

*The goal for this statement is for it to be one read aloud at the final Board of Trustees meeting June 9 by Glory.

Statement in support of Students for Self Operated Dining:

As this academic year comes to an end, the 2021-22 ASWWU Executive Board reiterates our support to shred the contract with Aramark and invest in a self operated dining system.

With the approaching decision for whether Big 3 contracting or self op dining should be pursued post- Fall 2023, we strongly advocate for investment in and planning for a self op dining system as soon as possible.

Since the Students for Self Operated Dining System group's existence, student government has consistently collaborated or otherwise engaged with them about this important issue. Students have repeatedly advocated for years against the contract with Aramark due to the many moral, ethical, and sustainability oriented dilemmas associated with contracting with the Big 3 corporations (Aramark, Sodexo, Chartwells).

In addition to divesting from a corporate contract that is morally and ethically in conflict with the university's mission statement, investing in self op would also allow far more autonomy and exciting possibilities to improve our dining system. Through self operation, we would not have to worry about negotiating with a 3rd party to enact dining system change, meaning that change could be more expedient and could better center student values. The university could have more control over the menu. We could maintain better quality working conditions because employees would be employed under WWU, not Aramark. Overall, through self op, our dining system could compete better against those of other Washington state and PNW universities. This is due to the fact that by nature, self op is a model with far more potential: the focus of the model would not be "what does our predetermined dining contract say we can and cannot do?", but rather, one that consistently asks "how can we improve our dining system to fit students' needs and compete with other institutions?"

We look forward to seeing a commitment to divestment from the Big 3, which would support students' needs, values and interests.