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Campus Auxiliary Services at SUNY Geneseo

Entry details

Entry Name:	Home Cooked: Student Recipe Contest
Institution Name:	Campus Auxiliary Services at SUNY Geneseo
Entry Completed By (<i>name and position</i>):	Kacie Haynes, Creative Director

The Home Cooked Student Recipe Contest reflects the SUNY Geneseo Campus Auxiliary Services (CAS) commitment to providing a high-quality dining experience for a diverse campus community and guests. The event encouraged students to share recipes that could be adapted to meet a variety of dietary needs, supporting the dining program’s ability to offer balanced, accessible menus including vegan, vegetarian, kosher, halal, and allergen-free options.

By integrating student creativity with established nutrition and dining practices, the contest highlights how campus dining can celebrate cultural traditions while maintaining a focus on health, inclusivity, and sustainability.

Essay:

The culinary team evaluated submissions for feasibility within a high-volume campus dining environment while preserving each student’s concept. Recipes were assigned to dining stations based on preparation requirements and dietary alignment, ensuring food safety protocols and consistency with existing kitchen workflows and specialized production areas.

Allergen-free recipes were developed with established protocols for avoiding major allergens.

Each recipe was adapted to scale to approximately 1,000 servings, utilize existing equipment, and incorporate student participation during preparation and service.

This special event transformed regular dinner at Letchworth Dining Complex into an interactive culinary experience. The dining space was enhanced with themed signage, station-specific displays, and a thoughtfully designed layout that encouraged exploration and interaction. Service areas were organized to highlight each student-created dish, reinforcing the cultural and personal stories behind the menu. Student-created dishes took center stage with themed digital menus, table tents, and QR codes to explore recipes and their stories.

Six student-inspired recipes stood out—balancing flavors, textures, and temperatures and utilizing a variety of preparation methods: Chicken Biryani, Jollof Rice, Black Bean Brownies, Chocolate-Orange Banana Bread, Cowboy Casserole, and Potsticker & Cabbage Soup—each reflecting a vibrant range of flavors, creativity, and the passion of the students who created them.

Introduction:

Campus Auxiliary Services (CAS) serves the SUNY Geneseo campus community. For many students, food is one of the strongest connections to home. The Home Cooked Student Recipe Contest was created to celebrate those connections by inviting students to share dishes that matter most to them—recipes passed down through family traditions, foods tied to culture and heritage, and comfort meals that evoke a sense of home.

Essay:

The contest transformed a standard dinner service at the residential Letchworth Dining Complex into an interactive, student-centered culinary experience. By showcasing student-submitted recipes, the event fostered meaningful engagement while providing dining services with inspiration for more diverse and inclusive menu offerings. The result was a dining experience that reflected the voices, traditions, and tastes of the campus community.

Selected participants collaborated with the head chef and culinary team to prepare and present their dishes, gaining hands-on experience in a professional kitchen. During dinner service, diners moved through all-you-care-to-eat stations featuring student-inspired dishes, creating an interactive experience while voting for their favorites. A panel of faculty, staff, and students evaluated each plated entry based on taste, uniqueness, and presentation.

The event celebrated creativity and cultural expression while strengthening connections between students and the residential dining program. It concluded with prizes for the top three recipes and recognition for all participants.

Introduction:

Building excitement and encouraging participation across campus fueled the success of the Home Cooked Student Recipe Contest. Marketing executed a cohesive multi-channel campaign—including social media, email announcements, submission and voting forms, and vibrant signage in high-traffic areas—to invite students to share recipes inspired by personal stories, cultural traditions, and favorite comfort foods. Held in a pay-one-price dining unit serving mostly unlimited meal-plan students, success was measured by participation, engagement, and dining traffic. Participation exceeded expectations: submissions represented every station, and four of six contestants collaborated with the head chef to prepare and plate their dishes, showcasing creativity and culinary skill.

Essay:

Engagement was high: students interacted with judges, shared details about their dishes, and sampled creations, sparking energy and conversation throughout the dining space. Feedback highlighted enthusiasm and enjoyment: one student said, “I always love how this is done with the students!” Another commented, “It was so much better than I was expecting!” Dish-specific praise included “Chicken Biryani is goated!” and “Incredible flavors!”

Branded signage, themed menus and recipe cards, and a coordinated dining setup created a cohesive, immersive experience. Students saw their recipes brought to life, making the event memorable and community focused.

Sustainability was integral: service materials were reusable or compostable, half the recipes were vegan or vegetarian, and locally sourced, plant-forward options helped reduce waste, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and promote healthier dining.

In partnership with Coca-Cola, prizes—including gift cards, cooking kits, and grand prizes like a popcorn maker, Slushi machine, or wireless speaker—encouraged engagement and celebrated student creativity. Feedback indicated lasting impact, with students expressing interest in new menu items and stronger connections with dining staff.

Through the Home Cooked Student Recipe Contest, campus dining continues to highlight student voices, showcase home-inspired flavors, and foster community through food.

Introduction:

The Home Cooked Student Recipe Contest successfully met its goals of increasing student engagement, expanding menu diversity, and strengthening connections between students and campus dining. Attendance was 64% higher than a comparable dining location, demonstrating a measurable increase in participation and interest.

Essay:

Students played a direct role in the event’s success, from recipe submission through execution. Four of the six selected participants collaborated directly with the culinary team, gaining hands-on experience while contributing to food preparation and presentation.

Sustainability was integrated throughout the event, including the use of reusable and compostable service materials, locally sourced ingredients, and plant-forward menu options. Notably, half of the featured recipes were vegan or vegetarian, supporting environmentally responsible dining practices.

The event delivered a strong “wow” factor by transforming a routine dining experience into an interactive, student-driven showcase of culture, creativity, and community, leaving a lasting impression on participants and attendees alike.

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

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Attachment name

Compilation of video an...

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