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Appalachian State University

Entry details

Entry Name:	The Scoop - Campus Dining Orientation
Institution Name:	Appalachian State University
Entry Completed By (<i>name and position</i>):	Katie Grubb, Director of Brand Management

Starting college comes with plenty of new challenges. Figuring out where and how to eat shouldn't be one of them. The Scoop Campus Dining Orientation program was designed to ease that transition. This month-long program introduced students to campus dining through interactive, supportive experiences that built confidence. Signature components included the Dining Dollar Dash, Dining Discovery Tours, and in-person tabling. These programs gave students multiple ways to learn, explore, and ask questions at their own pace. By combining education with engagement and incentives, The Scoop transformed dining from an unknown into a familiar, welcoming part of students' daily routines.

Essay:

The Scoop is built around three core experiences that work together to reduce uncertainty and help students feel comfortable navigating campus dining and all the resources offered.

The Dining Dollar Dash was a self-paced digital scavenger hunt that immersed students in dining spaces and tools through guided challenges. Students completed tasks such as exploring venues, using Nutrislice and Grubhub, identifying allergen resource staff, and providing feedback, earning points along the way that translated into Dining Dollars to use in retail dining spaces. This gamified approach encouraged exploration while allowing students to learn at their own pace and comfort level.

Three Dining Discovery Tours provided a structured, in-person introduction. Led by Director of Nutrition, Farrah Reidt, these 90-minute walking tours guide students through every major dining location, offering food samples, staff interaction, and real-time instruction on how to navigate each space and use their meal plan effectively.

In addition, in-person tabling sessions during the first weeks of the semester adds another layer of support, creating opportunities for one-on-one conversations, personalized guidance, and connection at various high traffic locations across campus.

Together, these experiences create a welcoming, community-driven introduction that helps students feel prepared, supported, and confident from the start.

Introduction:

The Scoop's marketing strategy was designed to meet students early and often, using clear, approachable messaging to reduce uncertainty and encourage participation. A cohesive visual identity and consistent tone were carried across orientation sessions, social media, the Campus Dining website, the monthly newsletter, and digital display screens across campus. Messaging positioned The Scoop as a helpful guide to "learning the ropes" of dining, rather than another requirement. Signature experiences like the Dining Dollar Dash and Dining Discovery Tours were promoted as fun, low-pressure ways to explore. This multi-channel approach ensured strong visibility and made participation feel easy, relevant, and rewarding.

Essay:

Marketing for The Scoop focused on making campus dining feel approachable, intuitive, and easy to navigate from the very beginning. Messaging emphasized the value of building confidence through first-hand experience, paired with the added incentive of earning Dining Dollars through participation.

Promotion began during orientation, positioning The Scoop as a natural next step after move-in—something students could engage with on their own time as they settled into campus life. This messaging was reinforced across multiple channels, including social media, website news features, the Campus Dining newsletter (The Feed), and high-visibility digital display screens across campus. These repeated touchpoints ensured students encountered the program in ways that felt relevant and timely throughout their day.

To further expand reach, The Scoop was shared with Resident Assistants and orientation leaders as an easy, ready-made activity that could help build community within residence halls and small groups.

Visual design remained bold, clean, and student-friendly, with clear calls to action that made participation simple. By combining consistent messaging, strong incentives, and multiple entry points, The Scoop successfully turned awareness into action while helping students feel more confident engaging with campus dining.

Introduction:

The Scoop had a meaningful impact on the first-year student experience by reducing anxiety and increasing confidence in navigating campus dining. Through a combination of guided tours, self-paced challenges, and in-person support, students were given multiple opportunities to explore dining spaces in ways that felt comfortable and manageable. The program also fostered community by creating shared experiences and encouraging interaction with both peers and staff. By helping students build familiarity early in the semester, The Scoop ensured they felt supported—not overwhelmed—as they developed routines and confidence within campus dining.

Essay:

The Scoop directly addressed a common first-year challenge: entering dining spaces without knowing how they work. By creating structured and self-guided opportunities to explore, the program helped students replace uncertainty with confidence.

Dining Discovery Tours provided a supportive, guided environment where students could walk through each location, sample food, and ask questions in real time. This experience was particularly impactful for students with dietary needs, offering reassurance and building trust through direct interaction with knowledgeable staff.

The Dining Dollar Dash extended this learning by encouraging independent exploration. Tasks such as finding allergen resource staff, navigating Nutrislice, placing mobile orders, and visiting multiple locations helped students build familiarity with systems they would use daily.

In-person tabling added a personal, approachable touchpoint where students could ask questions, receive nutrition guidance, and connect one-on-one with dining professionals.

The program also created opportunities for community building, whether through shared tour experiences, completing challenges with friends, or casual conversations at tabling events.

As a result, students reported feeling more prepared and less intimidated, leading to increased confidence and engagement with campus dining from the very beginning.

Introduction:

The Scoop was intentionally designed to transform campus dining spaces into active learning environments where students could build confidence through experience. Rather than separating education from the dining setting, the program embedded learning directly within spaces students use every day. Dining locations, digital menu boards, and visible staff identifiers, such as purple allergen resource badges, served as real-time teaching tools. Experiences like Dining Discovery Tours and the Dining Dollar Dash guided students through these environments, helping them connect information to action. This approach made dining spaces feel more familiar, accessible, and less intimidating from the start.

Essay:

The design of The Scoop focused on helping students feel comfortable in dining spaces by allowing them to learn within them. Each experience was intentionally built around real environments, reinforcing familiarity through direct interaction.

Dining Discovery Tours guided students through major dining locations, demonstrating how each space functions while highlighting key features such as menu displays, ordering processes, and available resources. Tours were anchored by a large, branded “The Scoop” sign at the starting location, with guides carrying signage throughout to maintain visibility and cohesion. Sampling food and meeting staff created a welcoming atmosphere that reduced hesitation and built positive associations with each space.

The Dining Dollar Dash reinforced this design by encouraging students to revisit locations independently. Tasks prompted students to engage with digital tools like Nutrislice, locate allergen resource staff, and explore multiple venues, strengthening understanding through repetition.

In-person tabling further activated these spaces by creating approachable, visible points of support where students could ask questions and receive guidance in real time.

Photos of the program capture students actively engaging—exploring, interacting, and learning by doing—demonstrating how thoughtful design can transform everyday spaces into intuitive, confidence-building learning environments.

Log in to nacufs.awardsplatform.com to see complete entry attachments.

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