

Dining RFI Update 3/8/2013

The Dining Services review process is continuing. Frequent communication, as it unfolds, will be provided. Below is the update for March 8, 2013:

- There is a range of ways that institutions provide dining services. The University of Kentucky does not need or want a one-size-fits-all solution. Our goal is to determine what works best for the University of Kentucky.
- Last semester, the university retained a national consultant, Envision, which was charged with developing a master plan for dining services on campus. As we rebuild and expand the residence hall system, dining facilities will be impacted: they will be moved, renovated and/or rebuilt. We will need expanded capacity.
- That process already is well underway with demolition plans in place for K-Lair in May 2013, or being developed for Blazer Café, Commons Market and -- all of which will be impacted by the phased demolition of current residence halls and expansion for new on-campus residence halls.
- To ensure that we are moving forward as comprehensively as possible, a little more than three weeks ago, the university issued a Request For Information or RFI. The goal of an RFI is to gather information from third parties that have an interest in potentially partnering with the institution to provide some or all of our dining services. The RFI responses are due on March 12.
- The initial timeline was to forward a recommendation for a course of action to President Capilouto by April 30. As quickly as we all want to move forward, we think it is better to move correctly and comprehensively, to ensure that we make the best decision for the university and everyone we serve.
- The RFI will afford us the opportunity to gather more in-depth information about potential business partners so that the University can make a fully informed decision about whether such an option is the best one for the university.
- As part of the RFI process, interested partners will be asked to discuss:
 - Employee retention and/or transition plans
 - Their commitment to sustainability and local purchasing of food, along with a host of other issues.
 - Their level of experience
 - Investments they would make at UK
- At the same time, our existing dining services operation will submit a proposal to continue those services in-house that will be fully evaluated and considered.

- Our dining services committee -- which has staff, administrators and student representation -- will be reviewing the proposal from UK Dining Services as well as the responses submitted by any interested third parties.
- Later this month, with the information from the RFI and the proposal from UK's Dining Services in hand, the committee will make a recommendation about whether to take the additional step of seeking more specific, formal proposals -- an Request For Proposals or RFP -- from potential business partners.
- If the university undertakes an RFP, the process would likely continue into June before final recommendations are made.
- At each step of the Dining Services review process, current information will be posted on website -- www.uky.edu/diningrevitalization.