

# Kacie Haynes



AwGQDekx

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## Entry details

Entry Name: Plant-Based Poke Bowl

Institution Name: Campus Auxiliary Services at SUNY Geneseo

Entry Completed By (*name and position*): Kacie Haynes, Creative Director

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## Essay:

Campus Auxiliary Services, Inc. at SUNY Geneseo—known on campus as “CAS”—operates three residential dining complexes, each featuring pay-one-price, all-you-care-to-eat service. Guests can choose from a variety of specialized stations, including vegan/vegetarian, Clean Eats (free from the top nine allergens), gluten-friendly, dairy-free, kosher, and halal options.

Our culinary team includes three professionally trained Head Chefs, a Sushi Chef, and a Culinary Support Center (CSC) Manager, all collaborating with the Nutrition & Wellness Manager to create diverse, inclusive menus. These menus feature special-diet recipes made with fresh, locally and economically sourced ingredients—such as our Nutritionist-approved Plant-Based Poke Bowl.

The Tofu/Plant-Based Poke Bowl was created to offer a vibrant, health-supportive option at the Twisted Fork station. Gluten-friendly and dairy-free, it features crisp romaine, medium-grain rice, mango, carrots, cucumber, and organic tofu, all finished with a savory house-made poke sauce. Its bright colors and mix of textures—from silky tofu to crunchy vegetables—reflect popular campus bowl concepts focused on customization and balanced nutrition.

Designed as a nourishing, plant-forward meal, the bowl supports sustained energy and overall wellness. Organic tofu provides complete plant-based protein along with isoflavones linked to heart and anti-inflammatory benefits. This protein source promotes satiety and helps support steady blood sugar levels—key for busy student lifestyles.

The rice base supplies accessible energy, while romaine, carrots, and cucumber add fiber, hydration, and essential micronutrients. Mango contributes natural sweetness, vitamin C, and carotenoids for antioxidant and immune support. Together, the fruits and vegetables enhance flavor, increase nutrient density, and help balance the meal's glycemic impact.

The house-made poke sauce adds both flavor and function. Sesame oil and toasted sesame seeds provide healthy fats that aid absorption of vitamins A and K from the vegetables. Garlic offers sulfur compounds associated with immune and metabolic support, and tamari delivers gluten-free umami flavor while maintaining dietary inclusivity.

Overall, the bowl delivers a balanced combination of complex carbohydrates for fuel, plant-based protein for satiety and muscle support, and healthy fats for nutrient absorption and sustained energy.

The Plant-Based Poke Bowl launched through a targeted campus campaign highlighting its health benefits, plant-forward ingredients, and inclusive, allergen-friendly options. Featured on the online menu with filtering and search capabilities, the dish clearly identifies vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free, and dairy-free options, making it easy for students with dietary restrictions to find suitable choices.

Collaborating with the Nutrition & Wellness Manager, the bowl was promoted as a balanced option for sustained energy. Additional efforts during National Vegetarian and Vegan Awareness Months and Campus Sustainability Month reinforced its plant-forward and environmentally conscious positioning. Engagement was encouraged through a feedback with raffle entry, and a coordinated mix of social media, digital and print signage, website content, online menu, and e-newsletters drove awareness, participation, and repeat patronage.

CAS may face challenges sourcing consistent, high-quality local and specialty ingredients due to seasonality and limited suppliers. Maintaining freshness, allergen safety, and consistent demand across locations also requires careful coordination. To control costs, CAS utilizes bulk purchasing, ingredient cross-utilization, and cost-effective plant-based proteins like tofu, along with seasonal sourcing and waste reduction practices.

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