

1901 Marketplace Renovation

Cal Poly

Introduction:

The renovation of the 1901 Marketplace was envisioned as a key component of the Campus Dining Master Plan, which was developed in 2014. To bring this vision to life, Campus Dining partnered with Associated Students Incorporated (ASI) to create a cohesive and collaborative neighborhood experience within the University Union. The renovation of Cal Poly's oldest active dining facility, Building 19, played a central role in this transformative effort.

Essay:

After three years of construction, Cal Poly reopened the 1901 Marketplace in January 2024, following a \$40 million renovation. Construction began in Spring 2021, with the design of the open-air dining venue inspired by iconic locations such as the Ferry Building in San Francisco and Chelsea Market in New York City. The venue features customizable spaces, offering a dynamic dining experience that combines popular restaurant chains like Panda Express and Chick-fil-A, buffet-style all-you-care-to-eat options, and unique student-driven concepts like Picos and Pom & Honey. These original eateries were selected based on extensive student feedback, ensuring the most sought-after dining options were brought to campus. In addition, Julian's, a beloved campus coffee shop, was introduced, serving locally brewed SLAKE Coffee. The result is a vibrant, open dining environment that emphasizes variety, flexibility, and community engagement. Starting in 2017, a comprehensive campus-wide initiative was launched to gather feedback from students, faculty, and staff. This process included research into

emerging dining trends, an in-depth analysis of the technical requirements for the complete renovation of the 60-year-old facility, and visits to popular dining establishments to inform the design and planning stages.

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Celebrating the completion of the renovation was a key priority. The Campus Dining Marketing and Communications team launched an extensive campaign to promote the newly renovated facility and generate excitement. Weekly social media updates highlighted construction progress, shared new facility features, and showcased updated photos. A dedicated microsite was created to provide information about upcoming offerings, sustainability goals, and design renderings. The campaign then expanded to earned media coverage, featuring stories on the venue's unique offerings and the campus's achievement of LEED certification. Additional promotional efforts included press releases, features in campus-wide newsletters, digital signage, and construction fence wraps.

Essay:

To ensure staff were up to speed on the new building, invited guests were allowed in for soft openings so that venues could work through the process and flow. This gave staff a chance to improve efficiency, develop communication and continuity within their venue. Menus were tasted at small feedback events. This allowed the team to garner feedback and tweak menus based on customer feedback and ideas. The menus were developed around survey data, a mix of national and proprietary brands. Analysis was given to how these 8 new venues would complement the other 38 on campus as a whole, and how they would add diversity and menu variety across dining establishments so as to meet customer expectations regarding high quality, convenience, customization and quick service. Financial operational goals were tracked throughout the process. Adjustments were always being made throughout the process to accommodate ongoing KPI's. Data was collected at each venue to incorporate into the larger facilities' financial performance. 1901 Marketplace currently accounts for 26.7% of all campus transactions, accounting for 7,200 transactions daily.

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During the construction process, public tours were offered on weekends, with four tours each weekend accommodating 10-20 participants per session. Additionally, Campus Dining leadership conducted private group tours to generate excitement and anticipation for the grand opening.

Essay:

To further engage the university community, small-group special events and soft openings were held prior to the official launch. These events not only built enthusiasm among patrons but also provided invaluable opportunities for staff training, menu testing, and refining operational plans. Through the planning process, the campus community was consistently asked for feedback, and given regular updates on the progress of construction and opening dates. Small event opportunities were hosted to test the facility out, included invites to Housing, Administration, Auxiliaries, Student Government and local media. Due to its central location on campus, the entire campus utilizes the space and thus was including in the lead up to the launch.

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