



Culinology team wins second place at RCA Competition

# SMSU Culinology and Hospitality Management

Fall 2019

## IN THIS ISSUE

# Welcome back to Fall 2019!

By Dr. Joyce Hwang

Fall 2019 has begun and we are excited to have new and returning students to the Culinology and Hospitality Management program. Also, we welcome Dr. Yumi Lim as she returns from family leave and Dr. Peiyi Shen as our new faculty member starting her first semester in Culinology.

Along with our fall courses, many events await student participation. As a program, we will hold our program booth at the MN Hospitality Expo as well as MN Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) Supplier's Expo in October. Our students will explore Minnesota's Hospitality and Food Industry while promoting our program.

There will be our regular fall industry advisory council meeting where students will have a chance to interact with the council members.

We have collaborated with the Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (AURI) to build a new sensory evaluation lab on the second floor of Individualized Learning Center. The new lab is expected to be finished this semester.

Under the new leadership of Dr. Kumara Jayasuriya, SMSU's new president, we will make fall 2019 another special semester together.

Welcome back to Fall 2019	P1
SMSU Culinology student team's achievement at RCA product development competition	P2
Recap of Spring 2019	P3
Hospitality Summer Internship	P4
Culinology Summer Internship	P5
Meeting a new mentor through RCA	P6
Thomas Sahlstrom, Hotel Administration Alumnus of SMSU and a new industry council member	P7
Dr. Peiyi Shen, the new assistant professor of Culinology	P7
Key Events in the Fall 2019	P8

## SMSU Culinary student team's achievement at RCA product development competition

by Julie Simonson

Four students from the Culinary major at Southwest Minnesota State University (SMSU) placed second in the international food product development competition held by Research Chef Association (RCA) in Louisville, Kentucky in March of 2019. The student team developed "Bluegrass Bowl", which was similar to a mixed rice bowl, but healthier by using farro (instead of rice), chicken, and a variety of vegetables to balance the flavor and nutrition. In the picture from the left to right are Josh Bernin, Lindsay Flogstad, Alissa Rojak, Julie Simonson (the team's advisor), and Jordan Schroeder.



Below are the testimonies from Team Mustang about their experience in 2019:

**Jordan:** "I was the sauce boss. Converting the sauce to completely powders and liquids for mass production was challenging but was joyful to complete successfully. The sauce's freeze-thaw stability proved to be the most challenging point, and we never seemed to get it quite perfect."

**Josh:** "I was responsible for the chicken, the technical manufacturing flow chart and reaching out to companies for samples. I learned that you need to follow up when companies do not get back to you. Another key takeaway was that you need to use your resources. Google is good, but nothing beats someone with experience in this industry. Ask for help."

**Alissa:** "I was responsible for many of the written parts of the proposal. I used my marketing background to better position our product and establish our marketing mix. Additionally, I did a lot of the administrative work for the team and tried to keep us organized. My key takeaway was organization. Make a plan and make it accessible to all. We started with a Gantt chart and that really helped us establish what we needed to do, when to do it and who exactly was responsible for its completion, even if multiple people were working on it. The accountability was immensely helpful in the end."

**Lindsay:** "My responsibilities were making the pickled cabbage, the corn and bean salsa, and the farro. I also plated the edamame, carrots and sauce, wrote preparation directions, and helped with the sell sheet. A takeaway for me was that so much more goes into coming up with and developing a product than you can ever realize. Doing this for the first time was a fun and rewarding experience. One challenge that we had the entire time was timing everything out. We always had more time than we needed during the preparation stage, but we didn't want to look like we weren't being productive."

## Recap of Spring 2019 Activities

*Joyce Hwang*

Spring 2019 was another semester filled with events around Culinology and Hospitality program. In February, our area once again hosted Future Farmer's Association's regional Food Science competition. Teams of 14 high schools from southwest Minnesota region competed in the competition. Different areas of the competition were set up and staffed by student volunteers from Culinology and Hospitality Management.

In April, the Culinary Skills Challenge was held in SMSU's RA facility. Our program supported this event in several ways. We provided small equipment for the event. Dave Simonson and Jordan Schroeder from Culinology and Hospitality program, volunteered to conduct a spring roll demonstration session. The SHO Club prepared lunch for more than 200 participants. This is the biggest event that SHO Club prepares for. The Culinology Club hosted group tours of our program area, along with a small activity using liquid nitrogen. Joyce Hwang, a faculty member of the Hospitality Management program, judged the Menu Design competition.

Because of support from the local community and other SMSU community members, the high school participants from the southwest Minnesota region were able to experience various aspects of the food science and culinary profession while being introduced to SMSU's offerings and facilities.

Spring semester also welcomed the student-run restaurant that is offered through the Restaurant Food Operations course. While students in the course learned through real life experiences, the guests were introduced to different types of food prepared and served by the class. The menu theme for Spring 2019 was noodles from around the world. Despite many snowy days during the semester, students and customers enjoyed different learning and service opportunities with delicious offerings of food.

The last service day of Restaurant Food Operations' class on April 18 was the Interactive Dinner, which is our program's largest fundraiser event. This year's theme was "Minnesota Grown Twisted". Students in the class had opportunity to handle Minnesota ingredients to prepare and present different dishes, while interacting with the guests during this fundraising event.



Culinary Skills Challenge: Spring roll demonstration section

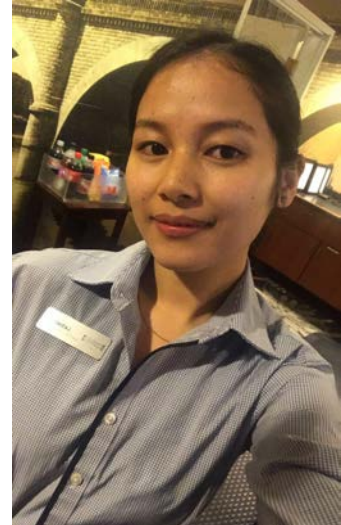


Culinary Skills Challenge: Culinology Club giving a tour of the department area to high school students

## **Hospitality Summer Internship:** Front Desk Agent Internship at Staybridge Suites in Bloomington, MN.

by Laxmi Shova Rana Magar

I did my past two internships in Food Service and Event. It was almost end of the semester and I was still confused what kind of internship I should look for this summer. I was extremely worried by the situation and went to talk with Professor Joyce. Professor advised me to try hotels as such experience will help me understand what I really think about it. Finally, I decided to seek a hotel internship, but I had less than enough time to find a position. Fortunately, I remembered about Pete Bromelkamp, Chief Human Resource Officer from TPI hospitality. I had an opportunity to meet him during Fall 2018 Industry Advisory Council Meeting. We had a very nice conversation and he emailed me after 3 days of meeting and offered to help whenever I need in future.



I emailed Pete to find out if there is any summer internship opportunity available in one of the TPI's hotels. Thankfully, he got back to me the very next day and General Manager from Staybridge Suites in Bloomington called and took my phone interview. I got hired and received detailed training as a Front Desk Agent. I had no experience in hotel operation and through this internship experience, I now have a better understanding of how hotels function.

For students who are confused about their career and is wondering to give a try to hotel like me, I would advise them to do their internship at Staybridge Suites. It is a three-star apartment style hotel that has extended stay option as well. One will learn many things about this hotel within three months. The manager and employees in every department are very fun to work with and welcoming. I also recommend attending Industry Advisory Council Meeting that our department provide every semester. It is a very helpful network opportunity to make connections with professionals in our field and one can seek their help to find internship and career opportunities.

## **Culinology Summer Internships:**

by Joyce Hwang

Several Culinology seniors were successful in securing their paid summer internship positions with various food companies, including Burley Foods, Gamay Food Ingredients, Land O'Lakes, Minnesota Valley Testing Laboratory (MVTL). They used the summer to gain valuable industry experience and learn where a Culinology degree can be applied.

Jose Pedroza with Burley Foods was involved with experimenting on replacing sugar in sauces, yogurt, and granola bars. He conducted sensory testing and then connected with a marketing intern to design the case studies for the company.

Dean Zinda with Gamay Food Ingredients worked to develop a new salad dressing from concept to finished product, along with many other tasks given to him.

Rajesh Hamal with MVTL worked in the food microbiology laboratory. He mainly focused on microbiological and analytical testing of food samples such as dairy, proteins, pet food, and a variety of meat samples.

Stanze Smith with Land O'Lakes learned the process of evaluating various products, assisted different projects and competed in the K12 (Kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> Grade) Innovation Challenge. She was also in charge of background research for developing a new base for further product development.

Everyone in the beginning of their internship work was nervous and did not know what to expect, but towards the end they all gained valuable experience in a real-life work setting. One student confirmed the importance of good communication, time management, teamwork, goal setting and planning. Another student confirmed research and development was a potential future career and had passion for such positions. Another learned how the K12 school channel is challenging but a meaningful area for developing good products. In addition, all indicated they had a quality experience provided by each company they worked for, as well as gained a great professional network while working with many people.

## Meeting a new mentor through RCA

by Alexandra Harmdierks

While taking Introduction to Culinary during fall 2018, I learned about the Research Chefs Association (RCA). Julie Simonson, the chair of the industry advisory council, recommended that we become student members, so I decided to take the opportunity. I was able to participate in the RCA's Professional Advisory Program by filling out an application about myself and my interests. I was then paired with AJ Shepler who works as a research and development chef at Roskam Baking Company in Grand Rapids, Michigan. We first contacted each other by email in November 2018 and then continued to email and call each other throughout the school year and into May.



During our conversations we discussed our educations, job experience, and goals. I was able to ask him questions and he gave very valuable advice. It was interesting to hear about how he got to the company that he currently works for. We also talked with one of his friends from college that works in meat science.

During one of our phone calls, AJ proposed that I come out to visit him at his work in Michigan. I was very excited about the potential opportunity but was unsure about if it would work out. Luckily, it did! His company was able to fly me out to Grand Rapids and let me spend a day with them. I met AJ at the airport, we drove to his office, and I started off my time there by meeting with his coworkers. I met with a few in their offices and met others while they were testing products. It was interesting to hear about all of their experiences and educations because all their paths were very different. I then got to tour the R&D test facilities, as well as several of their production facilities that were in different areas of Grand Rapids. It was informative to see the production side of the food and all the machinery and equipment involved. One of the biggest things that I have taken away from this mentorship experience has been making connections. The connections I was able to make with AJ and his coworkers are really important because they were able to give me a lot of really good advice. Also, we exchanged contact information so I can keep in touch and get advice from them if I ever need it in the future. Overall, the experience is something that I will value for a very long time.

## **Thomas Sahlstrom, Hotel Administration Alumnus of SMSU and a new industry council member**

by Joyce Hwang



Tom Sahlstrom claims that his education in Hotel Administration and liberal art at Southwest Minnesota State equipped him with the skills that have taken him around the country for the past 30 years. In addition, Tom was a member of the Student Hospitality Organization (SHO) club, played football, and was a Resident Assistant in Titan and Clapper.

After graduation in 1983, he started as a desk clerk at a hotel along the freeway near Dallas, Texas and moved along his career path from night manager all the way up to executive hotel manager of room through various hotels, including Four Seasons and Ritz Carlton.

In the recent past, Tom moved to La Crosse, Wisconsin and started a new phase of his career with Edward Jones and is currently ranked in the top percent of all Financial Advisors with Edward Jones.

With his love for the hospitality industry, he has stayed close to the profession. He has a small ownership in a few mid-level hotels and is currently serving on the La Crosse Country Club board where his responsibilities include house operations and personnel.

Tom has chosen to give back to SMSU through the endowed scholarship under his name for Culinary and Hospitality Management majors. His desire is to continue serving the SMSU community and he agreed to join the Culinary and Hospitality Management Industry Advisory Council starting this fall.

We welcome our enthusiastic alumnus of the program and are very excited to have Tom serve our industry advisory council.

## **Dr. Peiyi Shen, the new assistant professor of Culinary**

by Joyce Hwang

Dr. Peiyi Shen joins SMSU Culinary from North Dakota State University where she worked on her post doctorate research project after earning her PhD in Food Science from University of Massachusetts – Amherst, Massachusetts. Her research work is related to the discovery of dietary components for the prevention of obesity and aging-related processes, as well as the underlying molecular mechanism. She taught a research methods course at the pre-college to graduate levels. Dr. Shen believes in building relationships to facilitate research collaborations and effective teaching experiences. Her expertise in food science and various professional experiences will be a valuable asset to our Culinary program. Welcome, Dr. Shen!



### KEY EVENTS IN THE FALL 2019

September 10, 2019 – CULG/HOSP Program Welcome Back

September 27, 2019 – Industry Advisory Council Fall Meeting

October 1, 2019 – MN Hospitality Expo

October 8, 2019 – Institute for Food Technologist Minnesota Supplier's Expo

October 11, 2019 – SMSU Gala

October 12, 2019 – SMSU Homecoming

December 4, 2019 – SMSU Undergraduate Research Conference

## SMSU Culinology and Hospitality Management

1501 State Street  
Marshall, MN 56258

Please check our program website for more information:

- Culinology:  
<http://www.smsu.edu/academics/programs/culinology/index.html>
- Hospitality Management:  
<http://www.smsu.edu/academics/programs/hospitality/index.html>
- Program news and events:  
<http://www.smsu.edu/academics/programs/culinology/news-and-events.html>
- Scholarships:  
<http://www.smsu.edu/academics/programs/culinology/scholarships.html>
- Advisory Council:  
<http://www.smsu.edu/academics/programs/culinology/advisory-council.html>