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Editor

Combining Culinary Arts with Food Science

The importance of culinary arts in new product development is being increasingly recognized by the food industry. Food scientists need to understand how the chef's creative process and classical cooking techniques can help them develop new and improved retail and foodservice products.

In this new column in *Food Technology*, culinary professionals will present information that will help food scientists develop better food products. Topics will include the value of culinary input into the product development process; professional culinary associations; how in-house research chefs in food companies and ingredient companies help their companies and clients develop products; how independent chefs work with food companies to develop "gold standards" for the companies to target in their product development efforts; culinary trends; specific problems and solutions; and others.

The growing importance of the need for food scientists to understand culinary arts and for chefs to understand food science is evidenced by increasing educational opportunities. These opportunities are available as both college-credit courses and non-credit continuing-education courses. They include food science courses for chefs and culinary courses for food scientists.

Rutgers University's Cook College of Continuing Professional Education began offering in fall 2001 a series of three-day workshops designed to provide chefs with a food science perspective. The Culinology 101™ workshops, developed by the Research Chefs Association (RCA), a nonprofit organization serving the needs of professionals in culinary research and development, cover such topics as "Basics of Food Processing & Food Systems" and "The Art and Science of New Food Development."

The Culinary Institute of America (CIA) in collaboration with RCA began offering a continuing-education course last fall to provide food scientists with a culinary perspective. The five-day fundamentals course was taught at CIA's campuses in California and New York. RCA's Education Chair Jeff Cousminer, Savory Lab Manager at Firmenich, Inc., and Eric Sparks, Director of Product Development at Park 100 Foods, Inc., provided information on use of commercial cooking equipment and food preparation, and CIA instructors and RCA representatives taught

techniques for grilling, roasting, broiling, grain cookery, marination, maceration, deep and pan frying, potato cookery, sauté, stir fry, and gelatinization.

For more information about the courses at Rutgers and CIA, contact Shannon Blankenship, RCA's Director of Education Services, at 404-252-3663 or visit www.researchchef.org/educ.asp.

Metropolitan Community College, Fort Omaha, Neb., began offering a college-credit degree program last fall. The Culinology (Culinary Research) option, developed in collaboration with RCA, includes both culinary and

food science aspects and is intended to provide the educational background needed for a variety of careers in the food industry, including food research and product development as a corporate chef or a research chef. This option is transferable toward the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for completion of a Bachelor's degree in Culinology. For more information, call 402-457-2513.

Purdue University, West Lafayette, Ind., last fall began offering a college-credit course specifically designed for food science students as an elective in the food science curriculum. The course, developed by Chicago-based Chef Charlie

Baggs and taught by him and experts from the food industry, includes such topics as how traditional culinary methods are translated into commercial products and how ingredients are used to develop appealing flavor, texture, and color.

Phil Nelson, Head of Purdue's Dept. of Food Science, said that the course is one of the first, if not the first, full-credit course in culinary arts presented as part of a food science curriculum. The objective of the Culinary Arts for the Food Scientist course is to enable the students to communicate with the chefs within their companies—not to make them into chefs but to help them learn the language of the chefs and understand the process that chefs go through in making a gold standard. It's important, Nelson said, for today's food science students to be able to know the language, understand how a product is built from the beginning, understand recipes, have a knowledge of good flavors and consistencies, and understand the chemistry that creates those conditions. For more information about the Purdue course, contact Jay Marks at 765-494-8256. ●

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