

NACUFS (2025)

Residential Dining Facility of the Year

Teraanga Commons Dining Hall

Carleton University

Introduction:

Presentation of the Dining's Hall's dishes and design is uplifted further by effective marketing materials incorporated throughout the space. Every component of the operation was selected to be as engaging and practical as possible, and this extends to elements such as informational signage, menu boards and other assets. What's more, Carleton Dining is constantly soliciting feedback from guests, incorporating it into the changes we make to serve our clientele even better. Our Napkin Talk program is a seamless and simple service that allows us to remain in tune with the needs of our customer base.

Essay:

Standard marketing assets mainly consist of menu boards, which are completely digital and are featured at all the main stations at the Dining Hall. Each board features need-to-know information including a station's name, hours and dishes being served and features a looping video background that is thematically consistent with the offerings at each station. Menu items and product identifiers (PIDs) also include dietary icons that allow guests to take whatever dietary accommodations they may have into consideration with ease. All menu boards are operated remotely and can be altered as needed; this happens often during special Chef Features or holiday-themed events.

Napkin Talk is our customer feedback service that features online and in-person components. Guests are free to share their thoughts either by completing an online form or by writing them on a napkin and posting it to a billboard located near the exit. We use this feedback to adjust our menu offerings and improve their quality. Responses are issued within 24 hours to

build rapport with our guests. Napkin Talk is intuitive, easy-to-use and provides us with valuable insight into how we can serve our guests even better.

Introduction:

Carleton Dining has always been committed to providing our guests with menu options that are as enjoyable as they are healthy. We hold our responsibility to nurture the growth of our campus' student body in the highest regard; as such, the Dining Hall frequently enlists the services of our Registered Dietitian Talia to keep students informed about the options available at the Dining Hall and encourage them to make healthy choices. With regular events like Wellness Wednesdays and nutritional counselling available by appointment, the Dining Hall is uniquely prepared to guide its guests towards a healthier lifestyle through better eating.

Essay:

To help students learn more about healthy eating, Talia developed two dozen educational games about nutrition for "Wellness Wednesdays." In one minute of engagement, students get thinking about their nutrition and are introduced to her complimentary services. With her office in the Dining Hall, she counsels students on topics from healthy eating, to navigating Dining Hall food restrictions, medical conditions and eating disorders. Talia also hosts an annual "Nutritious Grocery Shopping on a Budget" seminar, which is particularly popular with first-year residence students living away from home for the first time.

Stations such as Vegan and True Balance are specially designed to attend to the dietary needs of those who require such accommodations. Carleton Dining works with Housing to survey students entering residence, and Talia contacts students who are identified as having restrictions to offer guidance, her contact information and a link to our website's Food Allergy Guide. Nutritional content is all online and accessible with QR codes. Halal protein is identified on the menu, and available at each meal. Carleton is also one of a handful of universities to beta test Health Canada's Food Guide Friendly pledge to help optimize and market our menus' nutritiousness.

Introduction:

During the recent overhaul of the Teraanga Commons Dining Hall, Carleton Dining used the renovation as an opportunity to rebuild our menu from the ground up. The renovation raised the grand total of stations we have to 20, adding new ones and expanding upon existing stations; as such, it was necessary to reconsider all aspects of our front-of-house and back-of-house experience. Led by Senior Executive Chef Daniel Poulin and staff, the result was a fully revitalized, extensively accommodating four-week menu cycle that establishes Carleton Dining's AYCTE program as one of the best in North America.

Essay:

Developing the Dining Hall's menu mix was an unprecedented balancing act. It required that all 20 stations reconcile their respective menu traits with our clientele's dietary requirements (e.g. non-vegetarian halal options, items without allergens etc.) and include healthy and comfort options, dishes from differing ethnicities and cultures and ingredients sourced from local suppliers.

New features like True Balance and our Gluten-Free Pantry place the Dining Hall in a class of its own when it comes to meeting guests' dietary needs. The former offers dishes prepared in an isolated kitchen without 9 of the 11 major allergens, while the latter offers additional options to guests with severe gluten intolerances. All dishes are labelled with intuitive icons for navigating options with ease. Regional favourites include smoked meat, shawarma and poutine and locally supplied items include most meats, breads, hot sauces, jerk seasonings and fresh produce. Client feedback also influences changes to the menu, from adding more vegan options to including seasonal menu specials during the Super Bowl, Christmas, Diwali and Thanksgiving.

For quality control, Sous Chefs taste test all dishes and a robust Food Safety Audit is conducted monthly along with daily Food Safety Huddles to review HACCP guidelines.

Introduction:

Carleton Dining is privileged to be able to conduct its AYCTE operations in a space whose design bears a high degree of aesthetic appeal. The renovation at Teraanga Commons Dining Hall has brought the experience of being a guest or a staff member to an entirely new level thanks to an expansion containing two new stations, a completely revamped layout with new décor, new furniture and ancillary elements and significant upgrades to our back-of-house operations. As such, the presentation of our food and our facilities has never been more compelling for our guests.

Essay:

Carleton Dining proudly designs and prepares the entirety of its menu at the Dining Hall in-house; as such, we go to great lengths to showcase this to guests as a means of uplifting our overall presentation. From grilling meats to sautéing pasta to brewing coffee, many stations allow guests to witness the process of how their meal is prepared and plated. For example, we use our own dough (prepared and stretched in-house) for over 300 pizzas served per day during peak times, and stations like The Greens offer a wide variety of produce and composed salads.

Presentation is greatly uplifted by the Dining Hall's revamped layout and new design elements. All aspects of the renovation maintain a high degree of aesthetic appeal, not just those related to preparing and procuring meals. Carleton Dining partnered with furniture designers to design a space that was functional, sustainable and accessible while maintaining a warm and inviting ambiance. Biophilic elements like trees and foliage make the space more naturalistic. The floorplan is densified with high-end furniture that can seat up to 950 guests and is designed to promote health, wellness, light and nature. Acoustic paneling deadens unwanted noise, promoting de-stressing.

Introduction:

When it comes to sourcing ideas that can help uplift the quality of the dining experiences we offer at the Dining Hall, no suggestion is too small to warrant consideration. Carleton Dining is constantly seeking out small adjustments and additions that can be made to the Dining Hall because we know it's the little things that add up and truly make a difference. From newly added food scanners to promote sustainability to adjustments in our hours of operations, we always keep a keen eye on even the smallest components of the Teraanga Commons Dining Hall experience.

Essay:

We pride ourselves on keeping our hours of operation flexible to accommodate students' busy schedules. We remain open daily from 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. to ensure that we are always able to serve guests. Stations like All Day Breakfast help uphold this mandate by offering breakfast to anyone who maintains irregular work hours.

30% of our kitchen staff are Carleton students. We're proud that our student community has a direct role in our everyday successes at the Dining Hall.

Our sustainability goals are regularly met and exceeded due to our investments in eco-conscious programs and technology. These include our CoolFood meal program that offers guests menu items with at least 38% lower carbon emissions than the average meal, EnergyStar appliances in our kitchen and our AI-powered food scanners from Nuvilab that help us collect data to reduce food waste.

Lastly, the Dining Hall's décor makes each visit more memorable. Colorful murals created by local artists feature design elements inspired by Carleton's rich and vibrant heritage, including station names like Grill 42, which is inspired by Carleton's establishment in 1942, and Bree's Inn, which refers to an old student-run bar on campus.

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



[NACUFS 25] Carl... 308 KiB



[NACUFS 25] Carl... 340 KiB



[NACUFS 25] Carl... 327 KiB



[NACUFS 25] Carl... 350 KiB



[NACUFS 25] Carl... 335 KiB



[NACUFS 25] Carl... 387 KiB



[NACUFS 25] Carl... 335 KiB



[NACUFS 25] Carl... 327 KiB



[NACUFS 25] Carl... 312 KiB



[NACUFS 25] Carl... 360 KiB



TCDH Halal Foo... 315 KiB



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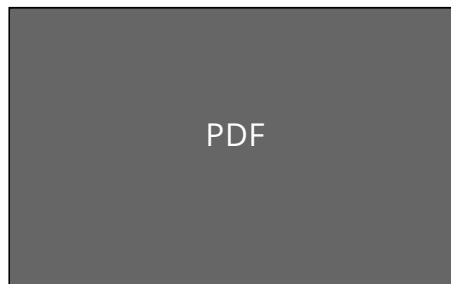
Ask a dietitian - 2... 516 KiB



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2025-Food-Allerg... 4.8 MiB



DSC01023-2.jpg 854 KiB



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