

More Than a Meal // Jump Start Cooking Classes

Central Washington University

Introduction:

The Jump Start Cooking Classes extend Dining Services' long-standing commitment to education, sustainability, and student engagement, reinforcing its vision to promote a diverse community and its mission to nourish the body and mind of the campus community. By partnering with Jump Start, Wildcat Farm, and Wildcat Pantry, Dining Services provides intimate, hands-on learning opportunities that help students—particularly first-generation participants—gain confidence in their ability to cook and build connections through food. These experiences align with Dining's core values of Culture and Sustainable Practices, ensuring dining is more than a service—it's a foundation for student success.

Essay:

Dining Services distinguishes itself by fostering meaningful partnerships that enrich student engagement and success. Through proactive collaboration with Jump Start, Wildcat Farm, and Wildcat Pantry, Dining continuously finds new ways to support students through food education and hands-on learning. This program strengthens cross-campus relationships, reinforcing Dining's role in student success, well-being, and sustainability.

In the Food Science Laboratory, students develop practical cooking skills under professional guidance. At Wildcat Farm, they engage with the full food system, touring the fields before joining a cooking demonstration. These experiences build confidence in the kitchen, encourage students to make informed food choices, and cultivate a sense of community through shared meals.

Rebekah Bresse, Jump Start Coordinator, shared:

"From the beginning, Chef Joe and AD Dustin Atkinson expressed how much they love opportunities to connect with students. Their passion for building community through dining is clear—they understand that food is more than a meal, it's a way to engage, support, and create meaningful experiences that impact student success."

By embedding education, sustainability, and community-building into dining, Dining Services ensures that food is more than nourishment—it is a catalyst for student engagement and success that extends far beyond the meal.

Introduction:

The Jump Start Cooking Classes marketing efforts focused on capturing the program's impact and creating a foundation for future outreach. Through collaboration with the University Relations team, Dining Services documented the experience through visually compelling photo and video assets, now featured in Jump Start rack cards, social media, and articles in Central Today, CWU's campus news outlet. The social media photo carousel recap highlighted both the cooking process and student reflections, creating an authentic, relatable narrative. These materials reinforce Dining Services' commitment to food education, community building, and food security, while laying the groundwork for broader promotion in Fall 2025.

Essay:

Marketing efforts for the Jump Start Cooking Classes centered on preserving the program's impact and leveraging it for future engagement. University Relations collaborated with Dining Services to develop high-quality photography, video content, and student testimonials, ensuring the experience was well-documented. Central Today articles highlighted the program's role in connecting students to food education and sustainability, while social media content expanded its reach through a photo recap showcasing student reflections and hands-on learning.

Although no broad promotion was needed for this year's pre-selected group, the captured assets now support Jump Start 2025 recruitment. Rack cards and other outreach materials feature striking imagery, engaging messaging, and a cohesive design that reflects CWU's brand identity, strengthening promotional efforts not only for Dining Services but also for campus-wide student engagement initiatives. These materials highlight the impact of hands-on learning, reinforcing CWU's commitment to fostering confidence, life skills, and meaningful student connections.

Additionally, continued collaborations with Wildcat Pantry ensure food education remains central to Dining Services' outreach. By prioritizing compelling storytelling and high-quality visuals, this marketing approach enhances visibility across multiple platforms, creating a model for future dining programs that deepens student engagement and showcases Dining Services' lasting impact.

Introduction:

At CWU, Dining fosters belonging, builds life skills, and creates community-driven learning experiences through food. Jump Start Cooking Classes, part of CWU's extended orientation for first-year students, provide hands-on experiences connecting participants with food, community, and campus resources. Students develop cooking skills, gain confidence using accessible ingredients, and build connections. Freshman Ari Ringsbye shared, "The recipe was simple, but Chef Joe made something wonderful out of it... Sharing food is how I connect with others." Through cooking classes and a Wildcat Farm tour, culminating in a farm-to-table dinner, students experience food in a new way.

Essay:

The Jump Start Cooking Classes enrich the campus experience by equipping students—particularly first-generation participants—with essential life skills, reinforcing food security, and fostering personal connections. These hands-on experiences build confidence in cooking, encourage informed food choices, and strengthen student engagement. Rebekah Bresse, Jump Start Coordinator, noted students immediately signed up again, responding with excitement: "Yayyy!" and "Can't wait!" Their enthusiasm reflects the program's ability to ease the college transition while reinforcing belonging.

Students form meaningful connections with Dining staff. Executive Chef Joe Ritchie shared, "These events allow us to build lasting relationships with students. They help put a human face on Dining Services and give us a chance to learn from one

another.”

Tevin Murlin, a Jump Start participant, emphasized the enduring impact:
"Jump Start cooking classes gave me valuable skills for the future. Learning to cook different foods and how ingredients interact has been incredibly useful. These skills will benefit me long-term."

The program extends Dining’s mission, integrating education, sustainability, and community engagement. Partnerships with Wildcat Farm and Wildcat Pantry reinforce food security by offering fresh produce and recovered meals. Aligned with CWU’s student success initiatives, these classes make a lasting impact on well-being.

Introduction:

The Jump Start Cooking Classes connect students to the full cycle of food production, preparation, and enjoyment. Two purposefully selected spaces—the Food Science Laboratory in the Health Sciences building and Wildcat Farm—offer hands-on learning experiences integrating culinary skills with sustainability and nutrition. In the lab, students practice cooking techniques in a professional-grade kitchen, gaining practical experience after a chef-led demonstration. At Wildcat Farm, students tour fields where ingredients are grown before joining a cooking demonstration at the outdoor shelter and sharing a meal inside a high tunnel, reinforcing the connection between food sources and cooking.

Essay:

Intentional space selection played a key role in the Jump Start Cooking Classes, ensuring students actively participated in every stage of food preparation. The Food Science Laboratory provided a professional setting where students worked with high-quality equipment, including gas stoves, stainless steel workstations, and commercial-grade tools. Each class began with a chef demonstration before students prepared their own dishes, reinforcing culinary skills through hands-on practice.

Beyond the lab, Wildcat Farm provided an immersive learning environment. The experience included a guided farm tour, led by the farm manager, introducing students to the produce they would later prepare. Under the outdoor shelter, Chef Joe demonstrated cooking techniques using fresh farm ingredients, offering students a direct connection to their food. A meal was then enjoyed inside one of the farm’s high tunnels, bringing the learning experience full circle.

These spaces foster long-term learning by equipping students with practical cooking skills they can carry beyond college. As Kaila Red Bow, Wildcat Pantry Coordinator, noted, students later sought out pantry ingredients featured in the class, applying what they learned in real life. This approach supports Dining’s mission to nourish both body and mind while reinforcing sustainability, food security, and student success.

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

PDF	PDF	PDF
Space and Desig... 3.2 MiB	Space and Desig... 4.0 MiB	Marketing Mater... 820 KiB



[Jump Start Cooki...](#) 674 KiB



[Jump Start Cooki...](#) 515 KiB



[Jump Start Cooki...](#) 732 KiB



[Jump Start Cooki...](#) 587 KiB



[Jump Start Cooki...](#) 633 KiB



[Jump Start Cooki...](#) 576 KiB



[Jump Start Cooki...](#) 663 KiB



[Jump Start Farm...](#) 1.2 MiB



[Jump Start Farm...](#) 1.2 MiB



[Jump Start Farm...](#) 698 KiB



[Jump Start Farm...](#) 951 KiB



[Jump Start Farm...](#) 663 KiB



Jump Start Farm... 716 KiB

Attachment name Jump Start Cooking Class...
https://youtu.be/MFzkK...

Jump Start Farm... 1.2 MiB



Attachment name Jump Start Cooking Class...
https://www.flickr.com/p...

Jump Start Farm... 1.0 MiB