

I Paid My Tuition...Why Can't I Eat Healthy?: An Exploration of Dining Options for Women at a Single-Gender HBCU and PWI in Atlanta

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Introduction

Atlanta, Georgia is home to two single-gender women's liberal arts institutions – a prominent HBCU (College 1) and PWI (College 2). College 1 is located in the historic West End of Atlanta, which is about 75 percent populated by Black residents. Low-income and predominately Black neighborhoods in this area lack proper access to healthy food. In comparison, College 2 is located in Decatur, Georgia, which is predominantly white. Give the previous statement regarding the association between predominately Black neighborhoods and healthy food access, clearly, Decatur's residents (include College 2 students) have better access to fiscal resources to get healthier food options. Not only does inadequate access to healthy food affect students' overall health, but also has been proven to affect students' academic performance. The present study will explore on-campus dining options and nearby food availability between these two colleges.

Methods

The data in this study were analyzed based on the type of food that each campus offers on campus as well as surrounding restaurants using UberEats. Both categories, on-campus and off-campus food availability, were categorized as unhealthy or unhealthy. Menus were obtained from the restaurants' official websites in order to be properly categorized.



Table 1. On-campus food/restaurant availability at College 1 and College 2

Restaurant Name	Healthy	Closing Hours
College 1		
Twisted Taco	No	9:00pm
Subway	Yes	9:00pm
Starbucks	No	9:00pm
College Dining Hall	Yes	7:00pm
Pod Market	No	10:00pm
College 2		
College Dining Hall	Yes	Hours not advertised
Mollie's Grill	Yes	Hours not advertised
Black Cat Coffee	Yes	Hours not advertised

Results

- 1** College 1 offers five dining options on their campus. Two of the five restaurants are categorized as healthy while the other three are unhealthy (see Table 1). College 2 offers three on-campus dining options. Although their times were not available online, all three restaurant menus categorized them as healthy.
- 2** Table 2 displays the off-campus restaurant options available both colleges. All of the restaurants near College 1 are categorized as unhealthy and have later closing hours. On the other hand, College 2 sits in an area surrounded by healthier restaurants, with earlier closing hours.
- 3** There is a very noticeable difference between the quality of both on and off-campus options between the two institutions.

The area in which these colleges are located plays a major role in the off-campus restaurants available to students.

Table 2. Off-campus food/restaurant availability at College 1 and College 2

Restaurant Name	Healthy	Closing Hours
College 1		
Popeyes	No	11:00pm
Zaxby's	No	10:15pm
Chick-fil-a	No	10:00pm
KFC	No	10:00pm
Taco Bell	No	12:00am
Wendy's	No	2:00am
Burger King	No	11:00pm
College 2		
Sweet Seed Salad, Poke & Juice Bar	Yes	8:00pm
Kale Me Crazy	Yes	8:00pm
Fresh to Order	Yes	9:00pm
Farm Burger	No	9:00pm
Go Vegan Grill	Yes	8:00pm
Chipotle	Yes	9:00pm
Cava	Yes	10:00pm

Discussion & Conclusions

HBCUs are often put at a food disadvantage because of the location of the school. College 1 is located in an underprivileged community with very limited resources. PWIs, like College 2, are normally located in better areas, meaning access to better resources. Food accessibility and affordability continues to be an ongoing issue amongst college students, especially those at HBCUs. Future studies regarding food deserts and insecurities amongst college students should provide guidance and next steps on how to combat and fix this issue nationwide.

