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## Northwestern U. food court adds kosher meals

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Daily Northwestern  
Northwestern U.

(U-WIRE) EVANSTON, Ill. -- Willie's Food Court began offering pre-packaged kosher meals Wednesday following complaints from students about the cost and difficulty of meeting their religious dietary needs on campus, officials said.

"It's not a complete setup at the moment," said Paul Komelasky, director of dining services for Sodexo Marriott Food Services. "This is part of what came out of the investigation of (kosher food availability)."

Among the kosher selections now available are cheese tortellini, beef stew and pasta with garden vegetables. The vegetarian meals cost \$4.49, and meat dishes cost 50 cents more.

Deerfield-based My Own Meals sells the kosher meals to Sodexo for \$2.75, said Joe Donofrio, the company's chief financial officer.

Speech freshman Zeenat Rasheed said offering kosher selections would increase food choices for Muslim students, who keep halal, a similar diet.

"Most of the food that is out there is generally non-vegetarian," she said. "It would be a very good idea to bring kosher to campus."

Komelasky said Sodexo eventually plans to broaden the program to include halal selections.

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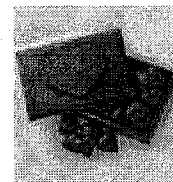
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The limited availability of kosher food on campus prompted student complaints Fall Quarter after a proposed plan would have cost kosher students \$5,163 a year -- \$2,265 more than the average meal plan -- and would not include weekend meals.

Komelasky said he plans to meet with members of the Jewish and Muslim community at NU to discuss further improvements in dining services.

All kosher selections served by Willie's will be pre-packaged. Having a kosher kitchen in Willie's would create logistical hurdles and is "not even a remote possibility," Komelasky said.

However, some halal dishes have "less stringent" requirements and may be able to be prepared in Willie's kitchens, Komelasky said.

Students who keep kosher cannot eat meat or poultry with milk and can only eat meat that was killed in accordance with Jewish laws.

The frozen dishes can be heated using two microwaves in Willie's.

Komelasky said Sodexo Marriott will try to keep the price of kosher meals, which are traditionally more expensive, low for students. A pre-packaged, non-kosher meal would cost about the same price, he said.

McCormick sophomore Mark Dredze said he previously did not eat at Willie's because the Norris University Center dining facility didn't offer kosher food. But he said the kosher meals might bring him to Willie's.

Dredze, who is not on a meal plan, said he normally buys his food at grocery stores. The only places he can find kosher food are in vending machines and at events sponsored by campus Jewish organizations.

Dredze said he plans to meet with a representative from the Office of Student Affairs within a week to continue discussion about the availability of kosher food.

My Own Meals also sent food samples to NU in December to be considered for use in dormitory dining halls, Donofrio said.

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