

NACUFS (2025)

Retail Sales: Single Concept of the Year

Heirloom

UNC Wilmington

Introduction:

Heirloom isn't just a meal—it's part of a movement. A recent survey revealed that 64% of UNCW students prioritize supporting small, local, and diverse suppliers, and Heirloom delivers. Nestled in the heart of the student union, this chef-driven concept sources over 80% of its ingredients locally, crafting brick oven flatbreads, hearty grain bowls and salads, and seasonal sides that cater to every palate. More than just a meal, Heirloom is a commitment—to sustainability, to community, and to the evolving needs of UNCW students. It's where local flavors meet global impact, redefining what campus dining can be.

Essay:

At Heirloom, fresh and made-to-order isn't just a promise—it's the foundation of every dish. In a recent survey, 50% of UNCW students ranked fresh fruits and vegetables as a top priority for healthy meals, while 47% emphasized the importance of freshly prepared food. Heirloom rises to the occasion with vibrant, chef-crafted offerings. The Veg Head flatbread, for example, is a colorful medley of pickled onions, banana peppers, goat cheese, and oyster mushrooms, delivering bold flavors in every bite.

Heirloom doesn't just serve students—it listens to them. At the start of the semester, we invited students to submit flatbread ideas via social media and received over 50 creative suggestions. The result? A rotating weekly specials menu

featuring student-inspired flavors, from the indulgent 'All Day Breakfast' with bacon, eggs, and garlic aioli to the savory 'Chicken Parm' flatbread. At Heirloom, every meal is a fresh, local, and student-driven experience.

Freshness is on full display with the Babylon Hydroponics system, growing vibrant lettuces and microgreens right in the restaurant. These hyper-local greens add the perfect finishing touch to flatbreads and bowls, bringing sustainability and flavor straight from farm to table—just steps away.

Introduction:

Heirloom is more than a dining spot—it's an experience. Located in Hawks Nest within Fisher Student Union, it's easy to spot with its signature brick oven and Babylon Hydroponics system, growing fresh greens in plain sight. Our open-concept kitchen invites students to watch their meals come to life, from hand-assembling vibrant vegetables and grains in hearty bowls to firing flatbreads to the perfect crisp. At Heirloom, we believe in complete transparency—not just in our ingredients but in the craftsmanship behind every dish. It's fresh, local, and proudly on display for all to see—and taste.

Essay:

Heirloom's layout is designed for both efficiency and transparency, ensuring students experience the journey of their meal from start to finish. The ordering process follows a seamless circular flow—after placing an order, ingredients are carefully assembled at our build station before heading to the wood-fired oven or our kitchen table for final dressings and microgreens. Each meal is then packaged in all-compostable containers and handed off to the customer, reinforcing our commitment to sustainability.

Behind the register, a farmer's market style chalkboard proudly displays the local farmers and purveyors we partner with, highlighting where each ingredient comes from. With most UNCW students hailing from North Carolina and surrounding states, they're likely to spot a farm near their hometown—bringing a true taste of home to every bite. By combining fresh, locally sourced ingredients with an open-kitchen design, Heirloom creates an experience that is as engaging as it is delicious.

Introduction:

At Heirloom, our menu is designed for both clarity and transparency. Displayed on a digital screen above the register, it offers clear descriptions, ingredient lists, and calorie counts, making it easy for students to make informed choices. The menu features both pre-made bowls and customizable options, allowing for flexibility and personalization. Our flatbreads are highlighted separately, ensuring every dish is easy to navigate. With a focus on quality and simplicity, we've created an intuitive ordering experience that reflects the fresh, transparent approach we bring to every meal.

Essay:

The aesthetic goal of our menu is to reflect the standards of the food we serve- clean and simple. We prioritize effortless ordering, and clear transparency of where their food has been sourced from- found on the chalk board hanging by the register. Students can order ahead on Grubhub for a quick on-the-go meal, or order at the register.

Our weekly flatbread special is highlighted on a chalk board at the register and is updated weekly. We also advertise these weekly specials on social media, with photos of the flatbread, and descriptions. It's easy to advertise a concept we are so proud of- from our award-winning culinary team that put the concept together, to the creative and delicious food we serve, and the sustainable and local aspects of this menu.

At the core of Heirloom, is our culinary team. Chef Ryan Andress is an awarding winning Chef, and Pro Chef III certified. He joined forces with Chef Josh Gullett to create a menu that keeps the integrity of our local ingredients and creatively displaying them in a curated dish.

Introduction:

Navigating allergen friendly dining or finding meals that align with your dietary preferences is not always the easiest in a retail restaurant setting. Whether it's following a vegetarian lifestyle, or avoiding gluten, our students deserve the ease of

finding these dishes. This is where the concept of Heirloom was born. Located in our bustling student center, students can order their meal on the go, or dine with friends, while adhering to their dietary preferences.

Essay:

The menu at Heirloom was designed to provide nutrient-dense, plant-forward meals, customizable to many dietary restrictions. We offer curated menu items, as well as a made to order salad or grain bowl. One of our standout options is the Heirloom Grain Bowl, a wholesome base packed with whole grains, heart-healthy poly- and monounsaturated fats, and plant-based protein. Featuring quinoa and mushrooms—two complete protein sources that provide all nine essential amino acids—this dish is perfect for those following a plant-based diet. Quinoa also makes it a fantastic gluten-free option, allowing guests to enjoy the benefits of whole grains without compromise. From there, you can customize your bowl with a variety of proteins, including flavorful non-meat options for vegan and vegetarian diets.

To ensure transparency and help you make informed choices, our menus list ingredients for all entrées and include calorie information. At Heirloom, we're committed to making healthy eating accessible, customizable, and above all, delicious. With every bite, you're indulging in a meal that's as nourishing as it is flavorful.

At Heirloom, we're redefining healthy eating—one thoughtfully crafted dish at a time.

Introduction:

At our core, we believe that the best food starts with the best ingredients. By partnering with local farmers and embracing the rhythm of the seasons, we create a dining experience that is fresh, innovative, and deeply connected to our community. Our ever-evolving menu highlights the beauty of seasonal produce, ensuring that every dish is a celebration of flavor, quality, and craftsmanship.

Essay:

Given its focus on local produce, we follow the schedules of the farmers we purchase from. Our menu changes seasonally to incorporate whatever is in-season at the time- ultimately leading to 4 different menu features. This keeps our menu fresh (both in ingredients and concepts), and our culinary team at the top of their game. Keeping produce seasonal ensures that our ingredients are the most nutrient-dense at the time of being served only furthering our commitment to health and wellness.

In spring, we celebrate vibrant fruits and crisp leafy greens, layering bright acidity and refreshing textures into our salads and grain bowls. As winter sets in, we embrace the rich, earthy flavors of parsnips, beets, and sweet potatoes, creating hearty, comforting dishes that showcase the season's best. By aligning our menu with nature's cycles, we keep every dish fresh—both in ingredients and inspiration.

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[Chef Ryan Andre...](#) 3.2 MiB



[Fall 2024 Heirloo...](#) 350 KiB



[Heirloom Breakf...](#) 3.0 MiB



[Heirloom Chicke...](#) 4.5 MiB



[Heirloom CYO B...](#) 2.2 MiB



[Heirloom Flatbr...](#) 1.0 MiB



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