

NACUFS (2025)

Residential Dining Facility of the Year

Centennial Village Dining Hall

University of Miami

Introduction:

The grand opening of Centennial Village launched with a vibrant lineup of events featuring influencers, expert and celebrity chefs, interactive vendor activations, and a special focus on enhancing the first-year student experience. But the excitement didn't stop there—since its debut, Centennial Village has hosted over 85 events, each designed to create memorable moments and elevate student life. What truly sets our events apart is their broad appeal, bringing together diverse cultural groups, on-campus and commuter students, Miami locals, out-of-state students, and those with an undeniable passion for school spirit.

Essay:

Social media has been instrumental in shaping the identity of Centennial Village. From a pre-opening video that garnered over 85.3K views across all platforms to dynamic student takeovers, collaborations with student organizations, widespread media coverage, and daily guest feedback—the enthusiasm has been truly remarkable!

The strong digital footprint is one piece of the broad marketing strategy of Centennial Village. Through a mix of social media, student ambassadors, special events, and strategic partnerships, Centennial Village's brand image is one that every student can identify with and feel a sense of pride for.

Innovative technology has been at the forefront of marketing and communications within Centennial Village. Digital menu boards inform students of daily specials, including Halal-certified chicken and beef, the Tapin2 mobile ordering system, and

allergen-friendly dining options. These screens also highlight events like Teaching Kitchens, themed menus, and dining hall takeovers. Enhancing the entry experience, with two large vertical digital screens are strategically placed, providing a dynamic hub for cross-promoting our campus-wide promotions that appeal to our meal plan holders. Recognizing the undeniable influence of social media and technology in marketing, Centennial Village was designed with the student experience—meeting them where they are.

Introduction:

Providing students with healthy, satisfying, and nutritious meals is top priority at Centennial Village. Our dynamic digital menu boards provide ease for students to navigate their options, clearly labeling dishes that are vegan, vegetarian, avoiding gluten, or high in protein. The dedicated allergen-free station offers a wide variety for those with dietary restrictions, including avoiding gluten waffles, chia pudding, a nut butter alternative, and non-dairy milks—ensuring that every student has options to enjoy. Students who have dietary restrictions, allergies, or intolerances are highly encouraged to meet with our Registered Dietitian to learn more about dining with us.

Essay:

Our campus Registered Dietitian plays a vital role in supporting students, particularly those with dietary restrictions. Through one-on-one meetings and guided walkthroughs, students receive personalized support on safe and nutritious dining options at Centennial Village. This hands-on approach fosters trust and ensures every student feels comfortable navigating their meals. The "Healthier U" guide serves as an essential resource for students navigating campus dining with allergens in mind. This comprehensive guide highlights daily offerings, allergen-free dining options, and practical tips for making informed choices—placing a strong emphasis on Centennial Village's commitment to inclusive dining. To further support students with dietary restrictions, our allergen-free station features a specially curated Universal Meal every Wednesday. These meals are developed by the Physician's Committee for Responsible Medicine, and are crafted without the top nine allergens, gluten, or animal proteins. One of our most popular stations, Taste of Home, offers comforting, home-style meals designed to bring familiarity and warmth to our students. Each meal includes a well-balanced combination of protein, vegetables, and starch. To ensure inclusivity, we also offer a vegetarian version of the main entrée, allowing all students to enjoy a meal that meets their dietary preferences.

Introduction:

Every menu at Centennial Village is carefully crafted with students in mind. By gathering insights through a variety of feedback channels, we gain a deep understanding of student preferences and desires, allowing us to create menus that resonate with our diverse community. Our students come from all corners of the country—and the world—and our menus reflect their hometown flavors while also introducing them to the rich, vibrant tastes of local Miami cuisine. We routinely adjust our menus based on student satisfaction, ensuring we continuously meet their evolving tastes and dietary needs.

Essay:

Students at the University of Miami come from a wide range of backgrounds, with a significant number hailing from the Northeast. To help ease their transition to college life, we offer familiar comfort foods like spicy chicken rigatoni, disco fries, and sloppy joes, bringing them a "taste of home." Located in the heart of Miami, Centennial Village also embraces the opportunity to introduce students to the vibrant and diverse flavors of the city. Through special events like Miami Bites, our menus showcase the rich culinary traditions of Miami, featuring local favorites like pan con lechón, arepas, and key lime pie. Our menus are designed to run on an eight-week cycle and are updated regularly based on student feedback. We gather insights through various channels, including in-house satisfaction systems, face-to-face interactions, annual surveys, and internal reporting. The culinary team carefully reviews these insights and production sheets to ensure popular items remain a staple on the menu through menu finesse.

In response to student input, Centennial Village dining hall introduced three exciting new stations: All-Day Breakfast, an

Allergen-Free Station, and a Showcase Bakery—each designed to enhance the dining experience and cater to student preferences.

Introduction:

At Centennial Village, we know dining is a multi-sensory experience, and presentation is as important as flavor. Every station is thoughtfully designed with a show plate at each meal period, creating a visually enticing display that draws students in before their first bite. To enhance the warmth and comfort of our meals, dishes are served in Bon Chef and Le Creuset cookware, evoking the feeling of home-cooked dining. Our chefs take a meticulous approach to menu development, carefully selecting plate colors and textures to maximize visual appeal. By engaging all the senses, every meal becomes an immersive dining experience.

Essay:

At Centennial Village, meal presentation is carefully curated to enhance both clarity and appeal. Vegan and vegetarian meals are easily identifiable in green pans, while our allergen-free station maintains strict separation using purple pans, cutlery, and equipment, ensuring the safety of students with dietary restrictions. Each station is designed to offer a well-balanced meal, complete with protein, vegetables, and carbohydrates, creating not only a nutritious plate but also an eye-catching one. At the heart of the dining hall is our central station, a dynamic four-sided hub where students can enjoy homestyle meals, classic pizza and pasta, or custom grill specials ordered through the Tapin2 mobile system. This main hub is strategically located for easy access and is positioned near beverage stations for a seamless dining experience. For our culinary team, a centrally located cooler within this island ensures efficient mise en place and smooth operations. One of our most visually striking stations is The Confectionery, where expert bakers in the showcase bakery handcraft an array of stunning desserts. From delicate pastries to bold, colorful confections, every treat is designed to be just as beautiful as it is delicious!

Introduction:

The Back of House kitchen at Centennial Village is meticulously designed for efficiency and food safety. Ingredients move seamlessly from the loading dock to walk-in coolers, into prep areas, and finally to serving stations, with a structured waste disposal system ensuring safe handling at every stage. Our allergen-free kitchen is a fully separate space, eliminating cross-contact risks. Equipped with dedicated cutlery and specialized production equipment, it provides students with food allergies a stress-free dining experience, giving them the confidence and peace of mind to enjoy their meals safely.

Essay:

At Centennial Village, our kitchen is designed with precision, prioritizing waste reduction, food freshness, and team safety. In our commissary, all produce and meats are portioned before being distributed to stations, centralizing cutting for efficiency, safety, and minimal waste. Our waste reduction initiatives include a composting program that tracks trim waste and overproduction. Food that can be donated is sent to the Miami Rescue Mission, while the rest is stored in our composting cooler for weekly pickup. Food freshness is at the heart of every meal we serve. To maximize quality, our chefs prepare meals in the back of house and finish them at front-facing stations, ensuring students receive the freshest dishes. Our facility is also designed for batch cooking, allowing meals to be prepared in smaller portions for optimal freshness. Additionally, proteins and produce are stored in separate coolers, ensuring the highest food safety standards are met. Safety is a top priority, reflected in our high-tech oil system that reduces injury risk. Clean oil is stored and transported through ceiling pipes, while used oil is collected in a separate tank, eliminating the need for team members to carry hot oil. Used oil is sustainably converted into biofuels.

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