I am very proud to announce that Dr. Zia Ahmed has accepted the role of Associate Vice President for the Residential Experience, effective May 20, 2024.

Dr. Ahmed is a well-known and respected Buckeye who has been a part of the Student Life team for nearly 14 years. In his most recent role, Senior Director of Auxiliary and Business Optimization, Dr. Ahmed has been leading the creation of a convergence strategy to revenue generation, including dining and catering, events and conferences, sponsorship and other emerging opportunities. Before that, Dr. Ahmed was the long-time Senior Director of Student Life’s dining and catering operation, which is one of the most expansive and multi-faceted in the country.

Dr. Ahmed is a strategic and innovative leader, who has initiated cutting-edge programs and technology that has transformed Ohio State’s approach to the delivery of dining services for students and other customers. His administrative experience includes organizational and operational effectiveness strategies, facility development and maintenance, capital planning, and issues management and response. Noted accomplishments include, but are certainly not limited to, cross-university collaboration to maintain dining operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, creation of the largest mobile ordering program in the country, development of customer-centric menu strategies that provide for a variety of dietary needs, implementation of the robot delivery system, numerous sustainability initiatives that have significantly reduced landfill waste, and the transformation of Ohio State’s Meal Plan Program.

Dr. Ahmed is also an accomplished student affairs practitioner who centers service delivery, student engagement and employee development in learning. He has led the development of a comprehensive and multi-faceted employee training and development strategy for the dining team, which is critical as they are required to complete a variety of educational modules throughout each year. Another example is how Dr. Ahmed spearheaded Ohio State’s food transparency and international outreach to educate students, offer service opportunities and support small coffee and tea farmers in more than nine countries. Dr. Ahmed is a nationally recognized operations and dining leader, including serving as a past President of the National Association of College and University Food Services.

Dr. Ahmed earned a bachelor’s degree and a Master’s of Business Administration degree from the
University of Akron, and he has a Doctor of Education degree from The Ohio State University. Dr. Ahmed is also a Certified LEAN Master and is trained in Six Sigma. In his new role, Dr. Ahmed will support Dining Services; Events and Conferences; Facility Operations; Facility Planning and Design; Housing and Residence Education; Risk and Emergency Management; Student Life Sponsorship; and, the Willie J. Young Sr. Off-Campus and Commuter Student Engagement team.

Melissa S. Shivers, PhD  
Senior Vice President for Student Life  
The Ohio State University