

Culinary and Hospitality Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Sonoma County Office of Education
Santa Rosa

Thursday, November 19, 2009, Noon – 1:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Jonathan Beard, CGHS; Brigitta Crews, SVHS; Martin Curtis, EMHS; Rob DiLillo, PHS; Megan Donner, CGHS; Sherry Eachus, Empire College; Marie Ganister, WHS; Debbie Grove, PHS; Stephen Jackson, SCOE/ROP; Josef Keller, Hotel La Rose; Rochelle Rose, EMHS; Pam Uchytel-Velasquez, WHS; Susan Wood, SCOE/ROP

Members at Large for County-Wide Advisory Committee:

Robin Ameral, John Ash Restaurant; Henri Augustus, Hyatt Hotel; Patricia Biagi, SCOE/ROP; Gloria Bowers, glo4desserts; Kate Caldwell, The LOK Group; Brad Calkins, Courtyard by Marriott; Heather Cruciano, VIVA; Condra Easley, Patisserie Angelica; Guy Fieri, Johnny Garlics; Greg Hardwicke, DoubleTree Hotel; Lisa Hemenway, Chef/Caterer; Eileen Laney, Travel Pays; Mike Matson, Vintage Valley Catering; Heather Nelson, Cattlemens; Jill Nussinow, The Veggie Queen; Mary Schiller, MCHS; Tomi Smith, AHS; Rich Volz, Marys Pizza Shack;

Agenda:

▪ Introductions

- Introductions were made and brief background information was provided by each attendee.

▪ Updates

- Chef Josef, Josef's Restaurant, Hotel La Rose, reported a 20% increase in business this year. In addition to a 10% decrease in prices, he has had to be creative to attract customers in this difficult economic time. Mid-priced restaurants experienced the biggest hit, while high-end restaurants experienced a 10-20% decline. Fast food chains continue to boom.
 - The tourist association is doing a much better job advertising and promoting Sonoma County.
 - Approximately 75% of the cooks in kitchens are Latino. They are hard working, flexible, work well in teams, are willing to learn and work any position asked of them. These are important soft skills needed of all employees, as employees can be trained on the hard skills.
 - Prospective employees need to treat these jobs as a profession. While much of it is hard production work, it can be a good career choice.

- Jonathan Beard commented on how the labor market has changed. In the past, restaurants hired Sous and Pastry Chefs. Restaurants and hotels can no longer afford these positions and many have been eliminated with employees back on the front line in production cooking.
 - Catering events provide students in culinary courses with valuable, “real-life” experiences that cannot be duplicated in the classroom. Chef Josef agreed internships provide a great way for employers to preview potential employees, as well as providing experience for the students. Students need to experience all aspects of the restaurant operations, including front and back of the house, kitchen, etc.
 - Teachers discussed methods used to have students volunteer for catering on Saturdays, which included small stipends, emphasis on the “real-world” experience, exposure to employers, extra credit, and the opportunity to work with friends.
 - Sherry Eachus, Empire College, recommended the book “Setting the Table” by Danny Myers. It is an easy read and emphasizes customer service and positive attitude. Teamwork and the goal of making someone “happy” are heavily stressed. Having read the book, Rochelle Rose highly recommended the book as well.
 - Brigitta Crews, SVHS, indicated her students participated in a ten-week internship. Students were assigned to restaurants and rotated every three weeks. For the final week, students selected which restaurant to work. Six restaurants participated and all agreed it was a win-win for all.
- **Economic Outlook**
 - Employment in the Leisure and Hospitality industry for the Santa Rosa-Petaluma Metropolitan statistical area indicates a loss of 400 jobs in September versus August 2009, and a loss of 1,000 jobs versus September 2008.¹ The Accommodation and Food Services and Food services and Drinking Places experienced a smaller loss of 200 jobs each in September 2009 versus August 2009. However the job loss for that same sector was 900 and 300 respectively versus the same time last year.²
 - The forecast for 2006-2016 is far more positive with positive increases ranging from 10 to 26% depending upon the occupation title. Wait staff and combined food preparation and serving workers including fast food jobs are projected to grow 51% and 71% respectively.³
- **Course Outline and Certificates of Achievement Review**
 - Suggestions for modifying course outlines included:
 - Hospitality – update industry titles; include geography, continents, cruise destinations; remove Thomas Cook; remove the political forces and add middle East and Mexico in the Global Issues unit; delete commercial restaurants with other businesses under Contemporary Foodservice Concepts; emphasize front and back of the house, marketing, event planning, housekeeping, and food and beverage.

¹ EDD, Labor Market Information Division, www.labormarketinfo.eed.ca.gov. October 16, 2009.

² Ibid.

³ Career Voyages – Hospitality – In-Demand Occupations. www.careervoyages.gov. November 16, 2009.

- Culinary – remove brand names; add units on fish, soups and stocks; remove thick soups and international; review hours on units; expand event planning to include different types of events (non-profits, weddings).

- **Advisory Meetings**
 - At the morning Core Content meeting, all high school teachers agreed to schedule site-based advisory meetings as teachers have strong relationships with local establishments. Mornings or after 2 p.m. appear better. Informing employers on the benefits of helping the educational community and helping shape future employees is important. Joining Chambers of Commerce as individual members also provides for more industry contacts.
 - Additional release time will still be made available for teachers to meeting and collaborate on curriculum and best practices.

The meeting concluded at 2 p.m.