



Search

[News](#) [Features](#) [Sports](#) [Opinion](#) [Science](#) [International](#) [Multimedia](#)

Opinion

# The change in dining service provider exemplifies the past year's issues

Roman Hladio, Editor-in-Chief | June 23, 2022

*UPDATE: Since publication, Vice President for Enrollment Management Ellen Johnson clarified that there will be no disruption in food service over the summer.*

Allegheny College President Hilary Link announced that Parkhurst dining will not be returning as Allegheny's dining service provider in an email to the campus community on June 7. The email stated that, following the dining experience survey, the college is "currently undergoing contract discussions with a new partner who will be serving the campus starting this fall."

Since then, there have been no official information releases. As a student living on campus for the summer, my concern has only heightened after a number of Parkhurst employees informed me that once dinner service on June 30 is complete, Parkhurst staff will leave the kitchen for the last time.

I want to know what will happen to my meal plan next week. I want to know how the current employees of Parkhurst who we love dearly are going to be treated with the transition — so far, I've heard that only three will be keeping their jobs. I want to learn the name of this new company not through hearsay, but from the college administration, especially since I don't



have the luxury of going home and cooking my own meals as they do. This is not the first time this year that I've felt as though administrators have been stingy with details, and I'm sure it won't be the last.

The 2021-22 academic year finally felt like firmer ground after the initial disruption of COVID-19, but it also felt as though administrators had decided that decisive, knee-jerk reactions would serve the college best. Whether it was out of fear of the extended financial effects of the pandemic or just because it felt good to finally have control over a situation after over a year of uncertainty, I cannot say. Either way, the dining provider shift feels similar to the reveal of the faculty staffing report — like the rug is being pulled out from under someone. Right now, I'm left wondering how drastically my summers will shift based on a single email from three weeks ago, and I'm sure Parkhurst employees are asking themselves questions twice as consequential as mine. Four months ago, Film and Digital Storytelling students were left wondering why their new and rapidly-growing program was cut back not just to a minor, but to become a fused minor with Journalism in the Public Interest. In a meeting for the JPI minor, myself and a number of professors constructed a plan for how our journalism program could sustainably incorporate Film and Digital Storytelling while maintaining the distinction of both fields. No one had proposed boundaries with which to construct the program, so we made our own, only to later find out the plan would not be accepted, as it didn't fit criteria we never had.

When the college first announced what is now called Link's Renaissance Plan, Link told me and my co-Editor, Ethan Woodfill, '22, that one purpose of the expanded administrative roles was to create more points of contact for the students. A First-Year Class Dean, for example, would be present to help point a first-year student in the direction they need. An ombudsperson would manage concerns brought forth by students, faculty and staff. The provost manages the structure of academics. It feels as though these chains of communication have not created more efficient offices, but rather more isolated offices. A first-year might know who to talk to when they need a resume fixed, but if the representatives of an academic discipline don't know who to talk to when they need a direct answer, what has the restructuring done but result in a web of offices that is equally untraversable? The implementation of the Renaissance Plan was a purposeful demolition of the house that is Allegheny College in the hopes that we could put it back together stronger. But now the old roof has become the new wall, the floor has become the window, and our understanding of not only the plan, but the college as a whole, has been crushed.

In the aforementioned article, Link said Title IX would be moved to Dean of Student Life April Thompson's portfolio. Later, Thompson added ASG advisor to her list of responsibilities after her predecessor left the college. Similarly, Link explained that Dean for Institutional Diversity Kristen Dukes would soon be reporting directly to the president's office. Both Thompson and Duke left their position at the college around a year after we published. Link referred to switches like this as "synergies." Now, seeing both these upper-level administrators leave the college along with numerous other staff and faculty members, I'm left wondering how effective these synergies are.

The Allegheny community is suffering from a lack of information and clarity. For the past year, it has felt like we've been riding in the backseat of a car with a blindfolded driver. I don't know what dining in the fall will look like. I don't know if the Parkhurst employees we love will be back, or if we'll be telling tales of their kindness and friendship to our future peers. I don't know what my senior year will look like at this institution I love.

I do know that Link expressed her surprise at "how little information was getting back to students," last February. I'm not surprised that hasn't changed.

COVID-19 Hilary Link parkhurst Parkhurst Dining

[View Comments \(1\)](#)

### About the Writer



**Roman Hladio, Editor-in-Chief**

Roman Hladio is a junior from Wexford, Pennsylvania. He is an English major with a Journalism in the Public Interest minor. This is his second year on...

### Opinion



**"It is a uniquely terrible feeling to watch your own autonomy be taken away by your government"**

#### **An open letter to President Link and her cabinet**

To the President and the President's Cabinet, It has recently come to the attention of the Coalition for Labor that Allegheny College is considerin...

#### **Opinion Editor reflects on college experience**

I really never thought I would get this far. I am not sure where I thought I would be, but it was certainly not here. When I started at Allegheny, I ...



#### **From the Editor: Building back Allegheny through resilience**

#### **Allegheny is stuck in 'the Sad Gap'**

Allow me to paint you a picture. Tell me if it sounds familiar. You are reading the news or Twitter or Facebook or this week's edition of



**SNO**  
ads

Advertise here & support student journalism

ADVERTISE HERE

## The Campus

*The student news site of Allegheny College*

Search

---

About The Campus

Staff

Advertisements