



CASE STUDY:

**UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL  
EXTENDS CONTRACT FOR ARAMARK'S  
DINING SERVICES TO 2030**



# PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW

Aramark was several years away from completing its dining services contract with the University of Massachusetts Lowell when the school's executive team decided to extend its partnership out for a number of years—all the way to 2030. This proactive step is a clear testament to the partnership's value to the higher education institution. Larry Siegel, Associate Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and University Events, explained the reason behind the action: "We understand the value of the partnership we have with Aramark, and how they positively guide the growth of our dining services, help us reach our five strategic goals and impact student satisfaction with their college experience."

Aramark's dining services are seamlessly integrated with the university, and the front line employees deliver a total hospitality experience UMass Lowell is proud of. What's more, school officials use the dining services as a selling point when marketing the school to new potential students and their parents. "Among the top five aspects of campus life that parents care about is the dining program," Siegel shared. "We highlight our dining program, including inviting parents to meals, because they come away very impressed with the quality, variety of options and value."



It's quite a change from the pre-Aramark days when the school ran its own traditional self-operated dining program. "We had a lot of challenges, including student dissatisfaction. The meal plans offered very little flexibility and value for the price. One of the first things that Aramark did was a market adjustment and created many more meal plan and menu options for the students. These actions proved that they are responsive to the needs of the university community. And they've continued down that path ever since, including regularly updating the menus and introducing innovative new concepts, venues and promotions."







**3 BIG  
UMASS-ARAMARK  
PARTNERSHIP WINS**



## CAMPUS DINING GENERATES \$24M IN SALES

When Aramark joined the UMass Lowell campus in 1988 the school had only 1,500 students living on the campus. There were two dining facilities and two small retail food venues that offered the students few dining options. Today, the scenario is vastly different. Nearly 5,000 students live on campus and their dining options are almost unlimited. Today, four dining halls serve a wide variety of food options, from authentic international cuisine to specialty items to allergen-free and vegetarian options. There are several popular national and local retail brands available to students. The dining transformation has been driven by Aramark's deep understanding about how to meet the needs of today's changing and growing student populations, along with a \$27 million investment in all dining venues. A testament to the success of the revitalized dining program is that campus dining now generates more than \$24 million in sales annually—up from \$9.5 million in 2009. UMass credits its transformed dining program with helping the school achieve its benchmark in student rankings, including achieving 156 in the *U.S. World and News Report*.

## ARAMARK CAPTURES 44% OF NON-MANDATORY MEAL PLAN SALES

UMass Lowell has set a residential goal to have 50 percent of undergraduate students living on campus. Currently, 64 percent of non-mandatory on-campus students are enrolled on a meal plan and 44 percent of off-campus students. "One of the greatest testaments to the quality of our dining program is that nearly half of the students subscribe to the meal plan program who don't have to purchase a school dining program, do purchase one," Siegel said.

## ARAMARK GENERATES \$7M IN CATERING AND CONCESSIONS

In 2009, Aramark branched out of campus dining to take over the management of UMass Lowell's on-campus catering services offered in multiple venues, including its downtown Inn & Conference Center and the Tsongas Center. The Tsongas Center also houses the school's athletic complex where students compete at the Division I level for men's hockey, men's and women's basketball. At these locations, Aramark fulfills the entire dining experience, including the hotel, catering and concessions. Concessions and catering each generate about \$1.5 million in sales. The conference center generates another \$4 million. "They blend the management of our three distinct operations seamlessly, including providing operational and financial efficiencies," noted Siegel. "It speaks to the quality of the catering that all of our corporate boxes for sporting events are nearly sold out."



## BEFORE ARAMARK

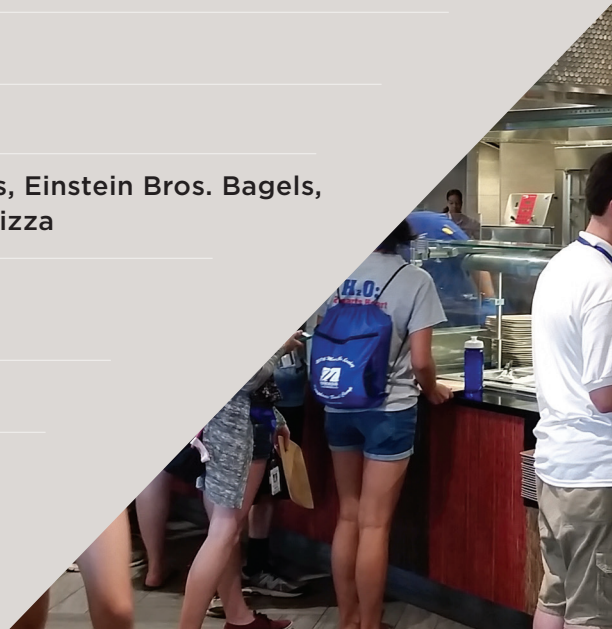
- Traditional “old school” inflexible, limited and high-cost residential dining service program
- No on-campus catering services

## AFTER ARAMARK

- Created exciting dining venues with innovative culinary solutions that appeal to current and prospective students
- Introduced popular national and local retail brands to the campus
- Currently generates \$24 million in dining sales
- Took over management of the school’s expanding catering services operation with over 4,000 catering events per year
- Supported a multifaceted approach to using campus dining, the Inn & Conference Center and the Tsongas Center as strong, self-sustaining revenue sources
- In late 2017, Aramark began designing another 3,000-square-foot retail space on the main campus

## PARTNERSHIP STATS

Date partnered	1988
Dining and retail venues	19
Students - on-campus	5,000
Students - off-campus	9,000
National retail brands on campus	Subway, Multiple Starbucks, Einstein Bros. Bagels, Freshii, Red Mango, Sal’s Pizza
Residential meals served per week	45,000
Retail transactions per week	30,000
Residential meals served across campus per year	1.6 million
Events catered on-campus per year	4,000





## UMASS LOWELL SAYS:

*“The Aramark team is so ingrained in our campus, we call them ‘university dining’ versus Aramark dining. Students, parents and even people from the community believe that our dining services program is run by the university—which I think is one of the best compliments we could ever get.”*

*“We have a wonderful collaborative partnership with Aramark. The company has put a great management team on the ground without exception over these years and always made us feel that we matter to them.”*



**Larry Siegel**

Associate Vice Chancellor of  
Student Affairs and University Events





For more information visit us at:  
[CAMPUSINSIGHTS.ARAMARK.COM](https://www.campusinsights.aramark.com)