Boston College Offers “Bowls” concept

The team at BC Dining developed their new “Bowl concept” in their efforts to decrease the amount of meat and increase the amount of vegetables in students' diets, a goal very much in line with the organization’s commitment to Menus of Change principles. McElroy Commons General Manager Michael Forcier states “We’re starting to see a lot of students coming into college dining and expecting healthier options. Having an entire line dedicated to showcasing vegetables and grains is a great way to honor this particular need.”

Forcier worked closely with his team, including Assistant General Manager Leora L’Heureux, to bring his idea to life. They searched high and low for the perfect quinoa base, and chefs crafted a marinated kale to bring healthy—but still flavorful—greens to the bowl. The team also hand-picked toppings to finalize a menu of 5 bowls for students to choose from, such as the Climate Bowl, the Sustainability Bowl and the Environmental Bowl. The team came up with a name for the new station: Harmony Bowls which made their debut in September when classes began.
Unfortunately, the Harmony Bowls were not as popular as Forcier had projected. Many students expressed that they felt the bowls were not substantial enough without an animal protein option. The team then added chicken to the line for these students, but still, the line was not performing. Additionally, some students were frustrated that the Harmony Bowl options were predetermined, preventing them from customizing their toppings and dressing. Forcier’s team went into crisis mode to plan their next move—it was time to reinvent the bowl.

“It just wasn’t making sense to have an entire station that never had students waiting in line. We had this great concept, but at the end of the day it wasn’t satisfying the customers’ needs,” L’Heureux said. “We knew it would be best for the Eagles’ Nest as a whole if we took a step back and reevaluated.”

And so, the team brought a three-step process to the bowls station. First, customers can choose a protein base of warm quinoa, brown rice, or marinated kale. Then, they choose sides which include roasted Brussel sprouts, sweet potatoes, corn, BBQ black beans, cauliflower, and butternut squash. Finally, customers can top the bowl with either fire-roasted chicken breast or a scoop of warm, savory, gooey macaroni and cheese. Marinated carrot slaw and choice of dressing complete the hearty lunch option.

The benefits of a build your own bowl are two-fold, a new variety of flavors enter the dining experience, as well as provide additional options for those that are gluten free, vegetarian, or vegan. The concept station currently denotes which dressing options are gluten free and contain allergens, and customers are encouraged to alert the server at the time of their order to ensure optimal food safety. BC Dining prides itself on the allergen awareness protocols taken for the safety of each and every customer. The overall nutrition profile of a “Bowl” varies, but on average contains nearly 20 grams of protein, and 18 grams of fiber! Not to mention a variety of vitamins and minerals from the vegetable additions!
On November 7, Forcier and his team debuted the new and improved Harmony Bowls— which now go by the simpler name of “Bowls”. BC Dining student interns helped to launch the concept by handing out samples to students around the Eagles’ Nest and promoting the change on BC Dining’s social media outlets. By late November, the change proved successful. Word of mouth and other marketing initiatives have made the Bowl much more popular. Forcier reported in an email to colleagues that for the first time, Eagles’ Nest had sold over 200 Bowls in one day, over 3x what the volume was before the relaunch.

Students raved about the Bowl station. “I love that I can choose the toppings and that there’s such a great selection,” said one student. Another commented, “I love that the bowls are so fresh and healthy, but still offer the option to add something indulgent like mac and cheese on top. I love seeing BC Dining expand healthy options.”

“We worked so hard to make this concept a success story,” said Forcier. “We’re just thrilled that it’s catching on. Bowls exemplify the Menus of Change principles in a lot of ways, so we’re really happy to get that word out as well.”
Unfortunately, the Harmony Bowls were not as popular as Forcier had projected. Many students expressed that they felt the bowls were not substantial enough without an animal protein option. The team then added chicken to the line for these students, but still, the line was not performing. Additionally, some students were frustrated that the Harmony Bowl options were predetermined, preventing them from customizing their toppings and dressing. Forcier’s team went into crisis mode to plan their next move—it was time to reinvent the bowl.

“It just wasn’t making sense to have an entire station that never had students waiting in line. We had this great concept, but at the end of the day it wasn’t satisfying the customers’ needs,” L’Heureux said. “We knew it would be best for the Eagles’ Nest as a whole if we took a step back and reevaluated.”

And so, the team brought a three-step process to the bowls station. First, customers can choose a protein base of warm quinoa, brown rice, or marinated kale. Then, they choose sides which include roasted Brussel sprouts, sweet potatoes, corn, BBQ black beans, cauliflower, and butternut squash. Finally, customers can top the bowl with either fire-roasted chicken breast or a scoop of warm, savory, gooey macaroni and cheese. Marinated carrot slaw and choice of dressing complete the hearty lunch option.

The benefits of a build your own bowl are two-fold, a new variety of flavors enter the dining experience, as well as provide additional options for those that are gluten free, vegetarian, or vegan. The concept station currently denotes which dressing options are gluten free and contain allergens, and customers are encouraged to alert the server at the time of their order to ensure optimal food safety. BC Dining prides itself on the allergen awareness protocols taken for the safety of each and every customer. The overall nutrition profile of a “Bowl” varies, but on average contains nearly 20 grams of protein, and 18 grams of fiber! Not to mention a variety of vitamins and minerals from the vegetable additions!
Boston College Offers “Bowls” concept

The team at BC Dining developed their new “Bowl concept” in their efforts to decrease the amount of meat and increase the amount of vegetables in students’ diets, a goal very much in line with the organization’s commitment to Menus of Change principles. McElroy Commons General Manager Michael Forcier states “We’re starting to see a lot of students coming into college dining and expecting healthier options. Having an entire line dedicated to showcasing vegetables and grains is a great way to honor this particular need.”

Forcier worked closely with his team, including Assistant General Manager Leora L’Heureux, to bring his idea to life. They searched high and low for the perfect quinoa base, and chefs crafted a marinated kale to bring healthy—but still flavorful—greens to the bowl. The team also hand-picked toppings to finalize a menu of 5 bowls for students to choose from, such as the Climate Bowl, the Sustainability Bowl and the Environmental Bowl. The team came up with a name for the new station: Harmony Bowls which made their debut in September when classes began.
On November 7, Forcier and his team debuted the new and improved Harmony Bowls—which now go by the simpler name of “Bowls”. BC Dining student interns helped to launch the concept by handing out samples to students around the Eagles’ Nest and promoting the change on BC Dining’s social media outlets.

By late November, the change proved successful. Word of mouth and other marketing initiatives have made the Bowl much more popular. Forcier reported in an email to colleagues that for the first time, Eagles’ Nest had sold over 200 Bowls in one day, over 3x what the volume was before the relaunch.

Students raved about the Bowl station. “I love that I can choose the toppings and that there’s such a great selection,” said one student. Another commented, “I love that the bowls are so fresh and healthy, but still offer the option to add something indulgent like mac and cheese on top. I love seeing BC Dining expand healthy options.”

“We worked so hard to make this concept a success story,” said Forcier. “We’re just thrilled that it’s catching on. Bowls exemplify the Menus of Change principles in a lot of ways, so we’re really happy to get that word out as well.”