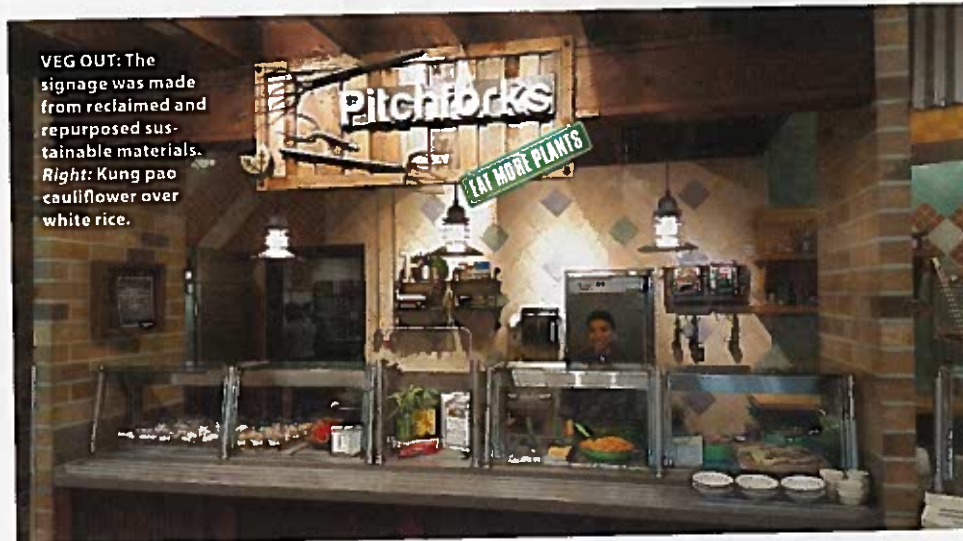


TrendWatch ^{fm}

WHAT'S NEW, NEXT & NOTABLE IN ONSITE FOODSERVICE



VEG OUT: The signage was made from reclaimed and repurposed sustainable materials. **Right:** Kung pao cauliflower over white rice.



COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

College Rolls Out New Concept with Plant-based Menu

Pitchforks, an all-vegan food station that opened in the fall, has quadrupled lunch sales.

PANKO-CRUSTED sweet potato burgers piled high with sliced avocado and shaved red onion. Seared tofu banh mi served with pickled zucchini noodles and a side of beet couscous. These are some of the plant-based protein options at Pitchforks, a new, all-vegan food station at Canisius College in Buffalo, N.Y. Since opening in the fall of 2016, the new station has appealed to vegans and non-vegans alike, quadrupling sales at lunch.

The initiative started with the college's vegetarian club. "They wanted to get more vegan options on our menu," says Chef Jennifer DiFrancesco. So in the winter of 2015, the dining program revamped its grab-and-go sec-

tion, dedicating one cooler to vegan and vegetarian items.

"Even our chefs worried it would be very hard to pull off," says John Tychinski, director of dining services.

"But we saw a 76 percent increase in revenue and 65 percent of the sales were vegan/vegetarian."

At the start of 2016, the dining program went one step further and created Pitchforks, an entire station of vegan comfort food.

"The goal was to not only offer delicious, hearty, vegan options but to also lure in any meat eaters passing by," says DiFrancesco. "We chose to make it vegan instead of vegetarian because a guest can also use our salad bar to add cheese or other toppings if they wish."

The result is a menu that cycles over 28 days with most everything made in house.

Dining services also recruited a vegan and a vegetarian to work the station.

Pitchforks is located in the Economou Dining Hall, where dinner is all you care to eat for \$10.50. At lunch, entrées at Pitchforks cost \$6. "We made these entrées 50 cents cheaper than all the other food stations to encourage healthier choices," says Tychinski.

Although social media and email blasts helped with the rollout, Pitchforks' success is largely due to word of mouth. "We're up 400 percent in sales from this station over last year when it was only half vegetarian," says Tychinski. Not only has

the general public increasingly stopped in to try Pitchforks, Tychinski says he's seen more and more faculty and staff choosing to purchase from Pitchforks over bringing a brown bag lunch.

"Pitchforks is part of three objectives we have that are all tied together," says Tychinski. "We want our dining program to move towards plant-based diets, sustainability and fair trade."

—Amanda McCorquodale

Expanded versions of these stories and much more are available online at FOOD-MANAGEMENT.COM.