Dear Trays,

You were the vessel that allowed us to sample every entrée that was offered, the mule that carried all those lobsters on King Neptune night, and the bearer of second helpings. However, we used you as an excuse to load up multiple plates with food we probably wouldn’t finish, making us waste so much. When we did end up eating all the food you carried, we may have been overeating. And even though life without trays might be a little more inconvenient, dining hall employees agree that these trayless tribulations are worth it. Without trays, we can take the time to think about how much we want to eat, encouraging mindful eating habits by taking a break between courses and allowing time for satiety to occur. We realize this may be hard to digest, but here are the facts that cannot be repressed:

In a Neilson Dining Hall pilot study, plate usage went from 2.5 plates per student at lunch to 1.1 plates after going trayless, a 56% decrease. The need for water required to wash all the trays has been eliminated, which at other colleges has saved .33 to .5 gallons of water per tray.

Going trayless at Rutgers has reduced food waste by 30%

After just one week of going trayless, Rutgers saved $131,000!

While we may miss piling you high with food on promo nights, we won’t miss your nutritional, economic, and environmental costs. Goodbye to trays packed with unnecessary calories and hello to plates mindfully filled with food. So, trays, what we’re trying to say is: it’s not us, it’s you.

Yours truly,
The Healthy Dining Team

Questions? Post on our Facebook (RU Healthy Dining Team), Twitter (@RUHDT), Instagram (@RU_HDT), SnapChat (RU_HDT) or e-mail us at peggyp@dining.edu. Our mission is to educate students about nutrition and encourage them to make healthier food and lifestyle choices. For more info, nutrient analysis and past newsletters, visit our web page at http://food.rutgers.edu.