

Student Assembly

Resolution 59: Implementing Comprehensive Nutritional Labeling in Cornell Dining Halls

Abstract: This resolution calls on Cornell Dining to enhance existing food signage in all residential dining halls by adding detailed nutritional information—including calorie counts and macronutrient/micronutrient content—to the small index card-sized labels currently used to display food names, dietary markers (e.g., vegan/vegetarian), and allergen warnings. Although some nutrition data is available online, it is inconsistently maintained and not always accessible at the point of service. This resolution proposes integrating standardized nutritional information directly onto the in-hall labels to support health equity, informed eating, and dietary transparency.

Sponsored by: Davian Gekman '27, David Duan '28

Type of Action: Recommendation

Originally Presented: 04/29/2025

Current Status: Adopted by the Assembly, 24-1-0, 05/01/2025

Context & Problem Statement

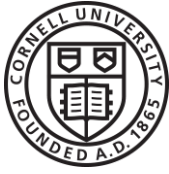
Whereas, Cornell Dining serves approximately **19,000 meals per day** across over 30 dining locations and is nationally ranked for quality, yet the existing on-site signage beside food items only includes food names, allergen markers, and whether the item is vegan or vegetarian;

Whereas, this signage does not provide calorie counts, macronutrient details (protein, fat, carbohydrates), sodium content, or other nutritional metrics, making it difficult for students to make informed choices at the point of service;

Whereas, students managing chronic health conditions, training for athletic performance, recovering from eating disorders, or adhering to ethical/religious diets rely on specific dietary intake and often require visibility into nutrient content beyond allergen alerts;

Whereas, while nutritional facts are posted on Cornell Dining's website or NetNutrition app, students report difficulty finding or navigating this data in real-time—particularly for composed or customizable dishes;

Whereas, according to the CDC, nearly **40% of college students** report weight management concerns and **11% report disordered eating behaviors**, demonstrating a need for clear, neutral, readily available nutrition information;



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Whereas, peer institutions such as Stanford, UCLA, and the University of Michigan offer in-person signage that includes full nutritional content, and the American College Health Association recommends on-site transparency as a best practice for campus health services;

Health, Equity, and Operational Benefits

Whereas, adding nutritional content to existing label cards would assist students with:

- **Chronic conditions** such as diabetes, hypertension, PCOS, or celiac disease
- **Allergies or intolerances** who also monitor nutrient levels (e.g., sodium)
- **Athletes and fitness-focused students** managing macronutrient goals
- **Students in eating disorder recovery** who require structured meal planning
- **Religious and ethical eaters** balancing faith-based guidelines with health

Whereas, students who are food-insecure or depend entirely on dining hall meals need consistent and accessible information to make the most of limited meal swipes;

Whereas, expanding label content would not require major infrastructure changes—Cornell Dining already uses menu management platforms (e.g., CBORD/NetNutrition) that track full nutritional profiles for each recipe;

Whereas, nutritional data can be automatically extracted from existing databases and integrated into the small display cards currently used, keeping the physical footprint of labels constant while expanding their informational value;

Feasibility and implementation

Whereas, the current label format used in all Cornell Dining residential halls already includes:

- Food item name
- Vegan/vegetarian icon
- Allergen alerts (top 9 allergens)

Whereas, the enhanced version of these cards would expand to include:

- **Calories per serving**
- **Macronutrients:** protein (g), carbohydrates (g), total fat (g)
- **Sodium content (mg)**
- Possibly **sugar and fiber** depending on label space and software capacity

Whereas, implementation logistics involve:



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- Pulling nutrition facts from NetNutrition or CBORD for each menu item
- Updating the card template to accommodate 2–3 extra lines of nutritional info
- Training staff or student workers to routinely update these labels alongside daily menu changes
- Reviewing placement and readability with support from the Division of Nutritional Sciences for design best practices

Whereas, student interns in public health or dietetics could support data accuracy and visual clarity as part of applied practice opportunities;

Resolution Statements

Be it therefore resolved, that Cornell Dining expand the current small index card-sized food labels in residential dining halls to include calories, macronutrients (protein, fat, carbs), and sodium content per serving;

Be it further resolved, that nutritional data be extracted from Cornell Dining’s existing database (NetNutrition or CBORD) and integrated into label updates through automated or semi-automated workflows;

Be it further resolved, that Cornell Dining consult with the Division of Nutritional Sciences and Student Health Benefits Sub-Committee of the Student Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) to ensure the nutritional labels are evidence-based, legible, culturally inclusive, and helpful for a diverse student body;

Be it further resolved, that Cornell Dining include these enhancements within the same label footprint to minimize visual clutter and maintain operational efficiency;

Be it further resolved, that these updates apply to all foods served in residential dining halls, including composed dishes, allergen-friendly lines, and seasonal/special event menus;

Be it finally resolved, that the Student Health Advisory Committee monitor student feedback on the clarity, usefulness, and equity impact of the new nutritional labeling system and recommend future improvements based on evaluation data.

Respectfully Submitted,

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