



IMPROVING HEALTHY EATING OPTIONS ON CAMPUS

Problem description

At our university cafeteria, the food options are mostly unhealthy. Most of the meals are heavy, oily, or made with a lot of dough. Even the dishes that should be more balanced usually end up covered in mayonnaise or oil. There are almost no light or healthy alternatives like simple salads, fresh vegetables, or meals that feel nutritious.

So if a student wants something healthy, there is basically no real choice.

Another problem is the cafeteria space itself. It's pretty small, and during the long break the lines become huge. Sometimes you spend most of your break just waiting, and by the time you get your food there is almost no time left to eat. There also aren't many places to sit, although that part seems harder to fix.

Since there aren't many good food options near the campus, going somewhere else usually takes too long—especially when the weather is bad. Because of that, students often end up eating whatever is available, even if they don't really want to. Some, like me, sometimes prefer not to eat at all until classes are over, instead of choosing something unhealthy.

All of this affects students' well-being. Heavy food makes you feel tired, and it becomes harder to stay focused and productive during the day.

Stakeholders

Students

- want fast, affordable, and healthier food
- want more variety, not just fried snacks
- want to spend less time waiting in line

Teachers and university staff

- also use the cafeteria
- want normal meals during the day

Cafeteria workers

- deal with complaints
- want a stable flow of customers
- prefer simple food preparation

University administration

- cares about student wellbeing
- wants fewer complaints and a better student experience
- doesn't want very high costs for changes

Suppliers

- provide products
- need clear requirements for new types of meals

Project goals

Main goals:

- make the food healthier and more balanced
- give students more choices
- reduce long lines
- improve overall satisfaction with the cafeteria

More specific goals:

- add light and healthy meals
- offer quick “grab-and-go” options
- keep prices affordable

Current situation (AS-IS)

Right now, the cafeteria works in a very basic way. Most of the food is prepared early in the morning, and the menu hardly changes from day to day.

A lot of the options are pastries, fried items, or sweet snacks. Healthy meals usually require more fresh ingredients and more time to prepare, so they are rarely available.

During the long lunch break, the line becomes extremely long. Because of this, many students simply buy whatever is the quickest, even if it's not healthy. Students who want something better often try to go outside the campus, but it usually takes too long, so it's not really a good option.

Main problems today:

- not enough healthy food
- too many heavy and oily meals
- lack of variety
- long waiting time during breaks
- no vegetarian or fitness-friendly choices
- food is often not very fresh by the afternoon

Future vision (TO-BE)

Option 1

Small improvements (low cost, easy to implement)

This option doesn't require big changes, just a few practical steps:

- add a couple of simple healthy dishes (for example: light salads, cooked grains like rice or buckwheat, baked chicken, or a basic soup)
- include healthier snacks such as yogurt, fruit, or nuts
- create a small “grab-and-go” shelf with ready lunch boxes for students in a hurry
- use clear labels showing ingredients and approximate calories

Even these small improvements would already give students more choice and make the cafeteria feel more modern.

Option 2

Medium investment

This option adds a more structured healthy food section:

- a separate “healthy food line” with several daily choices
- salads with dressing served separately
- grain bowls (a base like rice + vegetables + a protein)
- soups made with less oil
- sugar-free or low-sugar drinks
- simple fixed-price combos for quick ordering

This would help reduce lines and make healthy eating more convenient.

Option 3

Larger change

A bigger change could be partnering with an outside catering provider that specializes in balanced meals. They could deliver fresh dishes every day, so the cafeteria wouldn't need to cook everything on site. This would significantly improve the quality and variety of meals, but it requires more funding and planning.

Requirements

Functional requirements

(what the cafeteria should do)

- offer at least 30% healthy meal options every day
- have one simple soup available daily
- provide at least one vegetarian option
- include calorie and ingredient labels on meals
- create a faster “quick service” line for students in a hurry

Non-functional requirements

(quality and conditions of the service)

- food should be prepared fresh every day
- prices must remain affordable for students
- stable and reliable supply of ingredients
- the cafeteria must maintain a clean, safe environment

RISKS

Even with improvements, there are several risks that could affect the project:

- healthier ingredients may increase the overall food cost
- suppliers might not deliver fresh products on time
- students may not immediately switch to the new healthier menu
- the cafeteria may need extra staff to handle new processes
- purchasing new equipment could be expensive

KPI (Success Indicators)

These indicators can help measure whether the improvements are successful:

- fewer student complaints about food quality or variety
- shorter lines during the main lunch break
- more students choosing to eat on campus instead of going outside
- higher overall satisfaction score in student surveys
- increased sales of healthy meals