

Campus dining changes promote safety

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All dining venues will feature acrylic plexiglass barriers as well as full service stations to help prevent any contact between Sodexo workers and students, faculty and staff. (Photo by Sally Asher)

Let's face it! Food is an integral part of the college experience, and Tulane University, based in one of the world's greatest food cities, does it as well as any college in the country. It boasts award-winning chefs preparing everything from comfort rotisserie food to vegan, gluten-free and allergy-free options, not to mention pizza, sushi and other favorites.

When the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated major changes in the campus experience, the committee charged with dining modifications was determined to maintain the quality of campus dining while implementing crucial safety measures that address social distancing, cleanliness and testing.

Not only did Campus Dining, under the direction of Sodexo, achieve those goals, it added a variety of dining options aimed at keeping students both safe and happy.

Perhaps the biggest and most noticeable change is the addition of a temporary dining hall on the Berger Family Lawn. The new Dining Pavilion will serve as a second all-you-care-to-eat dining venue, housing food truck vendors The Currier tuk tuk and Healthy TU tuk tuk. It will also have a Chef's Table with entrees and sides. Two food trucks, Global Mobile and Roulez, will be parked on nearby Drill Road.

The Dining Pavilion will have a capacity of 280 diners, with all tables spaced 6 feet apart. The Commons, Tulane's main dining hall, will go from more than 1,000 seats to 550, allowing for physical distancing at that venue as well.

"Students and guests will use meal swipes to enter the Dining Pavilion and dine," said John Lange, assistant vice president of dining and event services. "Once inside the Pavilion, they will have access to the two food trucks on Drill Road."

Those trucks will offer fare similar to what is served in The Commons, Lange said. Global Mobile, for example, will offer a "carved station," while Roulez will have a "grill station."

In addition, the building, like the temporary classrooms, is ADA (American With Disabilities Act) accessible with push buttons both inside and outside. Dining staff will be available to assist physically challenged diners with food truck orders.

Here are some of the other changes that students, faculty and staff can expect:

- A new food truck concept, dubbed Bowlful, will feature all plant-based bowls and will be located on the Academic Quad.
- Dining plan meal swipes will now be offered at Le Gourmet featuring Rollin' n Bowlin' and Zatarain's, the latter of which will offer simplified recipes, freshly prepared proteins, vegetables and carbs made without milk, wheat, soy, peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish, eggs or gluten.

- Students also can use a meal swipe at the Green Wave Grille, which had previously been restricted to athletes. Located at Yulman Stadium, the venue offers an all-you-can-eat nutrition program designed by a sports dietitian and executive chef in collaboration with coaches and trainers.
- All dining locations will have defined entrances and exits to avoid cross flow of traffic as well as capacity restrictions. This will ensure 6 feet of social distance between groups. Directional floor stickers and signage will also aid in the implementation of social distancing.
- Table-top signage will help encourage guests sitting with cohort groups, as well as to signal if the tables have been properly sanitized or are waiting to be sanitized by a clean team member.
- All dining venues will feature acrylic plexiglass barriers as well as full service stations to help prevent any contact between Sodexo workers and students, faculty and staff.
- All Sodexo employees will be tested for COVID-19 according to university policy and complete a symptom and temperature check before entering the operation for work. All Sodexo employees will wear masks during work hours unless eating a meal during lunch breaks. Additional training has been added for all employees related to COVID-19 standards of operation.
- Hand washing and hand sanitizer stations will be added throughout dining operations to encourage hand hygiene.
- Additional clean teams have been added to each shift to ensure tables and stations are properly sanitized between guests.
- Tulane Dining has partnered with the mobile ordering app Grubhub, which will be implemented all retail locations on campus to allow for contactless ordering and payment as well as delivery/pick-up stations.
- The 1834 Club faculty/staff dining room will be converted into restaurant style dining, with seating capacity reduced and buffet service discontinued. Guests

will be greeted by a host/hostess who will take their order and serve the meal.

- The reciprocal dining plan agreement with Loyola University has been suspended until further notice. Tulane dining venues will also be closed to non-Tulane affiliates and the public.



Table-top signage lets diners know if tables have been properly sanitized or are waiting to be sanitized by a clean team member. (Photo by Sally Asher)