

From: Eric N. Monday, EVPFA

Subject: Dining Revitalization Communication Update

Dear Colleagues,

The Dining Revitalization Committee met this morning to discuss the information that has been gathered from both potential business partners and our existing internal operation for dining services.

After deliberating about these issues and also gathering thoughtful input from the campus and broader community, the committee -- with student, faculty and staff representation -- has recommended moving forward with soliciting formal Requests for Proposals (RFPs) from potential business partners.

The goal -- no matter what course is ultimately taken -- is to build the best possible dining services operation for our students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Fully exploring how a partnership with a third party would make such an operation a reality is the responsible course to take.

A promise was made to communicate this recommendation as quickly as possible. We also wanted to share where we go from here as well as more detail about our responsibilities to the university and broader communities we serve.

The committee's five [dining recommendations](#), which we are moving forward with, can be viewed here www.uky.edu/diningrevitalization.

In particular, I want to highlight a few areas that have been discussed at length and have been the subject of concerns and questions. If we choose a third-party business partner through the RFP process to build and expand dining services, the following criteria must be met:

- 1) A commitment to ensure that our current full-time UK dining employees will have employment opportunities with either the university or with the selected business partner. A commitment to employing student workers in our dining operations going forward also will be part of that requirement. We have outstanding employees doing tremendous work in dining services. We want to make sure they stay at UK. That is our promise and we will keep it. We also know that students receive not only necessary pay for this work, but in many cases -- like the student-run Lemon Tree Restaurant -- they receive critical learning and professional experience. We will not back away from those obligations, either.
- 2) A mandatory commitment to sustainability by purchasing local food produce and, in particular, to our already enduring partnership with the Kentucky Proud Program.

- 3) A specific and detailed commitment to expanded options, healthier food choices and responsiveness to the many constituencies that comprise the university.

These criteria are not -- and will not be -- optional. They are requirements. And they are promises we will keep.

Two other things are not optional:

- 1) We will increase the dialogue with those on our campus and the broader community. Over the next several weeks, as we move forward in this process, we will be meeting with employees, interested students, faculty and staff and those in the community who have thoughtfully given voice to a range of concerns. We will be developing a schedule for those conversations and promoting them throughout the campus, the community and on the website: www.uky.edu/diningrevitalization.
- 2) Ultimately, any final recommendation that the university administration takes to the Board of Trustees for a partnership on dining operations must make financial sense for the institution. It also must support the commitment the Board and the institution have made to student success and affordable access to the outstanding education provided by UK.

We have no limits - nor should we -- to our ambitions for our students and our university. But we do have limited resources, which requires us to seek innovative solutions.

For example, the only way we could move forward quickly with the revitalization of our residence hall system was to bring a partner on board, one who could promise up to \$500 million in private equity investment to make this transformation a reality.

Students, without question, are more successful academically and socially when they live on campus.

But doing things the old way -- one residence hall at a time, one year at a time -- denies students for too long the progress we all want. We needed a new path. We found one.

Now, as current residence halls are decommissioned, dining halls are being impacted as well. Between now and 2015, three dining facilities across our campus will come down along with old, outdated residence halls.

As it is with residence halls, significant and dramatic upgrades in dining facilities will require significant resources and investment. A business partner willing to infuse tens of millions of dollars into our dining infrastructure has to be examined.

Such an examination -- one that addresses our significant capital needs but also the thoughtful concerns and questions -- is the only responsible course to take.

We will fully explore that path. But in doing so, we cannot -- and we will not -- yield in the responsibility we have to our employees, to the campus community that depends on us, and to the broader community and Commonwealth who support us and expect us to lead.

That begins with openly and frequently communicating more about this process as it unfolds in the coming weeks and months. This communication is but a start.

Many people, both in the university and the community, have a deep interest in this issue. And we have a responsibility to address concerns and answer questions with the best available information we have today and with the promise to provide more as this process unfolds.

But, in particular, it's important that our UK Dining employees know how appreciative we are of their commitment to this institution -- a commitment that has remained steadfast even as we are wrestling with issues that create anxiety and questions.

We thank you. And we will do our best to answer your understandable questions -- and address your concerns -- as we move ahead.

Thank you.