



# PROJECT SHOWCASE 2023

Spotlighting the best in design and MAS projects

**LinkedIn's Newest  
Dining Space**

# Pro Tips



*You will have a true culinary advocate to provide guidance on equipment solutions, efficient kitchens, labor-saving operational concepts and serving spaces that excite and engage.*

**W**elcome to the 2023 FCSI The America's Project Showcase. We are proud to feature the excellent work of our consultant members! The Showcase gives you a sampling of the best of the best projects our design and management advisory services consultant members have been working on over the last few years. These case studies exemplify the wide range of foodservice operations consultants' efforts support, including corporate dining, colleges and universities, healthcare, stadiums, restaurants and hotels.

On the following pages, you will discover new projects featuring all-electric equipment and renovation projects that put a new spin on mature buildings. You will learn about everything from small foodservice kiosks to large commissary kitchens. Using an FCSI consultant benefits design and construction teams, as well as operators, by providing unparalleled professionalism and independent recommendations suited specifically to your operation. FCSI consultants follow a code of ethics and professional conduct that ensures they protect the client, public and profession's interests.

Working with an FCSI professional consultant means you are hiring a knowledgeable and seasoned foodservice expert that can help you solve issues both common and unique to today's dynamic foodservice industry. You will have a true culinary advocate to provide guidance on equipment solutions, efficient kitchens, labor-saving operational concepts, and serving spaces that excite and engage.

From our FCSI The Americas family, and on behalf of the board of trustees of FCSI The Americas, we hope you enjoy the newest edition of the FCSI Project Showcase and find inspiration for your next project in these pages.

And congratulations to all the FCSI members that submitted the projects: We are proud of your commitment to FCSI and your clients.

For more information on how to find an FCSI consultant for your project, or if you are interested in FCSI membership, please visit [FCSI.org](http://FCSI.org) or reach out to our FCSI The Americas Executive Director Wade Koehler at [wade@fcsi.org](mailto:wade@fcsi.org) or 309.808.2165. Thanks for reading and ... cheers!

**Christine Guyott, FCSI, RDN**  
**Chair, FCSI The Americas**  
**Executive Principal, Rippe Associates**

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**Foodservice Consultants Society International – professional membership designations**

**FCSI** – denotes the highest level of consultant membership

**FFCSI** – signifies a Council of Fellows member, which recognizes extraordinary contributions to the society

**FCSI (EM)** – denotes an emeritus member

**FCSI (PP)** – denotes an FCSI worldwide past president



Langston University's dining room was reimagined with an open concept that created a 360-degree view throughout the space.



# University Foodservice Reimagined with Modern Updates

*A change in foodservice providers and a whopper of a budget increase supported lofty goals for this historically Black college in Oklahoma.*

By Lisa White | Photos by Kenzie Veal

Switching foodservice providers halfway through a university's dining program renovation could throw any designer's project into chaos. Fortunately, the outcome proved worth the challenges, both for the foodservice designer, Eli Huff, owner of Salt Food Group (SFG), and for Langston University, a historically Black college in Langston, Okla.

This project held a personal connection for Huff as he attended Oklahoma State University, a Langston University partner. Professionally, it became a dream project when the budget more than doubled the initial dollars discussed.

"We presented our first design and won the project with a \$3.5 million budget," Huff says. However, the university wanted more as this was the foodservice facilities' first update since 2003. "They wanted to

go to the next level. They asked us what we'd do if we didn't have a budget, so we went crazy," he says. "The owners loved what we came up with and decided to increase our project scope and budget." With the additional funds allocated from a fair-share program, the all-in budget bumped up to \$8.7 million.

Included in the final design round: an updated kitchen, a main dining room overhaul to accommodate up to seven food concepts, an e-gaming center, a food fueling station, a nonalcoholic sports bar, a convenience store and a 24/7 vending area.

"Our former cafeteria and Student Success Center was not optimized in a way that served our students and campus community," says Theresa (Graves) Powell, vice president for operations / office of the president, Langston University. "The vision and expertise Eli brought to the project was

invaluable and helped us to achieve the transformational space we imagined."

The project got off to a strong start with SFG working hand in hand with Oklahoma State University's Long Range Facilities Planning team, which handled construction, and Selser Schaefer Architects. Having such a strong foundation proved critical when Langston changed foodservice operators by hiring Aladdin Campus Dining. The change came when the project was well underway. In fact, Huff and SFG were already working on this renovation for two years when Aladdin came on board. Given how far along the project team was, many key elements, such as adding a nonalcoholic sports bar concept, were already determined. So, getting Aladdin to buy into the design became critical.

"It took a lot of coordination as the design project was almost 95% complete

before we learned Langston was switching providers," says Huff.

## Unique Components

The food fueling station, which has become more commonplace on today's campuses, is another key design component. Carved out of a former storage room adjacent to the kitchen, this fast-casual self-serve area functions as a high-end vending station. It includes food lockers staff can stock from behind, bottle coolers, a snack bar and two mobile POS checkout stations. Hot, cold and ambient food items are available.

"We're doing a lot of these for athletes and students post-pandemic," Huff explains. "We can allocate just 400 to 500 square feet for these areas or even use a shipping container."

The last addition to the original plan was a salad-making robot, but the factory discontinued



supporting that product before the project was complete. The project team had waited more than two years to receive the product and couldn't bear to let it just sit in a warehouse. In the end, the robot was donated to the OSU robotics class as an educational opportunity to deconstruct it.

### A Phased Approach

The project proved a big improvement on the university's aging foodservice facilities, which included an old burger bar, outdated kitchen, dining room and a convenience store. In the center was an old Burger King that last operated on

campus in the 1990s.

"We only had so much time for construction before students came back to school from summer break," Huff says. "There's no way to do a total remodel with as many concepts as we had in just one summer."

So, it was decided to complete the project in phases. This approach would allow Langston's foodservice operation to continue serving its 2,038 students during the school year. The initial renovation plan actually had no money allocated for a kitchen remodel; the plan instead was to just update the equipment. With the additional

funds and a refreshed budget, the entire back of the house was gutted.

So, the kitchen renovation became the project's first phase, which took place during the university's summer break in 2020. All equipment, with the exception of the hoods and walk-in coolers, was replaced. "We rented a mobile kitchen in case the back of house wasn't completed when school started but canceled it when the kitchen was ready on time," Huff says.

With the kitchen completed and operating, a hallway was designated for seating while the main dining room was gutted in the

**The circular Soup, Salads & Sides station includes cold wells and an action station with induction burners for added versatility.**

second phase. This phase blew out all walls of the former dining space to create a 360-degree view, open atrium and outdoor patio.

"If I had to highlight one area in this project, it is the dining room," Huff says. "Right when you walk in the door, the dining room draws you in. It is the most eye-catching part of this project."

The focal point of the dining room is a round, orange wood-fired pizza oven. This is a hybrid oven that utilizes both natural

## LANGSTON UNIVERSITY STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER

gas and wood. "As a chef myself, I didn't want to require Langston's staff to chop wood; this oven can be set at 700 degrees F and stay there," Huff explains. "The school needs operational consistency as it serves 800 to 900 meals per day or more."

The main dining room's all-you-care-to-eat food stations include Classic Kitchen with entrees of the day; Breakfast Bar with a giant milk cooler and rotating breakfast items; Local Deli, where students can choose their bread, meat and toppings, with an oven for toasting; Sauce and Stone, a wood-fired pizza concept that includes flatbread and calzones as well as hot chicken wings and pasta sauces held in drop-in heat wells; and Flame Grill, a made-to-order burger and chicken sandwich concept that sits adjacent to Soul

**One of the unique components added in phase two was the Lion's Den, a nonalcoholic sports bar concept and e-gaming center.**



Town, which has drop-in heat wells for soul food offerings.

"An island hood above Flame Grill's giant flattop lets students watch burgers being made, while fryers are on the back line," Huff says. "Staff can prep at the front counter and face customers rather than run back and forth to the main kitchen."

Another centrally located showpiece, Soup, Salads & Sides is a circular self-serve salad bar featuring cold wells, an action station with induction burners for stir-fries, soup wells and a hot sauce island with 40 to 50 varieties.

In addition to two separate beverage stations on either side of the dining room, POS stations by both entrances have security gates since seating is available in this area after hours. All food stations can be individually secured after hours.

Also in phase two, the former burger bar was transformed into the Lion's Den and e-gaming center. The Lion's Den is a fast-casual nonalcoholic sports bar concept that has



**Eli Huff**  
Owner  
Salt Food Group

*"Right when you walk in the door, the dining room draws you in. It is the most eye-catching part of this project."*

digital menu boards by the entrance and an adjacent soft drink fountain. Food offerings include made-to-order sandwiches, burgers, fries, and both salad and smoothie/yogurt bars. A high-end, fully automated espresso machine provides up to 70 drinks.

One of the sports bar's key features is an eight-tap nonalcoholic draft system that sits to the left of the register. While this feature is popular, finding nonalcoholic beverages available in kegs, particularly those drinks using nitro, proved quite challenging. "We were told the volume was too low," Huff says. "We were up against our deadline when I was at a trade

### AT A GLANCE

#### **Project overview:**

A new food hall-style campus dining facility, a production kitchen, a non-alcoholic fast-casual sports bar, e-gaming center, a grab-and-go fuel station, a 24/7 vending area and a campus c-store

**Scope of work:** Concept development, food-service design, project management, equipment specifications, dining room servery design, operational consulting

#### **Design consultants:**

Salt Food Group (SFG), Tulsa, Okla.:

- Eli Huff, owner

#### **Project budget:**

\$8.7 million

#### **Foodservice equipment budget:**

\$2.2 million

#### **Equipment dealer:**

Amundsen Commercial Kitchens

#### **Foodservice contractor:**

Aladdin Campus Dining

#### **Architects:**

Selser Schaefer Architects

#### **Contractor:**

Timberlake Construction

#### **Interior design:**

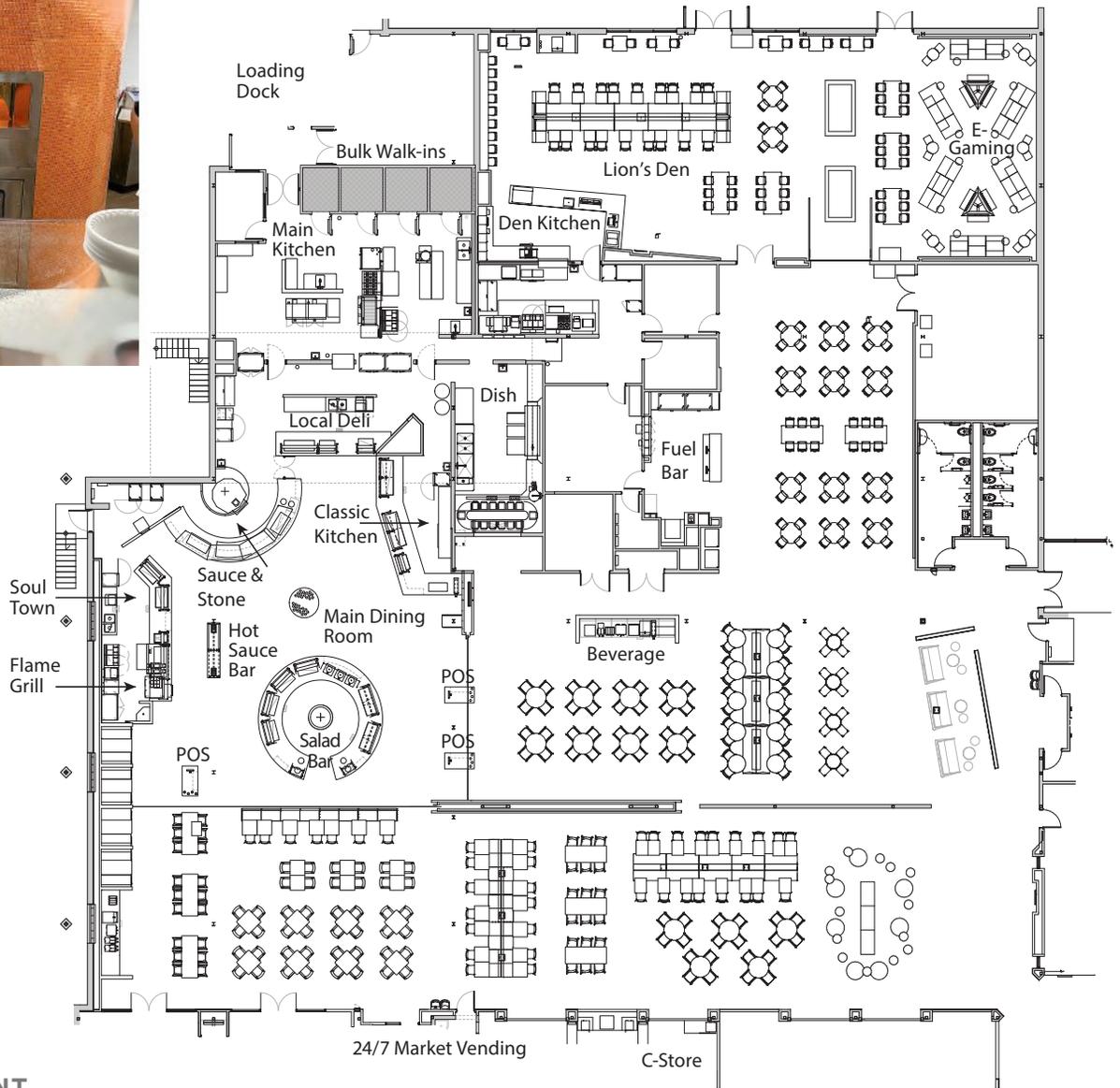
Oklahoma State University Long

Range Facility Planning;

Selser Schaefer Architects

#### **Millwork:**

BSI



## KEY EQUIPMENT

### Flame Grill

- 60-inch flattop griddle
- Deep-fat fryers
- Undercounter freezer
- Undercounter refrigerator

### Sauce & Stone

- Ceramic drop-in hot plate
- Hot food and hot soup wells
- Refrigerated pizza prep table
- Wood-fire pizza oven

### Soul Town

- 60-inch gas flattop griddle
- 60-inch refrigerated chef base
- Gas fryer
- Hot cabinet
- Prep salad sink

### Soup, Sides & Greens

- Drop-in frost tops
- Drop-in induction flattop (action station)
- Drop-in induction wok top (action station)
- Drop-in refrigerated cold wells
- Drop-in soup wells

### Classic Kitchen

- 3-tap bulk milk dispenser
- Hot/cold food wells
- Undercounter beverage cooler
- Undercounter specialty milk cooler

### Local Deli

- 2-compartment salad prep sink
- 2 rapid-cook ovens
- Built-in cutting boards
- Custom fabricated prep table
- Drop-in heated food well
- Drop-in refrigerated cold well

### Lion's Den

- Automated espresso machine
- Conveyor pizza oven
- Flattop griddle and 6-burner range
- Gas fryer
- Nonalcoholic draft tower and drink rail
- Refrigerated pizza prep table
- Smoothie blenders

### Fueling Station

- Heated food lockers
- Refrigerated beverage merchandisers
- Self-service POS

### Main Kitchen

- Four-burner range top with equipment stand
- 60-inch chargrill
- Double-stack combi oven
- Prep sink
- Double-stack gas convection oven
- Tilting braising pan
- 20-inch-by-20-inch prep table with sink
- Two door upright reach-in refrigerator
- Refrigerator chef base equipment stand
- Deep fat fryer

show and came across a company that could execute it." Two months later, the tap system was up and running at Langston.

Bar seating includes high tops and booths, with TVs adorning the walls. A highlight of the Lion's Den is a history wall that tells the story of Langston, its athletes and notable alumni.

There were a couple challenges during this part of phase two. "The Lion's Den sports bar graphics didn't come in accurately, and the e-gaming center consoles had to be rebuilt since these didn't function as they were supposed to," Huff says.

Situated to the right of the bar's entrance, dark

diamond-patterned carpeting helps define the space allocated for the e-gaming area. This space has levels of stair-stepper couches with charging stations and four-sided custom gaming consoles in the center of the room, so people can easily rotate between games.

Huff was aware of the popularity of e-gaming, noting that many schools in the college and university segment even offer e-gaming scholarships today. "Langston and OSU are working on creating a competitive team," he says. "We knew it was pushing ahead a little bit of the university's curriculum, but the e-gaming

center has proven to be a compelling future-forward addition."

During the project's second phase, the convenience store was relocated and expanded by about 400 square feet, while an exterior door was added for easier access. Called Quick Zone, it offers pizza, hot dogs, burgers, pies, hot and cold grab-and-go sandwiches, salads, snacks, beverages and groceries. "This area includes island merchandisers, food warmers, glass bottle coolers and typical merchandising racks," Huff says. "It also has two five-tier box warmers for pizza slices."

Phase two also involved

adding the aforementioned food fueling station, which is connected to the kitchen, in addition to a 24-hour vending market with a diverse, rotating menu that students can access with their ID.

The outdated warewashing system, which consisted of a rigged three-level carousel and conveyor belt from the late '60s, was completely overhauled. "We condensed it in four stacks that go around the carousel," Huff explains. "This compressed 30 feet of conveyor belt into a 12-foot carousel that can accommodate the same quantity by stacking. It is not only gorgeous but functions well and is centrally located for a better flow."



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