



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **UC Davis Dining Services Partners with SPE Certified to Expand Healthy Food Options**

### **Culinary Certification Program Elevates University's Cuisine**

DAVIS, CA, September 23, 2013 – UC Davis students who are settling into residence halls this week have begun experiencing a new take on healthy eating. UC Davis Dining Services in partnership with Sodexo and SPE Certified, a unique foodservice certification program designed to enhance the nutritional quality of meals without compromising taste, have announced their partnership to enhance platform food offerings in UC Davis' resident dining commons. The goal: to offer customers healthy, nutritious, and sustainable options that taste great.

UC Davis Dining Services is one of the largest campus dining operations on the west coast with more than 12,000 students, staff, and faculty on various meal plans, serving more than 55,000 meals per week in three platform-style, all-you-care-to-eat dining commons – Segundo, Tercero, and Cuarto. Ranked as one of the top vegan-friendly dining programs in the nation and earning the #4 Cool School spot this year, UC Davis is among a group of higher education institutions offering dishes with sustainable food ingredients at every meal.

The team of culinary nutritionists and chefs from SPE worked with Registered Dietitian, Linda Adams and Executive Chef, Michael Lyle on campus at UC Davis. Recipes currently on the menu, as well as some new ones were analyzed and adjusted to follow SPE Certified's scientifically-grounded culinary, nutrition and sustainability philosophies. These dishes will be featured at one platform in each of the three dining commons. The dishes do not focus on any particular diet; they are not exclusively vegan or vegetarian but inclusive of many different foods. The focus is a balanced plate composed of whole foods paired in combinations that enhance the entire meal.

Linda Adams explains, "Demonstrating that both nutrition and taste can be preserved is critical in changing the way people eat."

Students will taste the difference in many popular dishes. One example is a Greek yogurt-based dressing and crunchy pumpkin seed topping for our popular Santa Fe Chicken Salad. In some cases serving sizes of dishes may also be different. Fettuccine with Wine and Tomato has been enhanced with a full serving of vegetables.

“The purpose is to clearly highlight the values of healthy, sustainable food that UC Davis is known for,” states James Boushka, Marketing Director for UC Davis Dining Services. “Customers are increasingly demanding healthy food ingredients that are sourced from sustainable, environmentally-conscious growers.”

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 distinctive, squiggly red 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.

SPE Certified goes beyond the farm-to-table movement of Sourcing seasonal and local ingredients. It 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).

SPE Certified Founder and CEO Emmanuel Verstraeten added, “Healthy and nutritious food does not have to be boring. I am confident that our unique culinary and nutritional philosophy of creating nutrient-dense dishes, which are rich in flavor, will help enhance UC Davis’ current high-quality offerings.”

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Members of the media who wish to visit the residential dining commons are invited to make advanced arrangements by contacting James Boushka. Tours and food sampling will be scheduled between 11:30am and 2:00pm, Wednesday September 25<sup>th</sup> thru Friday September 27<sup>th</sup>.

### **About UC Davis Dining Services in Partnership with Sodexo:**

UC Davis Dining Services in Partnership with Sodexo is the on-site provider of resident dining, retail dining, concessions, and catering foodservice for the University of California, Davis. With over 12,000 students, staff, and faculty participating in meal plan the program serves more than 3,000,000 meals annually. Earning the Sacramento Area Green Business certification in 2011, one of the top ten vegan-friendly programs in 2012, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's WasteWise Champion two years in a row, UC Davis Dining Services is known for practices in pursuit of a more sustainable food system.

### **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.

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