

DES MOINES UNIVERSITY

Des Moines, Iowa



When Des Moines University made the bold decision to relocate its century-old osteopathic medical school from its longtime campus to an entirely new 88-acre site in West Des Moines, Rippe Associates joined the project early to help shape the future of student dining and wellness on the new campus. Brought on in March 2020, our team led the foodservice master planning and programming efforts from predesign through construction, with a vision centered around health, sustainability, and flexibility to match the University's ambitious goals.

At the heart of campus is *Summerfields*, a vibrant retail dining space conceived to reflect a modern food hall. This retail environment features four distinct concepts surrounding a central seating area, including a grill, brick oven pizza, clean eating, and international cuisine, all served through a fully open kitchen format. The facility supports pre-order, pre-pay transactions via kiosks and apps, helping reduce wait times and streamline staff workflow. The equipment suite not only reinforces sustainability goals but also supports made-to-order, customizable meals that cater to the long, demanding days of graduate students.

Details

Opening Date: Sept 2024

Equipment Cost: \$2,200,000

Edge of Advancement Building:

675 SF Banquet Support Space

350 SF Micro Market

Innovation Building:

10,000 SF Summerfields Retail Dining

Health and Wellbeing Building:

1,500 SF Wellness Lab Teaching Kitchen

100 SF Micro Market

Beyond the main dining space, Rippe helped plan and design key support functions such as catering and back-of-house operations. Catering plays a significant role in campus life, particularly for the Edge of Advancement building, where a banquet support kitchen services large galas and events. Efficient flow and zoning were critical: centralized circulation routes minimize steps, while ample cold and dry storage, a dedicated dish room, and prep spaces ensure seamless operations during peak periods. The clean eating station was specifically designed to enable take-home meal production, offering students and staff nutritious family-style options after long campus hours.

Recognizing the essential connection between nutrition and health, the project includes a flexible teaching kitchen located adjacent to fitness facilities in the Health and Wellbeing building. Designed to support both lectures and hands-on instruction, the space aligns with the University's osteopathic philosophy and commitment to preventive care. Additionally, micro markets with self-checkout capabilities were strategically placed in remote buildings to offer healthy, fresh options late into the evening, making use of high-traffic corridors to ensure visibility and access.

The campus has received LEED Silver certification and national design awards, including recognition from the AIA Iowa Chapter. Low-volume exhaust hoods, LED lighting, low-flow plumbing fixtures, and the reuse of existing equipment all played a role in meeting sustainability goals. The entire project reflects DMU's commitment to environmental stewardship, operational efficiency, and enhancing the student experience through thoughtful foodservice design. Des Moines University's new campus represents a rare and inspiring leap into the future, and Rippe Associates was proud to be part of the journey.

