

# Northwestern Dining and Compass Group helping students explore meal options

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Northwestern University Dining and Compass Group are feeding students' fervor for plant-forward fare as tastes and trends are moving further away from animal-based proteins.

In the weeks leading up to Thanksgiving, Northwestern Dining and Compass sponsored the 21-Day Plant Forward Challenge to commemorate National Vegan Month in November. More than 300 students took the Challenge, participating in tabling events, a Teaching Kitchen and Grand Finale featuring a number of new plant-forward dishes and vegan desserts. This was a 58% increase over the number of students participating in the first challenge in January 2019. Compass plans to make the Plant-Forward Challenge an annual event during National Vegan Month.

"Students at Northwestern University are very interested in trying more plant-based dishes, and they have asked us to offer more of these options in the dining commons," said Lisa Carlson, registered dietician nutritionist for Northwestern University Dining. "Students seem to be more interested in the health of our planet and animal welfare, so choosing plant-based meals fills that need and serves a purpose."

Only 7% of the general population are meat avoiders while 22% are meat limiters, according to the consumer reporting firm, Datassentials. Those numbers skew much higher on college campuses where 47% of college students say they are limiting their meat consumption. Taste and discovery top the reasons people choose plant-forward meals according to The Hartman Group's *Food & Technology 2019* report. Since Compass implemented its first menu on campus in September 2018, plant-forward options have increased in the dining commons by 33%.

Some of the new menu items include vegan grain meatballs with sweet & sour sauce; vegan coconut bacon; vegan hominy & squash soup; and vegan hoppin' John rice salad. Dishes popular during the Challenge included chayote Caribbean curry; portabella & cannellini bean ragu with polenta or grits; vegan red velvet cupcakes; vegan chocolate oat cookies; and vegan blueberry crumble.

The Challenge offered a fun way to encourage students to enjoy new plant-forward dishes. It was also inspirational as students were able to "pledge" to enjoy one, two or three plant-forward meals a day. Through the pledges, students reduced their carbon footprint over 21

days a combined total of 5,770 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>, thanks to their food choices. That's an equivalent savings of 293 gallons of gasoline.

### **About Compass Group**

Compass Group PLC is the world's leading food service company, which generated annual revenues of \$29 billion in 2017. It operates in nearly 50 countries, employs more than 550,000 people and serves roughly 5.5 billion meals a year. The Company specializes in providing food and a range of support services across the core sectors of Business & Industry, Healthcare & Seniors, Education, Sports & Leisure and Defense, Offshore & Remote, with an established brand portfolio.

### **About Chartwells Higher Education Dining Services**

Chartwells is the recognized leader in contract food service management, hospitality and award-winning guest service within 280 college and university dining environments throughout academic institutions across the U.S. Chartwells' nutritious cuisine not only satisfies the unique appetites, lifestyles and dietary needs of every guest dining on campus, but it also brings people together to promote the high-intensity relationships that will prepare students for the future. For more information,

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