

COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

NEW CAMPUS HOT SPOT: Binghamton's new Marketplace has been buzzing with business, serving over 25,000 customers a week in the early going.



A Diner's Dozen Stations

The renovated venue featuring 12 food concepts at Binghamton University doubles sales posted by the food court it replaced.

BINGHAMTON University's completely renovated University Marketplace dining venue has been nearly doubled the sales generated by the food court it replaced over the first month of its opening, says James Ruoff, general manager for Sodexo's operation at Binghamton.

Located in the school's student union complex, the venue features a dozen branded stations, including Red Mango, Pandini's, Mein Bowl, SubConnection, Cafe Spice, The Diner (featuring local foods), Garden Toss, Wholly Habaneros, New York Street Deli and Interna-

tional, a breakfast and rotating lunch kiosk.

There's also a c-store and a cafe serving Starbucks branded items. The cafe, though not all the stations, are open 24 hours on weekdays.

"Our transactions have been right in line with what we expected," Ruoff says. "We were serving over 25,000 customers each week in the first month."

"Our day parts have been interesting. Once we get busy for lunch, there is not much of a break until 8 pm. The afternoon customer counts have been very steady until that time. We are seeing a drop off after this, but it was anticipated," Ruoff adds.

One of the innovative aspects of the University Marketplace operation is the use of RFID chips in reusable drink cups to monitor refills at the Coke Freestyle fountain machine. It "has worked as well as we could have expected," Ruoff notes.

"It gives us the opportunity to offer over 100 beverage options to our customers with control over the numbers of pours purchased and used."

He adds that it also allows customers the option of buying a single pour soda or a reusable cup that can be loaded with many different fill levels (including unlimited fills) for the semester.

Student Chef Wins Spot on Dining Hall Menu

The Green Chef Challenge at UC-Davis promotes healthy eating with student competition to produce a vegetarian dish.

The University of California at Davis prides itself on having one of the most sustainable dining programs in the country, one that makes plenty of use of local, fresh products.

To promote that mindset, the college in 2011 launched a program called the Green Chef Challenge in which teams of students compete in an Iron Chef style cooking contest to produce healthful dishes incorporating a locally sourced secret ingredient.

The latest edition of Green Chef Challenge involved three teams representing the school's three dining halls, Cuarto, Tercero and Segundo. Each was assisted by a dining staff sous chef or platform cook and the winners got to see their creation on the dining hall menu in a scaled-up version.

The competition featured fennel as the secret ingredient and the winner was a dish called Fennelicious Frittata (a frittata made with cage-free eggs sitting on a grilled flatbread topped with a carrot and dill salad, with a side of roasted beet chutney) from the Cuarto team. It was featured on dining hall menus on March 18.

The other two creations were Veggie Bao (vegetables stuffed into balls of pizza dough baked with egg wash and topped with tahini sauce and a side of pickled fennel) and Curry Potato Pancakes (featuring a vegetable curry, marinated tofu and a garnish of pickled fennel with onions).



EGGS-QUISITE: The winning dish at UC-Davis' Green Chef student culinary competition was the "Fennelicious Frittata."