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The students here at Radford University are excited about many new things happening around campus: new president, newly renovated dorms, new buildings.... But what about the new food places?

Radford University is known for quite a few things. These include our cutting edge new science building, our excellent education program, and the nursing program, just to name a few. When thinking of a phrase to describe Radford University, one of the options would probably not be something along the lines of "Wide array of food choices!"

For years, students have talked about having a lack of choice in food services and have even dreaded that time on Friday afternoons when it seems like nothing is open on campus. We have taken the surveys, we have become Facebook warriors, and have even discussed other more savory options to put on campus.

Looking at what is already available to us on campus: Au Bon Pain, Papa John's, Dalton Dining Room and Dalton 2 Go, Muse Lunch and Dinner, Chick-Fil-A, Wild Greens, Pinkberry, Starbucks, etc. That seems like a great list of restaurants, right? Having places like Wendy's and Papa John's is nice for when you do not feel like driving or taking the bus to Christiansburg or when you can barely scrape the change together to order something from Benny's.

Then it hits that time during the semester hits when you have had Chick-Fil-A for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and you do not plan on expanding your horizons any further. There are a few reasons as to why students only stick with a few of the options on campus: time, dietary preferences/restrictions, and money.

Time is a huge factor in deciding where you are going to eat during any given time of the day. If you are lucky enough to get out of class before the lunch rush, which magically appears around 12:15 p.m. each day, you might find yourself with more of a selection. If you are one of the

unfortunate souls who gets out of class right in the middle of the lunch rush, you might be foraging for any leftover mac n' cheese at Au Bon Pain or waiting for the next batch of French fries at Chick-Fil-A. Time can convince us to eliminate other food options because we know after the first week, which food place will fit our schedule and which will probably not.

If you are a student who is trying to eat healthy or has dietary restrictions, the list of places on campus that you could go to is limited. Shellfish allergy? You might want to avoid getting sushi. Looking to lose weight? Well, you maybe have three places that are left on the list. Here at Radford University, what we put in our bodies is important to us but there are very limited options for people with food allergies or restrictions.

For instance, there are not many vegetarian options that are affordable on campus. Gluten free? That is a gamble. Vegan? You might as well forget it. For students who have restricted diets or are trying to eat healthy, there are only three choices that might suit your needs: Dalton, Wild Greens and Au Bon Pain. Dalton food cafeteria has some selection for people with food allergies but that depends on which day it is. The safest bet at any of the three places are the salads.

While we have many varieties of cuisines, many of them do not fit our dietary nor do they fit our monetary means. Not every student can afford to eat on campus and those who can eat on campus must ration their meal dollars. Meal dollars go quickly when you are indulging in luxuries, therefore our options become limited to the less healthy and cheaper food places on campus.

Students who are gluten free, vegan, or are vegetarian might find themselves in an even bigger dilemma between time, money and options. Many of the places on campus that offer gluten free, vegan, or vegetarian options are often times the more expensive. Students are stuck paying for the cheaper meals and in turn are also stuck going to the same options each time leaving very little variety.

While there are so many different options on campus, it does not seem like such a large list when you look at time, money, and dietary needs. There are more buildings that are going up on campus but no new food places. What are the surveys doing to help improve our food quality and selection? Will there ever be a change for the highlanders? Only time will tell on our campus.