



CULTIVATING THE LONG-TERM WELL-BEING OF ALL PEOPLE AND THE PLANET—ONE STUDENT, ONE MEAL AT A TIME.

All Member Meeting | October 4-6, 2021
Stanford University, CA

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“This groundbreaking enterprise gives us critical insights into nutrition and wellness, and shapes the way universities engage with growers, suppliers, and manufacturers.”

SHIRLEY EVERETT
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Senior Associate Vice Provost
Stanford University

Residential and Dining Enterprises

OVERVIEW OF THE MENUS OF CHANGE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE

Jointly Led by The Culinary Institute of America and Stanford University

THE VISION

Cultivating the long-term wellbeing of all people and the planet one student, one meal at a time.

THE MISSION

MCURC is a collaboration of forward-thinking scholars, food service leaders, executive chefs, and administrators for colleges and universities who are accelerating efforts to move people toward healthier, more sustainable, and delicious foods using evidence-based research, education, and innovation.

THE INITIATIVE

In 2012, **The Culinary Institute of America (CIA)** and **Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (HSPH)—Department of Nutrition** launched Menus of Change, an ongoing initiative to advance better food choices and menu development at the intersection of health, sustainability imperatives, culinary insight, and next-generation business strategy. With the success of the initiative’s annual Menus of Change (MOC) Leadership Summit and following the release of its annual report, “Charting the Future of Food & the Foodservice Industry,” the CIA and Stanford University launched a complementary initiative: the Menus of Change University Research Collaborative (MCURC).

The MCURC is a working group of scholars and campus dining leaders from invited colleges and universities interested in accelerating efforts to move American consumers—and college/university students, scholars, and staff in particular—toward menus that integrate both health and sustainability imperatives. The collaboration recognizes that a significant amount of energy for food systems transformation today is being driven by concerned university students and forward-looking faculty and administration, and understands that university food systems hold considerable untapped potential to further catalyze existing efforts.

At the foundation of the Collaborative are the 24 Menus of Change Principles of Healthy, Sustainable Menus, and central to the work of this network is a research agenda that uses campus dining settings as real-world testing grounds to evaluate an entire matrix of hypotheses on how best to implement these principles in high-volume foodservice. In doing so, MCURC is developing and scaling a new methodology for behavioral research around food choices that uses campus dining halls as living laboratories.

The MCURC members serve over 800,000 meals per day, and one of the Collaborative's strategic goals is to enlist the combined power of the Collaborative members through Collective Impact. This strategic initiative of data collection and impact analysis empowers members by enhancing their understanding of the Collaborative's combined protein purchases. The members' protein purchases directly affect the global environment and the health of their students. The data is aggregated so that the MCURC membership's ability to enhance both of these efforts is exponentially increased beyond that of any one university. Once fully understood, the most effective strategies for reaching these goals will be shared more broadly.

We held our first meeting of key MCURC campus dining representatives at the CIA's campus in Napa Valley in November 2014, establishing a strong core, and soon after, we brought on board foodservice leaders from several additional colleges and universities around the U.S., as well as academic faculty from a broad range of disciplines (please see p. 5). We held our first annual meeting in October 2015 at Stanford, our second annual meeting in October 2016 at Harvard, our third annual meeting in October 2017 at UCLA, our fourth annual meeting in October 2018 at Princeton, our fifth annual meeting in October 2019 at University of Colorado Boulder, and our sixth annual meeting in October 2020 online. The message from these university leaders has been clear: There is an urgent need for a network such as MCURC; the time for this change is now; the opportunities are immense.

To date, the network consists of 250 members representing 66 institutions:

PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS

The Collaborative was founded and is jointly led by:

- The Culinary Institute of America
- Stanford University

University Members:

- Boston College
- College of the Holy Cross
- Columbia University
- Cornell University
- Duke University
- Harvard University
- Kansas State University
- Michigan State University
- North Carolina State University
- Northeastern University
- Ohio State University
- Oregon State University
- Pomona College
- Princeton University
- Rutgers University
- Tufts University
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of California, Davis
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of California, Office of the President
- University of California, Riverside
- University of California, San Diego
- University of California, San Francisco
- University of California, Santa Barbara
- University of Colorado, Boulder
- University of Colorado, Colorado Springs
- University of Connecticut
- University of Maryland
- University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- University of Michigan
- University of Montana
- University of New Hampshire
- University of North Texas
- University of Notre Dame

- University of Southern California
- University of Texas
- University of Washington
- Vanderbilt University
- Yale University

Academic Members
(Participating Faculty):

- Chatham University
- Colorado State University
- Drexel University
- Hotel Management School Maastricht
- INSEAD
- Johns Hopkins University
- Lebanon Valley College
- The New School
- New York University
- Paul Bocuse Institute
- Penn State
- Penn State-Lehigh Valley
- Queens College (City University of New York)
- Rice University
- Singapore Institute of Technology
- Universite de Dijon
- University of Barcelona
- University of Vermont
- Virginia Tech

Ex Officio Members:

- Google
- U.S. Olympic Training Center

Research Collaborators:

- EAT Foundation
- Food For Climate League
- LeanPath.org
- ReFED
- World Resources Institute

For more information about all member institutions, please visit our website--moccollaborative.org--including links to each member's website to learn about the many innovative initiatives and programs these leading-edge schools and organizations are implementing to advance healthier, more sustainable food choices.

THE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

The study of food—whether focused on the related areas of agriculture, the environment, medicine and public health/nutrition, food science, hospitality, business, psychology, anthropology, history, political science, or law—is often siloed within academia. Furthermore, not all of these disciplines or programs within which they reside are typically engaged with the culinary and business leadership of university foodservice. Food studies programs that are emerging across the U.S. are starting to chip away at these silos.

However, it is not yet standard practice for university efforts around food studies to be truly comprehensive, or thoroughly reflected in the food choices, menu development strategies, and procurement guidelines of their respective foodservice operations.

The [MCURC Research Working Group](#) focuses on projects that impact students' diets, by developing scalable, applied solutions to promote delicious, healthier, and more sustainable food. We have developed three key types of research:

- **Collective Impact projects.** As described above, we aim to develop a culture of sharing data on the combined purchasing of specific foods that are at the center of the Menus of Change Principles. This continuously updated, robust data set presents myriad opportunities for rich analysis and research projects that will be valuable in real-world contexts.
- **Operational Research.** The Research Working Group develops “process improvement interventions” that inform more evidence-based improvements to dining operations.
- **Academic Research.** The support of academic research is one of MCURC's most important roles. Our research portfolio includes numerous projects that aim to be published in peer-reviewed journals and provide broadly generalizable results.

Here are some of the projects that have been conducted so far.

[The DISH \(Delicious Impressions Support Healthy Eating\) Study](#)

The Protein Flip, one of MCURC's main research focus areas, aims to improve consumption of vegetables and plant based proteins vs. animal-based proteins. Several studies have shown that healthy labeling is counter-effective to improve vegetable consumption, whereas indulgent labeling can have a positive impact on immediate consumption and postprandial satiety.

A pilot study, conducted in one MCURC institution in 2016, had shown the positive impact of indulgent labeling vs. neutral or healthy labeling on vegetable consumption. A scaled replication of that study, the DISH Study, has now taken place at six member colleges and universities. The manuscript has been published in 2019 in Psychological Science.

Faith in Fat Study

In an attempt to maintain a low weight, some students choose no-fat options. But fat is an important factor of a healthy - and tasty - diet. The type of fat is important for health because it can affect chronic disease risk. Menus of Change encourages choosing healthy fats, not no fats, so this study investigated how students perceive the healthiness of dishes with no fat, unsaturated fat, or saturated fat. As a vast majority of students selected the not fat options as the perceived healthiest ones, results show that students lack knowledge regarding the important role of fat, in particular unsaturated fat, in the diet. The manuscript has been published in 2020 in *Nutrients*.

Impact of a seminar on students' dietary intake and dietary carbon footprint

Dietary patterns link environmental sustainability and human health. Prior research found an eight-unit course on connections between food systems and environmental sustainability shifted dietary intake and reduced dietary carbon footprint among college students. This research evaluated the impact of a similar, more scalable one-unit Foodprint seminar taught at multiple MCURC universities. Students who took the Foodprint seminar significantly improved their vegetable intake by almost 5 weekly servings relative to the comparison group. They also significantly decreased intake of red meat and sugar-sweetened beverages. As a result of dietary shifts, Foodprint seminar students significantly decreased their dietary carbon footprint by 14%. The manuscript has been submitted for publication.

National Collegiate Food Waste Survey

This study's goal was to characterize and share food waste prevention and mitigation efforts currently underway by MCURC institutions, and identify common challenges and barriers that institutions face in preventing and mitigating food waste. The preliminary results show that food waste is a high or very high priority for more than 90 percent of respondents, who have made specific commitment to reducing food waste on university campuses. Food waste is measured regularly, and more than a dozen of strategies, from the set up of the dining hall, to the size of utensils, the communication using social norming, culinary or operational strategies have been identified in the responses. The data is currently under analysis for publication in a peer reviewed journal.

Examples like these speak to the remarkable amount of interest in developing research among different departments, between campus dining and academia, and between different colleges/universities. In addition to opening up new avenues of research, working with other universities through studies conducted at multiple sites presents the opportunity to increase sample sizes and therefore chances for grant funding. These examples also illustrate that the potential for this type of collaborative work is tremendous—and that the results can extend well beyond the sum of initial parts.

The MCURC initiative is meant to break new ground in terms of how scholars, foodservice experts, and business leaders interact around opportunities to advance successful food systems transformation within universities. Beyond this, MCURC works to cross-pollinate academic research that addresses the Menus of Change research agenda and that reaches beyond university communities to global opportunities for change. The Collaborative is a culinary-centric initiative that seeks to bring chefs, food experts, and key academic leaders and innovators around a table of enhanced vision, dialogue, and sharing.

In short, the MCURC recognizes that, in order to advance critical food issues, systems-level solutions are required that integrate academic, business, culinary, and consumer insights. One of the best ways to advance such thinking is by incubating novel collaborations in university-wide academic and foodservice settings—and innovative collaboration among universities.

Universities, Schools, Divisions, and Departments Represented in MCURC

Dining services divisions
 Athletic departments and performance dining divisions
 Business and management schools
 Design schools
 Schools of agriculture/departments of food science
 Schools of government and policy
 Schools of law
 Schools of medicine
 Schools of public health/departments of nutrition

Schools of liberal arts—American studies, anthropology, history, psychology, sociology, philosophy, and others
 Schools of environment and natural resources
 Schools of food systems and food studies
 Schools of journalism
 Schools of hospitality
 Schools of science
 Select interdisciplinary programs such as intra- university food studies centers

Note: Other schools to be considered as appropriate

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The initiative aims to work toward measurable impact, leverage new research findings in actionable ways, and develop concrete tools and resources to support the implementation of Menus of Change principles. As such, MCURC relies on committees and working groups, led by chairs and co-chairs responsible for organizing and facilitating dialogue among the committee or group, setting goals, and establishing priorities for action.

PROFESSIONAL COMMITTEES

Divides all members into five committees grouped by professional affiliation:

1. Executive Chefs and Culinary Directors
2. Senior University Administration
3. Directors of Dining Programs
4. Academics
5. Registered Dietitians and Sustainable Food Program Managers

These committees facilitate cross-university collaboration, providing professional groups an opportunity to connect and delve deep into issues relevant to their work.

WORKING GROUPS

The Education Working Group is responsible for leveraging key research findings to create resources and strategies in support of health and sustainability imperatives. These may include toolkits, trainings, recipes, menu strategies, as well as educational programming for the annual member meeting. The Research Working Group is responsible for establishing research questions to pursue, stimulating the design of new studies, and developing a next-generation, culinary-centric national research agenda.

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Composed of a small number of members from both foodservice and academia, and from across professional committees and working groups, this council of MCURC chairs and co-chairs serve as the drivers of project work and strategic goals and objectives, as well as advisors on the MCURC research agenda at large.

ADVISORY COUNCIL

This collection of invited MCURC members, both operator advisors and academic advisors, bring unique subject matter expertise and skills to effectively advise the Collaborative leadership on Collaborative-wide decisions, key priorities and objectives, and the overall strategic direction of the Collaborative. The work of MCURC is also supported by a representative from the All-Member Meeting host institution—to connect planning for the annual summit with the year-round work of the Collaborative—and by a Communications Chair, who helps guide strategy for press outreach and equips members with the tools and training to tell the individual and collective stories of the great work taking place in the Collaborative.

FINANCE & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

This committee consists of a small number of members with a track record in fundraising and sponsorship who oversee the plan and budget with corresponding support goals, and priority and aspirational needs, with full transparency toward members. An Industry Advisory Council serves as the voice of sponsor representatives, providing feedback and shaping sponsor engagement.

SPONSORS

The work of the MCURC would not be possible without the generous support of its sponsor organizations. For a full list of both founding sponsors and annual sponsors, please see the MCURC website page--moccollaborative.org/sponsors--featuring profiles of all our generous sponsor organizations.

MEETINGS

- **7th Annual All-Member Meeting** | October 4-6, 2021 | Stanford University
 - Member universities take turns hosting the All-Member Meeting each October.

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