

Disposable Dishware use Spikes at Holloway Commons. Here's Why:

Caitlin Molloy, Staff Writer

DURHAM, NH— Disposable dishes and cutlery have been used more frequently at the Holloway Commons dining hall this Spring semester due to campus facility repairs and malfunctioning dish washing machines, according to the Holloway Commons Hospitality and Services General Manager, Heather Lascelle.

“Natural ‘wear and tear’ is expected, especially with the volume of ware washing our dining halls achieve,” said Lascelle when asked if this was an irregular issue for the dining hall.

She has worked in the UNH dining service since 2018 and oversees 230 staff members, as well as the Holloway Commons building.

Paper plates, paper bowls, plastic cups and plastic utensils have been used at Holloway Commons dining hall six times since the start of second semester, as of Feb.20. Last fall, paper and plastic products were only used twice in replacement of the usual reusable dishware.

At Philbrook dining hall, a repair of a dish machine has accounted for the only time disposable products have been used in the second semester.

Lascelle shared that when school is out of session, the dish machines (at both Philbrook and Holloway) are turned off and examined for “preventative maintenance.” This is done to try and limit the amount of days that breakdowns happen and result in disposable products being used instead of the normal reusable options.

Elizabeth Badger, who has worked at Holloway Commons for 10 years and is a dishwasher, said on days that the 11 year old dishwasher can not be used, they are still able to use the pulping machine for food waste.

There are more trash runs that have to be made per day with disposable dishware service, but the workload is somewhat the same, said Badger.

Despite this, the dish machine malfunctions can be unpredictable. Holloway Commons does their best to minimize the effect that the breakdowns can have on guests by running operations as they normally do.

“I don’t mind the occasional switch up. Everything runs normally so it’s not an inconvenience to me,” said first year student Brynn Leslie. She noticed the irregular use of disposable products at Hoco at the start of the semester.

Paul Brousseau said there were more tasks added to his shift when disposable service ware is used, but the tasks were manageable. “Everything continued in a smooth flow,” said Brousseau. He has worked Reception at Holloway Commons for a total of 21 years.

The sustainability record for Holloway Commons will see little to no impact in spite of using disposable products more this second semester. The total number of days is still considered minimal as of Feb. 20.

“Our goal is always to use reusable service ware,” stated Lascelle. She also highlighted that these recent events were solely due to machine maintenance, and are in no way a labor concern.

Students are able to access the dining hall throughout the day as usual when paper and plastic service ware is used. These recent ‘disposable product days’ will have no effect on student dining plans.

Lascelle shared that “We [The Holloway Commons Staff] appreciate everyone being patient while we make the repairs necessary to our dish machine.”



Courtesy of the University of New Hampshire.

