

SOURCE: SPE Certified



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SPE Certified and UMass Amherst Partner to Offer Healthier Dining Options to Students

NEW YORK, NY--(Marketwire - January 9, 2013) - UMass Amherst and SPE Certified, a unique restaurant and foodservice certification program designed to enhance the nutritional quality of meals, have announced they will be partnering to revamp a portion of the university's dining halls menus to offer students healthier options without compromising taste.

SPE Certified's team of culinary nutritionists and executive chefs are reviewing up to 200 recipes and creating menus that follow SPE Certified's scientifically-grounded culinary philosophy -- to premiere on January 21, 2013 as the Spring semester begins. UMass Amherst Dining is the second largest campus dining operation in the nation, with 16,500 students on various meal plans, serving more than 40,000 meals daily. After ranking in the top ten of *Princeton Review's Best 377 Colleges* last year, UMass was recently named #3 "Best Campus Food" in the 2013 edition.

"SPE Certified and UMass Dining Services share the common goal of providing healthful and flavorful meals in a sustainable and environmentally conscious manner," said Ken Toong, Executive Director of Auxiliary Enterprises at UMass. "As a leading college and university-dining operator, partnering with SPE Certified, a highly regarded health food certifier, will solidify UMass' reputation as one of the healthiest colleges in the nation for student dining."

Launched in May 2012, SPE, which stands for *Sanitas Per Escam* in Latin (or "Health Through Food"), aims to provide a universal, trusted standard for healthy and delicious dining outside of the home. The SPE seal is a new way for restaurants and foodservice providers to address sustainability and personal health concerns, and importantly to ensure consumer confidence by establishing a recognized standard.

"UMass' award-winning dining program is perfectly aligned with SPE Certified's ethos of providing healthy and delicious food -- which was developed by chefs and dietitians and validated by world-renowned nutrition experts. Ken Toong and his top-flight team have an obvious passion for food, as well as a single-minded focus to provide students with convenience, flexibility and variety in the university's well-balanced meal options," said Emmanuel Verstraeten, Founder & CEO of SPE Certified.

SPE Certified goes beyond the farm-to-table movement of **Sourcing** seasonal and local ingredients, but also incorporates the principles of **Preparing** (using specific cooking techniques that preserve the integrity and nutritional qualities of the ingredients) and **Enhancing** (optimizing nutritional density by combining ingredients that are more powerful when eaten together than alone). This is what sets SPE Certified apart from other culinary certification programs.

Given that UMass Dining is clearly driven to improve, SPE Certified is confident that its unique nutritional and culinary philosophy of creating nutrient-dense dishes, which are rich in flavor, will help enhance the university's current high-quality offerings. For example, SPE Certified's focus on beneficial food synergies resulted in a salmon with Moroccan crust being paired with an acorn squash stuffed with wild rice and pecans. This dish contains the healthy fats found in salmon and is a source of fiber, potassium and zinc. The squash adds a large amount of antioxidants which are well absorbed thanks to the presence of a small amount of olive oil added during the cooking of the fish and the fats from the fish itself.

"Our students want our food to not only taste good, but to be good for them and to be environmentally sustainable. Working with professionals from SPE will help us to better serve our customers. Our staff and students will appreciate dining on food that is SPE certified," Mr. Toong added.

About UMass Dining:

UMass Dining Services is the 2nd largest college dining program in the United States. With 16,500 students on the meal plan and serving 40,000 meals per day and 5,000,000 meals annually, UMass Dining prides itself on offering healthy and flavorful meals using only the freshest ingredients featuring local, regional, and world cuisine in a sustainable and environmentally conscious manner. UMass Dining Services has received a myriad of national awards for its innovative and quality programs, including the White House Campus Champions of Change Award 2012 and NRN's MenuMasters 2011. It serves UMass Amherst, the flagship campus of the University of Massachusetts system and one of the nation's top public research universities with 27,000 students. www.umassdining.com

About SPE® Certified:

SPE® Certified is a unique certification and consulting program designed to enhance the nutritional quality of meals, without sacrificing taste. SPE stands for *Sanitas Per Escam* (Latin for "Health Through Food"), and its mission is to provide a universal, trusted standard for healthy and delicious dining outside of the home. SPE Certified's guidelines combine cutting-edge research with international health standards, validated and updated continuously by world-renowned nutrition experts. SPE Certified works with chefs to develop seasonal, great-tasting dishes that focus on sourcing, thoughtful preparation and an artful approach to combining nutrient-dense ingredients. Buildings have LEED; household products have the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval; food now has SPE Certified. www.SPECertified.com

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