

## Minutes of the Culinary Arts Advisory Committee Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025

**Time:** 9AM-11:00AM

**Members in Attendance:** Daniel Kedan, Kevin Anderson, Mark Kowalkowski, Nick Izzarelli, Nicole Calegari.

**Members Attending as Proxy:** None.

**Members Absent:** Steve Garner, Forest Kellogg, Bruce Riezenman.

**Faculty, Staff and Administrators in Attendance:** Joni Davis, Betsy Fischer, Madeline Giltner, Benjamin Goldstein, Shelly Kaldunski, Cindy Mushet, Kim Kinahan, Beatriz Camargo, Filomena Avila.

**Was there a quorum?** Yes X No \_\_\_\_.

**1. Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 9:05AM.

**a. Welcome and Introductions**

i. Advisory members, faculty, and staff introduced themselves and briefly went over their position and field.

b. **Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting:** Mark Kowalkowski moved to approve the minutes from the 5/22/2024 meeting. All in agreement. Minutes approved as submitted.

**2. Discussion Items:**

a. Highlights of the Year in Culinary Arts

i. Baking and Pastry Program - Shelly

1. Students can complete the program in 3 semesters; SRJC is not cohort model so students can customize to their specific needs; faculty meet with students each semester to complete academic plans so students can complete on time;

ii. Restaurant Operations Program - Betsy

1. The majority of classes are lecture classes with topics including beverage management, ABC licensing, employee culture, marketing, restaurant design.

2. The two Culinary Arts majors have been condensed into one. Previously, there was a major for Culinary Arts, and a major for Restaurant Operations. Now it is combined into one – Culinary Arts and Restaurant Operations major.

3. Student demographics - many students are from low socioeconomic backgrounds, are first-generation college students, or have English as a second language. Students often seek skills that allow them to earn a living wage and support families, rather than pursuing high-level hospitality management roles.

4. Inspirational success story - • Ricardo, a standout graduate, earned three associate degrees, fled civil war in El Salvador, and now studies at UC Berkeley while still connected to the Culinary Arts program. His story is used as a motivating example for students

iii. Enrollment, Pipeline Development and Recruitment

1. Enrollment has increased post-COVID due to focused efforts in recruitment and retention. The program maintains articulation agreements with six local high schools, allowing students to bypass introductory courses and enroll directly into hands-on classes. Dual enrollment enables high school students to earn both high school and college credit. The department is working on increasing visibility across the main campus to attract more students. Activities like scavenger hunts and high school tours help bridge the gap between campuses and enhance recruitment.
2. Challenges and future planning - Current facilities are at capacity; nearly all fall classes have waitlists. There is interest in offering noncredit, pass/fail courses that are repeatable and have no homework, but space limitations currently prevent this.
3. Second Chance Club - The Second Chance Club supports formerly incarcerated students reintegrating into education and life. Works in conjunction with the Ignite Program ("Inspiring Greatness Inside Through Education"). Cathy Burgett, a retired faculty member, teaches foundational skills to inmates to help prepare them for re-entry. Some students transition from jail to on-campus education through this pipeline.
4. New courses - Two new popular vegetarian courses: Vegetarian Salads and Root to Stem Cooking. Courses are open to certificate students and community members without prerequisites. There's strong interest among students, including vegetarians and vegans. Aspiration to develop a vegetarian certificate program.
5. Demonstration classes redesign for community members - Past community cooking classes included both community members and culinary students, but the mix created tension due to differing expectations. Culinary students approached classes with intensity and professionalism, while community members sought a relaxed experience. New solution: demonstration-based classes starting in the fall, focusing on tasting and observation.

iv. Retail Bakery and Café - Betsy

1. The Culinary Arts department has a successful retail bakery and café. The Café typically serves 900 guests in 11 days in a semester with the average check at \$27/person. Students rotate through front of house and kitchen roles. Emphasis is placed on real-world experience, but it's understood that service may not meet professional restaurant standards. Guests are reminded that it's an educational setting.

v. Job Placement through Culinary Arts Career Center and Event Assistance - Betsy

1. The program actively supports student job placement due to high demand from students. Many students are already working when they join and seek ongoing job opportunities throughout the semester. Faculty leverage strong industry relationships to connect students with employers. Regular employer partners include both large businesses (e.g., Kendall Jackson, Oliver's, Stark

Restaurants) and small local establishments (e.g., Farmhouse Inn, Noble Folk, Patisserie Angelica). Emphasis on creating good “matches” between student skills and job requirements.

2. The Event Assistant Service was created in response to frequent community requests for student help with private events. Qualified students are matched with one-time gigs (e.g., birthday parties, winery dinners, weddings). Students gain real-world experience in event execution and professional communication. The program offers students a chance to explore freelance and independent culinary work, often leading to long-term professional development.
3. Adapting to changing student needs – The program is seeing more students on the autism spectrum and others still affected by learning and socialization gaps from the COVID era. Many students are struggling with retention and repetition, prompting the need for enhanced learning tools. Plans include installing screens in teaching kitchens to replay recorded demos and instructional content, reinforcing lessons through visual repetition. This initiative aims to make learning more accessible, consistent, and supportive, reducing struggles for both students and instructors.

b. State of the College – Benjamin Goldstein

- i. A new college President, Dr. Angelica Garcia, was hired two years ago.
- ii. The college is navigating a transitional period due to declining high school enrollment, changing county demographics, smaller or fewer families due to the cost of living and past fire-related displacement. Budget adjustments are being made to align with state funding levels.
- iii. Career education program enrollments are strong post-pandemic. Programs like culinary, auto/diesel, welding, construction, and manufacturing are full.
- iv. The 2014 Measure H bond funding is wrapping up. The bond has resulted in new Lindley Center for STEM, renovated athletic facilities, significant improvement in aging campus infrastructure.

3. Industry Updates

- a. Advisory committee members were asked to share positive and challenging industry trends and offer insights into what could elevate student candidates in today’s culinary and hospitality workforce.
  - i. Workplace Readiness & Professionalism - Many young employees lack basic professionalism: poor interview attire, low awareness of workplace etiquette (e.g., yawning during presentations). Candidates often show up unprepared for real-world expectations, lacking initiative or understanding of professional conduct.
  - ii. Organizational & Note-Taking Skills- Difficulty with retention of information: students fail to take or refer to notes, requiring repetitive instructions. Need for better organization and accountability when receiving directions or recipes.
  - iii. Soft Skills & Personal Development - Students struggle with time management, consistency, and building structured timelines for events or prep. Lack of resilience: some don’t bounce back well from mistakes or

criticism. Issues with accountability and recovering from errors are common. A desire for instant gratification affects focus, patience, and attention to detail.

- iv. Communication & Conflict Resolution - Students often avoid difficult conversations or constructive feedback. Lack of exposure to conflict resolution or working through pressure with professionalism and respect.

- b. Discussion on AI Use in Culinary Education and Business

- i. Most advisory members are not actively using AI in their businesses yet, but interest is growing.
- ii. Dan, with CIA, recently underwent AI training with a consultant to explore its applications in teaching and management. AI can support cost analysis, scaling recipes, labor management, and inventory tracking. Considered a valuable tool for student learning and business efficiency, akin to teaching Excel or advanced kitchen tools like sous vide.

- 4. New Business

- a. None.

- 5. Adjourn

- a. Meeting adjourned at 11:00 AM