

Lebanon Valley College Makes Sustainable Update

The renovated Mund College Center at Lebanon Valley College in Annville, Pa., combines updated food offerings with a more sustainable facility.

“Very clearly, our facility was extremely outdated; not very practical, very difficult to manage and certainly not supportive of sustainable initiatives,” said Greg Krikorian, the school’s vice president of Student Affairs. “We are a residential college of about 1,600 students, with a commuting population of about 25 percent of our students as well. The Mund College Center is the centerpiece of the student experience, located in the forefront of our residence halls and adjacent to the academic quad. We realized that in order to provide a comprehensive student experience, it was an area we had to focus on.”

The evaluation process for the \$13.3 million three-phase project began four years ago by choosing Metz Culinary Management as its new campus foodservice provider.

Metz took over dining before renovation work was completed and worked out of the old facility. “The dining program at Mund is an all-you-can-eat experience,” said Bill Allman, general manager with Metz. “Now, we have several stations that we operate like a food court-style system. We tried a food court-style system with the old building, but it was sort of like cattle chute, your old cafeteria-style, outdated system.”

The first phase of the renovation involved the opening of a new kitchen. “They built a brand-new kitchen for us,” he said. “We transferred from our old kitchen into the new kitchen in May of last year after spring semester.”

About 90 percent of the equipment in the kitchen is new — and more efficient than the old equipment. “We did have some other equipment from the old kitchen that we had recently purchased,” said Allman. “We kept some of it to be sustainable. We wanted to continue to use those things. Why dispose of them if they are still working well? It worked out well for us.”

After the new kitchen was opened, work began on reconfiguring the old kitchen and dining spaces — with temporary food service provided out of a tent during the summer.

When the new serving area opened in the fall of 2011, the new focus was the center of the design. “The No. 1 focus was to bring the food fresh out front,” he said. “We have always made the food fresh, but I think the students didn’t see it. They just thought it was prepared in advance. What is really neat about



this is that we brought our cooks out front, so we are developing relationships with the students now. They can see us. We are preparing all of our grilled food right there. It is basically going from preparation right to the plate.”

Preparing the food in front of the students to their specifications has had a benefit. “One of the secondary benefits we’ve seen is less waste,” said Krikorian. “Students are taking what they think they can eat first, rather than filling their plates. That freshness, that immediacy has been very positive with our student body.”

The new service area features a number of different stations. The Bravo Station features a number of cooked-to-order items, including quesadillas, Asian noodle bowls, chopped salad cuisine and pastas.

Brick Oven Pizza and Pasta features made-to-order Italian specialties including hand-prepared stromboli and calzones, fresh pasta dishes and fresh-dough pizzas cooked to perfection in a Wood Stone oven.

The Dutchmen Grill features a charbroiler and griddle where students can order freshly prepared grilled items, including ground beef hamburgers and daily sandwich features.

“We have the LVC Deli,” said Allman. “Students can get any sandwich that they want freshly prepared. There are lots of choices for different breads, all fresh-cut meats, lots of cheese options. We have introduced new options there. We have Panini grills or use the Turbo Chef to heat the sandwiches. That is a great location for students.”

The Signature Entrées station features comfort foods and classic favorites. “We like to do them with a little bit of flair,” he said. “We try to dress it up. We are a restaurant-inspired company — it is all about the way the food looks and we try to make it fun. We also try to make it educational to the students, which is the biggest part of what we did with the cuisine line this semester.”

He continued, “We wanted to focus on the nutrition of the food, so all items at the Cuisine line are going to be gluten-free. It is a wellness focus. Every day, the Cuisine line will be focused on what we are calling Metz Nutrition 101 Facts. It will tell you exactly why you should eat broccoli and how it helps your health. It is important because a lot of students are asking for that information. A lot of the changes we make here are based on student feedback. We are not just doing whatever we want, it is what they are asking for, which is really cool.”

Cuisine is designed to offer a variety of gourmet items from vegetarian-based protein selections, a carving station featuring lean proteins, complex carbohydrate choices and culinary creations from around the world.

The Salad Bar features more than 40 items each day and includes some local produce. “Our produce vendor is a local vendor,” said Allman. “They try to focus on local farms. We also try to do a lot of organic foods. We offer different organic items that are featured on our salad bar. All of our soups are homemade and fresh. We try to have a healthy soup as well — lower fat, lower sodium for folks who are looking for that.”

Baked Impressions allows students to satisfy their sweet tooth with cookies, cakes, pies, brownies and cereal bars.

Among the offerings at all of the stations are items for students who require a gluten-free diet. “Looking at gluten-free, we have a big population of gluten-free students here as well,” he said. “That is the newest trend that we are seeing here. We actually make our own, gluten-free pizza dough now. We have a station that is called the Gluten-Free Zone. We put gluten-free desserts out and everybody eats them. I sampled a chocolate cake yesterday that was out of this world. You wouldn’t even know that it wasn’t wheat flour that was in it.”

Allman said that some students are choosing a gluten-free diet even if it is not medically necessary for them. “In offering gluten-free, it is a healthy lifestyle. There are lots of studies out there showing that not only are people gluten free because it is medically necessary, but because the processed wheat is causing health problems for people as far as migraines, headaches and those types of things. We are doing a lot of education with that.”

Offering these gluten-free items has benefited the community. “We used to have a significant number of students who would request exemption from our meal plan,” said Krikorian. “I believe at this point, we are down to one or two because of the personalized approach that Metz has provided in accommodating students and meeting those students’ dietary needs, which is a positive for all because students’ involvement in the dining experience is part of community building.”

Sustainability

Students have been involved in the redesign of Mund. “We have a student organization called SAFE, Students Action



For Earth, which is our student centerpiece of our sustainable initiatives on campus,” said Krikorian. “It was a student mandate that we build into this construction project LEED certification, which would be our first on campus. We are very confident that we will achieve LEED certification.”

He continued, “We have incorporated that into all of the design schemes, ranging from recycling of materials to reusing things to all of the systems that have been incorporated in this building.”

The building features a lot of glass, allowing for a lot of natural light, and features motion detectors to shut off lights when no one is in the room. “Some of the other really cool components that we did when we did this building with our food service — we use paper cups and those kinds of things that are sustainable in nature,” said Krikorian. “We also instituted a to-go container program where students can purchase or utilize a container that can be washed, turned back in and then reused again, rather than the traditional cardboard kind of containers.”

They also installed a pulper from Somat. “We pulp all of our waste, and it breaks it down from six bags to one bag,” said Allman. “It pulls all of the water out of it. That has really helped us with our waste management as well. We have a trash compactor here too. That has helped with the amount of waste we are putting into the environment.”

Ecolab has also worked with the school to help in its sustainable efforts. “They do monthly audits for us to make sure all of our equipment and chemicals are working properly,” he said. “We use the apex system, which is the ‘greenest’ of their chemicals. They also have provided training for our team as well on floors, warewashing and general cleaning.”

The school is also saving a significant amount of paper by adding digital menu boards. “We had to use paper menus at each station last year,” said Allman. “We have the digital signage at each station now that shows the menu for that station. Every meal, we used 20 sheets of paper. It is pretty significant.” —OCH

CSU Launches Green Guard

In an effort for staff to become more engaged in the green initiatives on campus, Dining Services at Colorado State University (CSU) in Fort Collins launched the Green Guard, which thus far has been highly successful.

“We went to each of the six dining centers and bakery for volunteers to be representatives for this group,” said Mark Petrino, senior associate director of Dining Services. “We received an overwhelming positive response. We chose who we felt were the most qualified and explained to them what the whole thing was about.”

The mission of Green Guard members is to serve as ambassadors for Dining Services’ sustainability initiatives in the dining halls. “They take the information that we give them in our monthly meetings, go out into the dining centers and kitchens and explain to the staff exactly what composting is, what recycling is and what goes into each of the bins,” he said. “We have put a bunch of different color bins in the kitchen so that we could ascertain the components of trash — one being recycling, one being composting and another being regular trash that we just take to the landfill.”

Each of the Guard members wears a button identifying themselves as such.

The employee program has worked so well that it has expanded to educating students. “Since we have mastered the back of the house, we are now moving it to the front of the house,” said Petrino. “We want these Green Guard members to be as visible as possible to the students so we can now start educating the students as to what is supposed to be recycled, compostable and just regular trash. We want to make the students aware that any paper products that



we have on campus are all compostable. All of it is made from sugar cane. It is all compostable. They are building the awareness of students with that also.”

Students are buying into the program. “The most popular reason being that they didn’t realize all of the things we do on campus,” said Petrino. “They didn’t realize all of the things we do in the dining centers, that we are not using any paper that is not compostable or items that aren’t being recycled into something else. They didn’t know that we are actually taking this composted material and generating it back to the campus community. We have a complete awareness of everything that should be composted and recycled. We’re striving to be 100 percent compliant with these things.”

Two of the dining centers have pulpers from Somat. “We are renovating another one this summer,” he said. “We have them in strategic locations on campus. Our bake shop doesn’t have a pulper, but every day we take the compostable material they have and bring it over to the dining center that has one.”

Students and staff members can see the material coming full circle. “We also have a huge composter,” said Petrino. “In about nine days, it becomes this very rich soil that the agricultural people on campus take back and do landscaping with on our campus. It was real fun and encouraging for them to see the whole cycle. The grass that is growing was the rind from the cantaloupe you cut a few months ago.”

After expanding the program to students, the hope is to extend it to the off-campus community. “There are always festivals going on during the summer,” he said. “We want to get out to the community now and bring the trash cans that we have so everyone understands what is compostable, what is recyclable and work these festivals in cooperation with the city so that we can bring more awareness to the city.”

They are also considering expanding the number of staff members on the Green Guard. “When we first launched it, we had about 30-35 interested in joining,” said Petrino. “We were very excited to see that there was so much interest in those people who wanted to join. Some of them are Agriculture majors who have graduated and now work for us. They were the most qualified.” —OCH





Gators Go Foam Free

Gator Dining Services at the University of Florida in Gainesville made the decision to eliminate foam packaging from all of its dining locations.

“The University of Florida is moving toward having zero waste by 2015,” said Dana Falstad, sustainability manager with Aramark, the campus foodservice provider. “Single-use polystyrene packaging was our first switch to more sustainable packaging within retail dining on campus. We decided to make the switch to remove polystyrene products to further our sustainability efforts on campus, and it was the next step in our helping to reach our goal.”

The program launched in February 2011 with Classic Fare Catering, followed by the university’s two residential dining facilities in May 2011.

Ridding foam in more than 40 dining locations diverts an estimated 1.2 million units of foam products from the landfill, which is approximately 24,000 pounds or 17,000 cubic feet of foam.

Locations such as Pollo Tropical, Panda Express, Chick-fil-A, Moe’s Southwest Grill, Chili’s, Jamba Juice, KFC and Burger King have replaced their foam products with paper-

based products that are either made with renewable resources, compostable and/or recyclable.

“By eliminating foam from Gator Dining operations, we are not only positively affecting our students, but we are also reducing our carbon footprint for all those who eat on campus and helping to promote sustainability within the community,” said Falstad.

Students, faculty and staff have been very pleased with the changeover. “[They] have commended our efforts, especially with our high-volume foodservice locations switching from foam to paper-based products that are compostable,” she said. “This sustainability effort has spurred others to take action around campus and ask other departments to reduce or remove foam products from their coffee-break areas.”

The school has worked with a number of suppliers to get its new products, including Genpak, Eco-Products, Pactiv and Solo Bare. “By leveraging our partnerships with our national brands, we have sourced foam alternatives for all products and have replaced the foam-based products with paper-based products,” Falstad said.

—OCH