

SANDWICH SHACK
HAND CRAFTED GREATNESS

aramark 

TOP 10 CAMPUS TRANSFORMATIONS

TO ATTRACT & RETAIN STUDENTS

With so much talk about the struggling state of higher education, it's easy to forget that America's institutions are still widely regarded as among the best in the world. Thanks to incredibly talented faculty, staff and administrators, our institutions account for 35 of the **top 50 Best Global Universities of 2016**. These individuals work tirelessly to uphold the prestige of America's higher education system through deep recessions and uncertain economic times. But despite it all, challenges persist. Today, new demands are stacking up against university leaders.

From large state universities and liberal arts colleges to urban community colleges, art schools and research institutions, administrators have witnessed consistent [college enrollment decline](#) over the last four years. In fact, about [47 percent of institutions](#) (based on a survey of 200) missed their target enrollments last year.

And that's only part of the issue.

[University Business](#) estimates the average college, university or career college loses between 30 to 48 percent of its new enrollments each year. Following each student out the door is tuition, fees, state and federal support, and advocacy that inspires future recruitments. Every loss impacts net tuition revenue, leaving CFOs and Student Affairs officers with dwindling resources and mounting expectations.

Several factors may be to blame for subpar enrollment and retention rates. But when you get down to brass tacks, parents and students are most concerned about the rising cost of higher education, and the amount of post-graduation debt they're likely to incur: [77 percent of high school seniors and college students say that money played an important role in their enrollment decision](#). They're wise about how they invest in their future. And they're choosing universities that provide value beyond educational reputations alone.

One of the most effective ways institutions can create more value for students is to invest money back into campus infrastructure, including dining and facility services, dormitories, classrooms and IT. Upgrading these infrastructures will improve the overall operation and management of these facilities and lower costs while at the same time, deliver the kind of college experience students want and expect.

Here are the top campus transformations breathing new life into higher education.



Dining Options & Venues

Student perception of the quality of campus life is directly linked to the dining experience. About 50 percent of students polled admit that a university's dining program is an important part of their enrollment decision, according to the Technomic College & University Consumer Trend Report. If your institution is to appeal to new recruits and current students alike, its leaders must develop a deeper understanding of exactly what today's student wants in a dining experience.

1. UPDATE MENUS

CONSIDER THIS:

- 78 PERCENT OF STUDENTS ARE CAREFUL OR COGNIZANT OF THE FOOD THEY EAT.
- ONE IN 133 AMERICANS HAS CELIAC DISEASE.
- 45 PERCENT OF STUDENTS PREFER TO SEE THEIR FOOD PREPARED IN AN OPEN KITCHEN ENVIRONMENT.
- A QUARTER OF COLLEGE STUDENTS (25 PERCENT) RESTRICT THEIR ANIMAL PRODUCT CONSUMPTION TO SOME DEGREE

To address these trends, give your residential dining menus a multicultural makeover. Serve fresh, healthy, whole foods and brand names students recognize and trust. Students want rich comfort foods and authentic ethnic meals. They also want options that are sensitive to their dietary needs and ethical beliefs. Fifty-seven percent of students say it is important to be able to substitute or omit ingredients in their food. This means, not only is it crucial to provide vegetarian, vegan and allergy-aware options like gluten-, soy-, wheat- and dairy-free meal choices, but also ingredient information to aid in awareness.

Another chief complaint among college students is food boredom. Without plenty of variety, many students will tire of the food options on campus, and venture off campus to find something new to eat. This deters them from re-enrolling in meal plans and negatively impacts dining revenue by several thousand dollars each semester—per student.

2. MODERNIZE DINING LOCATIONS

Traditional, cafeteria-style dining experiences pale in comparison to modern dining venues, which offer students a variety of dining options, **including:**

- Restaurant-style seating that provides a more intimate setting for socialization
- Quiet, private dining areas where students can eat and study
- Serving stations where students can request made-to-order meals that feature different ethnic and American foods
- Buffet-style grab-and-go options
- Mounted TV screens displaying the news, sporting events and more



3. CREATE MORE CONVENIENCE

In the past, students were thrilled to have a residential hall, a food court and a coffee shop. But today, this doesn't cut it. The demand for instant access and convenience is on the rise, and students are looking for universities that provide numerous points of service, including food courts, farmers markets, convenience stores, retail outlets, food trucks and self-serve options.

Fast-casual remains one of the [fastest growing restaurant segments](#). Translation: Students want quality, quick and customizable options from the national brands they know and love, like Au Bon Pain, Qdoba and Panda Express. Between early-morning classes and late-night study sessions, students also want access to food at all hours of the day.

University of North Carolina Wilmington even added a Teal Meal option to its meal plans giving enrolled students access to a wide variety of healthy, pre-determined combo meals at specific retail dining locations.

4. IMPLEMENT TECHNOLOGY

Transforming the overall performance of dining facilities is an important part of retaining students. By integrating technologies like self-serve kiosks, online ordering systems, and mobile applications into dining services, institutions benefit from **two major advantages**:

A Food-service staff gains greater insight into operational costs and efficiencies.

These technologies track ordering trends and behaviors, and provide valuable data to management that can be used to continually improve dining facility performance (experientially and economically).

B At the same time, students are provided a way to engage with the dining program using technologies they already know and love. They can check ingredients, provide feedback to food-service staff, and order food online for pickup at their convenience.

A group of diverse students are sitting on a grassy lawn, looking at a laptop and papers together. In the background, other students are walking, creating a lively campus atmosphere.

Campus & Environment Upgrades

Research shows that greater student engagement with campus can increase retention rates. To that end, institutions should consider several transformations to improve the way students view and interact with campus facilities and non-academic environments.

5. CREATE INVITING OUTDOOR SPACES

An institution's campus is its first impression. Students ranked cleanliness and maintenance as the two most important elements of a campus' outdoor environment. Additionally, they rank outdoor spaces as their favorite areas to "hang out." They are drawn to well-manicured landscaping and lush greens. Therefore, institutions should create kempt outdoor spaces for students to enjoy. But smart universities are taking this a step further, creating outdoor spaces that foster student interactions.

"Outdoor gathering spaces are very important in the quality of student life," said Ann Allen, senior grounds manager and operational excellence manager for Aramark at Southern Methodist University. "By creating outdoor spaces for them to either learn in, participate in class in, or recreate in, you're giving them a healthy green space to spend their time."

Creating spaces where students want to spend time encourages them to socialize on campus instead of looking for off-campus alternatives. Good landscape design can create areas for students to socialize and learn. Strategic positioning of trees, flowers, hardscaping and shrubbery can create multiple outdoor classroom spaces, enhancing the student learning experience.

"Life is too short to go to school on an ugly campus," Allen concluded. "It's the first thing that they're going to see when they get to SMU. It's the last thing they're going to see in their mirror as they leave."

6. HARNESS THE POWER OF IoT

One of the top institutional struggles today is aging buildings. Student expectations have evolved greatly over the last two decades. Most students considering college today grew up with technology and presume state-of-the-art equipment and capabilities will be a major part of their college experience.

Take a cue from technology-hungry students and consider how incorporating the Internet of Things (IoT) can transform your facilities management. As more everyday items connect to the Internet and communicate with one another, the more cost savings facilities management can reap. **Here are just a few ways cloud-based technology can update your institution's facilities management:**

- Monitor operations, capture trends and manage settings of HVAC systems
- Remote monitoring of alarm, trouble and supervisory signals for fire/life safety systems
- Analyze data to identify problems, which can then be corrected either remotely or by a technician
- Examine data to watch for increased energy use and schedule equipment maintenance

As technology continues to advance, the potential for benefits to facilities management and the institution will only multiply.



7. FOCUS ON SPACE UTILIZATION

Another chief concern for institutions is insufficient use of space: 44 percent of CFOs say “[making better use of facilities](#)” is key to cost reduction. One way to increase student engagement and mitigate vacant space is to create more casual areas in which students can study, socialize or decompress between classes. For example, institutions can transform unused spaces like old classrooms or labs into flexible lounges or learning centers with moveable furniture, smart technologies and open floor plans.

Mercer University, for example, transformed an old, closed coffee shop space into the Farmers Market, a healthy, organic and sustainable, all-you-can-eat dining location. With the Farmers Market, Mercer was able to meet student demands for a holistic approach to health in a more intimate dining experience. It is also earning \$1,125 in additional revenue per week, where the closed coffee shop was bringing in nothing.



8. DEVELOP MAKER SPACES

Another way universities are maximizing space and providing unique learning opportunities is by developing specialized labs, maker- or hacker-spaces. A maker-space is a communal area (usually within a community center or library) where students can go to share resources and knowledge, work on projects, network and create.

The space is equipped with technology, educational resources and manufacturing equipment, such as welding machines, laser cutters and 3-D printers. Students also have access to raw materials like plastic, cardboard, metal, wood, gears and batteries, as well as design materials like sketchpads, paints and easels.

By tapping into students' entrepreneurial spirits, higher education institutions can portray an environment of fostering creativity and individuality—intangibles that today's students are looking for in a school where they choose to spend their college years.

9. FEATURE A UNIQUE ATTRACTION

Universities can also attract attention by providing free entertainment-based amenities, such as an on-campus bowling alley, state-of-the-art workout facility, a campus movie theater or a beautiful environment to enjoy nature. Baylor University boasts its Black Gardens, a focal point at the heart of campus where thousands of beautiful perennial flowers are framed by a manicured lawn and boxwoods. At High Point University in North Carolina, students can't get enough of the school's free arcade.



10. UPDATE ON-CAMPUS HOUSING

Many higher education institutions require freshmen to live on campus because it's a huge part of the college experience. But it's also a huge part of the costs to students and their families. Dorms are becoming increasingly outdated as students continue to demand greater comfort and sophistication. As a result, many residential students are moving off campus after the mandatory first year of on-campus housing because they see a gap between price and value.

Currently, 57 percent of students [choose to live at home and commute to class](#). Each student who moves off campus costs about \$12,000 in lost revenue. The secondary side effect to this is reduced student engagement with campus, which can impact retention rates. If students leave school entirely after their first year, institutions can lose around \$140,000 per student.

To encourage students to live on campus after their first year, institutions need to align cost with value. Bottomline, students want dorms that meet their expectations for security, space, amenities, convenience and cleanliness, **including:**

- | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Secure entry | • 24-hour help desk | • Favorable location |
| • Communal areas for study groups or recreation | • Adequately sized dorm rooms | • Carpeting and A/C |

Some universities are taking the dorm experience a step further and installing kitchenettes, private bathrooms, game rooms and on-site dining halls or exercise facilities to appeal to students, reach capacity and improve on-campus student engagement. With the help of a public-private partnership (P3), your institution can better align the school's goals for success with your students' goals for success. [Learn more here](#).



THE POWER OF CAMPUS TRANSFORMATIONS

Your tuition might look steep when staring at an outdated university campus. But with modern dining facilities, advanced education buildings, accommodating on-campus housing and unique features, value is evident and students get the feeling they are no longer just investing in an education—they're investing in a unique experience.

From the institution's perspective, understanding and addressing the precise wants and needs of students and creating many ways for students to engage with campus will improve enrollment and retention rates, and increase net tuition revenue generated by the school.

“32%

OF UNIVERSITY CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICERS BELIEVE UPDATED OR NEW FACILITIES DROVE ENROLLMENT INCREASES BETWEEN 2010 AND 2013.”

— [NACUBO](#)

Ready to start attracting and retaining more students each year?

Contact Aramark to improve your dining and facilities services today.

CONTACT US!