

Williams College Goes the Extra Mile for Food Allergic Students with MenuTrinfo's Services

MenuTrinfo promotes safety and food allergy confidence at Williams College with Certified Free From and allergy conscious options on campus.

FORT COLLINS, COLORADO, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, March 8, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- MenuTrinfo is the nation's leading food allergy expert for the foodservice industry, including college and university dining. Their Certified Free From™ program is recognized by the American National

Standards Institute (ANSI) National Accreditation Board (ANAB) as meeting the rigorous International Standards Organization (ISO) 17065 standards for certifying bodies. It is the first certification of its kind to reach this level of accreditation.

“

What sets us apart is being an institution that invests in the space, personnel, and the program – We are a caring and nurturing institution that cares about [students'] needs AND wants.”

Temesgen Araya, Williams College



Williams Dining Chefs Nate Demo and Jake Snow at the Clean Cuisine Station

Williams College in Williamstown, MA, has recently become Certified Free From gluten and 8 of the 9 major allergens at their [Clean Cuisine station](#). Amidst the pandemic in 2020, the Williams culinary team had to find a way to feed students in their dorm rooms. With that, they needed to tailor their menus and ensure the options were inclusive to provide a safe dining experience for students. Allyse Wiencek, MS, LDN, is the Dining Services Nutritionist at Williams College. She understood that despite the challenges of the pandemic, their facility needed to make these changes as soon as possible.

"As hard as the pandemic was, it allowed us an opportunity to collect a more complete picture of our students' dietary needs. That was a big factor in inspiring the [Clean Cuisine] station," Wiencek said. "Food allergy awareness has always been a factor at Williams, but the continued upward trend in reported food allergies led us to put even more energy towards it."

Along with their Certified Free From kitchen and service station, Williams College also staffs [two Certified AllerTrainers](#), soon to be three. Certified AllerTrainers can deliver the AllerTrain Suite of Courses at dining facilities, enabling live trainings on safely serving those with food allergies and dietary restrictions.

"It's a consistent and reliable accredited training platform," Wiencek explained, as she is a Certified AllerTrainer herself. "The AllerSTAR subscription allows us to gain new training material every month, but more importantly, a reminder to keep food allergies, celiac, and others at the forefront of our minds."

The Clean Cuisine station at Williams College's Whitmans' dining facility has opened the door for many students to eat safely alongside those without food allergies and restrictions. The culinary team, including First Cook, Bridget LaValley, and allergen-specific Second Cooks, Nate Demo and Jake Snow, have done a remarkable job of heading the new operations.

Prior to the implementation of the Clean Cuisine station, the Whitmans' team was preparing an enormous number of individually made dedicated meals each week. Dedicated meals were more restrictive to the student, as they were only provided one option. Dedicated meals were held in hot air screens, where the quality decreased the longer they sat.

The new station offers safe, freshly prepared options which are served by staff to eliminate the



The Certified AllerTrainer Seal is given to individuals who have completed the CAT program



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**Williams
Dining**

Williams College promotes inclusion for their students with MenuTrinfo's services

risk for allergen cross contact. Students also have more options to choose from and can ask for larger or smaller portions if they so choose.

Williams dining also avoids garlic/onion and aims to keep their ingredients as “clean” as possible on Clean Cuisine to accommodate common food intolerances. “It's a challenge from a culinary standpoint without using butter, dairy, and garlic,” Snow said. “Finding new and creative ways to incorporate a higher level of nutrition and flavor has helped us generate more excitement for our station.”

“We have also seen many students that don't require an allergy-free meal come over and enjoy food off that station,” added Demo. “The entire student body has responded well to our new program, which is also naturally healthier without certain fats and oils.”

Increased quality and a more focused approach on operations have helped Williams College transform its dining experience. As many students set out to apply to colleges and are away from home for the first time, their parents prioritize having safe and viable options of variety for meal plans on campus.

Williams College Director of Dining Services, Temesgen Araya, knows their recent efforts have helped them become a leader in the student dining space.

“I think our perspective in providing allergy-free kitchens allows current and future students to know that we care to meet their needs and provide options and move into their wants,” Araya said. “What sets us apart is being an institution that invests in the space, personnel, and the program – it's a good way to understand that we are a caring and nurturing institution that cares about their needs AND wants.”

Betsy Craig, Founder and CEO of MenuTrinfo, always knows what it takes for institutions to change their practices and operations to accommodate the lives of those with allergies.

“MenuTrinfo is proud to partner with a food service industry leader, who is changing the lives of so many with their great allergy solutions,” Craig said. “Congratulations to Williams College for taking the leap!”

Whitmans' Senior Operations Manager, Charlotte Clark, is happy to report that their student feedback has become stronger and more positive. From seeing their overall numbers and sales increase to receiving constant positive feedback, reinforcement, and greeting cards, her team has seen their efforts pay dividends.

“I've gotten so many text messages from students just complimenting the chef!” Wiencek said. “Our Clean Cuisine station has added variety and opportunity for the students, which has opened up a new door for us.”

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