



PGqLpALZ

University of Pittsburgh

Entry details

Entry Name:	Recreation and Wellness Center
Institution Name:	University of Pittsburgh
Entry Completed By (<i>name and position</i>):	Maggie Weaver, Sr. Marketing Director

The philosophical approach to the menus across each unit is nourishing options to support the campus community’s health and wellness goals. Each concept projects the Wellness Center’s fitness and recovery missions with actionable, guest-driven choices. Recharge Café focuses on macronutrient-targeted meals for muscle repair. Edamame offers a poke-inspired, build-your-own canvas for balanced nutrition, and Squeezed provides hydration and micronutrient replenishment through fresh-pressed juices and smoothies. A variety of taste profiles appeals to each palate. The menu’s intentional offerings provide variety that reflects current student preferences based on data we received, including healthy options. That includes their demand for healthy options.

Essay:

Each menu is expertly tailored to its concept’s theme. Recharge Café’s “Build Your Own” omelets and protein-enhanced pancakes support post-workout recovery. Its Power Bowls and salads offer complete, balanced meals. Edamame’s customizable poke architecture is the epitome of the fast-casual, interactive dining trend, catering to preferences for fresh, globally inspired ingredients. Squeezed meets the demand for functional, clean-label beverages with juices targeting specific benefits like hydration or antioxidants.

Variety is engineered through daily specials like the featured Salmon Wrap with Mango Salsa at Recharge and Sunflower Power Bites at Squeezed adding variety beyond beverages. The menus deliver a full sensory experience:

The spectrum spans the vibrant greens of Edamame's bowls to the deep purple of beet juices. Creamy avocado and hummus offer a balance to the crisp cucumbers and crunchy furikake. Freshly prepared proteins and pancakes warm guests on a cold morning while cold salads, sushi rice, and chilled juices can help with cool down. The flavor choices span savory umami (teriyaki, katsu), bright acidity (pickled ginger, citrus), earthy notes (beets, wheatgrass), and sweet freshness (berries, mango). This deliberate diversity ensures nutritional completeness, visual appeal, and caters to a variety of taste preferences and dietary goals within the wellness framework.

Introduction:

Pitt Eats' three food concepts in the university's Wellness and Recreation Center — Squeezed, Edamame and Recharge Café — are a purposeful extension of the \$240 million investment in comprehensive student well-being. Recognizing the center's primary role as a campus connector for physical, mental, and social health, the dining program was designed to be an integrated pillar of that ecosystem. The strategy ensures nutrition is a seamless, intuitive part of the wellness journey. By embedding three complementary, health-forward concepts within the facility's flow, Pitt Eats is implementing the university's goals of fostering community, promoting sustainability, and establishing a modern, holistic wellness destination.

Essay:

Pitt Eats implemented three distinct, purpose-built concepts promoting healthful eating through design and operation. They also blend seamlessly with the university's gleaming new 270,000-square-foot Recreation and Wellness Center.

Recharge Café uses menu psychology and displays to highlight protein-rich menu selections, part of a campus-wide dietary icon labeling system. Edamame employs a vibrant, interactive assembly line where guests build poke bowls, selling freshness, global and "cleaner" choices through visible ingredients. Squeezed merchandises vitality at its juice bar, showcasing the fresh-press process.

These street-level concepts are strategically positioned within the nine-story center's traffic flow to serve as natural, convenient destinations, making nutritious fueling a logical component of the community-focused environment and an easy stop before or after any workout. The locations are fully integrated with campus meal plans — Dining Dollars and Meal Swipes. This is a critical sales tactic, removing financial friction and encouraging consistent use. The integration of USEFULL reusable containers at all locations, visually and physically reinforces Pitt's sustainability commitment which extends across campus. The holistic approach — tying menu development by registered dietitians and chefs to strategic placement and sustainable operations — demonstrates the culinary and operational collaboration that led to the successful launch and operation of these concepts.

Introduction:

The marketing strategy for Recharge Café, Edamame, and Squeezed was engineered to work in concert with the launch of the Recreation and Wellness Center, framing them as essential pillars of the university's investment in holistic well-being. Marketing communications were designed to educate and guide the campus community by translating the core "Food Built to Fuel" philosophy into compelling, actionable messaging. The overarching goal was to shift student perception of campus dining from a simple convenience to a strategic partner in their wellness journey, using polished materials, intuitive signage, and targeted promotions that mirrored the center's innovative and community-driven identity.

Essay:

Published menus and digital materials are clean, descriptive, and visually aligned with the Recreation and Wellness Center's aesthetic. They employ a polished design that clearly communicates "Build Your Own" customization and the functional benefits, such as protein enrichment and post-workout recovery that incorporates additional nutritional needs. Informational signage is built into the service flow, with step-by-step guidance at Edamame and Recharge Café that simplifies the customization process and educates guests on nutritious choices

Promotional methods strategically targeted the wellness-minded audience through a multichannel approach. This includes mobile ordering which students have embraced. Many students are mobile-first, making it an ideal platform for engagement.

Pitt Eats leveraged the significant buzz of the center's grand opening, active campaigns on Pitt Eats' robust social media platforms, and on-site promotional materials like digital screens and posters within the high-traffic facility to capture attention before and after a workout.

Specials, such as the featured Salmon Wrap or Sunflower Power Bites are advertised attractively as limited-time offerings. Customer feedback is gathered continuously to refine offerings. This is achieved through direct comment channels, integrated digital surveys, and by monitoring preferences through meal plan integration data, ensuring the concepts evolve in line with student dining trends and satisfaction.

Introduction:

Nutrition and wellness are not tangential features, but they are philosophically at the heart of the three dining concepts — Recharge, Edamame, Squeezed — within the Recreation and Wellness Center. Pitt Eats implements the university's commitment to holistic well-being by ensuring that comprehensive dietary information and inclusive options are seamlessly integrated into the guest experience. This approach is a direct response to the modern student's focused engagement with their health. The menus and options at the three concepts provide the transparency and variety necessary to support a diverse range of dietary goals, lifestyles, and personal definitions of wellness within a community-focused environment.

Essay:

Detailed information regarding dietary options and nutritional content is proactively communicated through multiple channels. Published menus use descriptive, ingredient-focused language (e.g., "protein pancakes," "build your own," "fresh-pressed") inherently signaling nutritional benefits. The strategic partnership with on-campus dietitians in menu development ensures this information is accurate and purposeful. Furthermore, the customizable architecture of Edamame and Recharge Café serves as an interactive guide, allowing guests to see and select ingredients that align with specific dietary needs, effectively making the menu board a transparent nutritional tool.

Special dietary options are not occasional features but a regular, structured component of daily service. Vegetarian and vegan choices are embedded at every turn: from Scrambled Tofu and Vegan Sausage at Recharge Café, to Seared Tofu and a full vegetable topping bar at Edamame. Avoiding gluten options are evident in choices like power bowls and salad bases. The concept design ensures these options are integral and appealing, moving beyond substitution to become celebrated menu highlights. This constant availability fulfills the promise of inclusive fueling, supporting students with diverse dietary requirements and aligning perfectly with the facility's role as a modern, holistic wellness model where every student can find options that resonate and fuel their personal wellness journey.

Introduction:

The introduction of Recharge Café, Edamame, and Squeezed into the University of Pittsburgh's state-of-the-art Recreation and Wellness Center represents a holistic dining strategy executed with precision. From facility design and merchandising that promotes intuitive healthy choices, to menus crafted on a "Food Built to Fuel" philosophy, every element is tailored to support the center's mission of total well-being. Nutrition and accessibility were foundational, while marketing efforts integrated these concepts into the campus wellness narrative. Together, they create a seamless ecosystem where dining is not a separate or external service but a core, enriching component of the holistic student wellness experience.

Essay:

Financial and operational goals for the concepts are successfully tracked through multiple data streams. Full integration with campus meal plans provides direct, real-time metrics on student adoption, visit frequency, and sales performance, ensuring the concepts' performance aligns with the investment in the \$240 million facility. This data-driven approach allows for agile menu and operational adjustments.

Customer satisfaction goals are demonstrably met, as evidenced by the overwhelmingly positive feedback cited by university leadership regarding the facility as an engaging, community-defining space. The dining concepts — with their emphasis on customization, recovery nutrition, and inclusive dietary options — are a direct response to the cuisine preferences from student surveys.

Selected sustainability goals are tangibly achieved through the integrated partnership with USEFULL, providing plastic-free, reusable containers at every concept. This program implements the university's broader sustainability commitments, reducing single-use waste and resonating deeply with environmentally conscious, wellness-focused guests.

The overall “wow” factor is unmistakable and fully commensurate with the spectacular nine-story facility. The concepts provide a culinary “wow” through vibrant, chef-crafted, and visually striking meals and juices. This creates a seamless, nutritionally sophisticated extension of the unparalleled physical environment. The dining experience completes the holistic wellness journey, solidifying the center’s status as a best-in-class model.

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



[Rec Center - Jui...](#) 3.0 MiB



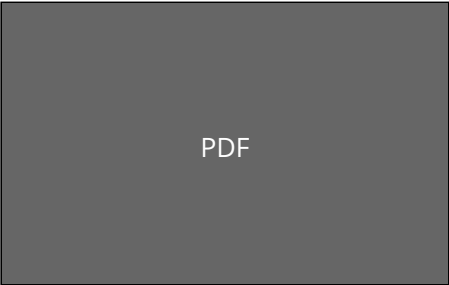
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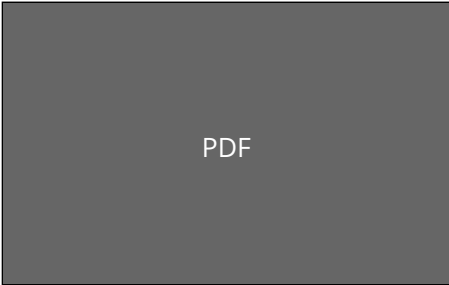
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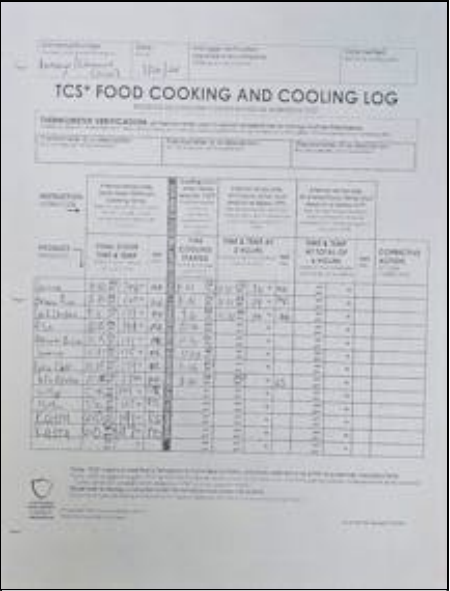
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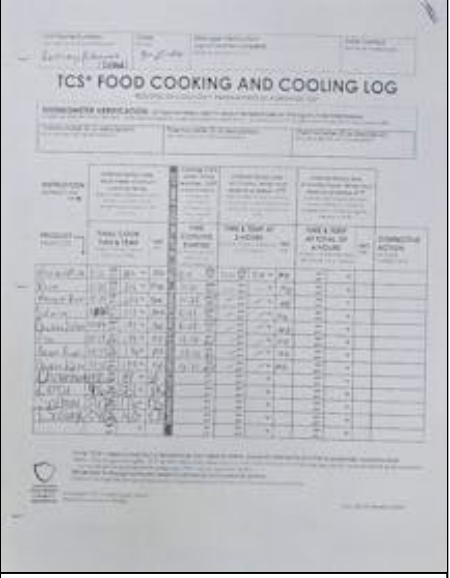
USEFULL, Rec C... 141 KiB

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Ambassador Po... 401 KiB

A photograph of a TCS Food Cooking and Cooling Log form. The form includes sections for 'Cooking', 'Cooling', and 'Holding' with various temperature and time recording fields. It also has a 'Corrective Action' section at the bottom.

Rec Center - Te... 442 KiB

A photograph of a TCS Food Cooking and Cooling Log form, similar to the one in the first row. It contains detailed tables for recording food safety data.

Rec Center - Te... 444 KiB

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Allergen Disclai... 51 KiB

A blue flyer with the text 'We want to hear from you!' and 'Let us know what you think about our new dining locations! Scan the QR code below to leave your feedback.' It features a QR code and the 'EATS' logo at the bottom.

Opening Survey... 251 KiB

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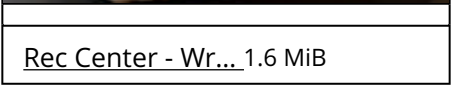
Why Wheatgras... 258 KiB

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<u>Squeezed Men...</u> 3.7 MiB

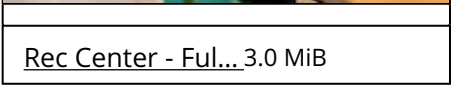
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Recharge Menu... 2.3 MiB

<u>Why Wheatgras...</u> 258 KiB

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<u>Rec Center Ban...</u> 2.5 MiB

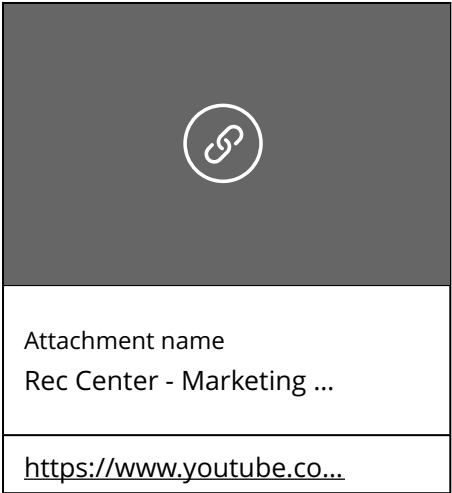


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Edamame Men... 1.2 MiB



	
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