

JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY

Jacksonville, Alabama



To meet the demands of its growing enrollment, Jacksonville State University unveiled a state-of-the-art dining facility. This new 30,000-square-foot multi-storied structure replaces a 62-year-old building that had become outdated and undersized. Designed to enhance the dining experience and increase operational efficiency, the new facility delivers modern conveniences while addressing critical infrastructure needs. The project ensures students and the broader campus community have a vibrant, functional dining space that meets diverse dietary preferences and social engagement needs.

The dining facility's lower-level houses essential back-of-house operations, including receiving areas, employee spaces, offices, catering preparation zones, and storage to support both the dining program and the nearby football stadium. The upper-level kitchen boasts a powerful hot production area for campus catering and dining concepts, while an expansive cold production space supports not only the dining hall but also retail locations throughout campus. The dining room itself features not only the dining hall but also retail locations throughout campus.

Surrounding the space are a variety of popular dining concepts: a scratch pizza station featuring Hot Rocks pizza oven, an allergen-free Simple Servings concept with its own dedicated kitchen, a made-to-order grill, an international cuisine station, and a dedicated bakery with its own cozy

Details

Opening Date: Aug 2024

Equipment Cost: \$4,000,000

All Areas: 30,000 SF

Private Dining: 65 seats

Student Dining: 700 seats

Scope

Design a multi-story dining facility to replace an outdated structure, address growing enrollment and operational demands. The project prioritized modern, efficient design with features like an allergen-friendly kitchen, scratch bakery, and sustainable systems while overcoming space limitations and tight timelines.

seating area designed to resemble a breakfast nook bathed in natural light.

A unique design highlight is the open bakery concept, which reflects the university's pride in its scratch baking program. Visible to students, this area showcases freshly prepared baked goods and offers a welcoming neighborhood seating space. Sightlines throughout the dining hall were carefully considered to ensure a "see-and-be-seen" environment. Concepts are positioned around the perimeter with low-profile central island equipment to maintain visibility. A ventless downdraft hood further preserves the space's clean aesthetic.

Strategic planning ensured that serving concepts were placed to be largely self-sufficient during peak mealtimes. Concepts like Pizza and Pasta, International, and Salad were outfitted with sufficient storage to minimize disruption. Beverage stations, condiments, and flatware are positioned near seating areas to reduce student movement during trayless dining. Back-of-house efficiency was also prioritized; storage is strategically placed near the freight elevator to streamline staff movement and minimize travel paths. Hot production equipment includes advanced tools like combi ovens and multifunctional tilting braising pans, alongside regional favorites like a large smoker and pressure fryers to create homestyle southern comfort dishes.

In addition to enhanced foodservice functionality, the facility incorporates sustainability features to improve energy efficiency and working conditions. A heat recovery system on the flight-type dish machine, combined with load-specific exhaust hood controls, minimizes humidity and optimizes energy use. The dishroom's new configuration reduces labor demands and streamlines the cleaning process, replacing an outdated rack conveyor system with a more efficient setup that dramatically improves throughput.

This project stands out not only for its thoughtful design but also for the remarkable speed with which it was completed. Faced with compressing a typical one-year design process into just three months, the design and construction teams worked efficiently to meet the university's aggressive timeline. Despite the rapid pace, the project encountered minimal construction issues, thanks to precise planning and exceptional coordination. The result is a modern, dynamic dining facility that will serve Jacksonville State University's students and community for years to come.



