

# **Our Campus Dining Request for Proposal Process**

## **General Information**

### **What is a Request for Proposal (RFP)?**

A Request for Proposal (RFP) is a document that solicits proposal, made through a bidding process, by a company interested in procuring a commodity, service, or valuable asset, and issued to potential vendors requesting submittal of a formal business proposal.

The Hofstra Campus Dining RFP provides potential dining service bidders with the full scope of work and the business terms the University is seeking, and additionally provides the contractual foundation for the two parties to work from once a bidder is selected.

### **Why was the Request for Proposal (RFP) issued?**

The current campus food service contract was issued under a formal RFP in 2007, and we are currently in the last year of the negotiated ten year contract term. As a good business practice, the University routinely issues RFPs for expiring service contracts to ensure we are procuring the best available services for a reasonable price.

In addition, with the RFP, the University intends to examine our current dining program and investigate potential dining enhancements that may be advantageous for our community.

### **Who is leading the RFP process for Hofstra University?**

The RFP process is co-chaired by Mr. W. Houston Dougharty, Vice President of the Division of Student Affairs, and Mr. Joseph Barkwill, Vice President of Facilities and Operations, and administered by Mr. James Spero, Assistant Vice President of Financial Affairs.

### **How long does the RFP process take?**

The University expects to render a final decision by May 1, 2017. Once a final decision is made and a vendor selected, work will commence under a new dining contract starting on July 1, 2017.

### **What has been done so far?**

The University collected dining surveys, updated campus data and information, and drafted the RFP document over the 2016 fall semester. The University identified various dining service

vendors who could adequately service a campus of our size, and issued the RFP to these firms in early December 2016.

Over the month of January 2017, campus tours were conducted with each of the three (3) firms that responded to our RFP.

### **What is the RFP Timeline?**

- The Dining RFP was issued to perspective bidders in early December 2016.
- Campus tours of dining facilities were conducted in January with all three (3) bidders who responded to our RFP.
- Each perspective dining vendor will be given the opportunity to meet and receive input from students and faculty members comprise the Dining Committee. These meetings will be scheduled in February by Student Affairs.
- In March 2017, dining proposals are due back from each of the three dining vendors. Each dining vendor will be scheduled to present their campus dining concepts to members of the Dining Committee.
- Senior university leadership will evaluate the financial and legal accepts of each vendor's dining proposal, and will further narrow down the selection to two potential vendors.
- In April of 2017, Dining Committee members will conduct a site visit(s) of other campuses operated by the potential vendors to observe their dining operations, and potentially meet with some students and administrators from each school.
- May 1, 2017 – Final award of the new Campus Dining vendor is announced.
- July 1, 2017 – New campus dining contract start date.

### **How is student feedback collected?**

Student feedback regarding campus dining has been (and continues to be) collected from various sources, and subsequently incorporated into the RFP, including;

- Past student satisfaction surveys conducted by the University and the SGA.
- Customer comment database which includes feedback collected on social media, and the digital feedback form on the Campus Dining website;
- Dining Committee meetings conducted monthly.
- Town hall meetings conducted each semester hosted by the President of the University.

The top three items most revealed by students form past surveys include the following;

- A desire for expanded hours of operation in food locations.
- Reduction in food unit pricing.
- Improved healthy menu availability, and greater variety.

### **What changes can we expect?**

By issuing a formal RFP for campus dining, food service enhancements are often achieved because it forces competition among vendors through a formal competitive bid process. In addition, an RFP requires each vendor, along with university students and administrators, to conduct a fresh, comprehensive, and formal review of all current campus dining operations.

The real challenge for both vendors and the university is how to best implement dining program changes without imposing an undue economic burden upon our students. For example, to what extent could operating hours at our dining venues be increased without adversely impacting the vendor's cost of operation, and thereby drive prices up for our community? Will our community be willing to scale back the current number of dining venues across campus to achieve potential food price relief, and/or longer operating hours at our dining venues?

### **How can I get involved?**

Throughout the process a variety of campus stakeholders will be involved, including undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty and administrators. A Dining Committee working group has been assembled and includes SGA student representatives, faculty members, and administrators. If you would like to learn more or would like to reach out to us with any questions or comments, please email; [diningservices@hofstra.edu](mailto:diningservices@hofstra.edu)

### **Will residential students be involved in the decision making process?**

Yes, a Dining Committee comprised of students, faculty, and administrators will help review each dining vendor's proposal, and provide input and recommendations to the two Vice Presidents Co-Chairing the RFP selection process. Student SGA leaders are encouraged to solicit student feedback to all Dining Committee members about recommendations students may have for the dining program.