



# Fairfield University Sees **143% Explosion** in Voluntary Meal Plans and Additional Student Dining Transformations with New Hospitality Partner



**Fairfield**  
UNIVERSITY

**PARTNER SINCE:**  
2021

**LOCATION:**  
Fairfield, CT

**TOTAL UNDERGRADUATE/  
GRADUATE ENROLLMENT:**  
5,349

Every higher education food services leader knows the challenges — inflation, supply chain, staffing, changing student expectations. In 2021, Fairfield University decided to overcome these challenges by working with a new service partner, Aramark Collegiate Hospitality.

In less than two years, Fairfield’s new branded dining services program, Stags Hospitality, has seen its dining service go from struggling to thriving. Improvements in sales and satisfaction are due to an ongoing number of innovations being rolled out, including:

- Expanding students’ on-campus dining and meal plan options
- Initiating mobile ordering through Grubhub across campus
- Adding support for students in developing healthy dining habits
- Creating a more sustainable environment on campus
- Building strong ties with the local food community

**Results**  
**have been**  
**phenomenal,**  
**including an**  
**explosion in**  
**voluntary meal**  
**plans by**  
**143%**





## EXPANDING STUDENTS' ON-CAMPUS DINING OPTIONS

One of the first initiatives Aramark launched for Fairfield was adding culinary options throughout the campus and expanding meal card access to all dining locations. Among the new dining options students enjoy today are:

- Rotating fleet of third-party food trucks Sunday through Friday
- Local pizza brand served based on student feedback
- Garden bar with create-your-own and composed salads
- Standalone sushi station with a variety of authentic meals, snacks and beverages
- "We Proudly Serve" Starbucks beverages, house-made breakfast sandwiches and grab-and-go items in the business school
- Grubhub mobile ordering and Starship delivery from campus locations
- New concessions and in-seat ordering and delivery within new sports arena
- Food-centric events recognizing National Cheese Lover's Day, Green Juice Day, Pizza Day and more

## SUPPORTING STUDENTS' HEALTHY DINING HABITS

To help students instill healthy habits in their academic and social life, Fairfield launched several innovative health and wellness initiatives, including:

- **True Balance™ allergen station:** provides information on preparing safe and nourishing meals for students with allergies and other medical needs
- **Personal nutrition support:** an expert provides students with information on nutrition and assistance with dietary needs and finding healthy options on campus
- **Wellness Wednesday:** offers healthy dining options such as pumpkin chai smoothie bowls, fresh squeezed antioxidant juices and Buddha bowls

## CREATING A SUSTAINABLE CAMPUS

Recognizing that creating a healthier planet is important to today's students, Fairfield and Aramark have teamed up to launch a wide range of sustainability projects:

- Increasing the main dining room's plant-based options to 35%
- Creating a campus farmers' market in partnership with local farms
- Distributing reusable cups and straws in partnership with a wellness committee
- Holding a vegan lunch event with representatives from the Humane Society
- Partnering with several local businesses for dairy, bakery, pasta, pizza and coffee

## STUDENTS LOVE THE NEW DINING PROGRAM

Students have appreciated the changes in dining services. They regularly express their satisfaction, including:

“ Great range of food types and variety of places to get food on campus.”

“ There are always fun events in the Tully [Dining Commons].”

“ With the addition of robot delivery this year as well as the workers who are friendly and happy to be working there, the dining experience is excellent.”

*The numbers reflect a positive student experience: <sup>2</sup>*

**81%** of students feel it's easy to order and pick up food on campus

**66%** of students were satisfied with their dining program (+2% from Fall 2021)

**69%** of students were satisfied with the value of their dining plan (+3% from Fall 2021)





## STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY TIES

The Fairfield campus continually works to build strong ties with its local communities through food donations. The total impact is nearly \$50,000 per year in meals.<sup>3</sup> Community donations include:

- Extra food from batch cooking donated to a local food bank
- Every Tuesday and Thursday, food goes to an organization that serves about 1,330 meals per week
- Every Friday and Sunday, food is shared with an organization that serves 1,425 meals per week
- Every November, hundreds of turkeys are donated to St. Mary's Church in Bridgeport, CT

## PLANNING FRESH IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

To continue making its dining program innovative and appealing to its students, Fairfield is planning a wide range of future updates and events, including:

- Creating its own food truck fleet with two new food trailers
- Deploying Grubhub mobile ordering and Starship robot delivery in one of its two Dunkin' locations
- Expanding partnerships across campus, including the School of Nursing and Health Studies and Fairfield Wellness committee
- Incorporating getVICKI RFID technology to expand accessibility to fresh food options across campus
- Deploying AI to guide students toward more responsible waste disposal practices and improved recycling habits

<sup>1</sup> 2022-2023 VMP Revenue Increase

<sup>2</sup> DiningStyles 2022 Survey Results

<sup>3</sup> Aramark Internal Data

See how Aramark Collegiate Hospitality can enhance your student dining experience.

[CONTACT US](#)

For more information visit us at:

[CAMPUSINSIGHTS.ARAMARK.COM](https://campusinsights.aramark.com)

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COLLEGIATE  
HOSPITALITY

## ADDING THE FUN FACTOR

Along with great dining options across the campus, Stags Hospitality also brings the fun factor to its students in a variety of ways:



Branded t-shirts for followers of the Stags Hospitality Instagram page



Coffee coupons and tumbler giveaways for sharing Instagram content during National Coffee Day



Television giveaway to a student during Meal Plan Holder Appreciation Day



Free pizza coupons for winners of a contest to find Lucas the Stag plushies hidden around campus



A Stags Hospitality trike bike surprises students with a variety of product offerings in different locations

