

Before reading, please understand this decision and request for proposal process could result in a contract for 10 years. This may be the Western community's only chance for the next 10 years to get out of the Big 3 corporate Aramark contract that students and many faculty are currently unhappy with. Students have been organizing since 2017 over this.

Below are the reasons students are anti-Aramark (or any "Big 3") and pro-self op. **Students know that Aramark and other corporate contractors are clearly not in alignment with Western's [strategic mission and values](#)**

**1. Aramark is tied to the Prison Industrial Complex which disproportionately impacts BIPOC, and in these prisons, Aramark has had horrible quality food, service and misconduct**

There have been many articles about this as well, in addition to Aramark being discussed in the documentary "13th" regarding the continuation of slavery in the USA under the 13th amendment so long as it is through imprisonment.

Black students have *demanded* an end to the contract in their [BSO demands](#) stating: "**Stand by Shred the Contract and end the contract with Aramark.** In its place, establish a Self-Operated dining system. Substitute dining contractors such as Sodexo or Bon Appétit are not acceptable."

Students have even been interviewed for articles within and outside of our university, such as in [Okay Player](#), with the following sentiments: "**Here at WWU, there are less than 3% of Black students on campus,**" she said. "**Correlate that with having Aramark on campus along with their history, and it shows that Black students are just products for our university to tokenize for diversity while still funding prison labor through a third party.**"

Also see articles:

[Aramark Corporation and its profit over people policy](#)

[Prison strike organizers to protest food giant Aramark](#)

[Aramark's Correctional Food Services: Meals, Maggots and Misconduct](#)

[Factsheet on the Food System and Prisons](#)

[Missing the Mark: ASU's food provider has been involved in questionable affairs](#)

[Opinion: ASU should sever ties with Aramark](#)

[Lawsuit: Rock's in Taco at Prison Damaged Inmate's Teeth](#)

[Whistleblower: Aramark Falsified Records, Served Filthy Foods](#)

[Emails: Aramark Served Inmates Cake Chewed by Rodents](#)

[Food Problems Contribute to Riot at Kentucky Prison](#)

[Kitchen Sex Still an Issue after one Year of Aramark](#)

## 2. The role of Kickbacks in corporate contracting (Aramark, Sodexo, Chartwells)

Read the full [report](#) by Real Food Generation about Kickbacks, which are corporate bribes that corporations like Aramark, Sodexo and Chartwells are involved with, which create a sense of exclusivity in campus dining and block local providers from having as much access to the university dining market. See figures from the report below.

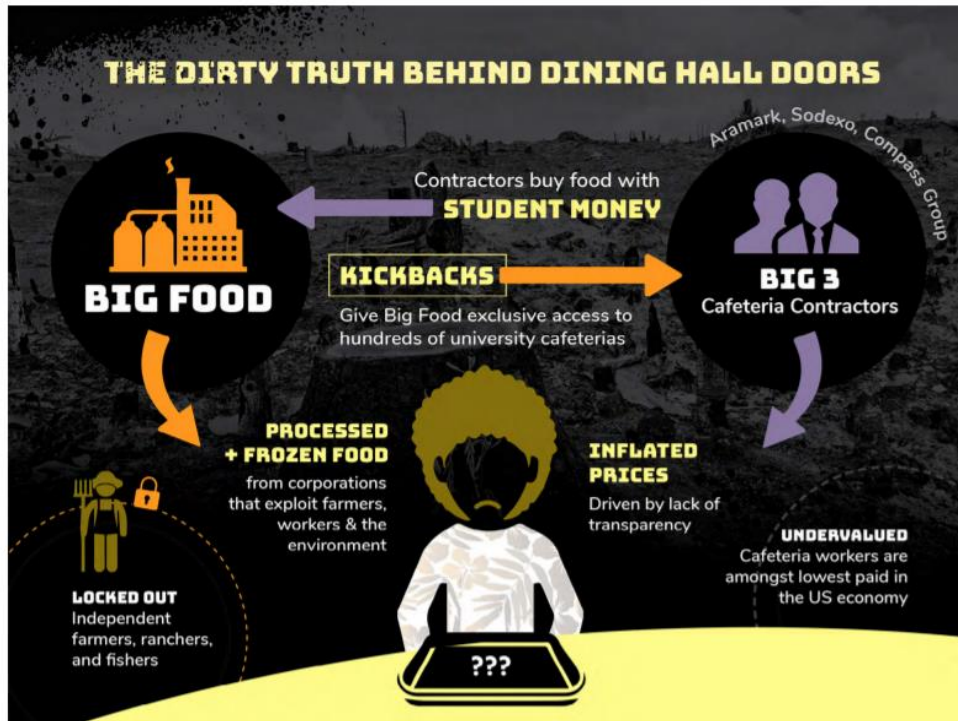
Also watch Uprooted and Rising's [Video](#) on Kickbacks

Fig . 4 The Big 3 leverage their dominance to secure kickbacks

	Group Purchasing Organization	Scale
	<b>Avendra</b> Based in Rockville, MD	Handles \$5 billion in annual purchasing spend Serves 650 companies across 8,500 locations
	<b>Foodbuy</b> Based in Charlotte, NC	Manages \$20 billion in purchasing power Has over 6,000 clients
	<b>Entegra</b> Based in Gaithersburg, MD	Handles \$18.2 billion in purchasing spend in North America Serves more than 93,000 purchasing sites in North America

Each company has a GPO to arrange big volume purchases and the rebates they generate

Fig 5. The kickback system creates winners and losers

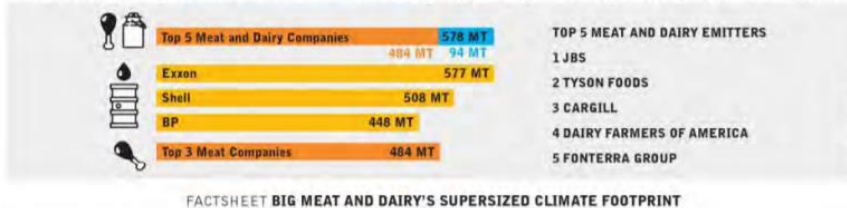


Infographic design by Poonam Whabi

Fig 6. The Big 3 are tied to the "fossil food" industry

**THE TOP MEAT AND DAIRY CORPORATIONS EMIT MORE GHGs THAN EXXON, SHELL OR BP**

Meat and Dairy company emissions in Million Tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> Eqv. (MtCO<sub>2</sub>e) (2016); Oil company emissions (2015)



Carbon emissions of top meat and dairy producers compared to fossil fuel companies<sup>102</sup>  
[infographic from IATP + GRAIN]

**3. Aramark does not value employee/ student worker rights**

Aramark has racked up various offenses and lawsuits under their corporation (view their [violation tracker](#)). Their top 5 offense groups are employment-related offenses, government-contracting-related offenses, safety-related offenses, and environment-related offenses. Their top 5 primary offense types are wage and hour violations, False Claims Act and related, labor relations violation, workplace safety or health violation, and employment discrimination.

In 2013, when WWU dining workers considered unionizing, Aramark managers [used intimidation tactics](#) to urge people not to unionize. This is something Aramark has done at [other locations](#) as well; they are infamously anti-union.

Additionally, students have heard various accounts of student workers being mistreated or unhappy under Aramark either from [anonymous posts](#), [testimonials](#) on the STC website, or personal stories from colleagues or friends.

Under a self operated dining system, it could be easier to center employees and student workers' needs and rights rather than depend on the HR and structures of a corporation that has repeatedly failed to care about workers' rights and put them first.

#### **4. Aramark is a PR Nightmare**

There have been numerous articles about Aramark that have exposed their corruption throughout the years, and especially during the period of our most recent 2010-2023 contract with Aramark. Continuing to partner with Aramark after all this emerging information and after *years* of student organizing about this issue would show the university's true colors; that they contradict their own strategic mission and values. Student organizers are very aware of ways to get the media's attention and attract negative PR as well as how to engage with alumni and donors in the case that the university decides to sign another 10 year contract with Aramark, Sodexo, Chartwells, etc.

#### **5. Self op prioritizes student needs, corporations don't**

The first priority for Aramark will always be corporate needs and expectations. The order of importance for corporate contractors likely goes from highest to lowest as: corporation → contractors (people that look after the contract) → students. Students and their needs are 3rd in line.

According to Kerry from OSU (self operated dining system), he may have some programs that he does as director in the department that don't make sense from a monetary standpoint "why am I focusing on halal, gluten free, vegan, etc", but because they are important to students, the department decides to go through with them because they want to put students first. [link](#)

#### **6. Self op has a lot more autonomy**

- a. **Change can be more expedient and can center student needs more easily:**  
According to Kraig Brady in a [meeting](#) about corporate contracting versus self op, he noted that due to an increase in Muslim students on campus, back when UC Davis was under corporate contracting, it took Kraig a year and a half to transition to halal friendly proteins because there "wasn't a direct line for sourcing under

Sodexo”, whereas UC Berkeley (self op) was able to introduce/ transition with more Halal protein in a month.

**b. There is no third party (corporate manager) the university or students would have to go through to enact change.**

**c. There is far more room for improving a dining system:**

In a Big 3 contracted dining system, options for that system are presented by the contractor in a predetermined box based mostly on the corporation’s financial needs and capabilities, with very little room for change or improvement of the system. If a university is ok with settling for mediocrity and what is the “least work”, then contracting with Aramark works fine. However, if universities want to strive to have a dining system that *can* put students first and they want to always be able to think about how to compete with other university dining systems and self improve, self op is the clear choice.

## **7. There wouldn’t be political affiliations with self operated dining:**

Right now, whatever political statements, legal history, and negative media coverage Aramark has as a corporation, through our contract, those issues become tied to us.

### **\*Important Note:**

It seems right as WWU ended their 50+ year relationship with Sodexo in 2011, it followed emerging information that Sodexo had various human rights violations: the same reason students are demanding now to end our relationship with Aramark and transition to self op!

Read these articles for more about the 2011 UW Kick Out Sodexo Coalition:

<https://www.thestranger.com/slog/archives/2011/05/17/western-cuts-ties-with-controversial-food-vendor-protests-continue-at-uw>

<https://www.chronicle.com/blogs/ticker/western-washington-u-cuts-ties-with-sodexo-its-longtime-dining-vendor>

<https://www.seattlemet.com/eat-and-drink/2011/05/university-of-washington-students-rally-to-kick-out-sodexo-may-2011>

### **Misc Resources:**

Shred the Contract’s [Letter to Admin](#) May 2021

WWU’s Campus dining services modality [Dining Report](#)