

Ringling Students Divided With The Current State of Cunnife Commons

The campus's cafeteria has been receiving some controversy lately in the court of public opinion.



By: Fionn O'Neill

The Ringling College of Art and Design has been ground for a topic of divisiveness recently: the campus's cafeteria. Some students have begun voicing concerns over the services provided by the establishment (commonly referred to as Cunnife). Their claims speak to a lack of quality food, specifically in consideration of the prices of the college's various meal plans—which are a mandatory purchase for first-year students.

“I think with the amount we’re paying, they should be able to work on fixing some of the common complaints people have,” says Cam Kluepfel, a first-year student, who shared some of his own personal experiences and opinions of the establishment. “I recall there being one time where I had a dead fly in my rice. I’ve had conversations with other students who have had similar experiences.”

While Cam has his fair share of negative feelings toward the cafeteria, he wants to make note of the positives, as well. He bolsters Cunnife’s ‘meal-swipe’ plan, which allows students to use their student ID-card for entry into the establishment. Instead of paying individually for each specific type of food they choose to eat, students swipe once and feast as they please.

“This system has allowed me to branch out and try some food I might have never tried, if I knew there was a chance I might be paying for something I wouldn’t enjoy,” he says. When asked his opinion on the establishment as a whole, he had this to say:

“I hope Ringling is able to make improvements on the issues I mentioned earlier, because I think Cunnife has a lot of potential. It’s just not quite there yet.”

That same sentiment is shared—to a more passionate degree—by Lily O’Neill, another student living on-campus. “I used to enjoy Cunnife’s food, near the beginning of the year,” Lily said, “I noticed a change in the menu after Milton.” She refers to Hurricane Milton, which forced the entire campus to evacuate in the fall of last year. “...repetition in menus and decline in quality. Multiple times I’ve had pink chicken. There have been a few times I’ve felt sick or nauseous after eating at Cunnife.”

Lily's opinion of the cafeteria is widely negative, claiming that it fails to, "cater well to different appetites." She went on to say this regarding the establishment: "Overall, I think it was a waste of money to build a new cafeteria, instead of improving the food and adding more alternatives."

The cafeteria was built in January of 2023. Since its inception, it's received more and more divided opinions among the students that frequent it. When asking some of the college's staff for any comment on the dining hall, none were able to provide one, as they did not use the services themselves.

For now, Ringling students are left to wonder if their concerns over the establishment will be met with any changes, or if the cafeteria will continue to operate as it always has.

Sources:

- Cam Kluepfel (Ringling Student)
- Lily O'Neill (Ringling Student)

