



MCURC

THE MENUS OF CHANGE
UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE

 Residential
& Dining
ENTERPRISES
STANFORD UNIVERSITY
Creating a Culture of Excellence


Culinary Institute
of America

 **Stanford** | Stanford Prevention
MEDICINE | Research Center

VALUE PROPOSITION



Developing scalable, applied solutions that promote healthy, sustainable, delicious food choices and cultivate the long-term well-being of all people and the planet—one student, one meal at a time.

Participating in the MCURC offers four core benefits:

BENEFIT #1: A VAST AND DIVERSE NETWORK

Gain access to an unparalleled community that is shaping the future of food.

The Menu of Change University Research Collaborative is a global network of 80+ colleges and universities and over 400 individuals who are accelerating efforts to move diners toward healthier, more sustainable, delicious food choices. The network consists of:

- **Member Institutions**, whose representatives include:
 - Academic Members
 - Chefs
 - Dining Directors
 - Registered Dietitians and Nutrition Managers
 - Sustainability Managers
 - Procurement Managers
 - Senior University Administrators
 - Student Fellows
- **Research Collaborators** (nonprofits and research organizations).
- **Sponsors** (manufacturers and other food industry companies).
- **Research Innovation Affiliates** (innovation and technology companies with unique tools and expertise that can further the MCURC research agenda).



MCURC MEMBERS COLLECTIVELY SERVE 4 MILLION MEALS PER DAY.

OUR STUDENTS WILL EAT 70 BILLION MEALS OVER THE COURSE OF THEIR LIFETIMES.

THEY WILL BECOME TOMORROW'S PARENTS, ENTREPRENEURS, AND LEADERS, IMPACTING THE ENTIRE FOOD SYSTEM WITH THEIR BELIEFS, BEHAVIORS, AND DECISIONS.



“MCURC membership offers an incredible opportunity to bridge research and action. It provides access to a collaborative network, practical insights, and the chance to drive impactful change in sustainable food systems, both on campus and beyond.”

—PEGGY POLICASTRO, Director of the Institute for Food Nutrition & Health IFNH, Rutgers University



The MCURC unites foodservice professionals from various dining services divisions, athletic departments and performance dining divisions, as well as select interdisciplinary programs such as intra-university food studies centers, with leading scholars from diverse fields of study:

- Business and Management
- Design
- Marketing
- Agriculture/Food Sciences
- Engineering
- Government and Policy
- Law
- Medicine
- Public Health/Nutrition
- Liberal Arts and Social Sciences
- Journalism
- Environment and Natural Resources
- Food Systems and Food studies
- Hospitality

Academic members join a network of like-minded faculty dedicated to connecting their research with foodservice leaders, students, and the broader academic community. They contribute expertise to collaborative research with dining services and member institutions nationwide, while expanding their work through multi-university groups that offer access to large student populations, funding, and publishing opportunities. Members gain resources, participate in discussions and conferences focused on health, sustainability, and the future of food, and play a key role in advancing a plant-forward movement in college dining that supports both human and environmental health.

A list of [member institutions](#) and [sponsors](#) can be found on the [MCURC website](#).



“Participating in the MCURC not only strengthens my ability to drive innovation in food sourcing, menu design, and culinary education, but also provides valuable insights into how we can transform day-to-day operations to align with broader goals of environmental sustainability and social responsibility. It’s a rewarding opportunity to lead and collaborate on initiatives that will have a lasting impact on our institutions and the future of dining.”

—MATTHEW WARD, Executive Chef, Residential Dining,
University of Northern Texas

The MCURC is co-founded and jointly led by Stanford Residential & Dining Enterprises (R&DE), Stanford Prevention Research Center, and The Culinary Institute of America (CIA) as an extension of the groundbreaking [Menus of Change](#) initiative presented by the CIA and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Department of Nutrition.



BENEFIT #2: ACTIONABLE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Together, MCURC members use campus dining halls as living laboratories for behavior change — pioneering cutting-edge research in real-world settings. Living laboratories are dynamic learning environments where applied research is bridged with operational innovation to advance the Menu of Change Principles of Healthy, Sustainable Menus. The MCURC publishes both operational and academic research through a robust multi-site research infrastructure, with results that are:

- **Implementable** in foodservice settings as projects are co-created with dining professionals;
- **Generalizable** because of the statistical power and diversity of test locations involved in studies.

Check out the rich portfolio of [operational research](#) (strategy toolkits and actionable resources for food service professionals) and [academic research](#) (published in peer-reviewed journals).

BENEFIT #3: INSIGHTS TAILORED TO YOUR NEEDS

MCURC stakeholders gain access to:

- **A year-round newsletter** featuring trends, recipes, reports, and member news.
- **Webinars** featuring solutions in action from across the MCURC.
- **Town hall meetings** with individuals who share unique role types and offer an invaluable community of support, troubleshooting, inspiration, and practical advice.
- Monthly **Research and Education Working Group** calls to share insights, explore best practices, and discuss ongoing research. Each session features a researcher presentation and open discussions, offering a platform to stay informed, contribute, and connect with the MCURC academic community.
- **An annual in-person summit**—the MCURC All-Member Meeting—which takes place at a different host institution each October and offers campus tours, case studies, and structured opportunities to build high-value relationships and partnerships across all stakeholder groups.





BENEFIT #4: MEANINGFUL, LARGE-SCALE IMPACT

MCURC members collaborate through the **Collective Impact Initiative**, led by the R&DE Stanford Food Institute. This initiative brings together a diverse group of institutions with a shared goal: **to reduce food-related greenhouse gas emissions from protein purchases by 40% by 2030**. In just five years, 33 institutions have collectively achieved a 23% reduction—impacting 93 million pounds of food. By contributing data to the Collective Impact Initiative, member institutions gain access to insights and results far beyond what any single university could achieve, making a meaningful impact on a global scale. Learn more [here](#).

Through participation in research and other MCURC projects, you can shape and share crowdsourced best practices and leading strategies to drive healthy, sustainable, delicious food choices at scale.

What's the cost to participate? Thanks to our sponsors, participation is currently free for Academic Members, Ex Officio Members, Member Institutions, and Research Collaborators. As the old adage goes, *you get out of it what you put into it*— ideas, expertise, and a commitment to collaborative, mission-aligned efforts.



“Supporting MCURC represents a commitment to driving meaningful change in the foodservice industry. Through collaborative efforts, innovative research, and scalable solutions, MCURC empowers us to advance sustainability and healthy eating across campus communities while delivering value that aligns with our business goals and long-term growth.”

—AMBER JOHNSON, Director of Marketing & Communications at Saskatchewan Pulse Growers/Lentils.org

LET'S CONNECT:

Sponsors, Corporate Membership, and Research Innovation Affiliates:

Rachel Hoover, Director of Corporate Relations,
rachel.hoover@culinary.edu

All other member inquiries:

Valentina Córdoba, MS, MA,
Research and Community Manager
valentina.cordoba@culinary.edu