Welcome to the World of KSU Dining Services. As a team, we support the mission of the University by enhancing the out-of-classroom experience of our students, faculty, staff and guests. The KSU Dining experience is more than great food. It is a community experience centered on culinary expertise, fresh ingredients, healthy options and a shared sense of environmental and social responsibility. Our team is committed to the best possible dining experience for our community.

Everyone is food expert. Everyone knows what she/he likes or needs among all of the choices available. Our culinary, management and staff teams work closely together to support the 23 different dining operations across campus, serving more than 30,000 customers daily during the academic year. We are particularly proud of our student staff members who balance their academic responsibilities with their acquisition of important, real-life, work-related skills.

Please contact me or any member of the Dining Services Staff with comments, suggestions or concerns.

Warmest Regards,

Jacqueline Parsons, Executive Director, University Dining Services

‘Fork in the Road’: New Food Truck Rolls Onto Kent Campus

This summer, University Dining Services goes mobile with a 24-foot, full-service kitchen on wheels.

Fork in the Road, the new food truck joining the Dining Services lineup, will bring students, faculty and staff a variety of fresh, homemade favorites on the go and fulfill cravings of customers on more remote parts of campus as well as at athletic events, large campus festivals and other special venues.

The truck will be able to produce just about any kind of food the Kent State culinary team can dream up. The menu will evolve with the availability of seasonal items and will feature classic favorites as well as a lineup of signature items. Executive Chef Christian Booher will oversee the truck’s daily operations and menu.

The food truck -- with the capability to accept cash, credit cards, FLASHcash and the dining plan -- was purchased from a New Jersey company that specializes in mobile dining units. The state-of-the-art equipment is built directly into the truck for durability and heightened performance and features a commercial Keurig beverage system, digital menu screens and blue undercarriage illumination to help it stand out at night.

More food truck information will be available ‘on up the road’...follow Fork in the Road on Twitter at @KSUFoodTruck.

University Dining Services provides employment to more than 800 students annually.
Catering and Banquet Sales – Delivering Customized Excellence

From morning coffee breaks to elegant hors d’oeuvre parties and themed buffets to seven-course VIP dinners, the Kent State University Catering and Banquet Sales team is ready to deliver quality dining options and exceptional service.

Assistant Director of Dining Services, Charles Berry, leads a talented and diverse team of professionals who work behind the scenes to perfect every detail of every event, including table settings, room décor, service style and menu.

“We work with our campus executive chefs to develop menus that are seasonal and match the theme of an event a client requests,” remarked Berry, adding that his team is always available to make customized recommendations.

This year alone, the unit will execute more than 3,500 requests serving more than 20,000 people, including student groups, faculty, staff, campus executives, special guests and dignitaries.

Delivering excellent quality and service is the office’s goal at each and every event no matter the group or size of the event.

Need assistance with an event you’re planning? The Catering and Banquet Sales team would love to help and can be reached at 330-672-3305.

The Kent State Bakeshop now features sugar-free, gluten free and vegan bakery items.
HEALTHY CHOICES . . .

It’s no secret that eating fresh fruits and veggies is a key to healthy living. Ever wondered how many fruits and vegetables the Kent State community consumes on average throughout the academic year? The numbers from the past year may surprise you.

A combined total of 126,250 pounds (or 2,020,000 ounces) of fresh fruit and fresh vegetables was consumed last year. University Dining Services purchases its produce from local vendors who source their products from as close to home as possible. The department is also committed to incorporating seasonal items into menus whenever possible.

Kent Chefs Explore Culinary Creativity at the Chef’s Garden

University Dining Services sponsored a Culinary Innovation Seminar at the Chef’s Garden’s Veggie U in Milan, OH this past summer, particularly for the unit’s culinary and leadership teams.

The Chef’s Garden is a sustainable, family-owned farm that focuses on growing herbs, vegetables, and lettuces for the restaurant industry. Emphasizing flavor, texture, and application, the Chef’s Garden staff utilizes a rich mix of traditional farming methods, cutting-edge food safety measures and a deep appreciation for people who prepare food. With a strong sense of the seasonality of food, their product offerings vary by the season and life stages of the plant.

The day-long seminar included a discussion of the future of dining at Kent State University. Students today have the most sophisticated palates in recent memory. Their exposure to fine dining, world cuisine and food integrity has ‘opened the oven doors’, allowing KSU’s culinary staff to be creative, edgy and passionate with the menus they develop.

At the same time -- with the Kent Campus serving as their ‘home-away-from-home’ for much of the year--students want menus providing comfort, nutrition and reliability.

Other seminar sessions included: an examination of current Kent Campus menus; team-building; a blindfolded Gazpacho (a cold tomato soup of Spanish origin)-making competition; a scavenger hunt involving the finding and identification of 40 different herbs (appropriately described by one of the participants as ‘…a taste-bud-tantalizing, sensory overloading extravaganza’).

The University’s culinary staff has had other forays into the field throughout the past year including two trips to Cleveland’s West Side Market -- the backdrop for the staff’s Lunch on a Budget Cooking Competition. The culinary staff also traveled to the Fabulous Food Show at the IX Center to get in touch with some of the latest food trends. Future trips include local farms and food retailers to allow the staff to continue its journey toward enhancing the dining experience for Kent State students, faculty, staff, and guests. Bon appetit!
University Dining Services welcomed the Class of 2017 back in style following winter break with its annual Very Important Party (VIP).

The event, which fills the Eastway Complex every spring, celebrated students (VIPs) making it through their first semester of college and returning for ‘round two’ – quite a feat considering how exciting and stressful beginning one’s college career can be.

On January 31st, the UDS team transformed Eastway into party central, with likenesses of Beyoncé, Justin Timberlake, Lady Gaga and Mr. Bean greeting students as they walked down the red carpet. Several students stopped for a photo opp with friends and our “celebrity guest” before continuing.

Downstairs, students rode a mechanical bull and enjoyed free samples from PepsiCo. A Black Squirrel Radio DJ filled the space with numerous favorite hits, and a live Twitter feed connected attendees as they discussed their favorite attractions of the night using the hashtag #OMGVIP.

A fire was built outside so students could create their own perfect gourmet s’mores and sip hot chocolate with friends. Others chose to spend the evening on the mobile gaming truck competing in the latest video games.

Upstairs in the dining room, the VIPs were treated to Henna and glitter tattoos and received caricatures and balloon art as keepsakes.

After five hours of fun, the party began to wind down, though some students continued to enjoy games of cosmic bowling and billiards late into the night.

Those VIPs who sent photos to their friends at other universities became the envy of their peers, many of whom responded that they wished their universities did something similar.

Fulfilling requests of the campus community, pizza has made its way into the HUB.

The Slice is an original pizza concept developed by the Kent State Dining team in collaboration with KSU students. The culinary team was given a mission to create a high-quality pizza that students, faculty and staff would enjoy, and they delivered. Various recipes were ‘taste-tested’ in focus groups with the help of SPICE, University Dining Services’ student food critic team, as well as various student leaders, faculty and staff. Feedback was helpful in the concept’s development, including the decision to keep salads as a part of the new unit.

During opening week, The Slice averaged more than 1,350 slices of pizza, 700 breadsticks, 125 Strombolis and 100 calzones sold each day.

“The response has been great, and we’ve received many compliments about the taste of our New York style pizza,” Dining Services Manager, Jessica Ryan, said.

The Slice continues to introduce items with featured pizzas of the day, including buffalo chicken, Philly cheesesteak and roasted vegetable with Gorgonzola. Salads are also available as entrées or sides made to order with dozens of toppings and a variety of greens.

Still hungry? Try a signature homemade cannoli or one of our Sweet Shots, available in tiramisu, strawberry shortcake and chocolate Oreo.

Auntie Anne’s opened for business to a very eager crowd in the HUB in late January with dozens of guests waiting in line to get their hands on fresh-baked, warm Auntie Anne’s pretzels.

The new venue’s grand opening was celebrated in early March with Twisteet the Pretzel giving away hundreds of samples of pretzel dogs and cinnamon sugar and regular pretzel sticks.

Overall, the Auntie Anne’s opening was a huge success. Dining Services looks forward to the continued popularity and success of the HUB’s latest addition!