

# Jack Spurlock



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## Entry details

Entry Name: University Housing and Dining - FAST Program

Institution Name: The University of Texas at Austin

Entry Completed By (*name and position*): Jack Spurlock, Associate Director for Marketing

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## Essay:

Special Diet Program of the Year

The FAST Program: FAST Line and FAST Pantry  
University Housing and Dining, The University of Texas at Austin

The Fresh and Simple Tastes (FAST) Program reflects University Housing and Dining's long-standing commitment to ensuring students with food allergies and special dietary needs have full, equitable access to residential dining. Rather than relying on a single accommodation model, FAST is a layered, operationally integrated program combining dedicated production environments, structured student training and multiple access points.

The FAST Line at J2 Dining, a residential dining hall, provides complete meals prepared and served in a fully dedicated allergen-controlled space. Every ingredient and process excludes the top nine allergens, and all food is stored, prepared and served exclusively within that environment to eliminate cross contact. The program operates at sustained scale, serving approximately 80 students at breakfast, 150 at lunch and 150 at dinner daily. This consistent participation demonstrates demand, trust and institutional commitment.

In 2025, UHD expanded access through the FAST Pantry at Kins Dining, another residential dining hall. Rather than reduce allergen accommodations during operational changes on North Campus, leadership introduced a secure, UT

ID-activated pantry model that allows trained students to independently access allergen-free meals and staples. Students complete a brief mandatory training before receiving access, reinforcing safety expectations while empowering autonomy. The pantry is stocked with allergen-free staples and expanded offerings such as fresh fruit, proteins and ready-to-use items, supporting both flexibility and repeated use.

Together, the FAST Line and FAST Pantry meet diverse student needs under a unified theme of safety, dignity and independence. Students may choose a fully staffed service model or a controlled self-access option depending on comfort level and schedule. Information about the program is centralized and accessible through Registered Dietitians, residential dining signage and digital communication, ensuring clarity and ease of enrollment.

Marketing efforts prioritize functional clarity over broad promotion. Messaging explains what FAST is, who it serves and how to access services through clear, step-by-step guidance. Students engage with Registered Dietitians directly and complete training through the university's Canvas platform, increasing compliance and reducing confusion. Communication is reinforced through website information, in-person consultations and physical signage within dining halls.

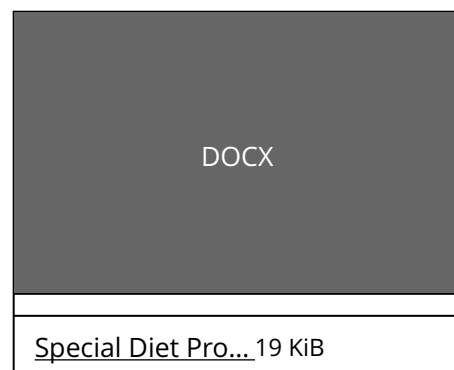
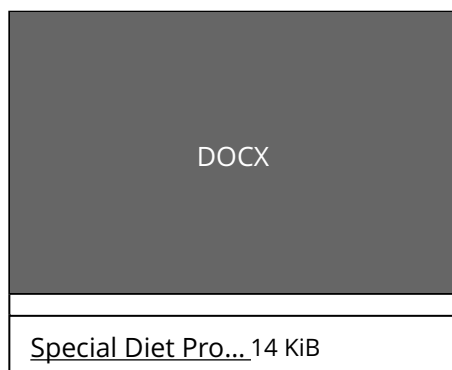
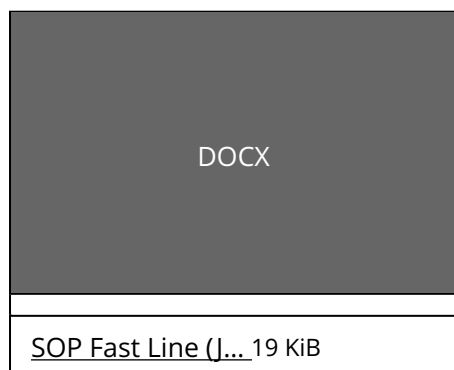
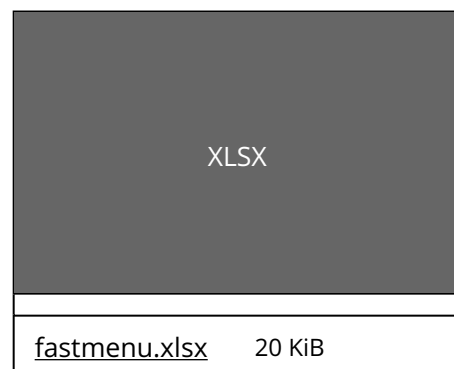
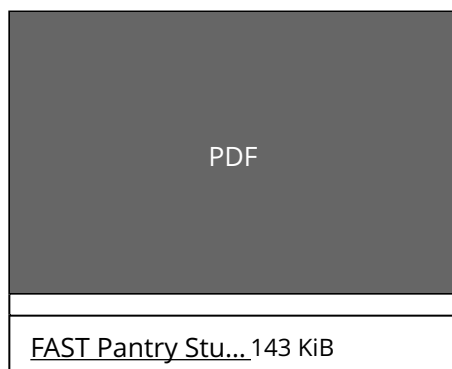
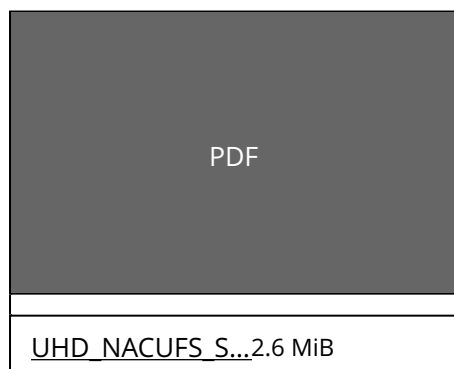
Program content is grounded in current food allergy science and best practices. All meals exclude the top nine allergens, and staff receive in-depth allergen training, FAST-specific education and ServSafe Allergen Certification. Educational materials are concise, professional and designed for practical application.

Program goals are clear: reduce barriers to safe dining and increase student confidence in residential dining halls. By the end of Fall 2025, 29 students had enrolled in the FAST Pantry, with access logs demonstrating engagement. Combined with sustained FAST Line participation and campus recognition through The Daily Texan, the program demonstrates measurable reach and positive impact.

The FAST Program represents a mature, scalable model that integrates safety, autonomy and operational excellence within everyday residential dining.

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