A Multi-Year, High-Volume Foodservice Leader-Supplier Partnership Designed to Accelerate Research & Innovation Around Key Health Imperatives

The Culinary Institute of America has long been a leader in bringing innovative, compelling healthy menu solutions to the foodservice industry through its groundbreaking Worlds of Healthy Flavors Leadership Retreat held each January in cooperation with the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health, Department of Nutrition. Other CIA initiatives have further enhanced the college’s position of leadership on these vital issues, including the Healthy Kitchens, Healthy Lives Conference and the Menus of Change National Summit, both co-presented by the CIA and the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health; and Healthy Flavors, Healthy Kids, a national leadership program for school foodservice leaders.

With The Culinary Institute of America Healthy Menus R & D Collaborative the college is advancing its support of healthy menu solutions for our industry by fostering a new and innovative supplier-operator partnership highly focused on a few critical health and wellness imperatives and opportunities. Collectively, members serve more than 100 million meals every day in this country. Small changes in their menu have big impact on public health in the United States.

The Vision: Time for Leadership and Action

The Collaborative is taking the lessons of previous CIA health and wellness programs and working with a small, carefully selected team of top foodservice industry culinary leaders—operators, with an emphasis on chain sector and other volume leaders, and suppliers—to craft highly targeted, sector-specific solutions that have the potential to dramatically advance our industry’s progress on expanding healthy menu choices.

Our vision for this rests on the convergence of several factors:

- Governmental/regulatory action is picking up the pace, and change in this area is both inevitable and will mean a substantially altered operating environment for foodservice industry leaders.
• Consumers, who initially sent mixed messages about healthier menu choices, now are increasingly indicating that they want more healthy foods and beverages available on menus—so long as they taste great!
• The broad directions of delicious, healthy menu design “best practices” have been outlined by the CIA through its work with Harvard and other collaborators, laying the foundation for next steps.
• The supplier community stands ready to help, and is looking to the operator community for a unified response to create a level playing field and reliable metrics for progress in innovation and collaboration.
• Though still strong and dynamic, the foodservice industry has taken a “hit” with the recent recession, and the path for future success lies in re-invigorating and re-imagining the value proposition—and sense of adventure and memorable experiences—consumers look for when dining out.

Above all, the goal of the Collaborative is to develop over time a substantial collection of new culinary insights, applications and menu solutions to meet today’s accelerating and rapidly evolving health and wellness challenges and opportunities. We envision that these solutions will benefit the industry as a whole, but the Collaborative’s participating operator members and corporate members are the first to gain access to this emerging “intellectual property.”

Priorities for the Collaborative are focused on four healthy menu R&D issues:

• **Sodium Reduction: Leveraging Flavor Multipliers**
  As a result of various government initiatives including the 2010 release of the National Academies of Sciences’ Institute of Medicine Report on National Strategies to Reduce Sodium Intake, sodium reduction is clearly moving front and center in efforts to expand healthier menu choices in our industry. This initiative is focusing on ways to leverage natural flavors and alternative flavor strategies—from herbs, spices and umami-rich foods to culinary techniques—that can reduce our reliance on sodium.

• **Produce Plus: The New Healthy Market Basket**
  Whether because of health or ethical concerns or flavor pursuits, interest among consumers in plant-based menu choices is accelerating. This initiative has concentrated on how to substantially increase the use of fruits and vegetables in successful menu design. Our strategy has also leveraged other elements of the healthy “market basket”—from whole grains, nuts, legumes and spices to fish and healthy oils—as well as the produce-centric cooking traditions of a variety of food cultures around the world, from the Mediterranean to Asia and Latin America. Finally, the initiative is exploring menu marketing strategies that play up culinary adventure and stealth health, avoid overt nutrition messages, and work to replace such misguided nutrition ideas as “low fat.”
• **Healthy Carbohydrates, including Whole Grains and Healthy Beverages**
  From breakfast breads and cereals to pizzas, sandwiches, pastas and desserts, grains play a major role in menu and recipe development. Though most chains do virtually no baking, the decision to utilize or not utilize whole grains touches many stakeholders across the supplier-operator spectrum. This initiative is focusing on “next generation ideas” to move the needle on whole grains use in our industry, in part by going beyond simple substitution practices and “yes/no” choices. This initiative is also focused on increasing the number of less sweetened and lightly sweetened beverages available to consumers, both through culinary beverage innovation as well as engaging beverage suppliers to provide more options for U.S. consumers.

• **Strategic Calorie Design: Re-imagining What Counts**
  With American obesity rates still at unsustainable levels, foodservice continues to be under considerable pressure to disclose calories and reduce portion sizes. Unwinding the “super sizing” trend poses immense challenges, but with healthcare costs skyrocketing and excess calories being fingered as a leading contributor, our industry is going to need to develop new value propositions for our customers. This initiative is focusing on decreasing portion sizes, decreasing caloric density (specifically through the increased use of fruits and vegetables), and developing opportunities to create “healthy indulgence” through a more strategic approach to the use of high-flavor, high-calorie foods in menu and recipe development.

• **Shifting the Protein Focus**
  American diners are increasingly interested in how protein impacts their health as well as the health of the planet. Meanwhile, foodservice professionals are navigating challenges with animal and seafood protein availability and pricing due to uncertainty in the market caused by climate change, drought, disease, and other factors. Decreasing portion sizes of animal protein, offering more sustainable seafood and plant-based protein, and exploring blends of animal and marine protein with plant-based protein are just some of the strategies that volume foodservice operations can use to shift the protein focus to more sustainable, healthful options.

The Culinary Institute of America’s Healthy Menus R & D Collaborative is a multi-year collaborative launched in 2010 that has fosters a group process which identifies needed content resources and appropriate strategies, and rolls out action plans to help chain leaders and other high volume culinary executives take advantage of changing consumer needs.
Members companies include leaders from the following sectors:

- Chain restaurant, including QSR and fast casual chains
- Campus dining
- Contract foodservice

In addition to members from the volume foodservice industry, the CIA invites “resource experts” to join our biannual meetings, who provide insights and expertise on food science, consumer insights, market research, and more.

Collaborative members meet in-person twice a year, at the annual member meeting in January following the Worlds of Healthy Flavors Leadership Retreat in St. Helena, California, and in June following the Menus of Change conference in Hyde Park, New York. Members work collaboratively throughout the year via working groups that focus their work around the four priority issues.

We invite you to become a member of this initiative that is accelerating the pace of healthy menu R&D and innovation within the foodservice sector and beyond.

**Annual Corporate Membership** ($30,000)

- An annual membership runs from January 1 through December 31.
- Limited to 8 companies per year.
- Opportunity for three corporate member representatives to attend the biannual member meetings.
  - January 19 – 20, 2017 at CIA, Greystone (CA)
  - June 20, 2017 at CIA, Hyde Park (NY)
- Corporate members’ products are used in the F&B plan for the member meeting.
- Corporate members are also invited to participate in member conference calls and working groups.