

Assessment Project Culinary Arts Program

Introduction

The intent of this assessment project is to develop a systematic assessment program for the Culinary Arts Program, specifically focusing on the skills and training that would make our students successful in their careers, once they have completed the program.

Method

The methods for this assessment project include:

- Conducting a student survey to find out how well the Culinary Arts Program trains students to meet the competencies of the American Culinary Federation (ACF). The survey that was used for the last two years was put aside and a totally new one was created, based on the competencies that the current faculty members are interested in looking at. See separate attachment for student survey instrument.
- Collaborating with Cooperative Education faculty, Tamara Pinkas, to review the results of her assessment project to find out what employers say about the strengths and weaknesses of the Culinary Arts Program that are reflected through the work of our students. The Cooperative Education Supervisor Evaluation of Student forms for spring term in 2004, 2005, and 2006 will be reviewed.
- Redesigning the Advisory Committee meeting agenda to include specific program assessment topics and questions that we really want to know about. Our advisory committee members, many of whom employ our students, are willing to share information that improves our program and are open to one-on-one follow-up discussions.

Process and Challenges

I came to the Assessment Seminar thinking that I would develop an interesting, thought provoking employer survey, send it out to an extensive mailing list and e-mail list, and pay tons of postage to send it out and get it back. All the time, I knew that the return rate for employer surveys is typically low. It was through group discussions, presentations on specific topics, and direct input from Sarah Ulerick, Mary Brau, and Craig Taylor each week that my assessment knowledge developed and evolved. At the same time, my assessment project evolved.

By the end of the term, I felt that I had a stronger, more effective, but simple assessment project that could be replicated and refined from year to year.

Results

The results of the student survey and review of the Cooperative Education employer evaluation forms will be tabulated and reviewed this summer. The redesign of the advisory committee agenda will occur this fall.

Regarding the student survey, approximately 70 first-year and second-year students completed the nine-page survey on June 6 and 7, 2006. It took them 20-30 minutes to complete. The results will be tabulated this summer and shared with our program faculty, staff, and advisory committee members in the fall.

Conclusion.....Also a Good Beginning

I am looking forward to finding out the results of the student survey and employer evaluations. I will continue to work on this project this summer and will share the results with the assessment seminar group.

I must confess that I took a peek at a sampling of the student survey forms. In general, the students view the program as training them well, in terms of the ACF competencies. I was very pleased by the thought students put into answering the questions at the end of the survey. It was interesting to see patterns emerge from their responses. This got me thinking about the program's future.....the areas for further curriculum development, the gaps in the program that were not visible before, and the use of this project's results as unit planning documentation and the basis for funding requests. The assessment seminar has been a beautiful, "joyful" experience.

Finally, I have been sharing information on rubrics and portfolios with our faculty. We have been having lively discussions about the possibilities next year. In addition, I shared a copy of an evaluation, form that was distributed in class a few weeks ago, with an instructor. He liked it, made a copy, stuck it to his current course evaluation form, and used it immediately. Thank you.