



CASE STUDY

How Two Universities Upgraded Foodservice Offerings and Boosted Appeal for Students

College and university foodservice has made big moves in recent years. Jokes about mystery meat have long been rendered obsolete as foodservice offerings rival nearby restaurants and, in some cases, even feature outposts of popular restaurants to draw in more student diners. Dining halls that offer a wide array of food choices, including options for those seeking specialized diets (i.e., gluten-free, kosher, vegetarian/plant-based, etc.) are now the norm, and for some universities, the next step has included adding kiosks and specialized foodservice options made with foods that students already know and love.

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Tuning Into Student Behavior at College Foodservice

College and university foodservice, including both meal plans and retail, represent significant opportunity for the institutions they service. Technomic's *2023 Beyond Restaurant Insights—College & University Report* found that retail sales of college and university service totaled \$18.8 billion in 2022.

And according to Technomic's recent *College & University Consumer Trend Report*, 39% of students living on campus participate in a meal plan, and 66% of students eat on campus at least once a week. Additionally, 39% of all food and beverages students eat are purchased on campus. But to boost those numbers, it can be as easy as offering exciting new menu options—44% of students say they wish their school changed the menu more often to offer new foods.

New and exciting offerings don't need to be completely unfamiliar items, however—it's important that diners still feel comfortable with the menu. What's more, updating the menu can be as easy as including ingredients from well-known and beloved brands.

King's Hawaiian products, for instance, have been proven to offer additional appeal to diners—Technomic's *Winter 2020 Brand Equity*

44%

of Consumers rate King's Hawaiian a

10^{OUT} OF 10



King's Hawaiian at Rutgers University

Rutgers University opened a King's Hawaiian Grill location in The Atrium, a newly renovated dining hall that features five different dining concepts, in August this year. Kris Solt, Assistant Director of Dining Services at Rutgers, said he was introduced to King's Hawaiian at a conference in 2021, when the executive team at Rutgers Dining Services began planning the new dining concept—The Atrium. "We all liked King's Hawaiian breads and thought our students would love the concept," Solt said. "We find that our students love the grab-and-go option. Many students are on the go and don't have time for the traditional sit-down" dining experience, he said. The King's Hawaiian menu is available on eight kiosks at The Atrium, and that technology allows operators to change the menu any time, from breakfast to lunch to late night. And since Rutgers' King's Hawaiian Grill is open from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., it's a great all-day and late-night option for students.

As for what the response has been, Solt said, "The numbers tell the tale, and we are extremely popular with many students. King's Hawaiian has been a welcome addition to the Rutgers dining portfolio and is currently the best-selling concept out of the five new eaters at The Atrium."

Items on the menu include French Toast Sticks and Meat, Egg & Cheese Sandwiches for breakfast (available with bacon, sausage, turkey bacon or vegan sausage); Crispy Buttermilk Chicken Sliders with fried onions and citrus tahini slaw for lunch and dinner; and mild or honey hot wings on the late night menu.

& Impact Study for King's Hawaiian found that 44% of consumers rate King's Hawaiian a 10 out of 10; 53% of consumers said they would pay at least 10% more for products made with King's Hawaiian bread; and making a product with King's Hawaiian increased orders by up to 28%. In short, by putting King's Hawaiian bread on the menu, operators stand to benefit big.

At Rutgers University and the University of Kansas, the appeal is being put to the test with King's Hawaiian Grills—and the results are significant.

Bringing King's Hawaiian Grills to More Campuses

Holger Kraetschmer, SVP & CMO of King's Hawaiian, said, "We are grateful for amazing university partners like the University of Kansas and Rutgers University, we are thrilled with the success we've seen with the grills and we can't wait to continue expanding our grills to more campuses. Gen Z grew up loving and enjoying our brand and we seek to bring those reminiscent feelings of home and comfort to our grills. We know that good times are created together, and we love being able to create spaces for students to congregate, share stories and build friendships over our mouthwatering menu items."

King's Hawaiian Grill locations offer a unique opportunity to foodservice operators at colleges and universities. By featuring a beloved brand and offering a broad range of menu items both familiar and new, operators can appeal to students who want something delicious to eat—and are looking for foods from a brand they already love.

King's Hawaiian is proud to offer comprehensive support to university foodservice programs, including menu support, products, marketing assistance and more.



To learn more, e-mail Ben Guggenmos at Ben.Guggenmos@irresistiblefoods.com, or visit King's Hawaiian online by [CLICKING HERE](#).



King's Hawaiian at University of Kansas

At the University of Kansas, King's Hawaiian Grill opened in The Market of the KU Memorial Union in January 2022. There, the response has been similar to what Solt reported. Ashli Brummer, Director of Corporate Sponsorship, Jayhawk Community Partners at the University of Kansas, said, "It has been well received by our campus, and our increase in sales speaks volumes to that. The King's Hawaiian product integration brings a unique flavor and option to our customers visiting The Market. The Grill serves both breakfast and lunch," and features menu items including breakfast sandwiches and breakfast burritos, chicken sliders, cheeseburgers and more, all made fresh to order via kiosks or mobile devices.

Brummel said, "We feature new items during select months throughout the school year, and have made small changes to the menu each semester. We've seen tremendous growth in sales; it has been a pleasure working with the King's Hawaiian team, from the construction of the space to revamping our menu items and LTOs, and we look forward to the continued collaboration."

