

# [The elmhurst cafeteria](https://assignbuster.com/the-elmhurst-cafeteria/)

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College, of course, is the final destination on the journey meant to take humans from childhood to adulthood and it is certainly not coincidental that with each progression upward through the educational system the students are rewarded with more leniency in terms of structure. As students progress from elementary school to high school and then into college, they are granted more freedom in terms of which subjects they can study and when they are allowed to take those classes. But one thing that seems to change very little if at all is the opportunity to eat. While the lunchtime may be far more structured during the lower levels of the education system, there is still a reliance upon that structure even into college. Students are still expected to congregate at the institutionalized times for breakfast, lunch, and dinner; post-dinner food choices are virtually ignored.
Unfortunately, college study habits don't conform to that old-fashioned structure. Because most college students are away from home living in either dormitories or off-campus housing away from their parents, and because college is as much as an institution for learning socialized behavior, they are experiencing a tremendous upheaval in lifestyle. Many students not only have studies to pursue but are also working part-time jobs and attending parties or getting involved in romantic relationships. As a result, they no longer ascribe to the structured social patterns associated with pre-college life. They can no longer be depending on parents willing to provide them with home-cooked meals available either freshly made or in the refrigerated leftover form at all times during the day. If they happen to miss out on their chance of getting a nutritional meal when the cafeteria was open, they have little choice but to eat fast food or junk food. The lack of nutrition that students suffer by not eating well affects not just their physical health but also their mental acuity as well.
A 2005 study found that almost three-fourths of all college students gain weight between their first day and the end of their sophomore year. The primary reason for this weight gain is a combination of late-night studying and poor nutrition due to students eating junk or fast food (Dryden). Studies indicate that the type of food that students eat contributes to their learning capabilities. College education requires that students retain a significant amount of information for a certain period of time. Most college classes grades are determined at least in part by testing and exams that, while requiring some levels of critical thought, also demands that students engage in the mastery of simple rote memory skills. Memory retention and responsiveness can be affected both positively and adversely according to the nutrition levels of food. When students don't have access to foods high in nutrition, they tend to turn to such foods as pizza, burgers, french fries, and other foods high in fat and cholesterol. These kinds of foods tend not to be positive for studying as they can make one feel lethargic and affect the brain's ability to concentrate. If the cafeteria would extend its hours, then the result would likely be that students would receive better nutrition and not turn toward these foods high in fats. Even worse then going on a late-night fast food run or ordering in pizza is relying on snack food to tide you over from one meal to the next. If the cafeteria were open later and offered food that met the nutrition needs of students, they might be more willing to eat healthier. This would benefit not only the students but the college as well. After all, healthy students perform better academically, raising the overall GPA figures, and making the institution more attractive to potential students and parents of those students (Kotler). On the other hand, of course, staying open later in order to offer fresh nutrition-packed food would require the purchase of a larger inventory. The food offered for lunch or even dinner could not be safely offered as fresh to late-night patrons. This would naturally entail spending more money to provide fresh food and clearly any rise in spending would have to be proven beneficial. It is obvious that a tremendous amount of money is raised and spent on college campuses, but since the purpose of college is supposed to train an educated workforce that will be capable of keeping America competitive in the global economy, doesn't it make sense to spend a little more to ensure that students are meeting their ultimate academic capability It would not be just the students who would benefit from better nutrition, and not just the school, but America itself.
Colleges are a meeting place for people of different cultures and backgrounds and foreign students sometimes have trouble adjusting to eating at a time that they would normally be sleeping or just waking up. By offering a greater opportunity for these students to eat on their body's schedule the effect will be not only to increase their productivity as students but to address diversity issues (Rosenberg). Clearly, the issue at stake on the other side is financial in terms of paying for more cafeteria employees, but if colleges can find money to buy new sports equipment every year then surely they can find money to pay for cafeteria employees.
In addition, students are attending classes throughout the day and night, and very often those nighttime students are arriving straight from work, without having had an opportunity to get sit down to a nutritional meal. Since some of these classes end after 8: 00, it would definitely present an opportunity for the school to raise revenue by offering full menu meals to these students. The cost of paying for more food and employees to cook and serve that food would probably be more than offset by the income produced.
There are simply too many good reasons for extending the operating hours of the Elmhurst cafeteria and not enough good ones in opposition. As is usually the case when it comes to common sense, the only real argument in opposition is that it would create more costs to the college.