary function of providing meals, and the secondary function of providing a social outlet for the campus. This latter concern shaped many of the changes made to Dining Services over the years.

McCown Dining Room opened in 1963. It was in McCown that students were freed from the restrictive practices of family style dining in favor of food lines. This was also the first time that students were employed in the dining facilities. This change helped students with the financial burdens that come with higher education and provided them with the opportunity to learn job skills that could be transferred to their post-school careers. This dining room also eliminated the need for assigned seating; students were free to fraternize with a larger variety of people. Meal
times not only provided a chance to eat, but also a chance to meet people that studied in a variety of fields encouraging interdisciplinary learning.

The 1960’s also saw the creation of Harrison Residence Hall and Dining Room and the University Center was built in 1966. The campus had grown so large that a bridge was needed to connect students from the new and old campuses and the University Center was built to fill this need. By this point, Dining Services was aware of the fact that anywhere students congregated food needed to be available. To this end, they created a small cafeteria in the University Center. Hoping that this building would be a Mecca of student activity, Dining Services strove to create a variety of options for students to enjoy. To ensure food was conveniently available to all students, meals were also provided at Harrison, Tobey-Kendel, and McCowen. With the new student center at the heart of campus, Bru Inn was no longer needed. It was decided to forgo the full meals previously available at Bru Inn and install convenient snack machines which better suited the type of consumption occurring in the facility. Due to the age of the facility, and the student’s interests in the newer concepts being offered across campus, Bru Inn closed its doors permanently in 1972. However, vending at Bru Inn proved to be immensely popular and cost effective, so vending was dispersed throughout the academic buildings. The dissemination of vending provided easier access for the UNC community to food items.

In the 1980’s, Dining Services created a variety of new dining styles and food options. The majority of these occurred at the University Center where it was remodeled and a dining atrium was added, creating an atmosphere that was open and welcoming. Kitchens were expanded and food lines eliminated in order to bring in the increasingly popular fast food. Various food shops were opened and experimented with such as Hungry Harold’s, Taco Bell Express, Pizza Hut, Pete’s Place, and Teddy’s. An upscale club/restaurant, named Bentley’s, was included with this remodel. With all of these new options, the University created a department to oversee all of the food preparations at the University Center. As to be expected with anything new, some of the new services at the University Center were not particularly successful. UC Food Service used these venues as litmus tests in order to better determine the needs of students. Failures taught a great deal about what students wanted, and Dining Services constantly implemented changes to adjust to the demands of the student body.

Jackson Field was the site for sporting events and Dining Services was there to feed the hungry crowds. Soft drinks, coffee, hot dogs and popcorn kept the loyal Bears fans satiated through the game. In 1982 the Broncos came to Greeley and their training table became the responsibility of UNC’s Dining Services. Tables laden with food, late night high energy snacks, coach’s huddles and concessions for the visiting fans were all Dining Services responsibility. Dining Services took these responsibilities on willingly and with great pride in providing sustenance to the back-to-back Super Bowl champs. In 2003, after twenty-one years at UNC, the Broncos chose to eliminate the “away from home” training camp and Dining Services no longer had the privilege of serving the Broncos.

One of the most successful dining options on campus in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s was a pizza shop named Arnie’s. It was located in McCowen Dining Room. Arnie’s bridged the gap between students and Dining Services in a way that no other dining location had because Arnie’s gave control of the menu to the students who ran it. Dining Services knew that no one could
anticipate the desires of the students better than the students themselves and the synergy of these
groups created calzones and pizzas that were soon popular throughout campus. It was not long
before the greatest problem facing Arnie’s was its inability to respond to the overwhelming
demand. The students and Dining Services found the solution to their problem together and made
Arnie’s a delivery only shop. Arnie’s delivery fell victim to budget cuts in 1997, but Dining
Services had no desire to cut a shop that was so well loved. They solved the dilemma by moving
the pizza operation to the University Center. At the same time, the student run Kepner Coffee
Korner also faced extinction due to budget issues. The UNC Marketing Club had started this
venture and the University was anxious to preserve the creation of its students, so Dining
Services also came to its rescue by taking control of the small shop.

Faculty dining was addressed in the early years with the provision of small private dining rooms
being served by the main kitchens on campus. In 1973, Centennial Hall provided a private dining
room and kitchen facility for faculty/staff until 1991 when the dining room was converted to a
banquet area for the University. A faculty/staff dining facility was established in 1996, utilizing a
private dining area in Tobey-Kendel Hall. Having a private facility for faculty/staff was
abandoned due to financial constraints in 1998. Not wanting to exclude a very important part of
UNC from their services, faculty and staff were invited to join students in the dining rooms
through a payroll deduction plan in the fall of 1999.

As times moved into the 1990’s, the pace of life accelerated. Students did not always have time
to sit down for meals. They became a grab and go society looking for more portable items like
sandwiches, chips, sodas, and cookies. Dining Services responded once again to a growing trend
by creating the Gourmet-to-Go. This concept gave the students access to quick, convenient meals
as they dashed to class.

All food services on campus were combined and Dining Services meal plan/food service
separated from Residence Life in the mid-90’s. All food services were consolidated under one
director in 1997. He hired an Executive Chef in 1998 to oversee all food and menu operations
including dining rooms, cash, and catering. UNC was the first State University to employ a
professional Chef in their dining operations. The Chef was also given the direction to increase
Dining Services’ presence through example and staff training.

Facing declining enrollments, budget cuts, and an aging facility, Dining Services made the
decision to close McCowen Dining Room in the fall of 1999 to students as a dining option.
However, the kitchen still remains open to produce meals for the Weld County Senior Nutrition
Program and is the current West Campus Gourmet-to-Go location.

PRESENT 2003
Our current mission statement: UNC Dining Services provides quality food and service in a
professional manner to students, faculty, staff and guests of the University of Northern Colorado.
It is a goal of Dining Services to support the mission of the University by promoting nutritional
awareness throughout the campus community. UNC Dining Services is committed to providing
pleasant dining experiences, meeting diverse culinary needs, and emphasizing value for all
customers.
Freshman who attend UNC and live in the residence halls – approximately 2,500 of the 11,500 campus population - are required to carry a mandatory 19 meal per week plan. Additionally, another 1,100 upper-class students have signed up for the Optional Bear Plan where they can choose from 50 to 160 meals per semester. Those sales were up by 15% this year. Dining Services also offers faculty and staff members a special meal rate of $3.95 plus tax which is deducted from their paycheck. Over 1,000 UNC community members have taken advantage of this program since its inception. The dining units campus-wide routinely prepare some 6,000 meals a day. The student consumer of today has more sophisticated tastes than their counterparts of yore. They expect fresher food, better presentation and a variety of choices.

Tobey-Kendel Dining Room, a building constructed in 1936, recently underwent a $6.5 million renovation. Located on Central Campus, Tobey-Kendel serves about 300 meals for breakfast, 700 for lunch, and 1,100 for dinner. The main dining room is arranged around a series of serving stations, some of which offer made-to-order items such as stir-fry dishes where students can choose the ingredients. Other stations offer entrees for which students spend less time waiting for items like lasagna or hamburgers. Lunch and dinner offer two soups, one of which is vegetarian. There is always a large salad bar with a variety of healthy choices to choose from. Cereal is also available at every meal. A deli is offered at lunch and dinner with fresh baked hoagies.

Harrison Dining Room, located on the west end of campus, originally built to service 500 students, currently serves about 200 meals for breakfast, 750 for lunch and 800 for dinner including many of the University’s athletes. Harrison offers a salad bar with healthy choices as well as the deli for lunch and dinner. Harrison Dining Room employs an older cafeteria style of service, but they have begun display cooking to help with the transition into the new West Campus Dining Room, a new $9 million facility that will have its Grand Opening the end of 2004 and be open for full service January 2005. Harrison Dining Room will then close its doors for food service.

The University Center Food Court board plan (meal plan) offers lunch Monday – Friday. The focus of menu development for the Food Court was to offer popular fast food items and speed of service. The Food Court offers a full range of lunch options to both cash customers and those on a meal plan. A deli station featuring a different hot sandwich each day, pizza station featuring calzones and baked pasta, and a daily display cooking area offer many choices. Additionally, a full salad bar, soup and the student staple, cereal, rounds out the Food Court menu offerings. Customer counts increased Fall Semester 2003 at the Food Court by 39%. The UC Food Court differs only slightly from the other board plans. Diners are allowed only one time through the Food Court and two entrees with as many drinks and side dishes as may fit on their tray.

The University Center Food Court Express window offers lunch Monday – Friday cash and credit cards only. Customers can choose from Pacific Rim rice and noodle bowls, pizza, deli sandwiches, soup and salads. The Food Court Express window is open for dinner Monday-Thursday for meal plans, payroll deductions and cash sales. Approximately 200 meals are served each evening. Meals are bundled into “meal deals” which include a beverage. Menu offerings include the Pacific Rim noodle and rice bowls, deli sandwiches, and daily student specials. The most popular student special is the Chicken Katsu, a recipe developed by student employees from Hawaii.
Gourmet-to-Go take out meals are offered at McCowen and Tobey-Kendel Dining Rooms. This option is available for students who don’t have time to sit down and eat. Hundreds of students take advantage of this choice Monday - Friday every breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Taco Bell Express, located in the University Center, is currently Dining Services only branded concept store. Taco Bell Express is open Monday - Friday 10:30 a.m. -7:00 p.m. While the store is labeled an express unit, it serves almost a full menu of Taco Bell items. Taco Bell Express is a license which means the University owns the store. However, Dining Services has to follow Taco Bell’s corporate policies and pay a 10% fee based on revenues to the company.

Kepner Coffee Korner is another cash operation located in Kepner Hall. It is open Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. -1:30 p.m. A wide variety of breakfast items and snacks are offered. Seattle’s Best coffee and Campbell’s soup are just two branded items highlighting the menu.

The UNC Catering department is located in the University Center. There were 1,327 catered events held last fiscal year. There are a wide variety of services to choose ranging from departmental coffees to sit-down dinners for up to 800. Customers can also have food professionally served or buffet style. Menus are available for breakfast, lunch and dinner and everything in between. Delivery services are offered for both on-campus and the surrounding community. Catering is involved in many special events on campus such as the all campus BBQ and the RHA dinner dance. A chocolate fountain was recently purchased to enhance our guest’s event. Ice sculptures are also offered. During the Holiday season and summer when University student help is hard to find, local high schools work for Catering for their fundraising projects. It is a great way to get young people from our community involved in the University as well as food service. UNC Catering is always striving to meet changing customer’s needs.

UNC Dining Services provides Greeley and its surrounding area’s seniors with nutritious lunches Monday through Friday throughout the year. In conjunction with a contract with the Area Agency on Aging that is renewed every five years, UNC Dining Services prepares meals for the elderly. The Senior Nutrition Program serves about 425 seniors per day. The Agency transports the meals to sites across Weld County.

UNC Dining Services oversees the vending machines on campus. Nearly every building has vending and snack machines. Dining Services is in the fifth year of an exclusive contract with Pepsi and Canteen vending.

UNC Dining Services has a staff consisting of approximately 80 positions. Approximately 200 University students are also employed through Dining Services. We currently have an Executive Chef who oversees the food production as well as teaches a culinary training program and a Serv Safe program for staff and other cooks in the area who wish to become certified. The department also employs a Registered Dietitian who is able to meet with students regarding their nutritional needs and also assists with menu planning for Dining Services.

The summer of 2003 saw the beginning of a new collaborative effort between UNC and Aims Community College here in Greeley. The UNC/Aims Dual Enrollment Program began. This effort allows Aims students to take classes on the UNC campus and UNC students to take classes
on the Aims campus. By offering this new program, Aims students are allowed to dine on campus, also.

In order to stay current with the newest trends, we are a member of NACUFS (National Association of College and University Food Service), NRA (National Restaurant Association), and the ACF (American Culinary Federation). All of the menus are on the web and updated weekly. Additionally, a 24 hour food line – 351-FOOD - is available to those wanting to know what menu is being offered daily. Dining Services is always trying to learn more and teach more. We help with the FND 447 course, offer the Weld Star training to student employees and new staff members who have not yet been Serv Safe certified. This year a Culinary Apprentice program was started. If it goes well, we will add more apprentices next year.

Fall of 2003 saw a change in purchasing practices for Dining Services and Purchasing Food Services. Prime vending was implemented. This practice has been used by UC Catering since 1990. Prime vending enables each unit to order directly from an approved vendor which means we can order food on an “as needed” basis. The food is then delivered to each dining room’s dock for Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday deliveries.

THE FUTURE
The foodservice industry is a constantly changing environment driven by the consumers continued accumulation of knowledge from various sources. These sources include the globalization of information from media outlets such as television, magazines and radio, blending of cultural backgrounds, increased internet usage, and the ever growing interest in the field of culinary arts by the consumer market. It is commonplace in the foodservice industry that the current trends of today become the standards of tomorrow. To be a leader in the industry of foodservice, it takes the foresight to see what the consumer generation of tomorrow will see as the standard and to offer them the variety and excitement of emerging culinary trends in a format that is conducive to the operational goals. UNC Dining Services is taking great strides to meet the demands of our current customers and is looking towards the future of how we can continue to meet the needs of the next generation’s expectations.

Menus are the culmination of creativity, foodservice trends, consumer expectations and staff capabilities, combined to define a foodservice operation’s vision. Constant revisions are needed to incorporate these aspects and continually keep pace with customer demand. The globalization of culinary knowledge leads us towards a style of cooking that is true to its origin. Consumers will be looking for authentic spices, ingredients, menu items and flavor profiles. Education and training will be a vital element for UNC staff to procure the necessary skills to produce authentic ethnic menu items. The globalization of culinary knowledge is also leading towards an overall understanding of interdependence on global markets. UNC Dining Services will have to be socially responsible in addressing the issues of biotechnology, world trade supplies, organics and local agricultural issues. Forming relationships with suppliers who are also on the forefront of these issues will be a key component of our success in addressing these social issues.

The future of menus for foodservice will reflect the customer’s demands for fresh foods fast and not fast food as we have seen it in the past. The concept of fresh food fast combined with the call
for authentic ethnic flavors will produce a need for menu concepts to go beyond what we see today in the fast food and chain restaurant industry.

In regard to facilities, continued growth in student enrollment will dictate the need of future expansion and availability of service to our customers. The current building of the West Campus Dining Room will be one way to accommodate a fraction of these needs. There is a current need for the University Center to also be updated. Food delivery issues must be addressed to avoid crossing of customer traffic. Kitchen space must be reorganized to accommodate a multi-concept food court that will contain various types of food windows, each supporting their own menu. Cooler and freezer space would need to be increased and a new dish area designed to eliminate the excessive expenditure and waste of the Styrofoam currently used at the UC. For this concept to be practical there is a need for the availability of the individual windows to accept not only meal plans but also various methods of payment. This would provide our student customers more menu options while also opening our services up to non-meal plan holders which would create a new avenue for revenue production. The food concepts at the University Center would be designed to support the future demand for ethnic cuisines and move from the fast food trend to good food fast demand. The stations should be diverse enough in equipment to change concepts without major future renovations.

The new West Campus Dining Room will house a GTG (Gourmet-to-Go) area that has the capability to be open at hours the dining room is not by having the feature of a separate entrance and exit area. Electrical and space capabilities are present in this area to further enhance the GTG program by offering hot entrees for students on the go. Having hot entrees and offerings that will ensure our customers a well-balanced meal allows Dining Services another avenue to meet customer needs and open up our services to new segments of the campus community. To maintain consistency in the services provided, renovations to the current Tobey Kendel GTG will be needed to provide hot entrée offerings.

In the future, there will also be a need for further satellite operations in areas of consumer density. Current preparation of a satellite operation in the library is an example of the changing expectations of today’s consumer. With the renovation of the former Laboratory School to house student services, a need for satellite operations in these types of areas may be expected. Convenience is the direction of trends we see in foodservice operations today. An increase of corporate restaurants offering drive-thru, late night meals and mobile locations can be expected to reverberate into the University sector as well. The use of convenience stores is a concept that many universities have cashed in on and one that may be expected by our customers in the future. These “C-Stores” also allow the availability to offer food at hours normal operations would be closed, giving the customer the availability to fulfill their needs within their schedule and allowing Dining Services an outlet to increase revenue with minimal staffing.

Nutritional awareness of customers has also continued to grow over the years. The information availability that the FDA requires on labeling and the media attention to certain nutritional issues have created a consumer market that is diverse in their nutritional needs and has an expectation level of an operation to offer foods that fit their dietary requirements. The requirements of tomorrow’s customer will most likely include addressing the concerns of hydrogenated fats, over processed foods, high carbohydrate menu items and chemically processed or fortified vegetables,
meats, and produce that are common in today’s market. Allergies to nuts, wheat, eggs, dairy, seafood, spices and certain oils have increased three-fold in the last ten years; and, the industry is expecting to see this increase continue. Dining Services will have to be proactive in addressing these concerns and filling the needs of our customers. A close working relationship with COPAN (Colorado Physical Activity and Nutrition) coalition will be built. Combined efforts are needed to counteract the issue of our nation’s obesity issues. This is an issue that must be addressed with education. As an educational institution we have a unique opportunity to address responsible eating habits with our customers not only while on campus but also, to better prepare them for their future.

The Dining Services staff plays an important role in not only the production of food but also education and interaction with our customers. Foodservice is no longer hidden in the steamy kitchens away from the customers. The consumer expectation of today is to be able to partake in the process of food preparation and/or to interact with those preparing the meal. The increase of restaurants with display kitchens, and in the University segment with the marketplace or Marche concepts, is testament to this growing change. This standard will only continue to grow which means a new skill of customer service and interpersonal skills will be a requirement of future staff. The demand for fresher ingredients and less convenience menu items, increased customer service and a basic knowledge of the culinary arts combine to form the minimal requirements of the foodservice worker of the future. To fully meet the demands of our future customers, there will not only be a need for an increase of knowledge of staffing but also for an increase of staffing overall. Dining Services is currently addressing this issue by experimenting with an apprenticeship program which allows us to draw workers who are interested in learning about the culinary profession and want to make it their career. This allows us the opportunity to train individuals based on our performance standards and to ready them for a career, which with further nurturing could be continued with the University in the future.

The non-traditional educational requirements of employees of UNC Dining Services will be much higher in the future. As discussed previously, the need to be familiar with ethnic cuisines, interpersonal skills, nutritional awareness, and a basic understanding of culinary principals will be necessary. Continued expansion of our self-funded Culinary Training Program will be a key component in addressing these issues. By continuing to also offer these programs to the surrounding community, we not only are looked at as culinary leaders but also increase the potential labor pool we have to draw from. Expansion of the ACF (American Culinary Federation) Apprenticeship program also allows Dining Services the opportunity to self-train not only the apprentices but also other employees. This increase of knowledge in the staff will lead to a passionate and ever self-feeding work environment.

Exceeding customer’s expectations is part of what fuels a healthy work environment and is the pure essence of the hospitality industry. Having the involvement of students in the planning process of our future is essential to properly exceed their needs and desires. By becoming actively involved with student organizations such as RHA (Resident Hall Association), ISA (International Student Association), COPIRG (Colorado Public Interest Research Group), and CPE (Center for Peer Education), we can obtain feedback of how we ought to focus our efforts to meet the student needs. A pilot program unique to UNC Dining Services was initiated last year by surveying the top ten high schools from which we draw admissions, inquiring of the
participants their culinary preferences. This data was compiled to form the basis of the following year’s menus. Continuation and refinement of the surveying tool will also help to assure we are meeting the needs of our customers. Involvement of students in such meetings as Taste Testing, Menu Planning, and the reinstallation of the Food Advisory Board are further ways to gain the important feedback from our customers. By working with campus groups and departments, Dining Services is better able to understand the needs of the students and map out solutions to serving and surpassing their expectations.

Dining Services has always played an important role in facilitating a section of the FND (Food, Nutrition & Dietetic) core curriculum. Continued relations with the FND department are desired to increase the knowledge of those students majoring in a field so directly related to the foodservice industry. Continued development of programs such as the Student Cooking and Nutrition Series offered to all students is yet another way for Dining Services to be a part of the University experience of our students and to contribute to their learning environment. There are many resources available on campus that Dining Services foresees as being future opportunities for increased student involvement and overall educational programming for our residents and campus community.

Future departmental partnership is the key to making not only Dining Services a success but also UNC as a whole. Without the cooperation of fellow departments, our cohesiveness as a University falters which through the perspective of our students decides our growth as a University. Dining Services will progressively develop a deeper relationship with Purchasing Food Services so the needs of our department as a customer may be met efficiently and effectively through constant communication and partnership. The move toward prime vending has generated the opportunity for more collaboration between Dining Services and the Purchasing Food Services office. This collaboration could be further enhanced through sharing technology, facilities and human resources. Relations with food suppliers will continue to grow as production personnel and Dining Services become more involved with the procurement of food and vendor relations.

Foodservice is not immune to the effects of our ever changing world of technology and in many ways must stay on the forefront. Nutritional information availability to students will be a concern that technology is able to address. Nutritional kiosks may be used so students will be able to input their daily menu choices into a nutritional analysis system to obtain their daily dietary intake. As we continue to work with technologically advanced suppliers, the need for continued updated systems will be required. The checks and balances of accounting, ordering, forecasting and inventory are all tasks that technology continues to offer time efficient solutions to. By taking advantage of these solutions we will have the ability to accurately look at and maintain current cost analysis reports which has an overall effect on the services we can fiscally afford to provide to our customers.

The current movement of our technological world is that of a paperless society. All functions of the operating system are foreseen to be without need of hard copies. Tools for this currently include ID scanners, hand held inventory devices, card access systems and availability of applications and forms in a web-based system. Continued functions of the student ID card may include the availability of a declining balance format which would allow students to purchase
goods at various campus locations. These locations may include for Dining Services the previously discussed C-store concept or satellite operations but could also be useful to other campus outlets as well, such as the bookstore or any campus location dealing with monetary transactions. This would provide convenience for the customer and increased opportunities of revenue growth for the University.

To be a leader in the foodservice industry, an operation must stay current on the direction of consumer trends and be forward thinking enough to make preparations to meet the needs of the consumer. Dining Services’ involvement with organizations such as the National Restaurant Association, National Association of College and University Foodservice, Colorado Restaurant Association, American Dietetic Association and the American Culinary Federation provide many opportunities for training, professional development, human resources, information on emerging trends, changes in industry standards and opportunities for publicity. Only by taking an active role in these industry associations can we stay on top of our ever changing market and see what the customer of tomorrow will expect. Networking with other universities and culinary professionals allows for ideas to be expanded on, changes to be taken further and the process of development and evolution of the foodservice industry to continue.