

Newly-Renovated University Club at Hofstra Opens

Renovation attracts new catered business to event space.

HEMPSTEAD, N.Y.—Hofstra University's University Club recently reopened its doors after a \$4-million renovation. The University Club, originally built in 1965, is part restaurant, part event space that caters exclusively to members, Hofstra faculty and staff.

Eisa Shukran, director of dining services for Lackmann Culinary Services at Hofstra, says they wanted the University Club to be a showcase for the university, a place where conferences, meetings and seminars could be held. Plus, he adds, it was a good opportunity to add a dining venue for faculty and staff.

The University Club is open for an à la carte lunch and dinner daily. Rob McCabe, regional executive chef for Lackmann, says he wanted to create an upscale seasonal menu that focused on local ingredients, but still make it reasonably priced. Standout dishes include the grilled mocha shrimp with plantain hash and chipotle oil, the pan seared dayboat scallops with a miso ginger glaze, and the grilled chicken wrap with shaved apples, lettuce and parmesan peppercorn dressing.

"The feedback has been tremendous. Everybody loves

the place," McCabe says. "Between the design and the food, everyone's been ecstatic. With the menu, I wanted to be able to deliver something to a college campus that was innovative and different, something they weren't used to. I wanted to show them what we could do so I set the bar very high."

Membership, which costs \$100, grants access to the à la carte dining room and complimentary monthly events. In addition, fees are waived for room rentals by members. Director of Marketing for Campus and Universities for Lackmann, Lisa Lahiji, says she has been working to get the word out to business and party planners in the community in order to generate business for the University Club's event space. Along with the main dining room, complete with its own bar and floor to ceiling windows, the building has two smaller rooms designed for events, meetings or conferences. Catering these types of events will be one of the University Club's top priorities. Lahiji says before the renovation of University Club, local businesses used the club for events and parties, so now, she is working on marketing.

"I've contacted the Long Island Biz2Biz Web site, and Meeting Planners International will be promoting the Web site as we continue to develop it. We'll also do banner swaps with local vendors," Lahiji says.

The University Club is also going to put on monthly student theme dinners to give students a chance to dine at the Club, Lahiji says. The first student theme dinner was a Taste of Italy; a three-course prix fixe meal that students could use their meal plans to attend. Lahiji says the promotion of the event played off the fact that students hadn't seen the inside of the University Club, and these events give them a chance to see what's been going on.

The renovation updated the dated, boys-club feel of the older facility, says Shukran. Wood finishes, soft lighting and in one room, a roaring fireplace contribute to the "clubby" feel without being pretentious. The dining room can accommodate 185 for a seated event and 315 for a theater-style event. The building also has an outdoor patio. The renovation also expanded into the kitchen with the installation of two convection ovens, fryer and a range.



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School Uses Cook-Chill to its Advantage

Arlington Central School District uses cook-chill and a scatter cafeteria system to accommodate growth.

POUGHKEEPSIE, N.Y.—When Arlington High School got a much-needed expansion in 2000, School Lunch Director Suzanne

Harris got two new tools to feed the growing student population more effectively: a cook-chill tank and a new cafeteria arrangement.



Instead of the old lunch line, Arlington switched to a scatter system.

Harris says they are one of the few school districts in New York that use the cook-chill method.

“You usually see it more in hospitals and prisons because they serve three meals a day,” Harris says.

The cook-chill tank is used to cook bulk items like marinara sauce, turkey and taco meat. Harris says cook-chill allows them to cook very large quantities, which makes for a consistent product for each school.

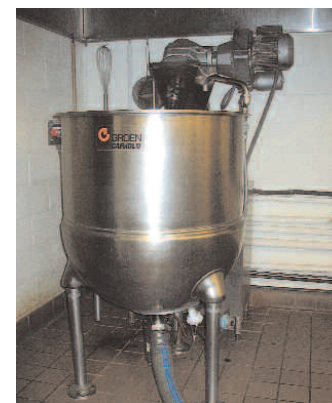
“We want all the students to have the same product, so I had my cooks make me samples of boxed macaroni and cheese and even those came out different,” Harris says. “I put the samples in clear containers and took them to the superintendent and said, ‘this is why I want cook-chill.’ It gives us the consistent product, it saves labor and it’s

better for sanitation.”

Along with the addition of a cook-chill tank, Arlington’s expansion yielded a change in the way its cafeterias are set up. Harris decided a scatter system, where there are several different stations instead of a traditional lunch line, would work better for the two high schools and one middle school.

“The scatter system allows the kids to go right to the area they want,” Harris says. “It’s more of an adult situation for them and not such a controlled institutionalized system.”

Each cafeteria has a different theme. For example, one of the cafeterias at Arlington High School has a New York City theme with stations like the Grand Central Grill and Little Italy Pizza, as well as a hot lunch station, Park Avenue Entrée,



where the items prepared with the cook-chill tank are found.

“With 10,500 kids, our average daily participation for the reimbursable meals is about 1,400. We also have a high à la carte business of around 9,000. Our free and reduced lunches make up about 9%, so averaged out, every kid gets something from us,” Harris says. “The key is giving them the choice to make healthier decisions. It’s all about moderation, not elimination. We have to walk the line of nutrition and getting the kids to actually eat.”

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