

University of Massachusetts Chef Wins NACUFS 2024 Culinary Challenge

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY, USA, July 19, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The National Association of College & University Food Services (NACUFS) this morning announced Chef Jeffrey MacDonald of the University of Massachusetts as the esteemed first place winner of the NACUFS 2024 Culinary Challenge, held Thursday evening at the Louisville Marriott Downtown as part of the NACUFS 2024 National Conference.

Representing the Northeast region for the second year in a row, MacDonald, chef de cuisine at the University of Massachusetts, won first place and received an American Culinary Federation (ACF) gold medal. Notably, all of the competing chefs received the honor of an ACF gold medal as well.



Chef Jeffrey MacDonald of the University of Massachusetts competes in the NACUFS 2024 Culinary Challenge in Louisville, Kentucky on Thursday, July 19, 2024.

“

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Jeffrey MacDonald

MacDonald said he felt incredible and couldn't be happier to take first place for his kombu cured branzino with miso matcha mousseline and shrimp gyoza dashi cream, wasabi pea puree, bulgur wheat stir fry, soy-glazed mushrooms and baby bok choy.

“All the other competitors did an amazing job,” MacDonald said. “Everyone got gold, so that's very cool. ... I feel honored.”

He thanked his wife first and foremost for her support and for caring for their three children while he practiced on his days off, as well as his mentor Anthony Jung, executive chef at the University of Massachusetts, for his support, input and feedback.

"I wouldn't be here without him," MacDonald said.

Chef Bouakhanh "Bou" Greene of the University of Michigan won second place and an ACF gold medal for her pan-seared branzino with Laotian fish essence, shrimp crispy balls, bulgur, mung bean, crushed peanuts, and savoy cabbage wrap. In third place and with another ACF gold medal was Chad McDonald from the University of Houston for his fruit de mer. Nicholas Simpson from Virginia Tech and James Jorgen from the University of Utah tied for fourth place, each winning ACF gold medals, and Tye Nielson from the University of California - Riverside also took home an ACF gold.



Chef Jeffrey MacDonald's winning plate from the NACUFS 2024 Culinary Challenge featured kombu cured branzino with miso matcha mousseline and shrimp gyoza dashi cream.

The NACUFS Culinary Challenge was created in 2001 and recognizes the extensive culinary expertise within collegiate foodservice. Each year, a protein is selected—this year, fresh branzino (European sea bass), bulgur wheat, and white shrimp—which competitors must use to create an original recipe to form a nutritionally balanced plate. The live competition begins at the regional level. ACF judges are on hand at all competitions to judge and provide feedback, making each event a valuable learning experience for competitors.

During both the regional and national competitions, the individual creations are judged based on a 100-point scale assessing organization, cooking skills, culinary technique and taste to determine who will take home the NACUFS title or an ACF medal.

More than 40 collegiate chefs from NACUFS member institutions in six regions qualified to face off in competitions during March and April at the NACUFS 2024 Spring Conference Series. Each of the winners, representing the Pacific, Continental, Midwest, Northeast, Mid-Atlantic and Southern NACUFS regions, advanced to the final competition.

The NACUFS 2024 Culinary Challenge winner receives a trophy, cash prize and recognition during the NACUFS 2024 National Conference and in the official NACUFS magazine, *Campus Dining Today*[®].

The 2024 Culinary Challenge is sponsored by US Foods and Cintas. Learn more online at www.NACUFS.org/Awards/CulinaryChallenge. Previous winners can be found at www.nacufs.org/PastCulinaryChallengeWinners.

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About NACUFS

The National Association of College & University Food Services (NACUFS) was founded in 1958 by a group of college and university foodservice professionals from across the United States. Since its inception, NACUFS has focused on its mission to support and promote excellence in collegiate dining by providing members with the programs and resources they need to excel, from benchmarking and best practices to educational programming and professional networking.

NACUFS institutional members include private colleges to large public universities, and two-year colleges to four-year universities and span the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, and beyond. Industry members include food and equipment manufacturers, distributors, brokers, foodservice support companies, councils, boards, trade associations, advisory commissions, and other professional groups. For more information, visit [NACUFS.org](https://www.nacufs.org).

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