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Stories



OHIO UNIVERSITY Dining Services

Rich Neumann has a lot of mouths to feed. As director of dining services for Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, Neumann oversees the 15th largest self-operated college foodservice operation in the country, according to the FoodService Director Magazine, February 2005. Larger even than Ohio State's, Ohio University's college dining services serves in excess of 3 million meals each school year.

The university boasts an undergraduate student population of 16,640. Graduate students and staff swell the campus population to more than 23,000. To feed them all, Neumann and a fulltime staff of about 174 manage five traditional dining halls, two mini food courts, an upscale cafeteria, three C-stores, and a free-standing fast food restaurant and mini-mart.

Neumann's staff also recruits students to work in the foodservice facilities. Dining Services, in fact, is the largest

student employer on campus, employing 800 students. Many of them take on student manager positions, giving them the opportunity to earn class

credit and gain foodservice management experience.

Dining services offers 32 meal periods a week. All facilities are open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Some are open for late lunch and late dinner as well. Students can choose from several meal plan options that give them the flexibility to eat when and where they want.

The traditional dining halls – Nelson, Boyd, Jefferson, Bromley and Shively – serve traditional fare, including three hot entrees (one vegetarian), a 45-item salad bar, two soups, fruit, dessert and beverages. They also feature carving stations, delis with Healthy Choice brand products, pasta bars, and fast food grills serving hamburgers, hot dogs, grilled cheese, chicken nuggets, fries and fish sandwiches. At breakfast, all dining halls have a waffle bar, and Nelson and Jefferson offer made-to-order omelets.

Students have a range of tastes and show high interest in balanced nutrition, consuming 500,000 lbs. of fresh produce a year. But burgers, fries and chicken nuggets still top the popularity list along with pizza and ethnic foods. Students chow down on 111,240 quarter-pound burgers, 44,450 lbs. of chicken nuggets, and a whopping 269,184 lbs. of French fries a year.

Totally self-supporting, Dining Services generates more than \$29



*Mike Hathaway, Mid-America Food Equipment;
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Rich Neumann, Ohio University Dining Services;
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million in sales annually. Of that, \$11.4 million went back to the university last year to help pay for computers in residence halls, athletic programs, renovations to residences and dining halls and other programs like ROTC. This year, Neumann has been charged with contributing \$12 million from operations back to O.U.

Already named by NACUFS as one of the most efficient operations in college foodservice for five years running, Neumann depends on Keating equipment to keep staff productivity high. Dining Services has about a dozen 60" Keating Miraclean® griddles in operation on campus, and eight batteries of three Keating Incredible Frying Machine® fryers.

In addition to fries and chicken nuggets, IFM fryers are kept busy cooking a few thousand pounds a year of fish squares and chicken patties for

sandwiches, fried shrimp at least one night per quarter, onion rings and jalapeno poppers.

"They have a very quick recovery time," says Neumann. Instant Recovery® means higher productivity and potentially more sales. That helps when you have aggressive revenue targets.

Keating Miraclean® griddles are used throughout the operation to cook everything from eggs and pancakes at breakfast to burgers and grilled sandwiches at lunch and steak at dinner. Efficient heat transfer makes cooking on Keating Miraclean® griddles faster. And the Miraclean® surface is easier to clean than conventional steel griddles, saving labor time and again making Neumann's staff more productive.

"Fryers and griddles are used every single day," Neumann says. "If a fryer goes down, it's a big deal in our units given the amount of frying we do. We use Keating equipment because it's reliable, and if it does need service it's simple and easy to fix."

Neumann's predecessor and former boss once purchased a different make of fryer because he was offered a special deal. It broke down so often, he switched to Keating.

Neumann, who has been with O.U. Dining Services for 16 years, five as director, says that some Keating griddles haven't been replaced in all the time he's been there. Several of the Keating fryers are more than 10 years old, and they still work like new, saving time and money.



Rich Neumann and student workers at Ohio University Dining Services proudly show off their Keating Miraclean® griddles and Keating fryers.



Productivity and reliability aside, one of the reasons he likes Keating best? "I like the look," he says. "They're clean, sharp, attractive. We do a lot of kitchen tours, and they never fail to impress parents and students. People are surprised at how clean it is."

Keating especially thanks O.U. former foodservice director Gene Reed for his request for a fryer with a lower flue temperature. His request was the inspiration for our research project resulting in our Incredible Frying Machine®.

Writer Michael Sherer is based in Chicago.



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