

University Catering

COMING TO AN EVENT NEAR YOU

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KATLUN FUIA

Inside >

Catering's New Day
Page 2

Celebrity Chef
Page 3

New Menus
Page 4

UNIVERSITY CATERING

Abayasinghe: 'I want to win your business'

Food for a changing customer demographic

BY CAROL C. BRADLEY, NDWORKS

Chris Abayasinghe, director of Food Services, has a story to tell about the launch of University Catering, and the theme is that "It's a fresh start. A whole new day."



Abayasinghe

It's a re-set for the entire department, he adds, offering the opportunity to cater meals to a changing customer demographic.

"The goal is for us to be more responsive by increasing the quality of food, offering better service and being good stewards of the University's resources."

The story—and major changes in catering that have come to fruition this year—have been several years in the making. Those changes will, Abayasinghe notes, shape the future of Food Services on campus for generations to come.

It began last year with the relocation of catering from the North Dining Hall to a revamped Center for Culinary Excellence (CCE) in the building, located on the far north side of campus, formerly known as the Food Services Support Facility—a move that potentially may lead to the long-anticipated renovation of the North Dining Hall.

"The CCE gave us the infrastructure to execute consistently," he says. "Now we have a dedicated facility for sourcing, producing and delivering food. The infrastructure improvements are investments, allowing us to take advantage of quality, local 'fresh just-in-time' food."

Purchasing has been consolidated to select vendors, allowing the leverage of partnerships and an increase in local purchasing. In support of both sustainability and efficiency, food is now delivered directly to campus eateries rather than being delivered to a central storage area, then reloaded and sent out across campus via truck.

"The improvements to catering reflect our pursuit of being best-in-class. It's about how we continue to promote a culture of service excellence across campus."

University Catering now offers a variety of options. Streamlined casual catering—lunches for meetings, seminars, student groups, etc.—are handled by our own Au Bon Pain Catering. "Place an order at 8 a.m., and we will deliver lunch for a meeting," Abayasinghe says. "I want to win your business."

New, cutting-edge menus

While catering menus still feature popular favorites, Executive Chef Donald Miller and his staff have been working hard to develop a new core menu and lots of new offerings, while retaining customer favorites.

"We've changed philosophies a little," Miller notes. "All our food is fresh—meat, poultry, seafood, vegetables. Nothing frozen. The new kitchen allows us to prepare food as close to event time as possible. We couldn't do that at North Dining Hall. Sometimes we were competing for oven space between catering and student dining."

"Now we can establish a level of quality both with the food and in presentation of food. Our team is trained to execute these items at the highest possible level. We've also elevated our dessert offerings. It's all about paying attention to detail."

"For example, all of our buffet entrees now feature complete course presentations in the chafing dishes. Our chefs now pair the appropriate fresh vegetables and starches together with the main entrée to complete the meal with an enhanced visual presentation."

With options for casual catering, retail units, such as Subway for the value-conscious, and now elegant high-end catering, there is a wide range of food service options available for any type of campus event.

Pricing is competitive. But one of the most important points, Abayasinghe adds, "What we return (financially) helps support the academic enterprise of the University. We want to be your caterer of choice."

Sample the new catering menus!

Stop by and meet the catering staff—and try samples from the new menus—at a tasting event Thursday, April 2, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the lobby of Grace Hall.



Casual catering for lunches and meetings

Casual, streamlined catering for luncheons, meetings and student groups is now handled by Au Bon Pain Catering. "If you place an order at 8 a.m., we will deliver lunch for a meeting or group," says Chris Abayasinghe, director of Food Services. "I want to win your business."



University Catering

The March 23 launch of University Catering included new uniforms, truck wraps and a new website. Here the catering staff poses in front of the Center for Culinary Excellence on the north edge of campus.

On front
Cover

On the front cover and Page 4: University Catering offers new menus and a new philosophy, with artistic layout of both cold and hot food. Food is fresh and locally sourced whenever possible—"Fresh haricot verts rather than frozen green beans," says Executive Chef Don Miller. "It's a whole new level of food service excellence." Photography by Kaitlin Fuja, OMG Photography.



UNIVERSITY CATERING

Chef Laura Johnson named ACF Central Region Pastry Chef of the Year



Johnson

Chef **Laura Johnson**, Notre Dame Food Services, was named 2015 American Culinary Federation (ACF) Central Region Pastry Chef of the Year, and will go on to compete against regional counterparts in the ACF National Convention in Orlando, Florida, July 30 to Aug. 3 for the national title and a \$5,000 award.



PHOTOS: ACF

Her winning dessert was a pastry-wrapped chocolate cake served with coconut rum ice cream, macerated tropical fruit, caramelized pineapple and banana with a banana cream and passion fruit fluid gel.

Johnson served first as an intern and later as baker/pastry cook at Notre Dame Bakeshop. In her current capacity as floor chef for Notre Dame Food Services, she oversees a staff of eight and produces pastries for University Catering and Morris Inn.

Food Services Staff

Food Service staffers gather on the stairs at a division Open Forum meeting at McKenna Hall in mid-March. The diverse staff includes first-generation immigrants from Mexico, Vietnam, Croatia, Italy, Iraq, Ghana and the Philippines.



BARBARA JOHNSTON

Filipino home cooking

Romeo Santiagué, Au bon Pain manager, and wife **Lea**, North Dining Hall service associate, will prepare traditional dishes for a Filipino American Student Association feast for 40 in early April, such as pansit bihon guisado, a traditional Filipino noodle dish; Filipino-style chicken adobo cooked with garlic and fish sauce; and turón, a slice of banana dusted with brown sugar, rolled in a spring roll wrapper and fried. Desserts will include biko (Filipino sweet sticky rice cakes) and flan.



CAROL C. BRADLEY



MYLEEN HOLLERO

Celebrity chef Jet Tila to visit campus

Monday, April 20, through Wednesday, April 22, celebrity chef Jet Tila, who's battled legends on "Iron Chef America," and appeared as a judge on "Cutthroat Kitchen" and "Guy's Grocery Games" in addition to many appearances on "The Today Show," "No Reservations" and National Public Radio—will be on campus. As part of the rebranding of catering and the emphasis on diverse cuisines, Chef Jet will train the culinary team on menus and cooking techniques. He'll also be creating a special signature dish for Food Services that will be revealed April 23 and available on catering menus the next day.

UNIVERSITY CATERING

PHOTOS: KATLIN FUJIA



CATERING

Menu



University Catering is available for best-in-class food service for your special events, including buffet-style service as well as served breakfasts, brunches, luncheons and dinners in a variety of settings as well as cocktail receptions and other large events; University Catering also provides elegant formal dinner parties and receptions, for both special events and weddings.

Contact University Catering at 574-631-7859 or visit catering.nd.edu for information on event planning, wedding packages, wedding menu tastings, available enhancements (specialty linens, floral services, ice carvings, lighting) facilities, policies and deposit requirements.

Hors d'oeuvres

- Charcuterie Station
Chicken Liver Paté, Serrano Ham, Prosciutto, Smoked Salmon, Dry Cured Hard Salami and Capicola Beer & Barley Croustades, Sour Dough Croustade and Lavosh Manchego, Gruyère, Parmesan & Gorgonzola Cheeses
- Whole Almonds, Olives, Cornish Pickles*
- Local Dried Fruits, Whole Mustard, Fig Jam*
- Spicy Vegetable Samosas
with a Garlic Aioli
- Bacon Wrapped Scallops
crispy Bacon wrapped around tender Sea Scallops

Appetizers

- Tea Smoked Indian Duck Breast
with a Michigan Cherry Chutney served with a White Truffle Soft Polenta and Demi-glace
- Fresh Fruit Grande
beautifully presented fresh Berries and seasonal Fruit with organic Green Tea Gelée

Salads

- Caprese Salad
with Plum Tomato, fresh Mozzarella, Basil, Bibb, Arugula and Toasted Crouton served with a White Balsamic Vinaigrette
- Roasted Asparagus on a Bed of Bibb
with Bacon Crumbles, Hard Boiled Egg, Shaved Parmesan, Toasted Almonds and Cherry Tomatoes served with a Lemon Emulsified Vinaigrette

Entrées

- Chicken Breast Medallions Lobster Oscar
sautéed Chicken Breasts topped with fresh lump Lobster Meat Medallions and Sauce Béarnaise. Served with a fresh seasonal Vegetable and Rice Pilaf
- Coquille St. Jaques with Cold Water Shrimp
served with Duches Potatoes and fresh seasonal Vegetables
- Gratin of Gnocchi
with Braised Kale, Caramelized Onions, Grilled Zucchini, Yellow Squash, Portabella and Broccolini served with a Tomato-Eggplant Sauce

Desserts

(wedding receptions include a traditional two-tier wedding cake at no additional charge.)

- Bailey's Irish Cream Torte
- Chocolate Cake with Bailey's Mousse
- Assorted Mousses: Chocolate, Raspberry, Mango, Bailey's and White Chocolate Caramel Flan
- Fresh Cut Fruit Salad
- Coconut Mango Pastry Cream Tartlet
- Lemon Chiffon Cheesecake
- Chocolate Bouchons with Creme Anglaise and fresh Fruit
- Fresh Strawberry Cream Cheese Filled Crepe with Strawberry Sauce