There's a new dining experience at UT Austin, and it's a far cry from the usual burgers, pizzas and fries available at most campus eateries.

O's Campus Café in the Applied Computational Engineering and Sciences (ACES) Building offers new American cuisine in a refreshing menu of such items as sushi, grilled vegetables, vermicelli, salads and deli sandwiches.

Named after Peter O'Donnell Jr., the UT donor who built the building, O's is run by Ron and Peggy Weiss and David Garrido, all associated with one of Austin’s best known restaurants, Jeffrey's Restaurant and Bar.

Ron's brother, Marc Weiss, is O's general manager. "It's so pleasant to be able to bring to campus life a healthy, fresh alternative," he said.

In addition to different food, O's boasts that it is the first wireless cyber café in Austin. Faculty and students can checkout ethernet cards at the restaurant in exchange for their ID cards.

Peggy Weiss said she and her partners had just opened a new Italian restaurant in Austin when they were approached about running the ACES café. They weren't looking for another project until they met with O'Donnell.

"He brought the plans for the building," she said. "We were impressed... and we could tell Mr. O'Donnell didn't cut corners. Thats the way we like to do business."

O's is not all gourmet fare. There are pizzas, burgers and fries in addition to the vegan and vegetarian dishes, soups and daily specials, including Casserole O’ the Day. Desserts include lemon tarts, cheesecake, various cakes, cookies and frozen yogurts.

A featured menu item is Peter O's Burger, a double meat sandwich with aioli sauce on Challah bun.

The cafe also is open for breakfast, serving breakfast tacos, fresh-baked muffins and other pastries, cappuccino and lattes.

O’s also is selling most of its menu items at "O's to Go," an 8-by-10-foot trailer that will be parked outside the ACES Building on Speedway and 24th.

Diners who are eating in can sit inside at as ground floor café or immediately outside in a courtyard. Total on-site seating is 150.

The restaurant also features a private dining room with seating for 20. O's caters events in the dining room, which can be reserved online at <www.aces.utexas.edu/ocafe>.

In addition, food is catered in various seminar rooms throughout the building, the faculty lounge on the sixth floor and for large events in the lobby of ACES. Menu items are not limited to the café’s fare, but can range from hors d' oeuvres to five-course meals.

Food service is under the guidance of Garrido, an award-winning chef and executive chef at Jeffrey's.

-Sheila Allee