

To the Oberlin Community:

We are writing foremost to express our strong support and appreciation for OSCA and to reiterate our commitment to equity and fairness across all residential and dining options. These are not mutually exclusive positions, as we hope to clarify in the following points:

1) There has been much concern expressed over the reductions in aid for OSCA members (\$1000 for those who dine in OSCA and \$2000 for those who both dine and live in OSCA), but it is important to note that these reductions are part of the new model that aids to three meals per day as the baseline instead of the current model which aids to two meals per day. As such, the net impact of these reductions is not what it would be if applied to the current model of aiding to the 14-meal plan. Next year, new students who dine with OSCA and receive full financial support from the college will actually receive \$460 more than they would under the current plan. Those who both live and dine with OSCA and receive full financial support from the college will receive \$540 less than they would under the current plan. Because more students dine in OSCA than both live and dine, new students who join OSCA will collectively receive more aid dollars from the college next year than they would under the current plan.

2) As an independent non-profit, OSCA sets its own rates. We are aware that OSCA has policies including grant awards, and we would encourage OSCA and its members to continue to explore strategies such as increased need-based financial aid or sliding scale charges to protect its affordability. These are the same questions facing the College, and as non-profit educational organizations, we need to share the responsibility for navigating the challenges posed by income inequality and rising costs.

3) OSCA has claimed in recent meetings with administrators that the financial benefit is the only real incentive to join OSCA, and that these changes will hurt its ability to recruit new members. We are hopeful that we alleviated this concern in the first point above, but we also

encourage OSCA to reflect on its proud history and on the experience and community it provides. We believe there are many factors beyond the financial benefit that make OSCA membership highly desirable and we encourage OSCA to market itself accordingly.

4) The claim that the new policy no longer compensates OSCA members for their sweat equity is incorrect. The compensation for OSCA sweat equity is reflected in the lower rates OSCA charges its members, as is the case with any independent nonprofit cooperative. However, the College recognizes the unique and valuable learning community created by OSCA, which is why it continues to aid members above the cost of OSCA's charges. For full-need students, this amount is approximately \$3500 for members who dine in OSCA and \$5600 for those who both live and dine in OSCA. One can simply divide the number of hours worked (five per week is expected, according to OSCA's website) into these figures to determine hourly compensation: for full-need students who dine in OSCA, compensation is more than \$25/hr., and for those who both dine and live in OSCA, it rises to more than \$35/hr. Again, this reflects compensation above that which is already calculated in the lower rates OSCA charges its members.

5) The new 300-meal plan provides plenty of flexibility -- we apologize that this wasn't made clear in the FAQ document that was emailed to students last week. Students will be able to use unused meal swipes at any campus eatery until dining closes for the semester, including the option to buy groceries or other goods at DeCafe. This will include special events hosted by CDS in the next year, which the Dining Committee is currently exploring.

6) Some members of the community have been incorrectly calculating an excessively high cost for individual meals and rooms by dividing the college rate by the number of meals or by comparing a dorm room to a room in a private house. This approach assumes that the college's room and board fee is used to cover only food cost, food preparation, custodial services, and maintenance. The College provides good wages and benefits to all employees, and is very proud to invest in its full-time workforce (as opposed to institutions

that staff housing and dining primarily through minimum wage temporary workers). It is also important to remember that the room and board fee covers many additional services provided by and for the residential experience, including in-hall student and professional staff, special programming in residences and dining halls, Safety & Security, the on-call system, the after-hours confidential counseling line, Rideline, the support system (including class deans) for students who are struggling, the conduct system, ID card support, and many more services that contribute to the campus residential experience.

We appreciate the opportunity to clarify these points, and are available to answer additional questions should they arise.

President Marvin Krislov and Senior Staff