



Holidays bring race for jobs

Melissa Oribhabor

Staff Writer

Holiday hopes for extra cash are dwindling for some as the search for a part-time job becomes harder this year. Unlike in years past, most retail stores are not clamoring at the same rate for seasonal help.

To make matters worse, the demand for lower-level retail jobs increases as the unemployment rate goes up.

"Anybody can come in to look for a job," said key-holder Serena McPherson, who works for MaxRave, a BCBG-owned store at the Independence Center Mall. "A lot more older people [apply]. The unemployment rate is so high, people come in to apply so they can [continue to receive] unemployment — they need proof they're looking for a job."

On average, retail stores have seen a drastic increase in the number of holiday applicants and,

because of this, store managers find themselves in a position where they can be pickier about forming a staff.

The store manager for Petland in Independence Center admits he is under pressure to keep costs down when hiring. Therefore, standards set for those he does hire have gone up.

"You can't be OK or mediocre, you have to be on spot," he said.

As a former store manager for Hugo Boss in Florida, he said the standards for hiring are higher now at Petland than they were at the high-end retail store just a year ago.

Petland receives more than 50 applications a week, so management can have their pick of the litter, so to speak.

But it's not just the competition for the open holiday spots that is tough, some stores simply cannot afford to hire more people.

"If we made more money, we'd be able to hire more people," said the co-manager of Journey's Kids.



Photo MELISSA ORIBHABOR

Petland manager Brent Sager and employee Brittany Kelly.

With a decrease in revenue, the company can only afford to give management so many hours to

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PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY KEVIN BRYCE

Food choice left to democracy

Kelley Kates

Staff Writer

The people's voices have been heard thanks to democracy at work.

With the aid of surveys, the Student Union Steering Committee has determined a list of four restaurants to be housed in the new Student Union, set to open in August 2010.

The list includes Chick-fil-A, SubConnection, Jazzman's Cafe and Baja Fresh Mexican Grill.

The first three foodservice venues were chosen in November 2008 through an electronic survey.

The final restaurant was determined by a survey sent out by the Steering Committee in October.

The food survey was implemented to get a feel for what the students on campus would really like to have as their fourth retail venue in the new Student Union.

Choices on the survey sent in October included Moe's Southwest Grill, Original Burger Company, Pizza Hut, A&W Root Beer and Baja.

Jody Jeffries, director of the University Center and member of the Steering Committee, said more than 400 responses flooded in from the survey.

"The trend in the voting was a preference toward casual Mexican cuisine with a fresh

and healthy approach," he said.

Many students said convenience and price were at the basis of their restaurant choices.

"Expense is a huge thing," junior David Garcia said. "A&W — nobody's going to buy that. It's just grease. It would have to be quick too. People aren't going to sit there and wait. If it's fast and cheap, I'll eat there."

Freshman Caitlin Brown disagreed about A&W, but also seeks the convenience factor.

"I like Pizza Hut and A&W," Brown said. "I haven't heard of the other ones. [I would have

rather seen] maybe like a Taco Bell or something. I probably will eat there because I'm in architecture and it is right down the street from Epperson, so I will probably eat there a lot."

The final selection came down to an overwhelming vote for Baja Fresh Mexican Grill, although the votes alone do not finalize the deal.

"The indicated preference of Baja Fresh Mexican Grill will now be submitted to the Student Union Steering Committee for final approval," Jeffries said. "Once approved, the planning process will begin to create this fourth venue within the Student Union."

Jeffries said the intent is to have all four venues available at the facility by the opening in the fall of 2010.

"We are excited to create four new retail venues to be enjoyed by our students in addition to Smart Market, Einstein Brothers Bagels, the UMKC Café, Miller Nichols Library Café a la Cart, Freshens Frozen Treats and the Hospital Hill Café," he said.

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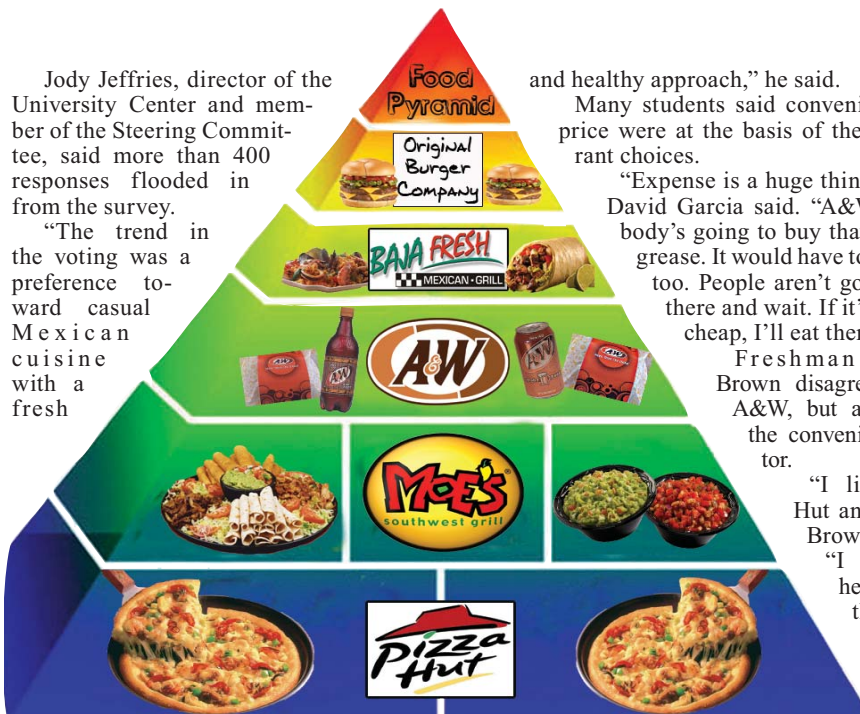


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