

celebrating success
within hispanic-serving
institutions



COLLABORATING WITH HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS TO CREATE AND CELEBRATE A CULTURE OF SUCCESS

Harvest Table Culinary Group is honored to play a vital role in the campus life of all of the colleges and universities we serve. We celebrate the fact that Hispanic-Serving Institutions comprise nearly 20% of our portfolio. We share their passion for educating and empowering diverse communities of students through transformative experiences. Our aim is to support student retention and success after graduation by fostering inclusive environments and amplifying their voices so they can positively impact the world.

We do this by forging partnerships that are guided by shared vision and values and by orchestrating experiences that adhere to Harvest Table's three pillars:

- We are authentic—we share our culinary story with 100% transparency.
- We are collaborative—we grow roots in your community through food.
- We are personalized—we stay true to the way we serve our food.



SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

Meaningful experiences during a student's critical college years create a sense of belonging, spark lifelong connections and encourage persistence to graduation and beyond. Harvest Table works closely with our partners to establish a culture of success that makes each student feel valued, engaged and empowered on their journey to become their best selves.



LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

To ensure our programs reflect the rich diversity of our guests, we work with our college and university partners to recruit a student dining board that serves as an advisory council for the hospitality program. This year-long commitment offers a meaningful way for student leaders to have a voice in issues directly impacting the campus community. The board's responsibilities include reviewing the annual dining plan and meal plan recommendations, operating hours, menus, staffing needs, community partnerships and future program enhancements.

Emerging leaders from across the nation serve on our student board of directors, working together to fuel change in the higher education marketplace and in the greater food industry. More than 50 students applied to be a part of the inaugural board in 2022 and the board has grown in size and impact each year.

Every Harvest Table campus partner has a member representative who serves for a full academic year. Board members participate in quarterly virtual meetings to discuss a variety of innovations surrounding meal plan design, sustainability initiatives, restaurant concepts, local and national partnerships and more. They are incentivized for their voluntary participation with a complimentary meal plan for both fall and spring terms.

student *spotlight*

Jocelyn Torres
Junior, University of Redlands
Student Board of Directors

Jocelyn brings her passion for food, nature and community to her role on the Student Board of Directors. While pursuing her studies in business and public speaking, she appreciates the opportunity to develop her leadership skills by serving as a voice for her peers and is determined to see their desires for more diverse offerings come to fruition. As a board member, Jocelyn is making connections that will prepare her for whatever the future has in store.

“ Working with Harvest Table on the Student Board of Directors has really allowed me to establish a strong connection with the team. Having this strong connection with the team has allowed better transparency for both the staff and students. I am so excited to have gotten the opportunity to serve our Redlands students! Being a student director, I have seen growth in students expressing their feedback more freely; I have seen students reach out to us to create a food committee for athletes. The overall environment from Harvest Table has been so welcoming and transparent to students that there is constant change because we are always improving. I am so excited to serve another year on the Student Board of Directors because we will begin to get a food committee going that’s not only for athletes but for others at the University!” ”





STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

Harvest Table doesn't just train student employees to become successful leaders during their college years—we also provide opportunities to transform their jobs into long-term careers after graduation. Investing in students is an investment in the future, cultivating a diverse and experienced workforce capable of assuming key leadership positions.

Our focused student hospitality management program effectively rewards employees in the present and sets them up for future success through developing leadership skills, gaining valuable work experience and enhancing their career prospects. This progressive learning program exposes students to different departments and projects, enabling them to gain a comprehensive understanding of Harvest Table's operations and make meaningful contributions to the company, the campus and the community.

- Student hospitality associates prepare and assemble food items while delivering exceptional guest service. They receive comprehensive training in food safety, proper food handling and sanitation protocols.
- Student hospitality associate leads build on their entry-level skills through mentorship and coaching in various aspects of leadership, including hands-on experience managing operations and exposure to areas such as merchandising, cash handling and sales.
- Student hospitality managers oversee their peers and interact with clients while acquiring valuable experience through training that encompasses operations, leadership, human resources, marketing, finance and accounting, supply chain, nutrition, sustainability and information technology. This role is ideal for students who are interested in career growth with our various lines of business after graduation.
- Step Up to Leadership is a paid internship program that illuminates career paths with dedicated management mentors, experiential learning and a direct pipeline to full-time employment opportunities after graduation through our Accelerate to Leadership program. Internships are available in human resources, finance and accounting, talent acquisition, digital marketing, sales marketing, supply chain, sustainability, nutrition, culinary arts and information technology, allowing students to pursue their passion into a profession.

FOOD SECURITY

The U.S. Department of Agriculture defines food security as the ability to access enough food at all times for an active, healthy life. In contrast, food insecurity is limited or uncertain access to adequate food. In 2022, according to the USDA, nearly 12.8% of U.S. households were food insecure. And according to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, 23% of undergraduates and 12% of graduate students—representing more than 4 million students—struggle with food insecurity.

Food security is a complex issue requiring effective solutions to address the imbalance of resources, storage and distribution, as well as individual factors that impact students' ability to know where their next meal is coming from. Harvest Table takes our role seriously in increasing access to food, reducing inequity and supporting sustainability across the campuses we serve. Efficient food management practices, multipronged food recovery efforts and strategic partnerships with local and national organizations are all part of our overarching commitment to provide a more vibrant and equitable food economy that takes care of our guests, our team members, our communities and our planet.

One tool in our effort to achieve equity is reducing food waste. While preventing waste before it occurs is ideal, donating safe, unused food contributes to healthy communities by feeding hungry people,



reducing food insecurity and diverting waste from landfills. Working with our campus partners, we create bespoke programs that best serve the needs of each campus and local community. Our capabilities include:

- Swipe Out Hunger
- DiningStyles Incentive Donation
- Food Recovery Network
- Campus Kitchen

Leveraging Leanpath, a key tool for tracking, analyzing and reducing food waste, Harvest Table donated more than 10,000 pounds of food and saved the equivalent of nearly 9,000 meals in Fiscal Year 2024. Leanpath's donation dashboard enables us to sort and share data with our partners, from the campus-wide metrics to individual locations, as well as sorting for the top donated foods, specific events and daily trends.



HEALTH & WELLBEING

Campuses that foster belonging and connection, mentoring relationships and a holistic culture of wellbeing are better positioned to support student success and retention.

Harvest Table recognizes that health and wellbeing is fundamental. While we align with the priorities of each of our campus partners, the bedrock of our approach is nurturing every dimension of wellbeing:

- Physical
- Emotional
- Social
- Cultural
- Environmental
- Financial
- Community
- Purpose

A dedicated health and wellbeing manager is key to our approach. At each campus, we employ a registered dietitian who works proactively with students and academic departments to ensure that their needs are met. This role connects with students on a personal level through individual nutrition counseling to address allergens and ensure they are getting the nutrients needed to support their lifestyle. Students thrive when they feel seen and heard by a dietitian who understands their concerns and takes an integrative view of their wellbeing.

We further empower students by nurturing the skills they need to be independent. Chef-led teaching kitchens engage all their senses and foster a friendly environment while equipping them with basic culinary techniques to create meals that will satisfy their hunger and impress their family and friends.



CULINARY INCLUSIVITY

Our international chefs embrace the cultural and ethnic differences that make cuisine unique from region to region. Understanding the nuances that make a dish authentic is essential. It's part of our commitment to cultivating strong communities and connecting to local culture. Offering bold, inspiring dishes that encourage guests to try new things and comforting them with familiar flavors supports our partners' goals to create a sense of belonging on campus.

At University of Redlands in Southern California, our Chef de Cuisine Sandy Gonzalez led *Guisos Caseros*, a Latin American culinary development session. (*Guisos* is short for *guisados*, which means something braised, stewy, homey and delicious.) Chef Sandy and many of our Redlands culinary team members contributed their own family recipes to incorporate authentic, vibrant flavors into our campus menus, showcasing the breadth of Latin culinary traditions. We then held a tasting for the campus community and refined our recipes based on guest feedback, to ensure that we hit the mark and satisfy Redlands students' discerning palates.

At Regis University in Denver, we collaborate with members of SOMOS—a student club whose mission is to provide support, celebration, appreciation and knowledge of Latinx culture—to create inclusive events that honor the members' rich traditions and flavors.

For Hispanic Heritage Month, we are highlighting culturally significant dishes every Tuesday in our *Roots and Recipes* series. SOMOS members shared their families' recipes for favorites like *enchiladas rojas*, along with a history tracing the food's evolution from the Aztec era to today. Our culinary team then brings the food to life for Regis students and the Denver community to enjoy together.



“ The passion for cooking has always been there, but it wasn't until I had my kids that I really learned to appreciate the ancestral role of unknowingly passing down recipes, techniques and flavors. Wanting to pass down a bit of culinary love and having the opportunity to do so gave me the drive to put the teachings of the important women in my life into recipes everyone can follow. Thus, a Latin recipe development was born, with the help of the amazing Redlands team, of course!” ”

—Sandy Gonzalez
Chef de Cuisine,
University of Redlands

partner spotlight

Nicho's Ice Cream Redlands

Beloved for its Michoacana-style treats, Nicho's mixes a delightful variety of savory, sweet and spicy flavors together for irresistible scoops of joy. This family-owned business offers a taste of home with its fruity paletas and raspados—and makes fans out of skeptics!

“ Since 2017, Nicho's ice cream has served the Redlands community with Mexican-inspired fresh homemade ice cream and fruit bars. Working closely with our community and other local businesses has been our vision since day one. Working hand in hand with Harvest Table over the past four years has been a tremendous support to help us achieve our mission. ”



team member *spotlight*

Hugo Montilla Elon Dining *Hospitality Services Director*

When Hugo moved from his native Puerto Rico to North Carolina in 2009, he struggled to find work in his field of criminal investigations. “Because at that time I didn’t speak English, all doors were closed to me,” he says. Instead, he joined our parent company as a dishwasher for Carolina Dining Services at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Hugo soon started learning English from a supervisor at the campus bakery and took the initiative to put away pallets at the bakery. “No one asked me to do it,” he recalls. “I did it because I was bored at the bakery, and they needed help.”

Hugo’s work ethic was quickly noticed by the chef who had hired him, and he was offered the opportunity to become the supervisor of the receiving team. “At that time more people started to know me and ask me, ‘Why do you work like that?’ and I told them, ‘Because this building is going to be mine.’ ”

He kept picking up English from friendly colleagues, learned the production system and how to count inventory, and set his sights higher. “As always, I wanted more and more responsibilities.” He bloomed in the role of production manager at Carolina Dining Services, learning to cook and manage the kitchen; as he rose to meet every challenge, he was promoted to positions of increasing responsibility, including director at one of the university’s dining halls.

Today, Hugo is Harvest Table’s Hospitality Services Director at Elon University and a leader within the Impacto Employee Resource Group. He has been recognized by his colleagues with multiple awards nominations, including the Ring of Stars and the 30/30 Impacto Awards.





Harvest Table Culinary Group is proud to play an essential role in supporting students and our team members by *celebrating* their diverse cultural traditions



By welcoming them and letting them know they belong, collaborating with them to bring the authentic flavors of Latin America and the Caribbean to our dining halls and build community through inclusive events, supporting their holistic wellbeing in every dimension, and nurturing their abilities and opening opportunities for them to thrive and lead, we strive to make them feel at home on campus and beyond.