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Appalachian State University

Entry details

Entry Name:	Savor Station
Institution Name:	Appalachian State University
Entry Completed By (<i>name and position</i>):	Katie Grubb, Director of Brand Management

At Appalachian State University, we believe safe dining should never mean sacrificing flavor, variety, or experience. The Savor station at Rivers Street Café, our largest dining hall, was created to meet the needs of students with food allergies while redefining what special diet dining can be.

Savor offers chef-driven meals free from the top nine allergens and gluten, but its true innovation lies in its inclusive approach. Rather than labeling the station as “allergen-free,” we lead with bold flavors, fresh ingredients, and globally inspired menus. This removes stigma and allows students with dietary restrictions to dine confidently alongside their peers. The result is a program that appeals to a broad audience — from students managing allergies to athletes, vegans, and those simply seeking high-quality, wellness-focused meals.

The theme of safe, craveable, and inclusive dining is evident throughout. Menus rotate regularly and feature diverse offerings such as blackened halal chicken bowls, chicken tikka curry, lamb kabobs, and plant-forward harissa bowls. Each dish is prepared daily using whole, unprocessed ingredients, ensuring both nutritional integrity and culinary excellence.

Accessibility and communication are central to the program’s success. Students can view menus and full ingredient information through Nutrislice online and allergen info on menu display screens on-site, while FARE allergen-trained staff and Registered Dietitian consultations provide additional support. Savor is promoted through a variety of

channels, including digital signage, social media, dining tours, nutrition consultations, and a monthly newsletter, ensuring students understand how to access and benefit from the program. Messaging is intentionally simple and student-centered, focusing on flavor and variety.

Savor supports broader university goals of student wellness, inclusivity, and engagement. Educational components are seamlessly integrated through ingredient transparency, personalized consultations, and collaboration with the Office of Disability Resources. These efforts have improved students’ ability to safely utilize their meal plans while reducing the need for special accommodations.

The program’s impact is evident in its strong participation and campus-wide appeal. Savor consistently draws high traffic, with students choosing it not just for safety, but for taste and quality. The university’s Chancellor and Student Government Association’s president are often spotted in line. Feedback indicates increased confidence among students with dietary restrictions and a shift in perception, where allergen-friendly dining is no longer viewed as limiting, but as desirable.

The Savor station at Rivers Street Café shows that allergen-friendly dining can be delicious, diverse, and inclusive. By prioritizing fresh, unprocessed ingredients and thoughtfully designed menus, we’ve created a program that students trust, chefs are proud of, and the entire campus celebrates.

At Appalachian State, we believe every student deserves access to safe, exciting, and satisfying meals. The Savor station delivers exactly that, raising the bar for allergen-free innovation and redefining what inclusive dining can be.

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Attachment name

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