

Leslie Eckert, MBA, CEPC, CCE, AAC

727.687.2964

leckert0867@gmail.com

Education

- ***Master of Business Administration with a concentration in Hospitality Management – December 2012***
South University
Keller
University
- ***Bachelor of Science in Culinary Management - December 2010***
The Art Institute of Pittsburgh, Online Division
- ***Associate of Science in Culinary Arts – March 1994***
The Art Institute of Ft. Lauderdale, School of Culinary Arts

Credentials

- ***American Academy of Chefs Fellow – May 2015 - Present***
- ***American Culinary Federation Certified Executive Pastry Chef – February 2014 - present***
- ***American Culinary Federation Certified Culinary Educator – June 2010 - present***

Work Experience

Academic Director for Culinary Arts & Baking Programs – June 2019 - present ***Great Lakes Culinary Institute at Northwestern Michigan College***

- Oversee enrollment for the Institute, including conducting recruitment activities (internal and external), controlling student attrition, and advising and career counseling students.
- Review and modify curriculum and assure ACF accreditation standards are being met.
- Represent the Institute within the community and at the state level through contacts and relationships with business, industry, government, associations, education, advisory committees, etc.
- Conduct marketing projects and events, coordinating with internal departments designed to highlight NMC's Great Lakes Culinary Institute in the Grand Traverse region and beyond.
- Supervise others in accordance with NMC's policies and applicable laws. Responsibilities include interviewing, hiring, and training employees; planning, assigning, and directing work; appraising performance; rewarding, recognizing employees; addressing performance problems or gaps.
- Apply a business plan approach, using data, identified trends, and defined priorities, to determine the most viable strategies for successful operations and efficient utilization of NMC financial resources.
- Use ongoing assessment of program and service quality and effectiveness to identify needed changes and improvements. Ensures quality of service in all areas by setting goals and outcomes and conducting assessment activities.
- Prepare and manage the Institute's budget.
- Apply innovative and entrepreneurial approaches to culinary education.

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Academic Director for Culinary Management, Culinary Arts & Baking Programs - April 2014 to December 2018

The International Culinary Schools at The Art Institute of Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina

- Principal academic officer for the Culinary Management, Culinary Arts and Baking programs
- Responsible for the day-to-day operations, including but not limited to assisting students toward successful program completion and staffing the classroom with instructors who support the mission of the college
- Responsible for assessing and achieving institutional academic effectiveness goals and applying use of results for improving overall outcomes
- Co-responsible with the Dean of Academic Affairs for the fiscal well-being of the department as it relates to education
- Responsible for the day-to-day operations of the culinary storeroom inventory, budget and staff
- Responsible for proctoring quarterly ServSafe Student exams, maintaining safe and sanitary kitchens, dining room and foodservice areas, HCCAP for food storage procedures and high quarterly health inspection scores.
- Participate in activities that promote the stature of the department and the college, including admission open houses and high-school college connections and community events
- Responsible for meeting the requirements for achieving and maintaining regional and programmatic accreditations including organizing and participating in self-studies, site visits and mock site visits for other campuses
- Provide academic leadership and select, train, develop, manage, and lead faculty and staff team members according to the guidelines provided by the Dean of Academic Affairs and Campus President
- Provide support to college and community relations activities while planning and implementing a budget including personnel requirements, program expenses, and capital needs
- Responsible for obtaining and retaining programmatic accreditation with zero compliance findings at time of site reviews.
- Create, staff and implement both planned and spontaneous community events and campus functions
- Mentor students through American Culinary Federation culinary competitions. Past students have achieved bronze, silver and gold medals.
- Support college programs designed to achieve student completion rates as outlined in an annually updated five-year strategic plan
- Collaborate with other Academic Department Directors within own school and across national schools regarding scheduling, sharing faculty, curriculum improvements, institutional effectiveness, and other responsibilities such as determined by the Dean of Academic Affairs
- Teach 5 to 10 contact hours a quarter
- Create and implement student-based exit strategies for a nationwide school closing

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Chef Instructor – January 2007 to March 2014

The International Culinary Schools at The Art Institute of Tampa, Tampa, Florida

- Design and present exciting pastry and baking curriculum and interactive lab class lessons that engage learners in a learning centered environment
- Provide students with opportunities to gain experience, knowledge and confidence with pastry arts and baking through learning centered activities, cognitive thinking exercises, bakeshop production and self-assessment
- Enhance the advanced baking and pastry class curriculums to offer more broad class goals and effective measurable objectives
- Create learner centered advanced baking and pastry lesson plans focused on multiple collaborative learning techniques and integrated technical multi-media
- Design advanced baking and pastry assessment rubrics for hands-on practical exams and development of soft skills
- Coach culinary students in extracurricular team projects that encourage growth in self-confidence and exposure to team work and team management in a production environment
- Coach culinary students in extracurricular food competition teams through the American Culinary Federation
- Conduct pastry demonstration lectures at Central Florida High Schools with Student Culinary Programs giving insight to a career in the culinary industry
- Motivate students to promote their creativity through artistic instruction

Executive Chef Instructor – January 2007 to March 2014

The Tutored Chef Restaurant, Art Institute of Tampa, Tampa, Florida

- Manage back and front of the house staff, average 12 people.
- Create station schedules and shift rotation.
- Facilitate station training and cross-training sessions.
- Lead weekly team meetings and plate tastings.
- Hold weekly staff one-on-one performance meetings
- Oversee the creation and production of seasonal menus and weekly menu specials.
- Responsible for the creation of food requisitions and proper food utilization.
- Work closely with storeroom and front of the house managers daily to achieve smooth restaurant operation.
- Expedite kitchen service and after service kitchen breakdown.

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Executive Pastry Chef/Owner - February 2002 to March 2014 Simply Decadent, Clearwater, Florida

- Owner and operator of a successful dessert catering company
Simply Decadent
- Responsible for company finances and reporting, lease agreements, foodservice licenses, supply inventory and production
- Work closely with clients, owner partner and staff regarding the creation, accuracy and completion of production orders and delivery
- Daily responsibilities include but are not limited to supervision and human resource management
- Established proper bakeshop equipment needs to match the production
- Assigned bakeshop duties and scheduled work shifts
- Trained staff in baking and pastry techniques
- Created new dessert items and menu layouts

Pastry Chef Instructor – October 2001 to November 2003 Publix Apron's Cooking School, Tampa & Sarasota, Florida

- Created collaborative learning student classes in Pastry Arts
- Facilitated student engaged educational pastry classes offered to the public
- Coordinated educational pastry class series for Publix Apron's
Cooking School Corporate Headquarters
- Requisitioned all food and equipment items needed for pastry classes

Work Experience - continued

Assistance Executive Pastry Chef – January 2000 to February 2002 Marriott Waterside, Tampa, Florida

- Supervised six-member baking staff
- Assigned bakeshop duties and scheduled work shifts
- Managed inventory and bakeshop production for four restaurant outlets and a 2200 seat banquet hall
- Trained staff in shift work and pastry techniques
- Created new dessert items and menu layouts
- Responsible for the production of over 60 pastry items and bread varieties
- Organized and managed pastry production for Banquet Event Orders
- Established proper bakeshop equipment needs to match the production

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Professional Training

- ServSafe Proctor & Instructor - current
- ServSafe Sanitation Training - current
- Culinary Supervision Management
- Nutrition
- Food Safety and Sanitation
- Classroom Teaching Strategies
- Curriculum Planning
- Educational Psychology
- Evaluation and Assessment
- Wild Yeast and Modern Breads
- Sugar Showpiece Design
- Gumpaste Flowers
- Modern Wedding Cakes
- Victim Advocacy
- Conscious Communication

Professional Organizations

- American Culinary Federation Education Foundation (ACFEF)
 - Central Region Industry Representative Site Evaluator - 2019
 - Central Region Educator Representative Site Evaluator - 2022-present
 - Accreditation Commission Member 2022-2023
 - Accreditation Commission Incoming Chair 2023-present
- Accrediting Bureau of Health Education Schools – National Accrediting Body
 - Culinary Site Evaluator 2017-2018
- American Culinary Federation (ACF): National Chapter 1992 - Present
 - Certification Commission Appeals Subcommittee Member 2014 – 2021
 - ACFEF Knowledge Bowl Committee 2016 - 2018
 - Women’s Task Force Member 2014 – 2015
 - Culinary Educator National Judge – 2015 – present
 - NCRLA Expo/ACF Co-Chair 2016 – 2017
 - CCE/CCSE Job Analysis Committee 2019
 - CEPC Job Analysis Committee 2019
 - CCE Exam Review Committee: 2013-2014
- ACF: Northwestern Michigan Chapter (MI042)
 - Professional Member: June 2019 - present
- ACF: Raleigh-Durham Area Chefs Assoc. Chapter: NC (NC051)
 - Professional Member: July 2017 – 2019
 - Nominations Committee Member: 2017 - 2018
- ACF: North Carolina Chapter: NC (NC001)
 - Professional Member: July 2014 – July 2017
- ACF: Tampa Bay Chapter: Tampa, FL (FL051)
 - Professional Member: July 1998 – 2016

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- Educational Chair: October 2012 – October 2014
- Awards Chair: August 2013
- ACF: Ft. Lauderdale Chapter; Ft Lauderdale, FL (FL061)
 - Professional Member: April 1994 – June 1998
 - Student Member: May 1992 – March 1994
- North Carolina Hospitality Education Foundation and North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association
 - Chair position, 2014 – 2016 NC ProStart Educator Workshop Advisory Board
 - The Art Institute of Raleigh-Durham host school for ProStart Educators Workshop Weekends 2014 - 2017
 - Advisory Member, 2014 ProStart Culinary Academia Board at Cary High School
- National Restaurant & Lodging Association
 - ProStart State Judge: 2009 – 2013 – Florida
 - Business Management Judge
 - Gourmet Food Judge
 - Appetizers
 - Desserts
 - Menu Layout and Costing
 - ProStart State Judge 2014 – 2019 – North Carolina
 - Gourmet Food Judge
 - Appetizers
 - Desserts
 - ProStart State Judge 2021-2022 – Michigan
 - Gourmet Food Judge – all categories

Accolades

- 2022 – American Culinary Federation Presidential Award
- 2022 - American Academy of Chefs, Joseph Amendola Award
- 2018 – Cooked Thanksgiving Dinner at the James Beard House
- 2015 – Inducted into the American Academy of Chefs
- 2014 – Awarded American Culinary Federation Southeast Region Pastry Chef of the Year
- 2013 – Awarded American Culinary Federation National Chef Educator of the Year
- 2013 – Awarded American Culinary Federation Southeast Region Chef Educator of the Year
- 2013 – Awarded American Culinary Federation Tampa Bay Chefs Association Member of the Year Award
- 2009 - Awarded “Part-time Instructor of the Year” for the year 2008
- 2008 - Awarded “Part-time Instructor of the Quarter” for Winter 2008 quarter
- 2007 - Awarded “Part-time Instructor of the Quarter” for Fall 2007 quarter

American Culinary Federation Conference/Convention Attendance

- 2022 American Culinary Federation National Convention, Las Vegas, NV
- 2021 American Culinary Federation National Convention, Orlando, FL
- 2018 American Culinary Federation Chef Connect: Charlotte, NC
- 2015 American Culinary Federation National Convention, Orlando, FL

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- 2014 American Culinary Federation National Convention, Kansas City, MO
- 2014 American Culinary Federation Southeast Region Conference, Charlotte, NC
- 2013 American Culinary Federation National Convention, Las Vegas, NV
- 2013 American Culinary Federation Southeast Region Conference, Louisville, KY

Classes Taught

- Concepts and Theories of Culinary Arts
- Concepts and Theories of Baking and Pastry
- Fundamentals of Classical Cooking
- American Regional Cuisine
- Introduction to Baking
- Introduction to Pastry
- Introduction to Baking and Pastry
- European Cakes & Tortes
- Chocolate, Confections & Centerpieces
- Artisan Bread Production
- Advance Pastry & Display Cakes
- Hospitality Marketing
- Café Operations – Front of the House