“Every day I see students on campus carrying around our familiar purple and gold milkshake cup. And it’s hard to blame them since our milkshakes are the perfect texture and just the right sweetness,” stated Tim Forte, UAlbany Dining’s retail director. “It’s the perfect all-American shake, made from fresh local milk.”

This kind of excitement for milkshakes on campus is relatively new at UAlbany. Besides a f’real machine at the campus store, the only way students had a shake was when they made their own concoctions using a blender and some select toppings at our resident dining rooms.

But students gave their feedback and dining services listened. “Even with the long, chilly winters in upstate New York, UAlbany students continued to request that we sell a variety of freshly made milkshakes at our grill,” stated Forte. “So we started looking around for a local dairy farm to help us create the base. That’s when we decided on Ronnybrook Dairy Farm.”

Ronnybrook was the unanimous choice by both the dining services staff and students after a few taste tests and a field trip to the farm in Ancramdale, New York.

“Our students want a voice in driving menu decisions,” said University Auxiliary Services’ Executive Director Stephen Pearse. “And having students go on field trips helps them understand the value and high quality of the products...
these small, local farms produce.”

So in late Spring 2016, UAlbany Dining introduced a local and sustainable milkshake to a very receptive student body. The campus community can now get a made-to-order milkshake in several flavors, including vanilla, chocolate, strawberry, coffee and mocha. Some successful limited time offers have also included chai and butter pecan. In less than 3 months, over 3,300 milkshakes have been sold.

“It was so great to have our students involved in the development process,” said Forte, “Not only has it made the milkshakes more successful, but it also let students know that their voice matters to us.”

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